

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS - PART FOUR



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JOSEPH - CANAAN TO EGYPT

BY
WAYNE E. McMORRAN
BEREAN BIBLE CHURCH
ARROYO GRANDE, CA 93420

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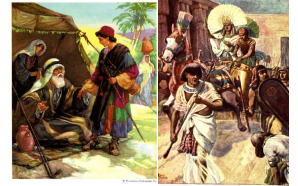
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JACOB : CANAAN TO EGYPT

CHAPTER 37

Note: The page numbers in this part start at 400 This is so that references in the indices will indicate which of the five parts that reference is in. In other words “Nuts (45)” is a reference in Part I while “Nuts (172)” is a reference in Part II.

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Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. This is the history of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

Genesis 37:1-4 (NKJV)

While this chapter begins with, “*This is the history of Jacob,*” it is, for all practical purposes, the history of Joseph (Chapters 49-46). *This is the history of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was . . .* “ It begins with Joseph with Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher (i.e. sons of Bilhah and Zilpah). He brought back a “bad” report concerning his brothers. דבֵּה (debah) has a base meaning of “to whisper” and hence acquires the meaning of “something that is told in confidence to another.” It becomes a “bad” report because, if it were good, there would be no reason to communicate in private. What the report was about is not said nor does it matter. Strike 1!

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children . . . Strike 2!

Also he made him a tunic of many colors . . . Strick 3 - you're out!

Three mistakes all in a row. If you have a legitimate complaint about another, it out to be aired in the presence on the person involved - not in secret! The fact that Jacob showed favoritism to Joseph and, especially, with regard to his clothing, made the problem a significant one. What will the result be?

First, another error. כְּתָנֵת פְּסִיִּים (katanth pasim) is not a coat of “many colors.” “Color” does not enter into the Hebrew. BDB says, “tunic with long skirts and sleeves” and TWOT has “flat of hand or foot, of tunic reaching to palms and soles.” K&D says, “an upper coat reaching to the wrists and ankles, such as noblemen and kings’ daughters wore, not “a coat of many colours” Where does “many colors” come from? From ποικίλος (poikilos) = “various” or “assorted,” the word found in the LXX at this place. It is also found in the following passages of the LXX.

*“When I saw among the spoils a **beautiful Babylonian garment**, two hundred shekels of silver,*

and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it."

Joshua 7:21 (NKJV)

*I **clothed you in embroidered cloth** and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk.*

Ezekiel 16:10 (NKJV)

*Then all the princes of the sea will come down from their thrones, lay aside their robes, and take off their **embroidered garments**; they will clothe themselves with trembling; they will sit on the ground, tremble every moment, and be astonished at you.*

Ezekiel 26:16 (NKJV)

Sorry about that! But it really does not make any difference if it had long sleeves and skirts, or was richly embroidered, or was multicolored - it was the envy of all his brothers.

But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him. "Hate" is as strong a word in Hebrew as it is in English. They could not do as many Jewish people do when they meet on the street and say "Shalom" שלום (shalom).

It was a sad situation. It was a situation that should have been eliminated as soon as possible. Let it fester and . . . Well, we shall see.

Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf." And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

Genesis 37:5-8 (NKJV)

Martin Luther King "had a dream" and so did Joseph. Not everyone agreed with either person! What is said next is a bit confusing (to me anyway). He told his brothers he had a dream so they hated him more - then he told them what it was about. How could they hate him before he revealed it? I would assume there was something about his demeanor that gave them some inkling of what the dream meant. When he told it to them, their suspicions were confirmed. When they heard him indicate, symbolically in the dream, that he was to rule over them, they really hated him. If God told you that your brother was going to rule over you, would you hate him? Perhaps not, but there was no evidence here that God gave him the dream, it would have seemed more likely that the dream came from Joseph's inner desires. Which was it?

K&D say this,

The dreams [this one and the next] are not represented as divine revelations; yet they are not to be regarded as pure flights of fancy from an ambitious heart, but as the presentiments of deep inward feelings, which were not produced without some divine influence being exerted upon Joseph's mind, and therefore were of prophetic significance, though they were not inspired directly by God, inasmuch as the purposes of God were still to remain hidden from the eyes of men for the saving good of all concerned.

I have not commented on the dream itself, it is self explanatory. The passage ends up with his brothers hating him more because of his words, understandably but why because of his dream? I have some really weird dreams but I do not feel "responsible" for them. Should they blame him for his dreams or for just talking about them?

Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me." So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

Genesis 37:9-11 (NKJV)

I can not help but wonder about Joseph. He has his brothers really angry with him and yet, after a second dream, he continues to tell them about it. Again, the significance of the dream is self evident - to his brothers, his father, and presumably to you. This time his father and mother were involved. Have you detected a problem here? The translators of Josephus and there is a footnote there.

1 We may here observe, that in correspondence to Joseph's second dream, which implied that his mother, who was then alive, as well as his father, should come and bow down to him, Josephus represents her here as still alive after she was dead, for the decorum of the dream that foretold it, as the interpretation of the dream does also in all our copies,

Josephus , Footnote to Genesis 37:10.

The dream was only symbolic and so it was not really important whether his mother was alive or not. As a result of the dream his brothers hated him even more but now they envied him as well. Why? Having two such dreams appeared to them (and Jacob) that the dreams had real significance and hence the envy. What his father's feeling were are not known, only that he made a mental note of this for future reference.

The following passage gives additional light on the original note about Joseph bringing a bad report to Jacob.

Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am." Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem. Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?" So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks." And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.' " So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.

Genesis 37:12-17 (NKJV)

Joseph's brothers again took the flocks out to graze, but Joseph was at home. It appears from this passage that Joseph was used as a messenger boy, in modern day office terms, a "gofor." The fact

that he was not allowed to go herd the sheep like his big brothers may have been the physical stimulus for his dreams. He didn't want to be just a messenger boy. This is not to say that God didn't have a part in these dreams since they were, indeed, prophetic.

He was sent to Schchem to find his brothers and bring back word as to their welfare. Upon arriving in the area, he did not find them there. A number of commentators have noted they probably were not welcome there after the hideous deed they had done to the men of that town!

A "certain" man found him wandering about in the field. Who was this "certain" man? No one seems to comment on this and he may have just "happened" to come along. On the other hand he may have been an angel in human appearances (as with Abraham) - a "guardian" angel. Whichever is the case, the man directed him to Dotham where he found his brothers. How was it that this "man" just happened to meet Joseph? How was it that he had overheard them saying where they were going? If he was not an angel in human form, he was, at least, a man used by God to fulfill His plans.

Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming! Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!" But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him." And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"--that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.

Genesis 37:18-22 (NKJV)

Joseph's dreams were about to come to an end, or so it would seem to his brothers who saw him coming in the distance. They conspired to kill him and cast him into a pit (where he would not be found). To eliminate any investigation that might ensue, they made up a story about a wild beast which devoured him. There would be no more of his dreams and the ones he already had would come to naught.

Reuben intervened - why? Some say so he could get back into the good graces of his father. This may be so, but he was also the oldest son and, perhaps, felt a bit more responsibility for Joseph. I would assume his plan sounded good to the brothers as they would not have to "kill" him, just cast him into a pit where he would die of "natural causes" (which would still be murder, but much "cleaner"). Reuben, however, planned to come back and get him out of the hole and return him home where he (Reuben) would get a grand reception for finding the "beloved" Joseph. Neither plan worked as we shall now see.

So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it. And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt. So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brothers listened. Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

Genesis 37:23-28 (NKJV)

Why take his tunic? Wait until the “court trial” and we shall see. Note, as stated above, his tunic was unusual, one that could belong to no one but Joseph. The fact they had this tunic was evidence that something had really happened to him. They would, as we will learn later, put blood on it so that it looked like an animal got him.

The text indicates there was no water in the pit. Does this mean that he would not drown in it or does it mean he would die of thirst? From their standpoint it made no difference - he would die either way.

Then they spotted the Ishmaelites coming near and Judah (the oldest son who had not be disinherited) had a better idea. They would make Joseph’s dreams come true! The text does not say that, but, eventually, this is exactly what happened. Judah’s thoughts, however, were that it would rid them of the onus of killing their brother.

Not only would they not have to commit murder, they might make some money in the process. Who could turn that down? K&D say,

Reuben wished to deliver Joseph entirely from his brothers’ malice. Judah also wished to save his life, though not from brotherly love so much as from the feeling of horror, which was not quite extinct within him, at incurring the guilt of fratricide; but he would still like to get rid of him, that his dreams might not come true. Judah, like his brethren, was probably afraid that their father might confer upon Joseph the rights of the first-born, and so make him lord over them. His proposal was a welcome one. When the Arabs passed by, the brethren fetched Joseph out of the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites, who took him into Egypt.

K&D, Genesis 37:25-28

As an interesting side note concerning the twenty shekels they sold him for, from Leviticus we may obtain this table.

“Value of a person” according to Leviticus 27:3-7”		
Age	Sex	Value
0 to 5	male	5 shekels
0 to 5	female	3 shekels
5 to 20	male	20 shekels
5 to 20	female	10 shekels
20 to 60	male	50 shekels
20 to 60	female	30 shekels
over 60	male	15 shekels
over 60	female	10 shekels

Apparently, even though Leviticus had not yet been written, they got the right amount for Joseph! As far as the senior citizens in this class go - sorry! Incidentally, K&D note that slaves went for 30 shekels

so there was a profit to be made!

On a somewhat more serious note, there are those who question why we have “Ishmaelites” mentioned three times and Midianites” once. According to Unger,

2. *In the time of Joseph we find the Midianites associated with the Ishmaelites so closely that it is hard to define their relationship; perhaps there was a company of Midianite merchantmen in the Ishmaelite caravan (Genesis 37:25, 27-28, 36). In all likelihood the descendants of Ishmael, and Midian, as well as of other exiled children of Abraham, had intermarried. In Judges 8:24 the Midianites seem to be called Ishmaelites. But this latter term may have come to be applied generally to traders of that particular kind, such as Canaanite, which came to mean merchant.*

UNGER, Midianites

So, Joseph is now on his way to Egypt and an unknown future. I wonder if he had any idea of the future he would have there? Do any of us know what the future holds for us, for those of us who have committed our lives to Him and allow Him to lead? Gail and I sure did not! We shall leave Joseph on his way to Egypt and return to Canaan.

Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes. And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?" So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?" And he recognized it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces." Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him. Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.

Genesis 37:29-36 (NKJV)

Something is wrong here! If the brothers sold Joseph, why would Reuben return to the pit to pull him out? K&D say, "*The business was settled in Reuben's absence; probably because his brethren suspected that he intended to rescue Joseph.*" While this is plausible, let me give you a better explanation.

At the beginning of this chapter, we read, "*the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah,*" which would seem to indicate that the boys divided up according to their mothers and were not always in the same place (but then Reuben and Judah were both sons of Leah). In any case, they were not all together in the sale of Joseph. There is no mention that the brothers told Reuben what they had done and he may have thought some beast may have gotten him.

The reason for taking his tunic now becomes clear. They dipped it in blood so that it would look like a wild animal got him. It would not be a good plan if “CSI” was around then because they would have determined there was no physical evidence of foul play on the tunic other than the blood. But, in those days, the science of crime investigation had not developed (and certainly not DNA!)

Linguistically, I have a problem with what is said next. They “sent” the tunic and they “brought” it . . . Which is it - send or brought? Apparently this is some Hebrew idiom I do not understand as none

of the commentators say anything about it. Either way, JFB says,

The commission of one sin necessarily leads to another to conceal it; and the scheme of deception which the sons of Jacob planned and practised on their aged father was a necessary consequence of the atrocious crime they had perpetrated. What a wonder that their cruel sneer, "thy son's coat," and their forced efforts to comfort him, did not awaken suspicion! But extreme grief, like every other passion, is blind, and Jacob, great as his affliction was, did allow himself to indulge his sorrow more than became one who believed in the government of a supreme and all-wise Disposer.

JFB, Genesis 37:32

To enlarge a bit, ask yourself the question, "How could you not recognize the despised tunic?" Even if they had really found it, they would of known at once whose it was - especially if Jacob could. The reason for the feigned ignorance is to further themselves from the truth. "Gee, we don't know anything about this but it looks familiar!"

Jacob took the story "hook, line, and sinker." Joseph was gone! So he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth. This was a common practice. It was done by: David, Ahab, Hezekiah, Mordecai, Job, the High Priests, and others (Joshua 7:6; Judges 11:35; 2 Samuel 13:31; 1 Kings 21:27; 2 Kings 5:7-8; 2 Kings 6:30; 2 Kings 19:1; 2 Kings 22:11; 2 Chron. 34:19; Esther 4:1; Job 1:20; Job 2:12; Isaiah 37:1; Matthew 26:65; Mark 14:63). Note especially,

And it came to pass, while they were on the way, that news came to David, saying, "Absalom has killed all the king's sons, and not one of them is left!" So the king arose and tore his garments and lay on the ground, and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn.

2 Samuel 13:30-31 (NKJV)

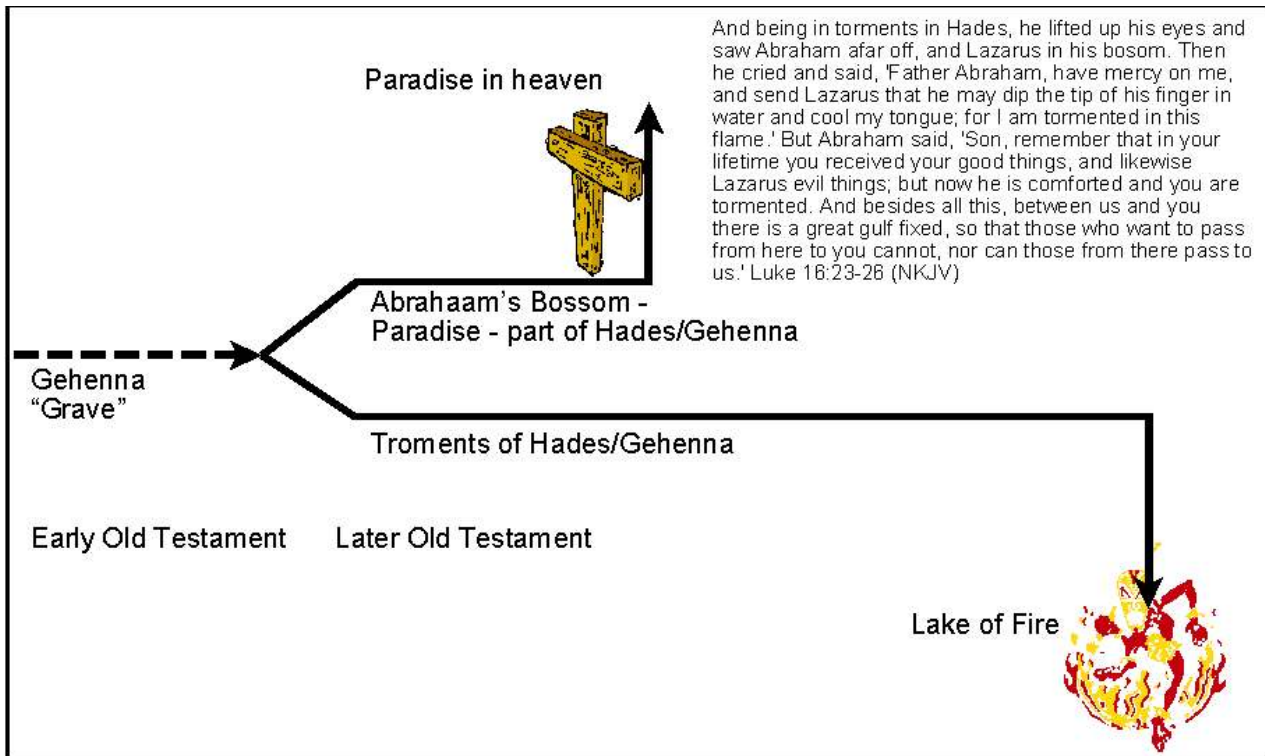
The term שקק (sakk) "Sackcloth" refers to just what it sounds like! According to Unger,

A coarse texture of a dark color, made of goat's hair (Isaiah 50:3; Rev. 6:12) and resembling the cilicium of the Romans. It was used (1) for making sacks (cf. Genesis 42:25; Leviticus 11:32; Joshua 9:4) and (2) for making the rough garments used by mourners (Genesis 37:34; Esther 4:1-4), which were in extreme cases worn next to the skin (1 Kings 21:27; 2 Kings 6:30; Job 16:15), and this even by females (Isaiah 32:11; Joel 1:8; 2 Macc. 3:19), but at other times were worn over the coat (Jonah 3:6) in place of the outer garment.

UNGER, Sackcloth

Jacob refused to be comforted. His statement, "I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." meaning he would mourn the loss of Joseph until his dying day.

NOTE: "Grave" here is שאול (sheol). I have prepared a chart below outlining what this was and is. At Jacob's time, it had a very vague meaning and was best translated as it is here, "grave." Later on, however, the "theology of Sheol" developed into an "actual" place where the departed dead went and became divided into two compartments, identified by Jesus (Luke 18) as "Abraham's Bosom" and the "Toments of Hades" (Hades being the Greek, NT term). When Christ ascended into heaven, "Abraham's Bosom" (otherwise referred to as Paradise ascended with Him and is now in Heaven. Someday, the others will be case into the "Lake of Fire." (Rev. 19).



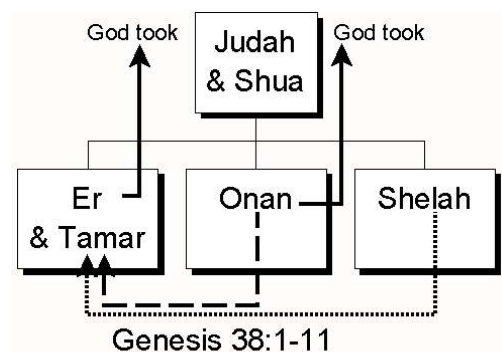
-Jacob, quite apparently, had no understanding of a concept such as "heaven and hell." While he wept, Joseph was taken to Egypt and sold to a high ranking official named Potiphar. We leave Jacob crying in Canaan. We will move to Joseph in Egypt in Chapter 39, but first a parenthetical chapter. In the meantime, Joseph can practice his tennis as he "serves in Potiphar's court." (Joke)

CHAPTER 38

It came to pass at that time that Judah departed from his brothers, and visited a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah. And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua, and he married her and went in to her. So she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Er. She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan. And she conceived yet again and bore a son, and called his name Shelah. He was at Chezib when she bore him. Then Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord killed him. And Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother." But Onan knew that the heir would not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he emitted on the ground, lest he should give an heir to his brother. And the thing which he did displeased the Lord; therefore He killed him also. Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house till my son Shelah is grown." For he said, "Lest he also die like his brothers." And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

Genesis 38:1-11 (NKJV)

This is a parenthetical passage which is included here in order to account for Tamar later on. It seems that, for some reason not stated, Judah went to visit a man named Hirah, an Adullamite. The meeting is incidental to the account. As what the account deals with is his marriage to a Canaanite woman (something he should not have done!) named Shua and the sons she bore to him. A chart to the right will help visualize the account.



In order of birth was Er, Onan, and Shelah.. Since the name Er is not used in context, it is difficult to attach any meaning to it. It appears to come from "To be aroused." It would seem to be Err to name a son Er! It must have been the case for we have the most interesting statement that "the Lord killed him." We can find instances like the one below.

And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

Genesis 5:24 (NKJV)

Here it says the Lord "killed" Er. Have you ever thought about the Lord actually killing someone Himself? He killed: The firstborn of the Egyptians (Exodus 13:15); the Children in the Wilderness (Numbers 14:16); the Amorites - "There were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword." (Joshua 10:11); 185,000 Assyrians (2 Kings 19:35); and others!

Thus Judah commanded Onan to marry Tamar. Why? So Er would not die "childless" - the first child born would be counted as Er's. This is known as a Levirate Marriage and is found as below.

"If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as

his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And it shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.

Deuteronomy 25:5-6 (NKJV)

“But,” you say, “this was before God gave Moses the Law.” True, but, Unger points out that “*The Levirate marriage was not peculiar to the Jews; it has been found to exist in many Eastern countries, particularly in Arabia and among the tribes of the Caucasus.*”¹ and K&D say,

The custom of levirate marriage, which is first mentioned here, and is found in different forms among Indians, Persians, and other nations of Asia and Africa, was not founded upon a divine command, but upon an ancient tradition, originating probably in Chaldea. It was not abolished, however, by the Mosaic law (Deut 25:5ff.), but only so far restricted as not to allow it to interfere with the sanctity of marriage; and with this limitation it was enjoined as a duty of affection to build up the brother's house, and to preserve his family and name.

K&D, Genesis 38:6-10

The New KJV puts it very politely when it says, “*when he went in to his brother's wife, that he emitted on the ground.*” When my kids were young, they always looked for a translation that was a bit more vivid! In case you don't get it, the NASB says, “*he wasted his seed on the ground.*” And, if that is not plain enough, the NIV has “*he spilled his semen on the ground.*” leaving nothing to the imagination. Actually, it would have been sufficient to say he practiced the only birth control method (other than total abstinence) known at that time.

For this act, the Lord also “killed” him. Do this mean (men) if you do the same thing, the Lord will kill you? No! There was more to it than that. As K&D put it,

This act not only betrayed a want of affection to his brother, combined with a despicable covetousness for his possession and inheritance, but was also a sin against the divine institution of marriage and its object, and was therefore punished by Jehovah with sudden death.

K&D, Genesis 38:6-10

Thus only Shelah was left who was, apparently, too young to marry at the time. For this reason, Tamar was asked to wait around until he was old enough to marry. It seems like this is a rather demanding request - to me anyway. Apparently it seemed so to her as well as we shall see.

Now in the process of time the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. And it was told Tamar, saying, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." So she took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place which was on the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife. When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, because she had covered her face. Then he turned to her by the way, and said, "Please let me come in to you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. So she said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?" And he said, "I will send a young goat from the flock." So she said, "Will you give me a pledge till you send

¹UNGER, Levirate Marriage

it?" Then he said, "What pledge shall I give you?" So she said, "Your signet and cord, and your staff that is in your hand." Then he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him. So she arose and went away, and laid aside her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood. And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand, but he did not find her. Then he asked the men of that place, saying, "Where is the harlot who was openly by the roadside?" And they said, "There was no harlot in this place." So he returned to Judah and said, "I cannot find her. Also, the men of the place said there was no harlot in this place." Then Judah said, "Let her take them for herself, lest we be shamed; for I sent this young goat and you have not found her."

Genesis 38:12-23 (NKJV)

Now, in the "process of time." Literally, "the days multiplied, became great." In other words, after a considerable length of time, time enough for Shelah to grow to manhood. Shua died, leaving Judah a widower. The time was sufficient that he had finished mourning for her and was going about his business. Therefore he went on a business trip. Unfortunately, a lot of men, even married ones, get into trouble on business trips. Judah will, just read on.

He went with his friend Hirah up to Timnah (wherever that was) to check on the shearing of his sheep. Someone, who it was is not told, told Tamar about the trip. Since Shelah was now an adult and not her husband, she gave up on that idea and decided on a different approach, a rather sordid one. She took off her "widows' garments" It would seem like she must have been wearing these for a long time. No indication is made in the Scriptures as to how long these garments were to be worn - presumably until they died or remarried. Instead, she dressed like a prostitute (harlot). Her plan was to catch Judah as he passed by - which assume that she had a good idea that he would succumb to her bidding. It makes one wonder if he was not in the habit of doing such things!



Her plan succeeded as he asked, "*Please let me come in to you.*" There are a few translations which make his proposal more specific, but this is indicative enough, and is precisely what the Hebrew says. Playing the part well, she asked him what he was willing to pay. He offered her a goat, which he did not have with him. She really didn't want a goat anyway and the fact that it was not with him gave her her opportunity. She asked for something much more valuable which, presumably, she would hold until he delivered the goat to her.

What should that be? Judah didn't have any good thoughts, but she did! She wanted his "signet" and "cord" and "staff." The staff was a regular walking staff. The cord was a cord worn around the neck with the signet ring attached. I am not sure about the staff, perhaps it had identification on it, but the ring certainly did.

Then the act was carried out, Judah continued on his way and she returned to her "widowhood." After reaching his flock, he sent a goat with his "friend the Adullamite," presumably Hirah, who not only was unable to find her but found that there were no prostitutes which normally frequented that place.

What to do? The signet ring and staff were more valuable than a goat and also would identify him.

If he tried to get them back, people would learn what he had done and so he had to “pay” for his sin!

Several things have occurred here that are morally wrong. Judah was guilty of fornication. The Bible makes a significant distinction between **adultery** and **fornication**.

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,
Galatians 5:19 (NASB-U)

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;
Galatians 5:19 (NIV)

"You shall not commit adultery.
Exodus 20:14 (NKJV)

(Note: The NASB has a footnote that says “immorality” is “sexual immorality.” Both are the same as fornication {Greek πορνεία (porniea) from which we get pornography} Adultery is dealt with early in the Bible - in the Ten Commandments. It is evident that, while fornication is a sin and not to be practiced by a Christian, it is not treated in the Bible as equal with adultery.

Tamar, one might say, was guilty of being a prostitute, but that really is not correct. Her immoral act was that of deception (and, in the process, fornication). Both were wrong. But, is there any sense in which they were justified.

Paul wrote the following.

But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am; but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.
1 Corinthians 7:8-9 (NKJV)

Judah had not remarried and may have been, to quote Paul, “burning with passion.” Well, this does not “justify” Judah’s actions but is the likely reason hell fell pray to it. Paul also has something to say about the widow.

Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.
1 Timothy 5:14 (NKJV)

He gives this admonition to protect widows from going astray. Basically, she has the same “excuse” he did. She also had the excuse that Judah had not kept his promise to her (perhaps he had simply forgotten and needed to be reminded).

And it came to pass, about three months after, that Judah was told, saying, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; furthermore she is with child by harlotry." So Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!" When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "By the man to whom these belong, I am with child." And she said, "Please determine whose these

are--the signet and cord, and staff." So Judah acknowledged them and said, "She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son." And he never knew her again.

Genesis 38:24-26 (NKJV)

One has to wonder if the Lord intervened in this scheme in that Tamar became pregnant with the one encounter. By the time three months had passed it became apparent that she was pregnant. The text does not indicate that she became pregnant by pretending to be a prostitute, perhaps this was inferred. Judah's reaction seems harsh - burn his daughter-in-law? Later, the Mosaic Law would have something to say about this.

The daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the harlot, she profanes her father. She shall be burned with fire.

Leviticus 21:9 (NKJV)

This speaks of the daughter of a priest (and is part of the Mosaic Law). Judah was not a priest. K&D also point this out.

But the Mosaic law enjoined stoning in the case of those who were affianced and broke their promise, or of newly married women who were found to have been dishonoured (Deut 22:20-21, 23-24); and it was only in the case of the whoredom of a priest's daughter, or of carnal intercourse with a mother or a daughter, that the punishment of burning was enjoined (Lev 21:9 and 20:14). Judah's sentence, therefore, was more harsh than the subsequent law; whether according to patriarchal custom, or on other grounds, cannot be determined.

K&D, Genesis 38:24-26

In any case, the sentence was not carried out as Tamar did what she had intended to do all along. She presented Judah's signet and staff as evidence of the man who was the father of the child. There was nothing that Judah could do but acknowledge he was the father. Regardless of the moral flaws we have seen in Judah in this instance, he shows character when he admits that the source of all this sordid mess was his failure to keep his promise to Tamar.

Judah had made a promise to Tamar, "*Remain a widow in your father's house till my son Shelah is grown. . . . (etc).*" He failed to keep it. Jesus said concerning making promises,

"Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.

Matthew 5:33-36 (NKJV)

'You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the Lord.

Leviticus 19:11-12 (NKJV)

In this case, we are not told that he swore in God's name. Still, if you make a promise, you really need to make it a point to keep it!

Now it came to pass, at the time for giving birth, that behold, twins were in her womb. And so it was, when she was giving birth, that the one put out his hand; and the midwife took a scarlet thread and bound it on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." Then it happened, as he drew back his hand, that his brother came out unexpectedly; and she said, "How did you break through? This breach be upon you!" Therefore his name was called Perez. Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet thread on his hand. And his name was called Zerah.

Genesis 38:27-30 (NKJV)

It turned out that Jacob “hit a double!” Tamar had twins. As we noted with Jacob and Esau, the midwife had to be very careful to determine which one poked out first, even if the other actually was (Completely) born first. This time, to make sure, she tied a scarlet thread on the first baby’s arm so there would be no mistake.

he received the name of פֶּרֶץ (Perez) (breach, breaker through). Then the other one with the scarlet thread came into the world, and was named זָרַח (Zerah) (exit, rising), because he sought to appear first, whereas in fact Perez was the first-born, and is even placed before Zerah in the lists in Gen 46:12; Num 26:20. Perez was the ancestor of the tribe-prince Nahshon (Num 2:3), and of king David also (Ruth 4:18ff.; 1 Chron 2:5ff.). Through him, therefore, Tamar has a place as one of the female ancestors in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

K&D, Genesis 28:30

Tamar plays the prostitute (harlot)



CHAPTER 39

Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand. So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field. Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.

Genesis 39:1-6 (NKJV)

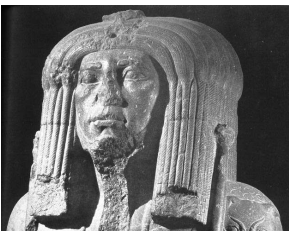
We return to the story of Joseph after the interlude of chapter 38, which we classified as one of the worst chapters in the Bible because it certainly tells a sordid story of the man Judah.

We will discover that Joseph is altogether different from Judah. I have always felt that Joseph and Benjamin got a great deal of teaching, instruction, and personal attention that the other ten boys did not receive. These seemed to be the only two boys in whom Jacob was interested.

J. Vernon McGee's Thru The Bible, Genesis 39:1

Sordid or not, without the previous chapter, we would have little information on the ancestors of the tribe of Judah, one of the most powerful tribes in Israel and the last to be taken into captivity. As a side note, a "JEW," in the strict sense, is a descendent of Judah. Since the tribe of Benjamin (and part of Simeon) joined Judah when the kingdom was split under Solomon, a "Jew" might also be of the tribe of Benjamin, even, perhaps, of Simeon. Today, however, that is all "lost in history" and "Jew", "Israelite", and "Hebrew" are consider synonyms.

Moving now to Egypt, we meet up with several Egyptians. These is the Pharaoh which is not his name, it is his title. According to K&D, "Joseph became prime minister of one of these powerful rulers, either Amenemes (I-IV) or Senwosret (I-III). " A bust of Amenemes is shown to the left (one of the four of them) and a bust of Senwosret is shown below that (one of the three of them). We shall not deal with him right now as the first person with whom Joseph had contact is Potiphar.



It might be noted here that the Egyptians apparently did not speak the same language as Jacob and his family.

But they did not know that Joseph understood them, for he spoke to them through an interpreter.

Genesis 42:23 (NKJV)

(Even though Joseph understood them, he used an interpreter so they would

not recognize him). There are a number of explanations for this, one of which is there were, apparently, people who could speak both languages and, perhaps, Potiphar was one of them. Certainly, in time, Joseph would have learned the language of the Egyptians.

The story of Joseph as he goes to Egypt is a story that is repeated a number of times. Moses goes to Egypt and assumes leadership of Israel. Daniel is taken to Babylon and becomes “second in command” to three successive kings! The Lord has a way of getting His people where they need to be. Note the sentence, “*The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man.*” You can not separate the first half of the sentence from the last. His success was due to the Lord’s being with him. The Lord caused him to צלח (tselach) = Prosper.” Potiphar observed him and that the “Lord was with him.” Joseph must have made known to Potiphar his God and how He would bless him or Potiphar would not have known this. Joseph, among other things, was not a man afraid to speak of His Lord. JFB state the situation better than I might.

Though changed in condition, Joseph was not changed in spirit; though stripped of the gaudy coat that had adorned his person, he had not lost the moral graces that distinguished his character; though separated from his father on earth, he still lived in communion with his Father in heaven; though in the house of an idolater, he continued a worshiper of the true God.

JFB, Genesis 39:3

Potiphar recognized something (or someone) good when he saw it (him) and took advantage of it. He made Joseph the overseer of his house, the result of which was Potiphar’s house was also blessed by the Lord, “for Joseph’s sake.”

The blessing was all encompassing, “*the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field.*”

I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Genesis 12:3 (NKJV)

His master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand. K&D say, “*This confidence in Joseph increased, when he perceived how the blessing of Jehovah (Joseph’s God) rested upon his property in the house and in the field.*” But, just how did Potiphar “see” this? He could see that what Jacob did prospered. How could he see it was the Lord that caused this to happen? I have found no commentary that indicated how Potiphar knew that there was someone at work in his home other than Joseph. How did he know the Lord was causing all this to happen? There is only one way, Joseph had to have talked with Potiphar about his Lord. Joseph must have told him that the Lord was doing these things.

When you go to work, (1) do you work as unto the Lord? (2) Do you let your boss and associates know why you work hard and do well? Consider this!

Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

We might have said that Joseph took Paul's advice except that Paul had not yet been born. He had to have given the Lord credit for the way he prospered.

So Joseph found favor in his sight. This is a very literal translation of the Hebrew. Technically, "he found favor in his eyes."

I'd Rather See A Sermon

I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day.
I'd rather one should walk with me than merely show the way.
The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear,
Fine council is confusing but examples always clear.
And the best of all the preachers are the men who live their creeds,
For to see the good in action is what everybody needs.
I can soon learn how to do it if you'll let me see it done,
I can watch your hands in action but your tongue too fast may run.
And the lectures you deliver may be very wise and true;
But I'd rather get my lesson by observing what you do.
For I may misunderstand you and the high advice you give.
But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live

Author Unknown

To use the theme of the above poem, Potiphar "saw a sermon" as proclaimed by Joseph.

As a result, this young lad (I do not know how old he was by this time, but probably in his late teens or early twenties) was put in charge

He made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field. The Lord's blessing was evident everywhere - clear out into the fields. It was not because Potiphar was so loved by God, it was because of the faith of Joseph and his reliance on God.

Finally, Potiphar put him in charge of everything! Potiphar was an officer of Pharaoh, namely the captain of the guard, Potiphar continued on in that position and could concentrate on it entirely because, back home, Joseph would take care of everything.

This section ends with a statement that goes with the next section, so we shall consider it there,

And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her. But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was

inside, that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside. And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside, that she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, "See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside." So she kept his garment with her until his master came home. Then she spoke to him with words like these, saying, "The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me; so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside."

Genesis 39:7-18 (NKJV)

The last section ended with, *Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.* It is no wonder then, that Potiphar's wife *cast longing eyes on Joseph.* K&D say that, in this context, נשׂה (nesah) means "*she gazed at him with desire; usu. + vb. of seeing*" In her position, there must have been many men she could have "gazed" at but the grass is always green on the other side of the fence. She pulled no punches, "lie with me!" The word "lie" is the common word שכב (shecav) "to lie die" but here it is in the imperative (masculine singular). She commanded him to do so, it was not an invitation! Joseph, in keeping with his character so far, refused. His reply is of note.

- *my master does not know what is with me in the house,*
- *he has committed all that he has to my hand.*
- *There is no one greater in this house than I*
- *he has not kept back anything from me*
- *he has kept back only you, because you are his wife*

Joseph could do anything he pleased with anything (or anyone) in Potiphar's house - except her! How could one betray someone who had showed such confidence and trust in? There is something in the phrase they you may not have noticed, "but you." Potiphar must have told him that his wife was "off limits" for him to say "except you." Why? Many commentators seem to believe that Potiphar knew what kind of woman she was and hence expressed his concern.

So, how could Joseph betray Potiphar's trust and do this? Wait! That is not what he said. He said, "how can I sin against God." Why would that be a sin against God. Paul explained it to Timothy.

Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed.

1 Timothy 6:1 (NKJV)

Potiphar knew about Joseph's God. Here is a place where Potiphar would see what kind of God Joseph had. Joseph had to be careful that *God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed.*

If this had happened only once, this chapter probably would not be in our Bible. But she kept it up "day by day." What should one do in this case? *he did not heed her, to lie with her **or to be with her.*** Not only did he refuse her, he stayed away from her presence. If she came into a room his was in, it is assume he would leave it. He did the proper thing for a man to do. So all was well until "about this time." The NKJV translation is misleading here. The NASB has, "Now it happened one day . . ." Day after day Joseph kept away from her. But, as you might expect, there came a day when his plans went amok. *Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside.* Should Joseph have said (to himself), "Oh oh, there are no other men in the house today, I

had better get out? First, it is not obvious that he knew there were no other men in the house and, secondly, he went in to do his work. How could he work for Potiphar without going into the house? I am quite sure that, had Joseph the ability to see into the future, he would not have “reported for work that day.”

None of the men of the house was inside, that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." The text does not say this, but I would be willing to say that she probably dismissed the men of the house that day so she could carry out her plan. Her plan was not to “lie with Joseph,” she had probably given up on that. Now she was going to “get even” with him.

The proud have me in great derision, Yet I do not turn aside from Your law.

Psalm 119:51 (NKJV)

Like the Psalmist, Joseph would not be “turned aside.” *But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside. And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside, that she called to the men of her house and spoke to them . . .* She now had proof that she “had been with Joseph.” There is an interesting note here as cited below.

This was the second time Joseph’s clothing was used to bring a false report about him (cf. 37:31-33). In both cases he had been serving faithfully. But in both cases Joseph ended up in bondage.

Bible Knowledge Commentary, Genesis 39

Half truths are often worse than direct lies. *"See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. **And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside.**"*

He did leave his garment with her and fled. But he did so without touching her, which she does not comment on.

There is something here that may not meet the eye. She told her story to the men of the house and they took care of Joseph by . . . Whoops! They did nothing. They probably had had similar experiences with her and thought to themselves, “well, she’s done it again!” So, she had to repeat the story when Potiphar came home.



So it was, when his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, saying, "Your servant did to me after this manner," that his anger was aroused. Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison.

But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing. The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the Lord was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper.

Genesis 39:19-23 (NKJV)

According to K&D, Potiphar had him cast into prison which K&D say, was a “state-prison surrounded by a wall. This was a very moderate punishment.” They go on to say this.

An attempt at adultery was to be punished with 1000 blows, and rape upon a free woman still more severely. It is possible that Potiphar was not fully convinced of his wife's chastity, and therefore did not place unlimited credence in what she said. But even in that case it was the mercy of the faithful covenant God, which now as before (Gen 37:20ff.) rescued Joseph's life.*

K&D, Genesis 39:19

When taken to Egypt, he found favor in the eyes of Potiphar. Now that he is in prison, he finds favor with the keeper of the prison. Romans 8:28 never fails!

The prison was ב בית ה טהר (Bebethsohar) which is, literally, "the house of roundness." In other words, "the roundhouse." Since they didn't have trains in those days, it must have meant something else.

The most ancient prisons were simply water cisterns, out of which, since the sides came nearly together above, one could not easily escape unaided

UNGER (Genesis 37:20, 22)

This would, perhaps. Explain the "roundness."

The situation with Joseph and the jailor was quite similar to that with Joseph and Potiphar. I have to wonder if Potiphar, "politically," had to put Joseph in prison but told the jailor to treat Joseph this way. Today, Joseph would be called a "trustee." *The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the Lord was with him.* We noted a similar expression before with Potiphar. All in one sentence we have the jailor putting everything with Joseph because **the Lord was with him**. If nothing else, Joseph is become God's evangelist in Egypt. Even more so later on. The text said that the Lord made whoever he did prosper. I have no doubt about that but I wonder what there was for him to do?

Hell hath no fury like that of a woman scorned.

McGee 39:10

CHAPTER 40

It came to pass after these things that the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief butler and the chief baker. So he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison, the place where Joseph was confined. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; so they were in custody for a while.

Genesis 40:1-4 (NKJV)

The Butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker . . . oops, wrong story. This is about a baker alright but the other man is a cupbearer. מִשְׁקָה (masqua) is “to pour” and, hence “one who pours” or a cupbearer. Some translations have “butler” which, I suppose, is approximately the same. The same thing happened to them as had happened to Joseph. They went from being the “chief” persons in Pharaoh’s palace to inmates of the prison, the same one where Joseph was. Why? The Baker tripped the cupbearer and made him spill wine all over Pharaoh . . . I don’t know, it is not important what they did!

Joseph was placed in charge of them as well as everyone else. The text points the out to explain his contact with them. Unlike Joseph who seemed to be serving a life sentence, they were placed there only until the Pharaoh decided what to do with them.

The jailor “charged Joseph with them.” There is a question as to whether Joseph was charged with keeping them from escaping or with serving them. JSB have a rather strange comment here.

not the keeper, though he was most favorably disposed; but Potiphar himself, who, it would seem, was by this time satisfied of the perfect innocence of the young Hebrew; though, probably, to prevent the exposure of his family, he deemed it prudent to detain him in confinement (see Psalm 37:5).

JFB, Genesis 40:4

To understand this, you must first remember that Potiphar, himself was the “Captain of the Guard” for the prison. (Genesis 37:36; Genesis 39:1). It may be true that Potiphar, by this time, had determined that Joseph was really innocent, but this has nothing to do with what is going on in this chapter. It appears that he was to look after their needs, both on the basis of what is said above and on account of what happens now.

Then the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison, had a dream, both of them, each man's dream in one night and each man's dream with its own interpretation. And Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them, and saw that they were sad. So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in the custody of his lord's house, saying, "Why do you look so sad today?" And they said to him, "We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it." So Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, please."

Genesis 40:5-8 (NKJV)

Men (and women) have dreams (I have nightmares). Most of the time these dreams are, in the words of Ebenezer Scrooge, “a bit of underdone potato.” Sometimes, however, the dreams come from God. The problem is, who can interpret them? Daniel said,

There is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these:

Daniel 2:28 (NKJV)

Only God can interpret dreams. He can, however, reveal their interpretation to man. Joseph had had two dreams and both his brothers and his father knew the interpretation. They were simple dreams with simple interpretations. Now we have two more dreams. The cupbearer and the baker had them. When they arose, they were troubled. Have you ever been troubled by a dream you've had. I have and, I suspect, you have too. Seeing the men whom he was to be caring for looking so sad made it an imperative that Joseph seek the source of their sadness. It was then he learned they had had dreams but there was no one to interpret them - not in the prison, at least. The Joseph says something that sounds a bit strange. He claims that interpretations belong to God and, in the same breath, asks them to tell him their dreams. He was not God! So why tell him?

Consider Daniel again.

So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

Daniel 2:16-19 (NKJV)

Daniel knew that only God could interpret dreams but he also knew that God had given him the ability to receive the meaning from Him and relay the meaning on to the person who had the dream. We can assume it was so with Joseph. I wonder how many dreams he had had and interpreted. I wonder if he had interpreted other's dreams. He may have.

Then the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "Behold, in my dream a vine was before me, and in the vine were three branches; it was as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes. Then Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand." And Joseph said to him, "This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days. Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his butler. But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon."

Genesis 40:9-15 (NKJV)

This is why "butler" is not a good translation for "cup bearer." His dream consisted of a grape vine that flourished with a bumper crop of grapes. This allowed the cup bearer to make them into wine and supply the wine to the Pharaoh in "his cup." With the exception of the "three branches," it is not hard to interpret what the dream would mean. It would be up to the Lord to explain to (or point out to) Joseph the significance of the three branches.

So Joseph, apparently, answered almost immediately with the meaning - in three days the cup-bearer would have his position back. Having done a big favor for the cup-bearer, he asks for a favor - "tell

the Pharaoh about me and get me out of here!" He explained to him why Pharaoh should do this - he is innocent.

When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, "I also was in my dream, and there were three white baskets on my head. In the uppermost basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them out of the basket on my head." So Joseph answered and said, "This is the interpretation of it: The three baskets are three days. Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from you."

Genesis 40:16-19 (NKJV)

Once one knows the interpretation of the first dream, the second is quite easy. It is the same dream except (1) it has to do with baking rather than cup-bearing, and the results were vastly different.

Again the dream would be fulfilled in three days. He does not ask the baker to remember him to Pharaoh - he will lose his head instead!

You may say, "well those were easy enough to interpret!" They are easy after you have seen the interpretation.



Now it came to pass on the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. Then he restored the chief butler to his butlership again, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

Genesis 40:20-23 (NKJV)

The third day was Pharaoh's birthday (which may have made it easier for God to show Joseph the meaning of the three things). Everything went exactly as Joseph had said they would - except - the cup-bearer forgot about Joseph.

How would you feel about that? You do a great thing for the cup-bearer and he totally forgets you. What about when you pray and God grants you your request and you fail to thank Him? Is there much difference? Not difference, indifference!

CHAPTER 41

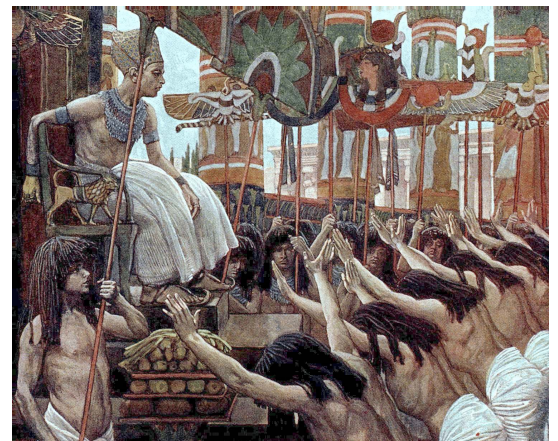
Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river. Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. Then behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ugly and gaunt, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the river. And the ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke. He slept and dreamed a second time; and suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, plump and good. Then behold, seven thin heads, blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. And the seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads. So Pharaoh awoke, and indeed, it was a dream. Now it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh.

Genesis 41:1-8 (NKJV)

At this time, Joseph had been in Egypt for 11 years - part of them in Potiphar's house and part of them in prison. He has two more years to spend in prison. He would be thirty years old before he "saw the light of day."

Pharaoh had a dream. Before we look at the dream, let us look at the man. פַּרְעֹה (Pharaoh) is not a name, it is a title. According to Unger,

The title of Egyptian kings. It is the Heb. form of the Egyptian title "the great house." During the early dynasties the expression was an honorific title for the chief Egyptian ruler, but from the powerful Eighteenth Dynasty when Egypt ruled the East (c. 1550-1320 b.c.), it was in common use as the official title of the kings of Egypt. . . . Joseph became prime minister of one of these powerful rulers, either Amenemes (I-IV) or Senwosret (I-III). (2000-1780 BC)



UNGER, Pharaoh

The dates are not certain. Secular scholars cannot even agree on many of the dates in Egypt so there is no point in further confusing and issue which is of little consequence to us. Pharaoh had two dreams in one night. Have you noticed that the dreams in this book come in pairs? It seems that a second dream is a confirmation of the first.

In the first dream, he was by "the river." The NKJV should have "the River" here (seeing how the translators have attempted to translate the Hebrew very literally. I grew up in Berkeley which is on "the Bay." No one in Northern California speaks about "San Francisco Bay," it is simply "the Bay." Likewise, in Egypt, the "River" was the Nile (as translated in the BASB and NIV and others).

Out of the river came seven fine looking, fat cows. Adam Clark says they were hippopotamuses since they came up out of the water. However, since "hippopotamuses" is Greek for "river horse", it would have appeared in the LXX if this were so. Remember, this is a dream and one must not attempt to assign an over-interpretation to things. The Nile is a symbol of Egypt and so the cows

were “Egyptian cows” and nothing more. Actually, they did not feed “in the meadow” but among the reeds באהו (ba ahu) along the River. Then seven other cows came up which are described as דק (dak) “thin” to see and רע (ra) “ugly.” The last ate up the former and (it is implied) remained “thin and ugly.”

The second dream has the same elements as the first. Seven sets. The first well nourished, the other blighted. All the Pharaoh would have to do is read from Isaiah!

*And the Egyptians I will give
Into the hand of a cruel master,
And a fierce king will rule over them,"
Says the Lord, the Lord of hosts.
The waters will fail from the sea,
And the river will be wasted and dried up.
The rivers will turn foul;
The brooks of defense will be emptied and dried up;
The reeds and rushes will wither.
The papyrus reeds by the River, by the mouth of the River,
And everything sown by the River,
Will wither, be driven away, and be no more.*

Isaiah 19:4-7 (NKJV)

Actually, this speaks of a judgement yet to come.

When he awoke, he called *all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men*. Years later, in Babylon, the Babylonian king would call for “the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans” to tell the king his dreams. (Daniel 2:2). חכם (hakameah) = “wise” or, by implication, “wisemen.” This term does not have negative connotations. For example, we find it in the passage below.

*Choose **wise**, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes, and I will make them heads over you.'*

Deuteronomy 1:13 (NKJV)

חרטום (hartumme), “magician” on the other hand is not neutral. It is found in the reference above in Daniel. The root of the word means “to scribe” or “to write” and hence one who writes down magical formulas. There are those, however, who doubt that derivation. In any case, they most certainly did not look to God to find the interpretation of dreams! Unger, correctly, divides magicians into two groups.

Magic may be divided into two classes—natural or scientific, and supernatural or spiritual—the one attributed its wonders to a deep, practical acquaintance with the powers of nature; the other to celestial or infernal agency.

UNGER, Magic

Today, we might make three classifications: (1) those who do things through an understanding of the “laws of nature.” and might be classified today as scientists, (2) those who deal with spiritualism and are, basically, tools of Satan, and (3) those who are merely showmen, doing tricks.

Most of the magicians we are referring to here are of the second type but there may have been those of the first as well. Regardless of their ilk, they could not interpret the dream. They were, at least, more honest than those in Babylon who insisted on trying to fool the king and were unsuccessful.

They answered again and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation." The king answered and said, "I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation."

Daniel 2:7-9 (NKJV)

Then the chief butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying: "I remember my faults this day. When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, both me and the chief baker, we each had a dream in one night, he and I. Each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his own dream. Now there was a young Hebrew man with us there, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him, and he interpreted our dreams for us; to each man he interpreted according to his own dream. And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him."

Genesis 41:9-13 (NKJV)

Then the chief cup-bearer's "lapse of memory" came back. He "remembered his faults." McGee says they were sins - a fault is a sin! He is correct, however, in that חַטָּא (hata) is the Hebrew word for sin. He not only sinned, but he did not speak proper English! "Both me and the captain. . ." We all know that it should be "The captain . . . and I." I believe the Hebrew grammar is correct but should be translated ". . . Me and the Chief . . . as well," correctly placing the emphasis on himself.

They "dreamed according to the interpretation of his own dream." The NIV has "each dream had a meaning of its own. The Hebrew has a rather strange way of putting it. He then tells Pharaoh the event of telling Joseph (i.e. the Hebrew man) and Joseph's interpreting them, correctly, for them. Perhaps McGee was right that he sinned - he didn't even recall Joseph's name, only that he was a Hebrew.

Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it." So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: "Behold, in my dream I stood on the bank of the river. Suddenly seven cows came up out of the river, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. Then behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt. And the gaunt and ugly cows ate up the first seven, the fat cows. When they had eaten them up, no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were just as ugly as at the beginning. So I awoke. Also I saw in my dream, and suddenly seven heads came up on one stalk, full and good. Then behold, seven heads, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. And the thin heads devoured the seven good heads. So I told this to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me."

Genesis 41:14-24 (NKJV)

As with Daniel, they sent for him right away, but not before he had a chance to shave and change his clothes (I don't think they had showers in those days).

*In Egypt, cosmetics was not a luxury, it was a way of life! **Men** and women followed the latest fashions in both hairstyles and make-up. Cosmetics, more so, was life or death in Egypt - kohl to rim the eyes was (almost) equal to sunglasses today!*

*Everyone, from the poor to **the pharaohs**, had make-up... the difference being the range and quality of the products used. As for hair, rich Egyptians shaved their heads and used wigs to keep up with the latest styles - these wigs were even made of human hair! Perfumed oils were used to rub into the scalp after shampooing (if they had their own hair), and perfumed fat was placed on top of the head (seen in many party scenes), to melt into the hair and give off a pleasing scent.*

Due to the climate, Egyptians had a fixation for cleanliness - so much so that foreigners (thought to be dirty) and those who didn't have access to much personal hygiene were despised. Men and woman shaved and plucked off all of their body hair using tweezers, knives and razors, be them of flint or metal



http://www.egyptvoyager.com/articles_womeninancientegypt_03.htm

Once he was presentable, they took him to Pharaoh. Then Pharaoh said something a bit strange to him. He said, "I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it." From whom did he hear it? It sound as if he had heard it some time ago. The only meaning one can make of this is that he had just heard it from the cup-bearer.

"It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Joseph acknowledged that he can not interpret a dream, only God can. As far as the dream is concerned, various translations give it different slants. The NASB says God will give Pharaoh "a favorable answer" (i.e. a good one) whereas the NIV has "the answer he desires" (i.e. simply the interpretation being sought). The Hebrew says, literally, "God will give peace to Pharaoh." (i.e. Pharaoh will know the meaning and can stop worrying about the dream.)

Pharaoh reveals the dream to Joseph. The text is almost verbatim from what we have already seen except that Pharaoh adds two of his interpretations to the part about the cows. (1) "*such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt.*" (2) "*When they had eaten them up, no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were just as ugly as at the beginning*" I presume he realized the second dream paralleled the first and did not enlarge upon it. These two comments would appear to be what was at the base of Pharaoh's worries.

Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do: The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads are seven years; the dreams are one. And the seven thin and ugly cows which came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty heads blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine. This is the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do. Indeed seven

years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land. So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it will be very severe. And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming, and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. Then that food shall be as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land may not perish during the famine."

Genesis 41:25-36 (NKJV)

There seems to be a difference in Joseph's interpretations of dreams and Daniel's Daniel seems to take some time to wait for God to reveal the interpretation to him. Joseph seems to answer right away. I would assume the difference is only in the writing that makes us feel that Joseph answered immediately - he probably did not.

He begins by noting what we have already observed - the two dreams are simply different manifestations of the same message. Specifically, God had shown Pharaoh what **He** was about to do. An interesting note here is that, technically, the Hebrew has "the God." This construction is used in only a few of the 292 references to HaElohim (the God) in the Old Testament. "Elohim" without the article appears about 2600 times. "The God" appears about 200 times in the Old Testament but only 292 have "haElohim" (the God). Two of those appearances are used in the first verse below and this is also the only verse (in the NKJV) where one of them (haElohim) is translated "the God." In the Psalm it is not God at all but "the gods." Aren't languages strange?

*Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and **the God** who answers by fire, He is **God.**" So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken."*

1 Kings 18:24 (NKJV)

*Oh, give thanks to the God of **gods!** For His mercy endures forever.*

Psalm 136:2 (NKJV)

It appears that the construct is used when addressing "polytheists" in indicating that He is not some other god, He is "The God.(i.e. the one and only God)." The last part of the above verse could just as well have been translated, "He is The God!" It is sort of like our use of upper case for words dealing with God (Lord, He, Him, etc.).

Joseph will tell Pharaoh what "the God" is about to do - not just any old god, mind you, but the one true God of the universe! The number seven is significant in the dream but, seven days, months, years, or what? With the baker and the cup-bearer, it was three days. God reveals, through Joseph, that the seven is a reference to years. There is no special significance to the number seven beyond that it is generally the number of completion. It probably is to be taken as a long enough period to prove the accuracy of the interpretation. After seven years of that, the people would have forgotten what it was like to have plenty.

A word must be said about the dream, the cows coming up out of the Nile (not hippos as noted above). The connection is that famine in Egypt is not due to lack of rain as it seldom rains in Egypt. Instead, the water for crops, livestock, and people comes from the Nile which annually overflows its

banks and thus provides the irrigation necessary for the raising of livestock (cows) and grain (heads). It probably replenished the water table as well so that there is water in the wells.

For seven years, God would cause the Nile to overflow its banks abundantly and cause the crops to flourish and, from them, the livestock. Then the “east winds,” produced by God, would lower the water in the Nile and it would fail to overflow its banks and produce famine in the land - a severe famine. Note only that, the East wind would cause drought in other areas of the part of the world, as we shall note later.

As we have noted previously and, especially the two dreams that Joseph had, “*the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God.*”

. . . *It is also written in your law that the testimony of **two** men is true.*

John 8:17 (NKJV)

*Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of **two** or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness.*

Deuteronomy 17:6 (NKJV)

*“One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of **two** or three witnesses the matter shall be established.*

Deuteronomy 19:15 (NKJV)

Two men, two dreams, it is all the same, it is a confirmation. It also is an indication (here) that “*God will shortly bring it to pass. Now therefore . . .*” Joseph completes the interpretation. “Now therefore” is an indication the he is going from interpretation to advocacy.

. . . the divinely enlightened seer’s glance was clearly manifested, and could not fail to make an impression upon the king, when contrasted with the perplexity of the Egyptian augurs and wise men. Joseph followed up his interpretation by the advice (vv. 33-36), that Pharaoh should “look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt;”

K&D, Genesis 41:37-41

בִּין (bon) comes from a root “to make separate.” From this it acquired the meaning “to be able to separate one choice from another and be able to select one” or, simply “to discern.” חָכָם (hakam) means “wise” in the same sense we take it. Basically, the kind of man you would like to have as a leader!

Then he says, *Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years. . . .* “Let Pharaoh do this” might easily be translated as “in addition to doing this, do the following. . .” He was to set up פְּקֻדִים (pekedim) “Overseers”

There role would be to “*collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years.*” Now, I have to admit the arithmetic here confuses me. One-fifth for seven years would be 1 and 2-fifths. For seven years they would live on four-fifths of their normal diet but, then, spreading seven-fifths over the next seven years would give them only one-fifth the normal supply. That seems like it would be very meager! On the other hand, if this happened in the U.S. it would probably be

beneficial for most of us!

He concludes with *“that the land may not perish during the famine.”* He does not say they we will all have plenty to eat, only that they will not starve to death.

So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?” Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.” And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, “Bow the knee!” So he set him over all the land of Egypt.

Genesis 41:37-43 (NKJV)

Pharaoh was impressed, to say the least. He said, *“a man in whom is the Spirit of God.”* רוח אלהים (Ruh Elohim) is the exact same construction we saw in Genesis 1:2 with the Spirit of God hovering on the waters. It would be folly to assume that Pharaoh knew anything about the Holy Spirit. It would even be strange that even Joseph knew about the Holy Spirit in the sense we do today.

Do (or did) the Jews (sons of Abraham) believe in a Triune God? Certainly, the Son had not yet come and they could only look forward to the coming of their Messiah. But, even though the “Spirit of God” is mentioned a number of times in the Old Testament, the “Holy Spirit” was not recognized as a third part of the Trinity until New Testament times and the term “Holy Spirit” appears only twice in the Old Testament (NKJV). As Unger stated, “The experiences of OT saints and all pre-Pentecost believers came short of these tremendous blessings that are the heritage of every genuine believer in this age.”



Now, on the other hand,

God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

John 4:24 (NKJV)

So it was natural for the Jews to speak of the spirit of God (note the lower case S!). Since the Day of Pentacost, all true believers have received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Such was not the case in the Old testament. Here is a list of the ones who did (mostly some of the Judges): BALAAM - Numbers 24:2, OTNEIL - Judges 3:10, GIDEON - Judges 6:24, JEPHTHAH - Judges 11:29, and SAMSON, Judges 14:19. The Spirit did not remain with these men, it remained with them as long as they had a task to perform and then it left. This is nowhere more evident than with Saul and David.

But the Spirit of the Lord **departed from** Saul, and a distressing spirit from the Lord troubled him.
1 Samuel 16:14 (NKJV)

Now Saul was afraid of David, because **the Lord was with him, but had departed from Saul.**
1 Samuel 18:12 (NKJV)

Note the following!

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from Your presence,
And **do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.***
(A Psalm of David) Psalm 51:10-11 (NKJV)

Perhaps you, like me, never thought about the magnitude of Pharaoh's statement. Here is an Egyptian king (Pharaoh) who had plenty of Egyptian gods (they had a lot of them) and his statement reflects the observance that "the God" has His spirit in Abraham! I suspect we generally think of these ancient people as being rather uneducated and without a lot of intelligence but it simply is not true. Pharaoh was very intelligent.

Another thing you ought to reflect on is the fact that the very powerful Pharaoh put his complete trust on a man who have been brought from prison to see him and who worshiped a God not familiar to him. No Egyptian CIA background investigation, no check of his military records, no letters of commendation - just a 30 year old man about whom he knew nothing - except he was the only one in the whole realm of Egypt who could interpret his dreams. God certainly was with Joseph.



I could observe this as a case of "from rags to riches" but it would be more fitting to say "from a coat 'of many colors' to fine Egyptian Royal apparel. It is fortunate that some photographer was able to preserve the picture to the right of Joseph in such an array. Actually, you know it is only an artist's rendition and one, I believe, that makes Joseph look very effeminate which I am sure he was not!

Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. It was Jacob's signet ring that got him into trouble. It was Pharaoh's signet ring that made Joseph the figure of authority which he assumed. I wonder if the Pharaoh had more than one such ring and, if not, what Pharaoh then would do.

Later, after the Babylonian captivity, another king, the Persian king Ahasuerus, would give his signet ring to another.

So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.

This was a mistake of which the book of Esther deals, so that, in the end,

So the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai; and Esther appointed Mordecai over the house of Haman.

Esther 8:2 (NKJV)

Incidentally, you can still get them, if you are willing to pay \$195. (See right). To answer a previous question, I assume that Pharaoh had more than one such ring. Not only did Joseph receive the ring, but always was to ride in the Pharaoh's second "limo," i.e. The Egyptian equivalent.



Pharaoh also said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paaneah. And he gave him as a wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On. So Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt. Genesis 41:44-45 (NKJV)

Joseph got even more than the ring and chariot. He also received a new name and a wife in the deal. The wife's name was Asenath, the Egyptian form of Minerva. We will see more of her as we go on. As to the name פֶּעִנַת פֶּעִנָּה (Zaphnath-Paaneah) = "the god speaks and he lives," According to K&D the Greeks interpreted the name to mean "savior of the world." (I doubt that this is correct!). I would assume the meaning of the name given by BDB (above) is correct. I believe the name was based on his observance that the Spirit of God lives within and guides Joseph. JFB lists a set of other possibilities, "variously interpreted, "revealer of secrets"; "saviour of the land"; and from the hieroglyphics, "a wise man fleeing from pollution"—that is, adultery."²

Regardless of the name (which is never used again), Joseph assumed his responsibilities and went all over Egypt, doing his job. I assume he did it well!

Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. Now in the seven plentiful years the ground brought forth abundantly. So he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities; he laid up in every city the food of the fields which surrounded them. Joseph gathered very much grain, as the sand of the sea, until he stopped counting, for it was immeasurable.

Genesis 41:46-49 (NKJV)

Here we have to notice that Joseph was 30 at the time. To say that the first seven years were plentiful appears to be an understatement, for the grain he collected was "as the sand of the sea." and, as such, Joseph had to stop counting. Mathematics was not so well developed in Joseph's time. This is why you will sometimes see things like

And they blessed Rebekah and said to her: "Our sister, may you become The mother of thousands

²JFB, Genesis 41:45

of ten thousands; And may your descendants possess The gates of those who hate them."
Genesis 24:60 (NKJV)

Why not simply say "The mother of "ten millions?" Because they didn't have a word for million (or billion, trillion, etc.). So, when the grain piled up to the point where it was impossible to record the numbers," he stopped counting, for it was immeasurable. "

And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." And the name of the second he called Ephraim: "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."
Genesis 41:50-52 (NKJV)

During the first seven years, Joseph had two sons (he wasn't so busy with the affairs of Egypt that he didn't take time for his personal life. It is wrong to not obey God with regards to the things He asks us to do, but we also must not neglect our own personal needs. Paul and the author of Hebrews makes it known that we have to take care of ourselves.

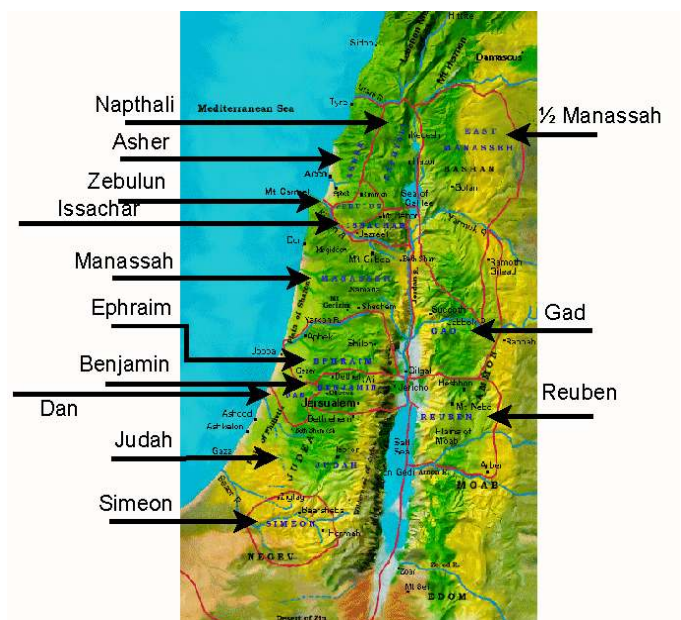
Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run **with endurance** the race that is set before us,

Hebrews 12:1 (NKJV)

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. **But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.**

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (NKJV)

So, anyway, he had two sons, Ephraim and Manassah. Before commenting on the meaning of their names, let me point out something that is often a point of confusion. How many "tribes" were there in Israel. On a map of Israel (right), how many different tribes can you locate. You will not find the land of the Levites because, as priests, they had no land (other than in the cities). That leaves eleven. But you will not find land allocated to Joseph either - down to ten. But there is land given to both Ephraim and Manassah so we are back to twelve. Finally, as shown on the map and described below, Manassah was divided.



The two tribes and the half-tribe have received their inheritance on this side of the Jordan, across from Jericho eastward,

The point of all this is to show that Joseph received a double blessing, divided between Ephraim and Manasseh.

אפרים (Ephraim) means "fruitful." The text itself tells us that, *For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.* מנטה (Manassah) means "'cause to forget." We are told this in the text, *"For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house."* So, now when we read about either of these two in the Scriptures, we shall know where they came from.

Before proceeding, I would like to point out a comparison.

Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry." "

Luke 12:16-19 (NKJV)

In this parable, we have a man who appears to do the same thing as Joseph did in Egypt. The Lord condemns this man for it. What, then, is the difference?

- First, God (apparently) told Joseph to do this.
- Next, the man in the parable was guilty of covertness - Joseph was not
- Last, he was storing up treasure for himself - Joseph was doing it for others.

Then the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Egypt ended, and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. The famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, do." The famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians. And the famine became severe in the land of Egypt. So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all lands.

Genesis 41:53-57 (NKJV)

We now come to the seven bad years. Joseph's interpretation was correct (you knew it would be). Note, however, that it was not just Egypt that was affected. *The famine was in all lands.* K&D note the following:

Years of famine have frequently fallen, like this one, upon Egypt, and the neighboring countries to the north. The cause of this is to be seen in the fact, that the overflowing of the Nile, to which Egypt is indebted for its fertility, is produced by torrents of rain falling in the alpine regions of Abyssinia, which proceed from clouds formed in the Mediterranean and carried thither by the wind; consequently it has a common origin with the rains of Palestine

K&D, Genesis 41:53-57

It was absolutely necessary that there be famine in "all lands," especially in Palestine. The reason

why this had to be will become obvious later (you probably already know the reason). As predicted, the people of Egypt became “famished.” Incidentally, it was not until I was studying this that it occurred to me that the term “famished” is derived from “famine.” רעב (raab) has a base meaning of “to hunger” and the cause of (widespread) hunger is drought - hence the connection of the words.

I need to stop here and question the phrases, “*The famine was in all lands,*” and *The famine was over all the face of the earth.*”

*For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy **from the face of the earth** all living things that I have made.*”

Genesis 7:4 (NKJV)

It stands to reason that somewhere on this planet there was food - just not in the part of the world we are concerned with. But, comparing these passages, one would conclude that The Flood was also “local” in nature and not global. How do we interpret this? By checking the Hebrew very carefully! The Hebrew construction found in the above verse is found here, in 8:8, and 8:13. The construction found here is only here and in Exodus 8:20 and Jeremiah 51:52. So, we are talking “apples and oranges.” You can not claim that The Flood was “local” on the basis of the Hebrew texts.

The Hebrew term, לחם (lahem) has several meanings: That which contains some sort of grain and is baked in an oven (i.e. “Bread”). It may also refer to food in general. Since the Egyptians in those days had no deep freezers, they could not store up any meat, only grain. For this reason I believe the word is to be taken in its more literal sense. Remember the following verse?

*So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, **Bethlehem**).*

Genesis 35:19 (NKJV)

Back home in the “House of Bread” (Beth+lahem) there was now no bread!

The first thing Joseph did (as requested by Pharaoh) was *he opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians.*

The people will curse him who withholds grain, But blessing will be on the head of him who sells it.

Proverbs 11:26 (NKJV)

I wonder what was done with the money! (The Scottish blood in me is sowing). In time, people from other countries came to buy grain. This was an essential part of God’s plan. In what way this was essential we shall find in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 42

When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?" And he said, "Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die." So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, "Lest some calamity befall him." And the sons of Israel went to buy grain among those who journeyed, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

Genesis 42:1-5 (NKJV)

News gets around fast, even without technology! The news reached Jacob that there was grain to be obtained in Egypt. Consider the following -

Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land.

Genesis 12:10 (NKJV)

There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar. Then the Lord appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you.

Genesis 26:1-2 (NKJV)

Abraham had gone to Egypt for food. Isaac would have but the Lord redirected him. Now it is Jacob's turn. Many years later, Jesus would be taken there. Jacob did the only sensible thing, send his sons to Egypt to buy some grain (Jacob being too old to make the trip unless it was necessary (But note later on).

Ten brothers went - Joseph was already there and Jacob wanted Benjamin to remain with him. God had a plan in all of this. They went "among those who journeyed" - There were many others who needed the grain as well.

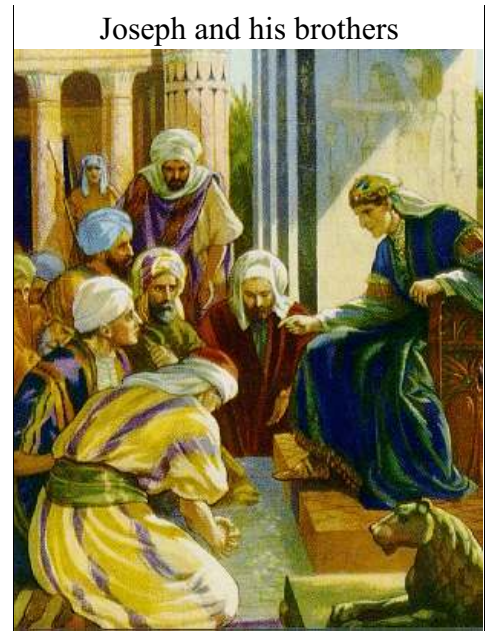
Now Joseph was governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with their faces to the earth. Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly to them. Then he said to them, "Where do you come from?" And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food." So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them, and said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land!" And they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. We are all one man's sons; we are honest men; your servants are not spies." But he said to them, "No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land." And they said, "Your servants are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest is with our father today, and one is no more." But Joseph said to them, "It is as I spoke to you, saying, 'You are spies!' In this manner you shall be tested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether there is any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies!" So he put them all together in prison three days.

Genesis 42:6-17 (NKJV)

It is not necessary to think that Joseph did this all by himself. He must have had aids in the distribution of grain. Dr. McGee felt that Joseph probably positioned himself in one of the granaries closest to the entrance of Egypt from Canaan because he anticipated some members of his family coming for grain. He may have been right.

When his brothers arrived they bowed down with their faces to the earth. They took a position of deep respect for this man who might sell them some grain.

Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly to them. The question usually asked is, "If he recognized them, why did they not recognize him?" If you have been viewing TV lately, you may know that there are a number of programs dealing with "complete make overs," applying to homes, to people, etc. Well, Joseph had a complete make over. No beard, not cloak of many colors but the finest of Egyptian clothing. Add to this the fact that they would certainly not expect this powerful man to be



Joseph - this would be beyond comprehension.

Note what he did!

- *spoke roughly to them*
- asked, "Where do you come from?"
- said to them, "*You are spies!*"

Generally speaking, one would not expect him to do any of these things. He knew where they came from. He knew they were not spies. There was no need to speak roughly - except to keep them from recognizing him. *So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.*

Remember Joseph's dreams? The first dealt with his brothers bowing down to him. That they are now doing. The other dream included his father (and Benjamin). This has not yet happened.

"You are spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land!" ערוה (herwat), "nakedness" is the same word as we found in Genesis 9 - the nakedness of Noah. Here, they are accused of "looking under" the surface of things in Egypt to find its weak spots. His brothers plead with him to accept their word, that they are there to buy food. They were unable to "convince" Joseph who they really were (of course, he knew). So he proposes, "*In this manner you shall be tested.*" בחרן (bahen) "to test" is found often in the Psalms.

Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; Try my mind and my heart.

Psalm 26:2 (NKJV)

For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined.

Psalm 66:10 (NKJV)

Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties;

Psalm 139:23 (NKJV)

The word, unlike “tempt,” is neutral. Its intended outcome is not anticipated - one may pass, one may not pass.

By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. It would seem strange that Joseph would swear “by the life of Pharaoh.”

And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the Lord.

Leviticus 19:12 (NKJV)

But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.
Matthew 5:37 (NKJV)

We are not supposed to swear at all. Perhaps Joseph had not read Matthew 5:37! Seriously, I assume that he swears in the name of Pharaoh in order to keep them from recognizing him. If he had said, “By the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” he would surely have given himself away.

It is becoming clear now that Joseph’s intentions are: (1) to see his brother Benjamin (the only one that is a full brother rather than a half brother) and (2) to see how much remorse his brothers have over what they did to him.

The details of this test are a bit confused in this text. He says to send one brother back to get Benjamin and yet he says “you shall be kept in prison.” He then throws them all into prison - for three days. He gives them time to consider their situation.

Then Joseph said to them the third day, "Do this and live, for I fear God: If you are honest men, let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house; but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses. And bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die." And they did so. Then they said to one another, "We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us." And Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not speak to you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us." But they did not know that Joseph understood them, for he spoke to them through an interpreter. And he turned himself away from them and wept. Then he returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.

Genesis 42:18-24 (NKJV)

By the third day, Joseph had relented some. He would let them all go back except one. Not only that but he would send them home with the grain they sought. The order still stood, however, that they bring Benjamin back with them as proof they were not spies (and so Joseph could be reunited with his full brother).

One of Joseph’s aims was fulfilled there that day as they spoke to one another concerning the fact they were wrong in what they had done to Joseph. They perceived that God was now punishing them for what they had done. They had sold Joseph to the slave traders some twenty years earlier so it is a bit of a mystery how they connected these two acts. One would suppose that this is the first time

they found themselves in a grave situation since their evil act, and so this is the connection. Reuben squirms out of the situation by saying "I told you so!" Which is true but he is still guilty in that he went along with the plan, thinking to carry out his own plan, but failing.

They could speak to one another freely because this "hard nosed" Egyptian did not understand their language (or, so they thought). They thought this because Joseph had been speaking to them "through an interpreter." By this time, Joseph must have spoken (and understood) the language of the Egyptians well. He also remembered the language of his family. We can not really say what these languages were nor would it do you much good to know. The point is he could "eavesdrop" on their conversation.

This was too much for Joseph and he had to turn away from them to his the tears in his eyes. "Wept" here is the common Hebrew word for "weep" (as in Gn 42:24 43:30 Ex 2:6 Nu 11:4; 11:10 14:1 1 S 1:7; 1:8; 1:10 11:5 30:4 2 S 1:12 3:16 13:36 15:30 19:1; 19:2 2 K 8:11; 8:12 Is 30:19 Je 41:6 50:4 Ez 24:16; 24:23 La 1:2 Zc 7:3 Jo 1:5 2:17 Psalm 78:64 126:6). Their repentance had reached his heart and so he would be able to forgive them for what they had done to him. Nevertheless, he still wanted to see Benjamin. He took Simeon as a hostage and bound him. Reuben was the oldest and likeliest one to keep, but he had heard Reuben's words that he did not want to go along with their plans, so Simeon was next.

Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man's money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. Thus he did for them. So they loaded their donkeys with the grain and departed from there. But as one of them opened his sack to give his donkey feed at the encampment, he saw his money; and there it was, in the mouth of his sack. So he said to his brothers, "My money has been restored, and there it is, in my sack!" Then their hearts failed them and they were afraid, saying to one another, "What is this that God has done to us?"

Genesis 42:25-28 (NKJV)

With Simeon in captivity, he gave the rest the grain they had come for along with provisions for the trip. In addition, however, he had their money put back in their sacks! What an effect it had on them. McGee says,

They feel that this is the judgment of God upon them. Ordinarily it would have been good news and a wonderful thing to have your money returned to you! Let me ask you this: Wouldn't you like to go down to your favorite supermarket to do your weekend grocery shopping, load up several of those great big carts and buy for your whole family; then wouldn't you like to open up your grocery sack at home and find that they had given you back all of the money you had paid for the groceries? Do you think that would be bad news to you? Especially, would it worry you if you learned that the grocer was giving this to you as a gift from him? Don't we all agree that under ordinary circumstances that would be good news? We would actually take it as an encouragement—

J. Vernon McGee's Thru The Bible, Genesis 42:26-28

Somehow, I do not seem to agree with McGee. If I opened my grocery sacks and found my money in them, I would think a mistake had been made and call the store (if not return to the store) to get the matter straightened out. I also think I would worry, once I found out it was a gift from the grocer, why? To just take the money and be happy with it would be dishonoring to God (in my mind) unless there was a reason for it.

They said to one another, "What has this governor done to us!" assuming he was responsible for this . . .? No they did not! They figured it had to be from God. They said, "What has God don't **to** (↳) us?" It was not "What has God done **for** us." Whatever the reason for their money being in their sacks, it could not be good, not after the treatment they had received in Egypt.

Then they went to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan and told him all that had happened to them, saying: "The man who is lord of the land spoke roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. But we said to him, 'We are honest men; we are not spies. We are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no more, and the youngest is with our father this day in the land of Canaan.' Then the man, the lord of the country, said to us, 'By this I will know that you are honest men: Leave one of your brothers here with me, take food for the famine of your households, and be gone. And bring your youngest brother to me; so I shall know that you are not spies, but that you are honest men. I will grant your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.' "

Genesis 42:29-34 (NKJV)

Then they went to their father . . . It seems to me if they felt some mistake was made with the money, they would have returned to Egypt to settle the matter. They did not. They continued on to Canaan. They told Jacob all they had said to Joseph down in Egypt. How there were twelve of them but one was no more (they thought) and one was at home with their father. Then they gave him the good news and the bad news. The good news was he sent them home with the grain they needed that they they would be allowed to trade in Egypt. The bad news was Joseph ("the man who is lord of the country") was holding Simeon hostage and demanded they bring Benjamin down to him.

Then it happened as they emptied their sacks, that surprisingly each man's bundle of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me: Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me." Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, "Kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you; put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you." But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave."

Genesis 42:35-38 (NKJV)

Apparently, they had found only the one sack of money before because, in Jacob's presence, they opened all of the sacks and each had their money in their sack. One more piece of bad news for Jacob. This was too much for him. The man had lost Joseph. Now he has lost Simeon as he sees no way to get him back unless he sends Benjamin and, if he does that, he will probably lose Benjamin too. A strict translation of his comments is more poignant. "You are making me childless!" One by one he was losing his sons - where would it end?

Reuben made a sincere but somewhat hollow gesture, to take his two sons if he did not bring Benjamin back. That would be little consolation, but what else could he do? It was not enough! Jacob would lose both sons of his beloved wife Rachel and there would be no consolation for that! What to do? Well, this lesson is like a soap opera - you have to wait until the next chapter to find out!

Now the famine was severe in the land. And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, "Go back, buy us a little food." But Judah spoke to him, saying, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.' " "If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. But if you will not send him, we will not go down; for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.' " And Israel said, "Why did you deal so wrongfully with me as to tell the man whether you had still another brother?" But they said, "The man asked us pointedly about ourselves and our family, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?' And we told him according to these words. Could we possibly have known that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?"

Genesis 43:1-7 (NKJV)

We ended the last chapter wondering what was going to happen. We will have to wonder for a while because nothing happened. They left the situation as it was and proceeded to live of the grain they had obtained. But, eventually that ran out and something had to be done. This time, Jacob said to go back to Egypt and buy "a little food." מַעַט (mahat) = "little." Why only a little? None of the commentaries seem to note any reason. The most likely is they had only enough money to buy a little. It could be that they believed the famine was nearly over and so there was no use spending all their money on food. McGee seems to think if the famine had lifted, Simeon would have been left in Egypt "to rot."

As we proceed through this chapter there is something you need to note. In the last chapter, three times, we had, "Jacob said . . ." (Genesis 42:1; Genesis 42:29; Genesis 42:36). In this chapter there is no "Jacob said . . ."; it is "Israel said . . ." (Genesis 43:6; Genesis 43:11). Why? In Chapter 42 it is the strong man Jacob talking. In this chapter it is the man in the hands of the Lord, Israel, talking. There was a change in attitude, a change in humility on his part!

Judah has to remind Israel that they can not return unless they have Benjamin with them. What a mess! "Why did you tell that fellow you even had a brother!" This was a natural question but Judah explains how "the man" gave them the "third degree." They appeared to be in big trouble in Egypt and they did not want to make matters any worse by lying to "the man." Judah ends by saying "How were we to know he would do this?"

Then Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones. I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. For if we had not lingered, surely by now we would have returned this second time." And their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man--a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. Take double money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!"

Genesis 43:8-14 (NKJV)

Then Judah tells Israel “how it is.” Either they go down to Egypt with Benjamin or they will all die from hunger, including Benjamin. So, there really is no choice! This time, Judah acts as “surety” himself instead of Reuben’s offer of his sons. Then he makes a statement that borders on a scolding of Israel. He points out that, had they returned to Egypt as they were supposed to, the matter would be all settled now and they would not be in this mess.

Israel answers, “*If it must be so . . .*” Notice the italics! These words are not in the Hebrew text. The text simply says, “If so . . .” which does not make for good English, hence the added words. Israel takes no chances as he makes up the “shopping list.”

- *the best fruits of the land*
- *a little balm*
- *a little honey*
- *spices and myrrh*
- *pistachio nuts and almonds*

this makes up a rather impressive present. Surely this will please “the man.” In addition, he gives them instructions to offer to pay double the cost of the grain. This would surely please him. Then, finally, there are the instructions to take back the money that was in their sacks because *perhaps it was an oversight*.

“Take Benjamin and go!!” Then he offers up a prayer of sorts. “*And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man.*” Is this a prayer? God is all hearing and even if we do not specifically address Him, if we indicate that they are trusting Him to bless the plan, it is still a prayer. There is formal prayer and informal. Paul admonishes us,

pray without ceasing,

1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NKJV)

We cannot be on our knees 24 hours a day but we can pray in our attitude toward God as does Israel here. Note that he uses the name “*God Almighty.*” Why?

Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body.

Genesis 35:11 (NKJV)

It is the name God uses for Himself when he changed Jacob to Israel. It is the name God used when he made this broad promise to Israel. So it was only natural that Israel should use this name in his prayer. His prayer is that “the man” would release the “other brother” and Benjamin. It is as if he considered Benjamin already a prisoner in Egypt.

The section closes with Israel saying “If I am bereaved, I am bereaved.” In other words, whatever the result, I am ready to accept it. The same sort of sentiment with respect to God’s will is found below.

*If we say, 'We will enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. ***If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die.****

*"Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; **and if I perish, I perish!**"*

Esther 4:16 (NKJV)

So the men took that present and Benjamin, and they took double money in their hand, and arose and went down to Egypt; and they stood before Joseph. When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Take these men to my home, and slaughter an animal and make ready; for these men will dine with me at noon." Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph's house. Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, "It is because of the money, which was returned in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may make a case against us and fall upon us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys." When they drew near to the steward of Joseph's house, they talked with him at the door of the house, and said, "O sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food; but it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there, each man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand. And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks." But he said, "Peace be with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them. So the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed. Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there.

Genesis 43:15-25 (NKJV)

So they took "that" present (i.e. the one which Israel had detailed), Benjamin, and double the money. The text omits any mention of their taking the money they found in their sacks, but they must have as we will see later. They went to Egypt and presented themselves to Joseph (the "man") and Joseph, at last, saw his brother Benjamin. With that desire fulfilled, he made preparation for a great "luncheon" ("at noon"). It is strange what a guilty conscience will do to one. Instead of being happy about being invited to Joseph's home, they figured that the purpose was to judge them for the money they supposedly took.

Finally, they get a hold of the steward and confess what had happened and, apparently, held up the money for him to take it back. I would think that the bit of business would have been taken care of before this. Why was it not until they were taken into the house that they worried about it? In any case the result is interesting. The NKJV says "Peace be with you," a literal rendering of the Hebrew. Other translations paraphrase it "be at ease" or "don't be afraid," but I think the literal translation is more in keeping with the account. Why should they be at peace? Because, as the steward said, *Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks*. What would this Egyptian steward know of their God? Their father's God (this just being an emphasis, it is not referring to another God)? We already had the answer in a previous lesson. Joseph was a faithful witness to his God while in Egypt. Potiphar knew of Him, Pharaoh knew of Him, the Jailor knew of Him, and now, as we see, Joseph's servants were well aware of Joseph's God and how He was not only Joseph's God but the God of his fathers.

The mention of Elohim (God) help quell their fears. The presentation of Simeon to them helped even more. While waiting for Joseph, they did two things:

- *they washed their feet*

- *they made the present ready for Joseph's coming*

Now, today we would say, "they washed their hands and then prepared the present." An interesting point. Note the following!

Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders.

Mark 7:2-3 (NKJV)

Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!"

John 13:9 (NKJV)

The washing of feet was of the utmost importance - hands came second and, apparently, some of Jesus' disciples did not wash them at all!

Back to the account, we shall assume their hands were clean as they laid out all of the "goodies" they had brought down to Joseph.

And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth. Then he asked them about their well-being, and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" And they answered, "Your servant our father is in good health; he is still alive." And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves. Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son." Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought somewhere to weep. And he went into his chamber and wept there. Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, "Serve the bread." So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians. And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another. Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

Genesis 43:26-34 (NKJV)

It is a small matter, I presume, but it bothers me a bit where the present was. In the last section, they came into the house and prepared the present. Now, with Joseph home, it says they brought it into the house. Judging from the Hebrew, I believe it may be translated, "they brought him the present in their hands which was in the house." But, we shall go on.

As on the previous occasion, they bowed down to the earth to him. Is it wrong for "Christians" (i.e. God's people) to bow down to anyone but God? The Bible is clear that we are to worship no one but God. The Bible does not say, however, that you are to be rude and not give the customary greeting to someone. Then Joseph asks the welfare of their father, adding "the old man." He is not being insulting, here is merely repeating their own words. With this they bow even lower.

Then he spots Joseph which is clarified with (his mother's son, i.e. his full brother). He asks is this is the younger son but, according to the text, does not wait for an answer. Instead he asks for God's grace to be upon him. All of this was too much for Joseph so he (apparently) excused himself and went to his private quarters where he could have a good cry in private. At this point, one has to

wonder why Joseph was making it so hard on himself and the others by not revealing who he was.

The NKJV may be a bit misleading when it records him as saying, "Serve the bread" (which is what he did say). The meaning of the words is they should serve the meal of which bread was a major part. As the meal progresses, Joseph's brothers should have "smelled a rat." Something was quite amiss. In fact, two things were out of the ordinary.

First, there were three tables. One for Joseph's brothers, a second for the Egyptians of the household (they don't eat with Hebrews) and a third for Joseph. Why? They must have thought, because he was the head of the house, he ate alone. The fact was, he could not eat with the Egyptians either! However, K&D say,

"For this was an abomination to the Egyptians." The Hebrews and others, for example, slaughtered and ate animals, even female animals, which were regarded by the Egyptians as sacred; so that, according to Herod. ii. 41, no Egyptian would use the knife, or fork, or saucepan of a Greek, nor would any eat of the flesh of a clean animal which had been cut up with a Grecian knife

K&D, Genesis 43:32-33

More than this, the brothers were arranged at the table "according to their birthright." This astonished the brothers but did not get them to figuring out how that could be. What would you have done?

Then he took servings to them from before him. This verse is curious in the many different translations of it.

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.

Genesis 43:34 (KJV)

He took portions to them from his own table, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. So they feasted and drank freely with him.

Genesis 43:34 (NASB-U)

Joseph had portions of food brought to them from his table, but Benjamin's portion was five times more than any of the others. So they ate and drank with Joseph until they were drunk.

Genesis 43:34 (GW)

With respect to the KJV, I didn't know that "mess" was used anywhere outside of the military (unless the food really was a "mess.") The NASB paraphrases slightly to account for the Hebrew idiom and says that the food came from Joseph's "own table." This would have seemed rather strange to me if I were one of the brothers. With respect to the GW translation (not recommended), I will let K&D discuss it.

*By this partiality Joseph intended, with a view to his further plans, to draw out his brethren to show their real feelings towards Benjamin, that he might see whether they would envy and hate him on account of this distinction, as they had formerly envied him his long coat with sleeves, and hated him because he was his father's favourite (Gen 37:3-4). This honourable treatment and entertainment banished all their anxiety and fear. "They drank, and drank largely with him," i.e., they were perfectly satisfied with what they ate and drank; **not, they were intoxicated***

K&D, Genesis 43:32-33

So the meal ended as does this chapter. What happened next is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 44

And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack. Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money." So he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. When they had gone out of the city, and were not yet far off, Joseph said to his steward, "Get up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid evil for good? Is not this the one from which my lord drinks, and with which he indeed practices divination? You have done evil in so doing.' "

Genesis 44:1-5 (NKJV)

It sounds like we are going to have a repeat performance of the last trip home. The brothers got the food they came to buy, but, as before, their money was returned to their sacks. There is a great difference, however. This time, Benjamin is with them and Joseph had his silver cup put into Benjamin's sack as well. Imagine what that will do to them! The steward did exactly as he was told to do. How good to have a steward you can give a specific job to do and have confidence that it will be done.

*As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, **as good stewards** of the manifold grace of God.*

1 Peter 4:10 (NKJV)

Are you such a steward? God expects it of us just as Joseph expected it of his steward.

The next morning the brothers were sent home, they are their "donkeys" (a much nicer word than in the KJV). Joseph gave them a little head start and then sent his steward after them and, when he met up with them, accuse them of taking the silver cup that Joseph (supposedly) used for divination.

The technical word for this is "hydromancy" which, if you are not familiar with it, is another term for "magnetohydrodynamics." If you still do not know what it means it makes no difference - Joseph did not use it for that purpose. How can we know. Well, when he did his greatest revelation of the future (to Pharaoh) he sure did not have a silver cup - probably only a tin cup from the prison. Why say so then? If it was an ordinary silver cup it would be not much different than having the money in their sacks. However, if it had spiritual powers, then it was truly an alarming thing to find - if they found it.

So he overtook them, and he spoke to them these same words. And they said to him, "Why does my lord say these words? Far be it from us that your servants should do such a thing. Look, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves." And he said, "Now also let it be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and you shall be blameless." Then each man speedily let down his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. So he searched. He began with the oldest and left off with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.

Genesis 44:6-13 (NKJV)

The brothers received the steward with astonishment. They had been honest men and returned the money from the last trip. They had been honest in telling about their family. They had been invited to eat in Joseph's house. Who would possibly do such a thing after all that? Surely, no Christ would (or should) and they did not (knowingly) do it. Why should the steward believe them? They promised that, if the cup was found on them, the one who had it would be put to death and the rest of them would become slaves. One would not make such an offer if there was any question about his or her innocence.

One has to ask at this point, "Was that a wise thing to say?" They were, unwittingly, condemning to death the brother they had promised so sincerely to protect! Solomon had words about this.

*The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious,
But the lips of a fool shall swallow him up;
The words of his mouth begin with foolishness,
And the end of his talk is raving madness.
A fool also multiplies words.*

No man knows what is to be;

Who can tell him what will be after him?

Ecclesiastes 10:12-14 (NKJV)

The steward had a different plan, probably it was Joseph's plan and the steward was carrying it out. "Now also let it be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and you shall be blameless." The condemnation was much less harsh. Benjamin would be Joseph's slave and the rest would be free to go.

So the search began, starting with the oldest. I can imagine the tenseness of the situation. They had already experience finding their money in their sacks on the last trip. What might this steward find this time? "Whew - it wasn't in Reuben's sack, what about "Simeon?" "No, not in his either!" etc. and etc. Joseph was left to the very end. Talk about "cliff hangers." The men must have been beside themselves by this time. "Surely it is not in Joseph's sack - it just can't be!" But it was!

So the steward to Benjamin back to Joseph as a slave and the rest returned home - well, wasn't that the agreement? There were a few agreements prior to this. They had solemnly swore to their father to protect Benjamin at all cost. They couldn't return home and tell Jacob that Benjamin was a slave in the house of "the man." After tearing their clothes they returned with Benjamin. I wonder if clothes were as expensive in those days as it was a fairly common practice. Reuben, Jacob, Joshua, David, ... (Genesis 37:29; Genesis 37:34; Numbers 14:6; 2 Samuel 1:11 . . .).

So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he was still there; and they fell before him on the ground. And Joseph said to them, "What deed is this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination?" Then Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup was found." But he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so; the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father."

Genesis 44:14-17 (NKJV)

They returned to Joseph's house. "And he was still there." In other words, he was waiting there for them. They fell on their faces to the ground (literal Hebrew) as they have already done several times before. It seems to be becoming their standard posture.

Joseph is harsh. He not only condemns them for what they did but he, in fact, insults them in that they should have known that he "practiced divination" and hence could easily find out what happened. Of course, his "divination" was in sending the cup with Joseph in the first place.

The brothers are at a loss for words. What shall we say? speak? . . . clear ourselves? They have been caught "red handed" and there is no way out. But then, he says something strange. He does not say, "You have found out the iniquity of your servants," but "God has found out . . ." Not just any old Egyptian god, mind you, but "Ha Elohim" = "The God" = "The one true God." We have discussed the significance of the article, "the," before. God is punishing them for what they did to Joseph so many years before. Time means little to God.

*. . . afterward you may return and be blameless before the Lord and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the Lord. But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the Lord; **and be sure your sin will find you out.***

Numbers 32:22-23 (NKJV)

So, all eleven of them were there, because of their past sin, to serve Joseph ("the man"). Joseph declines the offer. He just wants Benjamin, the others are free to go home (as far as he is concerned, as far as Jacob is concerned, that's another matter). *go up in peace to your father!* How will they go "in peace" to their father without Benjamin? They had to do something and they had to do it then!

Then Judah came near to him and said: "O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you are even like Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?' And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, who is young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.' Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.' And we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' But you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.' So it was, when we went up to your servant my father, that we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, 'Go back and buy us a little food.' But we said, 'We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; and the one went out from me, and I said, "Surely he is torn to pieces"; and I have not seen him since. But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.' Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, it will happen, when he sees that the lad is not with us, that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.' Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?"

Genesis 44:18-34 (NKJV)

In a recent lesson, we listed the twelve sons of Israel. We crossed out Reuben, Simeon, and Levi

for indiscretions on their part, leaving Judah to be first in line for the blessing of the first born. Here we see what kind of man he really was. We see a man who will stand up and speak out for what is right.

Then Judah came near to him and said: "O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's hearing. It would be assumed from this that what follows was a private conversation between the Governor (Joseph) and Judah. He begins with the greatest humility for himself and respect for the Governor - "you are like Pharaoh. . ."

Given the opportunity to speak, he gives an accurate and detailed account of all that has happened. They were asked about others at home and he volunteered the information that they had a father, **and old man** (not being disrespectful, but honest) and a child **of his old age**. The father was too old to travel and the son too young. He stresses the relation between Jacob and Benjamin.

Next Judah reminds him how he requested them to bring Benjamin to him and how they had refused because the separation would be too much for Jacob. He also reminds him that he would not allow them to come back for more food unless Benjamin was with them - so they did not return. But, then, he relates how they were very scarce of food and had to do something. Then he related the details of the "death" of Joseph which makes it all the more important that the one remaining son of Rachel remain with the father. He does not reveal that Joseph is not really dead and what they did to him - normally it would not be a matter for Joseph's attention anyway,

Finally, he pleads the fact that, if he returns without Benjamin, his father will die of grief and he will bear the brunt of the blame. He has two choices in his mind. He can return without Joseph which would probably lead to the death of his father and his own death since he promised to be "surety" for Benjamin. The other choice is for him to remain as a slave and let Benjamin return. Then all would be well except he would now be a servant in Egypt which is surely better than the alternative.

Before we proceed, let us look at this "surety."

I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever.

Genesis 43:9 (NKJV)

The above is where Judah made this vow. The Psalmist says,

Be surety for Your servant for good; Do not let the proud oppress me.

Psalm 119:122 (NKJV)

Finally, Unger gives its definition.

The earliest form of surety mentioned in Scripture is the pledging of person for person, as when Judah undertook with his father to be surety for Benjamin (Genesis 43:9). And when circumstances seemed to call for a fulfillment of the obligation, he actually offered himself in the place of Benjamin. In this sense the psalmist asks God to be surety for him (Psalm 119:122).

UNGER, surety

As you may have observed, these last chapters of Genesis seem to be a series of cliff hangers - will Joseph accept Judah's plea? See the next chapter!

Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it. Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph: "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry. You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for there are still five years of famine." ' And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you. So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here." Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

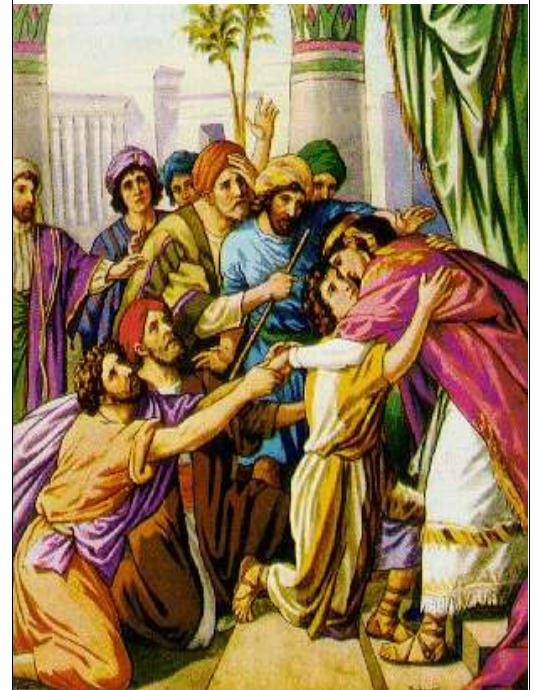
Genesis 45:1-15 (NKJV)

Joseph could not control, יכל (yakol) himself. This is the same word as when he wrestled with the angel and prevailed. He prevailed when he wrestled with God but this was too much for him. He had all of the Egyptians "put out" (it was an order!) From before him because he found himself no longer able to control himself. There was not a (Egyptian) man with him.

And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it. This is to be interpreted that the Egyptians in Joseph's house heard the loud wailing and those in the house of Pharaoh learned (heard) about it from them. It is doubtful that his wailing could be heard in Pharaoh's house, where ever that may have been. Unger says "*the orientals seem to have had tears at their command and could weep at pleasure.*" I think only women have that ability today! I really wonder what his brothers thought about all this wailing!

Finally, the long awaited word (awaited by me, anyway). "I am Joseph" immediately followed by the question as to whether his father still lived. He had had the assurance his father was alive a number of times. K&D say, "*but his filial heart impels him to make sure of it once more.*" I think it was more for the purpose of identifying himself. Saying "I am Joseph" could mean he was just someone named "Joseph" but the question

Joseph makes himself known to his brothers



affixes the name to their brother and father.

His brothers were “dismayed” in his presence. To say בָּהֶל (bhalu) is to be dismayed is an understatement. Consider the passage below.

*And when the men of Israel turned back, the men of Benjamin **panicked**, for they saw that disaster had come upon them.*

Judges 20:41 (NKJV)

First, there was the guilt of what they had done. Then there was the surprise of seeing his position. Finally, was the suddenness with which he finally let his emotions go and began crying out. What would you have done?

He has them come closer and gives the account of how they sold him into slavery. He is not saying this to make them feel even more guilty. He has already satisfied himself of their feelings there. He says it to identify himself for no one else would have known that bit of information.

After they calmed down a bit, Joseph asked, *“Please come near to me.”* He had been (probably) standing on a raised platform (or sitting on a throne) with his brother down below. Now, he invites them to come up and join him. When they came close to him, he confessed, *“I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now . . .”* In almost the same breath he says, “but now!” Forget that, look to the present. After all the agonies they had gone through over what they had done to Joseph, he tells them, *“do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here.”* “Hey fellows, forget that, there was a reason for it!” God had foreordained it for a purpose. There had already been two years of drought, this is the second trip they have made, and there are five more years to go!

“God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God;” Have you ever had something like that happen to you? Not big things like this, necessarily, but things God did that we didn’t understand at the time but he had a purpose as we later found out. We have no idea of the things God does for us that we are not aware of.

He tells his brethren that God as done three things:

- *He has made me a father to Pharaoh*
- *He has made me lord of all his house*
- *He has made me a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt*

What is the difference between these, “father”, “lord”, “ruler?” The later two are ok but, in what sense was he a “father” to Pharaoh? The term implies that they were on a closer basis than a mere political one, they Pharaoh treated his as a friend and counselor. Joseph uses “ha Elohim” here even though there are no Egyptians around. Why? Because his brothers have not seen him for a long time and, so far as they knew, he now followed after all the Egyptian gods - but he did not! Elohim (God) was still his God and was still in control of his life, his families life, the lives of the Egyptians, and, in fact, the lives of all going through the famine.

Hurry and go . . . come down to me, do not tarry. . . and you shall hurry. Three times in this passage we find the word “hurry,.” מָהָר (mahar), the Hebrew means the same as the English - hurry up! They were to hurry home and tell Jacob the good news. They were to hurry and return to Egypt with Jacob “in tow.” He makes known to Jacob that they will be moving into Egypt, specifically, the land of

Goshen, for quite some time. According to Unger,

This was a fertile section of Egypt, excellent for grazing and certain types of agriculture, but apparently not particularly inviting to the pharaohs because of its distance from the Nile irrigation canals. It extends thirty or forty miles in length, centering in Wadi Tumilat, and reaches from Lake Timsa to the Nile

UNGER, Goshen

By having his family there, Joseph could keep an eye on them and make sure they had enough to eat and live on. In order to provide “proof” of all this, Joseph says, *'And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you.'* In other words, you heard it directly from me! There is no doubt to the truthfulness of the matter.

“You shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt.” Is Joseph some sort of braggart? No - he want’s his father to know that it is in his power to bring about what he has told him. With the message delivered to his brothers, Jacob breaks down and he and Benjamin wept on each other’s shoulders. You sure wouldn’t want to do that today, not in this country anyway. But this was a long time ago and far away from the moral morass we now live in.

Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, "Joseph's brothers have come." So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. Now you are commanded--do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.' "

Genesis 45:16-20 (NKJV)

Joseph’s plans were soon changed. Pharaoh had different ideas. Pharaoh must have been a kindly person as he was determined to give them the “best” of the land of Egypt. Goshen seems to be a land prepared by God for Israel. It was not the “best” land for the Egyptians, as noted above, because it was too far from the Nile. On the other hand, it was a very fertile country and, to Israel, it was well suited since he had not particular need for being near the Nile.

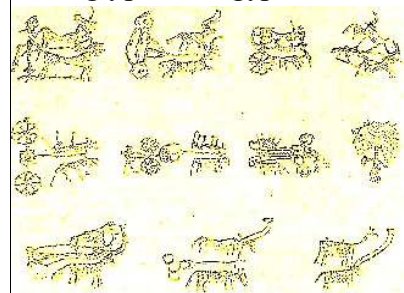
The text says that “it pleased Pharaoh and his servants.” Literally, “it was good, יטב (yitab) on the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants.” Pharaoh not only asked, but commanded, Joseph to send carts back to Canaan so his family could ride back to Egypt in relative luxury. Finally, he says “do not be concerned with your goods.”

“Let not your eye look with mourning” i.e., do not trouble about the house-furniture which you are obliged to leave behind. The good-will manifested in this invitation of Pharaoh towards Jacob’s family was to be attributed to the feeling of gratitude to Joseph, and “is related circumstantially, because this free and honourable invitation involved the right of Israel to leave Egypt again without obstruction”

K&D, Genesis 45:19-20

The appearance of the carts in Canaan will produce quite a stir. A petroglyph (stonedrawing) of Egyptian carts is shown to the right

Petroglyphs of Egyptian Carts



(courtesy of

<http://www.armenianhighland.com/homeland/chronicle120.html>)

I do not suppose it took Joseph long to execute Pharaoh's orders.

Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them carts, according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey. He gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments. And he sent to his father these things: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey. So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, "See that you do not become troubled along the way."

Genesis 45:21-24 (NKJV)

Considering there must have been at least 75 family members, not to mention servants who may have had to walk, it would have taken 25 carts at three per cart. This is no small caravan. But then, the servants likely rode too or how would they have kept up? As far as we know these carts had only one seat and one pair of wheels (no back seat drivers). Perhaps a servant did the driving and family members would do the riding.

He tells them not to become troubled along the way. What does that mean? K&D say, "Placatus erat Joseph fratribus, simul eos admonet, ne quid turbarum moveant. Timendum enim erat, ne quisque se purgando crimen transferre in alios studeret atque its surgeret contentio." So there you have it - if you speak the right language! The point here is the source of trouble.

He is not worried about them getting into trouble with others on the way, he is worried about them getting along with each other. How well do most brothers get along all the time? These brothers have had a terrible load of guilt upon their shoulders then, suddenly, it has been lifted and they are leading a fabulous wagon train back to Canaan. With emotions built up like this, it would be quite possible for fighting to break out among his brothers. Apparently, none did.

Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. And they told him, saying, "Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart stood still, because he did not believe them. But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. Then Israel said, "It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

Genesis 45:25-28 (NKJV)

When they got to Egypt and told their father about Joseph, he had an immediate cardiac arrest! Actually, there may have been some heart involvement there as he was now an old man. They "seeing is believing" and the sight of this whole caravan of Egyptian carts was enough to prove to him that what was told him was true. Note, his sons still called him Jacob but he referred to himself now as Israel - "Then Israel said . . ." He had finally reached the state where he should be with respect to faith and trust in the Lord.

CHAPTER 46

So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!" And he said, "Here I am." So He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes." Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives, in the carts which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. So they took their livestock and their goods, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him. His sons and his sons' sons, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.

Genesis 46:1-7 (NKJV)

Before leaving Canaan, Israel journey one last time to Beersheba before heading for Egypt. He didn't have to be a rocket scientist to know it would be the last time he would see it. Because of this, God appeared to him at night. I would suppose Jacob was lying there, trying to go to sleep, and be very concerned about the move to Egypt. After all, what had God commanded them about this? Wasn't he supposed to remain in the land of Canaan?

I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt. There, not only was it alright to go, but God would go there with him and make him a great nation. How long would it take to make a "great nation? If the population increased by 50% every 20 years (a pretty slow growth rate) there would be over 230,000 Hebrews in Goshen at the end of 400 years. If the population doubled every 20 years, there would be over 73 million Hebrews there. On the other hand, if there just stayed until the drought was over, 70 people could hardly grow into a "great nation." God need the time for them to build up to the size of a great nation.

Had Abraham passed on God's revelation to Jacob?

Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years.

Genesis 15:13 (NKJV)

We are not told whether or not this was on Jacob's mind then or not. In any case, we begin with what we have. The middle section of this chapter I have presented in a different format, as seen on the next page.

-
- 1 Reuben
- 2 Hanoch
 - 3.Pallu
 - 4. Hezron
 - 5.Carmi
6. Simeon
- 7.Jemuel
 - 8.Jamin
 - 9.Ohad
 - 10.Jachin
 - 11.Zohar
 - 12.Shaul, (son of a Canaanite woman)
- 13.Levi
- 14.Gershon
 - 15.Kohath
 - 16.Merari
- 17.Judah
- 18.Er
 - 19.Onan
 - 20.Shelah
 - 21.Perez
 - 22 Hezron
 - 23.Hamul
 - 24.Zerah
- 25.Issachar
- 26.Tola
 - 27.Puvah
 - 28.Job
 - 29.Shimron
- 30.Zebulun
- 31.Sered
 - 32.Elon
 - 32.Jahleel.
- 33.Dinah Genesis 46:9-15
-
- 1.Gad
- 2.Ziphion
 - 3.Haggi
 - 4.Shuni
 - 5.Ezbon
 - 6.Eri
 - 7.Arodi
 - 8.Areli
- 9.Asher
- 10.Jimnah
 - 11.Ishuah
 - 12.Isui
 - 13.Beriah
 - 14.Heber
 - 15.Malchiel

-
- 16.Serah, their sister. Genesis 46:16-18
-
- 1.Joseph
- 2. Manasseh
 - 3.Ephraim
- 4.Benjamin
- 5.Belah
 - 6.Becher
 - 7.Ashbel
 - 8.Gera
 - 9.Naaman
 - 10.Ehi
 - 11.Rosh
 - 12.Muppim
 - 13.Huppim
 - 14.Ard. Genesis 46:19-22
-
- 1.Dan
- 2.Hushim
- 3.Naphtali
- 4.Jahzeel
 - 5.Guni
 - 6.Jezer
 - 7.Shillem Genesis 46:23-25

RECAP: $33+16+14+7=70$

Joseph and his two sons were already in Egypt so this leaves 67, or 66 persons who accompanied Jacob.

Still 70 people went to Egypt (or were born there).

There is no need to comment further on these genealogical passages except to note the math is correct. One might say, "Wait, Manasseh and Ephraim were born in Egypt, they did not go to Egypt!" A Hebrew historian would argue that they went "in the loins of their father Joseph." (A good Hebrew argument against abortion).

Then he sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out before him the way to Goshen. And they came to the land of Goshen. So Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; and he presented himself to him, and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive." Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and say to him, 'My brothers and those of my father's house, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me. And the men are shepherds, for their occupation has been to feed livestock; and they have brought their flocks, their herds, and all that they have.' So it shall be, when Pharaoh calls you and says, 'What is your occupation?' that you shall say, 'Your servants' occupation has been with livestock from our youth even till now, both we and also our fathers,' that you may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians."

Genesis 46:28-34 (NKJV)

Since Jacob did not have access to MapQuest or other mapping service (obviously) he sent Judah back to Joseph to determine more specifically where they were supposed to locate and then lead him and the family there. Joseph, apparently, accompanied Judah back to meet with his father and bring them into the land.

The meeting must have been very emotional! Not only is Reuben and Benjamin safe once more, but he now sees his lost son Joseph. Israel's words *"Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive."* Are probably not to be taken too literally, considering the emotions. Yet, Israel was now a very old man and was ready to die. A number of commentators have credited this as the source of the following.

"Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word;

Luke 2:29 (NKJV)

There was, however, one very important thing to do before he died (in Genesis 49:33). We wait until then to discuss his death rather than be premature!

Meanwhile, Joseph set out a plan for his brothers. They were to pretend to be shepherds while in Goshen. No! It was not a pretense, for they really were shepherds. They were, however, to make sure it was known that this was their occupation. Why? *"Every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians."* Why so, Adam Clark has several opinions, one of which is interesting.

Shepherds and feeders of cattle were usually a sort of lawless, free-booting bandits, frequently making inroads on villages, etc., carrying off cattle, and whatever spoils they could find. This might probably have been the case formerly, for it is well known it has often been the case since. On this account such persons must have been universally detested

CLARK, Genesis 46:34

This would make it appear that the Egyptians had seen too many John Wayne movies! K&D were closer to the mark when he wrote,

The dislike of the Egyptians to shepherds arose from the fact, that the more completely the foundations of the Egyptian state rested upon agriculture with its perfect organization, the more did

the Egyptians associate the idea of rudeness and barbarism with the very name of a shepherd. This is not only attested in various ways by the monuments, on which shepherds are constantly depicted as lanky, withered, distorted, emaciated, and sometimes almost ghostly figures (Graul, Reise 2, p. 171), but is confirmed by ancient testimony.

K&D, Genesis 46:34

and also

The reason why his brethren should describe themselves to Pharaoh as shepherds from of old, namely, that they might receive Goshen as their dwelling-place, and that their national and religion independence might not be endangered by too close an intercourse with the Egyptians.

So, unknown to Jacob and his family, they had moved into a new home where they would be ~~for the next five years or so~~, the next four hundred years! They would be there until God would raise up a baby called Moshe (Moses) gets pulled out of the river!

CHAPTER 47

Then Joseph went and told Pharaoh, and said, "My father and my brothers, their flocks and their herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan; and indeed they are in the land of Goshen." And he took five men from among his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh. Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, "What is your occupation?" And they said to Pharaoh, "Your servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers." And they said to Pharaoh, "We have come to dwell in the land, because your servants have no pasture for their flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now therefore, please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen." Then Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. The land of Egypt is before you. Have your father and brothers dwell in the best of the land; let them dwell in the land of Goshen. And if you know any competent men among them, then make them chief herdsmen over my livestock."

Genesis 47:1-6 (NKJV)

Once they were finally settled in Goshen, Joseph made a formal trip to Pharaoh along with five of his brothers. Which five? Why five? It must have made an impression on Stephen for he said,

*And the second time Joseph was made known to his brothers, and **Joseph's family became known to the Pharaoh.***

Acts 7:13 (NKJV)

As to which five, the Hebrew wording is a bit strange here. He took five from קצה (qseh) = "end" or "extremity." Adam Clark, in his research of the use of this term, concluded the following.

This has been understood six different ways. 1. Joseph took five of his brethren that came first to hand—at random, without design or choice. 2. Joseph took five of the meanest-looking of his brethren to present before Pharaoh, fearing if he had taken the sightliest that Pharaoh would detain them for his service, whereby their religion and morals might be corrupted. 3. Joseph took five of the best made and finest-looking of his brethren, and presented them before Pharaoh, wishing to impress his mind with a favorable opinion of the family which he had just now brought into Egypt, and to do himself honor. 4. Joseph took five of the youngest of his brethren. 5. He took five of the eldest of his brethren. 6. He took five from the extremity or end of his brethren, i. e., some of the eldest and some of the youngest, viz., Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, and Benjamin

CLARK, Genesis 47:2

Of these, the last is the one that is most likely. I believe the connotation of the fact that he took five from the "extremes" of his brothers is that he took five which were most representative of the whole. Why five? Have you noticed that number appearing with some regularity in this part of the study?

*Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was **five times** as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.*

Genesis 43:34 (NKJV)

*For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still **five years** in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting.*

Genesis 45:6 (NKJV)

*He gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and **five changes** of garments.*

Genesis 45:22 (NKJV)

*And he took **five men** from among his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh.*

Genesis 47:2 (NKJV)

One also has to wonder about Stephen.

Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to him, seventy-**five** people.

Acts 7:14 (NKJV)

Where did he get the five? We have already seen that “All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy.” (46:27) which is repeated in Exodus 1:5. Where did he get the extra five? Read Stephen’s defense in Acts 7 and ask yourself if you could give a review of the Old Testament as accurately and completely as did Stephen? But, perhaps, the “five” stuck in there from another part of his memory. In any case, they then made their plea for land where they could feed their livestock (mostly sheep) and requested the land of Goshen.

The real answer to all this is, while in the Bible, the number “seven” is the number of completeness or perfection, the number “five” had similar connotations to the Egyptians. Hence, in keeping with this, Joseph brought five of his brothers.

He informed Pharaoh with respect to his relatives, that “*indeed they are in the land of Goshen.*” In other words, they are all settled down there, please, don’t suggest they go somewhere else!” Then came the anticipated question. “*What is your occupation?*” Their answer was רעה צאן (roah son) = “feeders of a flock.” Most translations have, “*Your servants are **shepherds**, both we and also our fathers.*” This is probably correct but they may have had other livestock too.

How would you like to be in a position where the king, president, pharaoh, etc. of the land said to you, “*The land of Egypt is before you. Have your father and brothers dwell in the best of the land; let them dwell in the land of Goshen.*” (or whatever land it was you were asking for)? Again, we see the influence that Joseph and his God had on Pharaoh. We also see God continuing to develop His plans for the nation of Israel.

Actually, they got even more than the bargained for as Pharaoh then said, “*if you know any competent men among them, then make them chief herdsmen over my livestock.*” Joseph was to select from his extended family “competent men” - אנשי חיל (ansi hayil). The same type of men which Jethro (Moses’ father-in-law) instructed Moses to select.

*Moreover you shall select from all the people **able men**, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. . . . And Moses chose **able men** out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people: rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.*

Exodus 18:21,25 (NKJV)

This may sound like an insult to Joseph's family - "**if** you have any . . . What Pharaoh is asking is for him to select any outstanding herdsmen to be herdsmen over Pharaoh's livestock. K&D use a different term than "competent," "*if he knew any **brave** men among them, to make them rulers over the royal herds, which were kept, as we may infer, in the land of Goshen, as being the best pasture-land.*³ We can assume that (1) as Pharaoh, he would have all kinds of livestock, perhaps even some horses, and (2) since Egyptians didn't like herdsmen (or being herdsmen) he had a hard time getting them. Here then was an agreement by which they both profited. Today it would be called a "win-win situation."

Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How old are you?" And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." So Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

Genesis 47:7-10 (NKJV)

Next, Jacob is brought before Pharaoh. By now Jacob is a very old man, as McGee puts it, "*one foot in the grave and the other foot on a banana peel.*" It begins with Jacob "blessing" Pharaoh. One needs to understand a difference here.

All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father spoke to them. And he blessed them; he blessed each one according to his own blessing.

Genesis 49:28 (NKJV)

When we get to chapter 49, we will see the specific blessings Jacob bestows on each of his boys. But there are "blessings" and "blessings." Here, the "blessing" is simply a greeting and not used in the sense it is used in Chapter 49. Pharaoh replied by asking "How old are you?" Perhaps customs change but, today, that would not be a very friendly greeting. But, perhaps Pharaoh was just curious.

In any case, Jacob responded by saying how long his "pilgrimage" had been (130 years). Most translations, other than the NKJV, have "sojourning" which is a better description of his life (and ours)

*This world is not my home, I'm just-a-passing through
My treasures are laid up some where beyond the blue
The angels beckon me from heaven's open door
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore⁴*

However, K&D have "pilgrimage."

Jacob called his own life and that of his fathers a pilgrimage because they had not come into actual possession of the promised land, but had been obliged all their life long to wander about, unsettled and homeless, in the land promised to them for an inheritance, as in a strange land. This pilgrimage was at the same time a figurative representation of the inconstancy and weariness of the earthly life, in which man does not attain to that true rest of peace with God and blessedness in His fellowship, for which he was created, and for which therefore his soul is continually longing (cf. Ps 39:13; 119:19,

³K&D, Genesis 47:3

⁴Albert E. Brumly

54; 1 Chron 29:15). The apostle, therefore, could justly regard these words as a declaration of the longing of the patriarchs for the eternal rest of their heavenly fatherland (Heb 11:13-16).

K&D, Genesis 47:3

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

Hebrews 11:13-16 (NKJV)

“Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life.” This is certainly not a very noteworthy evaluation of ones life, especially when all Pharaoh asks was how old he was! To one extent or another we are all in the same situation Jacob was. As for me, I could prepare two lists:

List One - How Evil My Days have been!

- 1: Colon Cancer - 1993
2. Gall Bladder Surgery - 2002
3. ...
4. Etc.

List Two - How Great My Days have been!

- 1: Graduated top in a class of 100 Electronic Engineering Students
- 2: Was a member of the Technical Staff of the world famous Bell Telephone Labs.
3. Was a University professor for 36 years (top step, full professor for 24 of them)
4. ...
5. Etc.

Is the cup half full or half empty? Yes, Jacob had a rough road: a wife he didn't like (Leah), a son who committed incest, two sons who made him to be a “stinker” in the neighboring tribes, and, especially, he lost his favorite son (or so he thought! On the other hand,

*Like arrows in the hand of a warrior,
So are the children of one's youth.
Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them;
They shall not be ashamed,
But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.*

Psalm 127:4-5 (NKJV)

Consider also the following table

Patriarch	Times in the Bible	Comments
Abraham	263	Including Abram
Isaac	119	
Jacob	336	See Below

Israel	2300	2636 total - both the man and the nation.
--------	------	---

The nation of Abraham is not in the U.N. today, neither is the Nation of Isaac, but the Nation of Israel surely is! It was through Jacob that Israel grew to be a mighty nation.

*all who were numbered were **six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty.***

Numbers 1:46 (NKJV)

These were the “men of war.” Add the other men, the women, and the children, and Israel left Egypt a very large nation to begin with. And, of course it grew from there!

Anyway, Pharaoh received his answer and Jacob “blessed” him again (i.e. “Said goodbye”).

And Joseph situated his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. Then Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with bread, according to the number in their families.

Genesis 47:11-12 (NKJV)

From there they settled in the land of Rameses. What happened to Goshen?

Rameses is the Egyptian city of Goshen, first mentioned in Genesis 47:1-11, where it is related that a possession was given to Jacob and his sons “in the land of Rameses,” which was in “the land of Goshen.” The name Raamses occurs in Exodus 1:11 as one of the two store cities built together with Pithom by the enslaved Hebrews. Archaeology has fixed Pithom at Tell el-Retabah and Rameses at Qantir, Hyksos Avaris, and indicates that these cities were (allegedly, at least) built by the famous Rameses II (c. 1290-1224 b.c.).

UNGER, Rameses

As with everyone else, Joseph provided the grain his family needed.

Now there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine. And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, for the grain which they bought; and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. So when the money failed in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us bread, for why should we die in your presence? For the money has failed." Then Joseph said, "Give your livestock, and I will give you bread for your livestock, if the money is gone." So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for the horses, the flocks, the cattle of the herds, and for the donkeys. Thus he fed them with bread in exchange for all their livestock that year. When that year had ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is gone; my lord also has our herds of livestock. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands. Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants of Pharaoh; give us seed, that we may live and not die, that the land may not be desolate."

Genesis 47:13-19 (NKJV)

Eventually, a problem arose, a problem that has existed in every society - not enough money! Canaan "languished" because of it. פנה (pene) is a word of many meanings such as "to face someone." Here they languished = להה (lah) because of it This, incidently, is the only occurrence of the word "languish" in the Old Testament. After selling grain, and more grain, and still more grain, Egypt's "Fort Knox" was loaded with money, the people were broke. Today, they could have done like we do and just print up some more! They finally had to result to selling all their livestock. That was both good news and bad news for them. Without the livestock, they would not need as much grain. Without livestock, how would they earn more money?

So, now Joseph had horses, sheep (flocks), cattle, and donkeys. The text does not say this but remember that Jacob's sons were to be "cowboys" for the Egyptians who hated raising animals, so, perhaps Joseph's brother became quite busy!

Now, their money is all in "Fort Know." Their animals are all in the "O K Corral" and they run out of food again. The people are desperate, very desperate - so much so that they would say to Joseph, *we can not hide from my lord that our money is gone; my lord also has our herds of livestock. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands.* So, at this point they offered themselves as slaves to Pharaoh (and Joseph), giving their land to Egypt.

There is something about "buying a piece of land" that most people do not understand. When you buy a piece of land, it is not yours to do what you want with! You say, "I sure can!" OK, Get yourselves some earth moving equipment and start digging up "your land" and taking it somewhere else! You will not get very far! The deed we get for our land simply gives us the right to use it and keep others off of it, but we do not really own the dirt.

The reason for the above comments is that, while they "gave" their land to Pharaoh, they could still farm it (or raise cattle on it) but now they would be only the caretakers. Their argument made a lot of sense. If they all died from starvation, what would happen to the land?

Then Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for every man of the Egyptians sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. So the land became Pharaoh's. And as for the people, he moved them into the cities, from one end of the borders of Egypt to the other end. Only the land of the priests he did not buy; for the priests had rations allotted to them by Pharaoh, and they ate their rations which Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their lands. Then Joseph said to the people, "Indeed I have bought you and your land this day for Pharaoh. Look, here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land. And it shall come to pass in the harvest that you shall give one-fifth to Pharaoh. Four-fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and for your food, for those of your households and as food for your little ones." So they said, "You have saved our lives; let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants." And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt to this day, that Pharaoh should have one-fifth, except for the land of the priests only, which did not become Pharaoh's.

Genesis 47:20-26 (NKJV)

So, the deal was done. They were each given a plot of ground (a square plot?) And seed to plant. They could keep 80% of what grew but 20% (a fifth) was to be pharaoh's. That isn't all that bad. If you and your spouse had a taxable income of \$100,000 in 2003, you would be paying 18.62% Federal Income Tax, not to mention State Income Tax, Property Tax, Sales Tax, etc. Note that the exemption for the "priests" was for the Egyptian priests - Israel had no priests yet.

One thing you should always keep in mind in studying the Scriptures is when it says, *And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt to this day*, it does not mean Friday, September 17, 2004 (the day I wrote this). It refers to the day that Moses (or whomever) wrote it.

So Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions there and grew and multiplied exceedingly. And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years. When the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "Now if I have found favor in your sight, please put your hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me. Please do not bury me in Egypt, but let me lie with my fathers; you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place." And he said, "I will do as you have said." Then he said, "Swear to me." And he swore to him. So Israel bowed himself on the head of the bed.

Genesis 47:27-31 (NKJV)

The chapter closes with the notice that Israel *grew and multiplied exceedingly*. From about 70 persons who went down to Egypt to well over 1 million who came out of Egypt 400 years later. Jacob told Pharaoh he was an old man (full of years) but he managed to live another 17 years in Goshen, bring him to 147 years!

He knew his time was near and so, as with his fathers before him, he called Joseph to his side and had him place his hand under his thigh (we never figured that one out) and "*deal kindly and truly with me.*" In other words, "do what I ask you to do." His request was both reasonable and understandable. He did not want to be buried in Egypt. Joseph agreed and swore to Jacob to take him to the family burial place.

EXTENDED NOTE REGARDING EGYPTIAN FEUDALSHIP⁵

Profane writers have given at least an indirect support to the reality of this political reform of Joseph's. Herodotus, for example (2, 109), states that king Sesostris divided the land among the Egyptians, giving every one a square piece of the same size as his hereditary possession (κληρον) and derived his own revenue from a yearly tax upon them. Diod. Sic. (1, 73), again, says that all the land in Egypt belonged either to the priests, to the king, or to the warriors; and Strabo (xvii. p. 787), that the farmers and traders held rateable land, so that the peasants were not landowners. On the monuments, too, the kings, priests, and warriors only are represented as having landed property (cf. Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs*, i. 263). The biblical account says nothing about the exemption of the warriors from taxation and their possession of land, for that was a later arrangement. According to Herod. 2, 168, every warrior had received from former kings, as an honourable payment, twelve choice fields (ἄρουραι) free from taxation, but they were taken away by the Hephaesto-priest Sethos, a contemporary of Hezekiah, when he ascended the throne (Herod. 2, 141). But when Herodotus and Diodorus Sic. attribute to Sesostris the division of the land into 36 νομοί and the letting of these for a yearly payment; these comparatively recent accounts simply transfer the arrangement, which was actually made by Joseph, to a half-mythical king, to whom the later legends ascribed all the greater deeds and more important measures of the early Pharaohs. And so far as Joseph's arrangement itself was concerned, not only had he the good of the people and the interests of the king in view, but the people themselves accepted it as a favour, inasmuch as in a land where the produce was regularly thirty-fold, the cession of a fifth could not be an oppressive burden. And it is probable that

⁵K&D Genesis 47

Joseph not only turned the temporary distress to account by raising the king into the position of sole possessor of the land, with the exception of that of the priests, and bringing the people into a condition of feudal dependence upon him, but had also a still more comprehensive object in view; viz., to secure the population against the danger of starvation in case the crops should fail at any future time, not only by dividing the arable land in equal proportions among the people generally, but, as has been conjectured, by laying the foundation for a system of cultivation regulated by laws and watched over by the state, and possibly also by commencing a system of artificial irrigation by means of canals, for the purpose of conveying the fertilizing water of the Nile as uniformly as possible to all parts of the land. (An explanation of this system is given by Hengstenberg in his Dissertations, from the Correspondance d'Orient par Michaud, etc.) To mention either these or any other plans of a similar kind, did not come within the scope of the book of Genesis, which restricts itself, in accordance with its purely religious intention, to a description of the way in which, during the years of famine, Joseph proved himself to both the king and people of Egypt to be the true support of the land, so that in him Israel already became a saviour of the Gentiles. The measures taken by Joseph are thus circumstantially described, partly because the relation into which the Egyptians were brought to their visible king bore a typical resemblance to the relation in which the Israelites were placed by the Mosaic constitution to Jehovah, their God-King, since they also had to give a double tenth, i.e., the fifth of the produce of their lands, and were in reality only farmers of the soil which Jehovah had given them in Canaan for a possession, so that they could not part with their hereditary possessions in perpetuity (Lev 25:23); and partly also because Joseph's conduct exhibited in type how God entrusts His servants with the good things of this earth, in order that they may use them not only for the preservation of the lives of individuals and nations, but also for the promotion of the purposes of His kingdom. For, as is stated in conclusion in v. 27, not only did Joseph preserve the lives of the Egyptians, for which they expressed their acknowledgements (v. 25), but under his administration the house of Israel was able, without suffering any privations, or being brought into a relation of dependence towards Pharaoh, to dwell in the land of Goshen, to establish itself there and to become fruitful and multiply.)

CHAPTER 48

Now it came to pass after these things that Joseph was told, "Indeed your father is sick"; and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. And Jacob was told, "Look, your son Joseph is coming to you"; and Israel strengthened himself and sat up on the bed. Then Jacob said to Joseph: "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.' And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. Your offspring whom you beget after them shall be yours; they will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. But as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."

Genesis 48:1-7 (NKJV)

After these things . . . after Joseph had moved his family into Goshen and settled them there and, apparently, after the famine was over we start a new section in the history of Jacob (Israel). He had become ill. This would have to be sometime during the seventeen years he lived in Egypt, probably very near the end.

Because of this, Joseph brought his two sons before Jacob. Why he took this opportunity to take his sons to see Jacob is not told us. But, as Joseph approached and was announced to the old man, "Israel" strengthened himself and sat up in bed. He was the patriarch and, as such, Israel was able to sit up in his bed.

As he sat there he spoke to Joseph, beginning with "God Almighty" (a name for God we have mentioned several times) He quotes for Joseph the promise made so many years before

And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel. Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land."

Genesis 35:10-12 (NKJV)

Then, Jacob (Israel) does a rather strange thing. He says "your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, . . . are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine." In other words, Ephraim and Manasseh would be Jacobs sons, just as Reuben, Simeon, etc. K&D say this.

The promise which Jacob had received empowered the patriarch to adopt the sons of Joseph in the place of children. Since the Almighty God had promised him the increase of his seed into a multitude of peoples, and Canaan as an eternal possession to that seed, he could so incorporate into the number of his descendants the two sons of Joseph who were born in Egypt before his arrival, and therefore outside the range of his house, that they should receive an equal share in the promised inheritance with his own eldest sons.

K&D, Genesis 48:3-7

In a previous lesson, we noted that Ephraim and Manasseh received land in Canaan as did direct sons of Jacob. This presents a somewhat complicated situation.

. . . yet Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him came a ruler, although the birthright was Joseph's--

1 Chronicles 5:2 (NKJV)

Reuben, Simeon and Levi, for reasons already noted, lost their right as "the first born" to Judah. But Judah did not fully benefit from this right. Joseph was the one who benefitted from the double inheritance through his two sons. Why, K&D suggest,

Joseph's mother, who had died so early, was also honoured thereby. And this explains the allusion made by Jacob in v. 7 to his beloved Rachel, the wife of his affections, and to her death-how she died by his side, on his return from Padan (for Padan-Aram, the only place in which it is so called, cf. Gen 25:20), without living to see her first-born exalted to the position of a saviour to the whole house of Israel.

Then Israel saw Joseph's sons, and said, "Who are these?" And Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me in this place." And he said, "Please bring them to me, and I will bless them." Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. And Israel said to Joseph, "I had not thought to see your face; but in fact, God has also shown me your offspring!" So Joseph brought them from beside his knees, and he bowed down with his face to the earth. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him. Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn. And he blessed Joseph, and said:

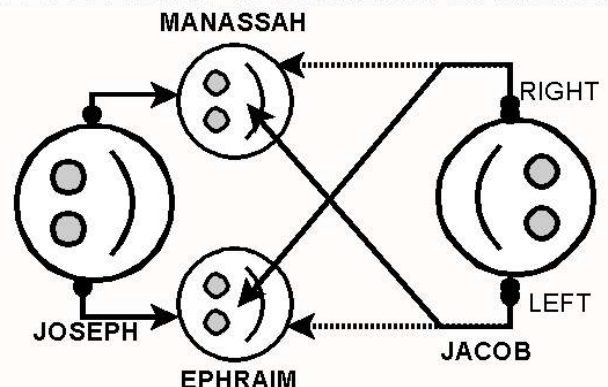
*"God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,
The God who has fed me all my life long to this day,
The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil,
Bless the lads;
Let my name be named upon them,
And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;
And let them grow into a multitude in the
midst of the earth."*

Genesis 48:8-16 (NKJV)

Then Israel saw Joseph's sons. He had misplaced his bifocals so he could see that there were two boys there but he could not see their faces. He asked to have them brought closer for two reasons. First, the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see, and, second, he wished to bless them.

Now, instead of Joseph being dead for many

JACOB BLESSING EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH



years, he sees, not only Joseph, but his sons as well - a double blessing. Joseph brought the boys to his father with Ephraim at his right hand (Jacob's left) and Manasseh at his left (Jacob's right). That way, they would be in the proper place for the blessing, as shown in the diagram to the right. But, then *Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly.* Apparently, the one upon whom the left hand was laid received the first blessing. Remember our discussion a ways back concerning Benjamin being the "son of the right hand?" I presume that perhaps Joseph was the "son of the left hand!"

For reasons known only to Jacob (and God) he chose to bless Ephraim over Manasseh. He then gives a blessing.

*"God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,
The God who has fed me all my life long to this day, . . .*

The NKJV translators left out an important word here, "the." It should read (with my emphasis)

***The God**, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,
The God who has fed me all my life long to this day, . . .*

Jacob uses "He Elohim," "The God," the name which we have noted several times before. It is the formal ultimate term for God whom Jacob expects to bless these boys.

Then he speaks of "The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil." We have not seen "The Angel" since way back in Abraham's day (Genesis 24) **except**,

Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Jacob.' And I said, 'Here I am.'
Genesis 31:11 (NKJV)

This was when Jacob was tending Leban's flocks and was told by the angel to return to Canaan. Now he is beseeching the Angel to bless his offspring as He had blessed him. That is, that he would "*Bless the lads; Let my name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.*" He asks that three names be used to describe Israel, Abraham, Isaac, and himself (Jacob). That this is so may be seen by looking up the following: Exodus 2:24; Exodus 3:6; Exodus 3:15-16; Exodus 4:5; Exodus 6:3; Exodus 6:8; Exodus 33:1; Leviticus 26:42; Numbers 32:11; Deuteronomy 1:8; 6:10; 9:5; 9:27; 29:13; 30:20; 34:4; 2 Kings 13:23; Jeremiah 33:26; Matthew 8:11; 22:32; Mark 12:26; Luke 3:34; 13:28; 20:37; Acts 3:13; 7:32. As a specific example,

*And God spoke to Moses and said to him: "I am the Lord. I **appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty**, but by My name Lord I was not known to them. I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers.*
Exodus 6:2-4 (NKJV)

Now when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head." But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and

he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will bless, saying, 'May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!' " And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh. Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am dying, but God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to you one portion above your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow."

Genesis 48:17-22 (NKJV)

Now when Joseph saw that his father. . . I assume the "when" was before the blessing was made as it would do no go to say anything afterward. Joseph saw that his father had switched hands and put the left hand on Ephraim rather than on Manasseh. It might be said that Joseph, at this point, thought it was due to Jacob's poor eyesight that he got the hands mixed up. Jacob made it know that it was no mistake. He refused to change. Instead, he blessed Manasseh also, after Ephraim. He said, "*By you Israel will bless, saying, 'May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!'*"

And Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph—to Ephraim and Manasseh--saying, "You are a great people and have great power; you shall not have only one lot, but the mountain country shall be yours. Although it is wooded, you shall cut it down, and its farthest extent shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots and are strong."

Joshua 17:17-18 (NKJV)

And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover to the Lord God of Israel.

2 Chronicles 30:1 (NKJV)

Ephraim and Manasseh did, indeed have a special portion in the land of Israel. As indicated before, Joseph received a double inheritance in the fact that both sons received one, *Moreover I have given to you one portion above your brothers* (i.e. "Two" is "one portion" above one.)

We had better hurry on to the next chapter while Jacob is still alive!

And Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days:

*"Gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob,
And listen to Israel your father.*

Genesis 49:1-2 (NKJV)

Having blessed Joseph's two sons, Jacob calls all twelve sons to him. One might expect to be the time in which he blesses his sons as he is about to die. But, the words that follow are, in fact, prophetic (as well as poetic). The fact that the words are poetic is evident even at verse 2 where the second line is a parallel to the first.

1	Hear	sons of Jacob
2	Listen	to Israel your father

Nevertheless, it is still an act of blessing. JFB and Adam Clark and Matthew Henry state,

It is not to the sayings of the dying saint, so much as of the inspired prophet, that attention is called in this chapter. Under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit he pronounced his prophetic benediction and described the condition of their respective descendants in the last days, or future times.

JFB, Genesis 49:1-2

The whole of these prophetic declarations, from Genesis 49:2-27 inclusive, is delivered in strongly figurative language, and in the poetic form, which, in every translation, should be preserved as nearly as possible, rendering the version line for line with the original.

CLARK, Genesis 49:1-2

All Jacob's sons were living. His calling them together was a precept for them to unite in love, not to mingle with the Egyptians; and foretold that they should not be separated, as Abraham's sons and Isaac's were, but should all make one people. We are not to consider this address as the expression of private feelings of affection, resentment, or partiality; but as the language of the Holy Ghost, declaring the purpose of God respecting the character, circumstances, and situation of the tribes which descended from the sons of Jacob, and which may be traced in their histories.

HENRY, Genesis 49:1-2

One final thought regarding Old Testament Prophecies is in order here. For the most part, these prophecies had a "near" fulfillment and a "full fulfillment. Take the following, for example.

*Therefore the Lord Himself **will give you a sign**: Behold, the virgin shall **conceive and bear a Son**..*
Isaiah 7:14a (NKJV)

*Then I went to the prophetess, and she **conceived and bore a son**. Then the Lord said to me, "Call his name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz; for before the child shall have knowledge to cry 'My father' and 'My mother,' the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be taken away before the king of Assyria."*
Isaiah 8:3-4 (NKJV)

Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given me! **We are for signs** and wonders in Israel
From the Lord of hosts, Who dwells in Mount Zion.

Isaiah 8:18 (NKJV)

Above, we have a prophecy, followed by the near fulfillment of that prophecy and a reference stating that it is the (near) fulfillment.

But wait,

*Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and **shall call His name Immanuel.***

Isaiah 7:14 (NKJV)

The prophecy also indicated the name, "Immanuel." The son noted above was not called "Immanuel" but, of all things, "*Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.*" The child with the name "Immanuel" would be the full fulfillment of this prophecy. Is there a reason for this? John describes the end times and writes,

The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men.

Revelation 9:7 (NKJV)

These locusts are probably helicopters which, to John, would certainly have looked like that. But was John suppose to write that helicopters were to appear? He had never heard of such a thing!

The prophets had to write in terms of what they could understand and so the Lord spoke to them in both a near fulfillment, which they could understand, and a far fulfillment which they would not have to understand. In this case, the near fulfillment was in the 12 sons themselves. It was in accordance with their characters. But the far fulfillment was in the final disposition of the twelve tribes.

With these thoughts in mind, we shall look at what is said of each of the twelve sons.

*"Reuben, you are my firstborn,
My might and the beginning of my strength,
The excellency of dignity and the excellency of power.
Unstable as water, you shall not excel,
Because you went up to your father's bed;
Then you defiled it--
He went up to my couch.*

Genesis 49:3-4 (NKJV)

The portion concerning Reuben is to be taken more by verse than by hemistich (i.e. the half line of a verse). Yet, "firstborn," "the beginning of my strength," and "excellency" are all parallel themes regarding the first-born child. This describes what he should have been personally and, prophetically describes what the Tribe of Reuben would have been historically.

Verse 4, as far as I can tell, should have three hemistiches in it, not four as in the NKJV - .

*Unstable as water, you shall not excel,
Because you went up to your father's bed;
Then you defiled it--He went up to my couch*

Verse 4 explains why the praise in verse 3 would not apply. He was “unstable as water.” פּהַז (pahaz) is a verb expressing wantonness or recklessness. In a more abstract way, combined with “water” it means “to boil” or “to overflow.” He was like a ‘56 Chevy Station wagon we once owned, every time you even looked at it, the radiator boiled over. That was Reuben. Because of this nature, he defiled his fathers bed - remember back in 35:22 the incident with him and Bilhah?

Prophetically speaking, the tribe of Reuben was one of the three (two and one-half) tribes that failed to cross the Jordan into the promised land. Interestingly enough, in accordance with what Jacob said, “*Unstable as water,*” the tribe of Reuben actually crossed over the Jordan.

Then it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over, that the ark of the Lord and the priests crossed over in the presence of the people. And the men of Reuben, the men of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh crossed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses had spoken to them.

Joshua 4:11-12 (NKJV)

Now therefore, divide this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh." With the other half tribe the Reubenites and the Gadites received their inheritance, which Moses had given them, beyond the Jordan eastward, as Moses the servant of the Lord had given them:

Joshua 13:7-8 (NKJV)

They did the hard work of clearing the land but did not enjoy the blessings. Just like many “Christians” today who are working hard to get to heaven but do not realize that works is not the way.

*"Simeon and Levi are brothers;
Instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place.
Let not my soul enter their council;
Let not my honor be united to their assembly;
For in their anger they slew a man,
And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox.
Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce;
And their wrath, for it is cruel!
I will divide them in Jacob
And scatter them in Israel.*

Genesis 49:5-7 (NKJV)

If you remember back, Simeon and Levi were the ones who tricked the Hamorites into being circumcised (Chapter 34) and then slaughtered them. They were most certainly, *Instruments of cruelty*. For this reason, Jacob passed over them, *Let not my soul enter their council*. He gets a bit more specific with terms that need some explanation.

They slew a man. But they slew a whole tribe of men! “Man” is the correct translation of the Hebrew, שׂרָא (ish) but not the correct interpretation as is found in the NASB and NIV, The NASB has “*they slew *men,*” with a footnote saying that, literally, it is “a man.” The NIV has the same but without a

footnote. When dealing with poetry, the strict literal translation may not be the clearest.

Because of this, in the full fulfillment of Jacobs words, they were “divided” and “scattered.” This was literally true. The Levites, being selected to be priests, were divided up amongst all of the other tribes, in the cities.

The second lot came out for Simeon, for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. And their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah.

Joshua 19:1 (NKJV)

and all the villages that were all around these cities as far as Baalath Beer, Ramah of the South. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. The inheritance of the children of Simeon was included in the share of the children of Judah, for the share of the children of Judah was too much for them. Therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of that people.

Joshua 19:8-9 (NKJV)

The descendants of Simeon were “scattered” amongst the tribe of Judah, in accordance with this prophesy.

*"Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise;
Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies;
Your father's children shall bow down before you.
Judah is a lion's whelp;
From the prey, my son, you have gone up.
He bows down, he lies down as a lion;
And as a lion, who shall rouse him?
The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
Until Shiloh comes;
And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.
Binding his donkey to the vine,
And his donkey's colt to the choice vine,
He washed his garments in wine,
And his clothes in the blood of grapes.
His eyes are darker than wine,
And his teeth whiter than milk.*

Genesis 49:8-12 (NKJV)

Having, in effect, passed over Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, Jacob now comes to Judah. We have seen the character of this brother in ast chapters. He has demonstrated himself to be both wise and strong and, as such, a leader. Since the name “Judah” means “may God be praised,” K&D state, *“This nomen, the patriarch seized as an omen, and expounded it as a presage of the future history of Judah.”*

Jacob likens Judah to a “lion’s son.” This is an epithet which would remain throughout time, until the time of one of his descendants.

But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."

Revelation 5:5 (NKJV)

The scepter shall not depart from Judah. Israel's first king was Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin. His reign was rather short lived and taken away from him and given to David of the tribe of Judah. Since then, the kings of Israel were all descendants of Judah. The scepter has still not departed.

*Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;
A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.*

Psalms 45:6 (NKJV)

"Until Shiloh comes." There has been much controversy as to whom (or what) "Shiloh" applies. There was a city by that name,

So the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go to the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, which they had obtained according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses.

Joshua 22:9 (NKJV)

However, the language is consistent with Shiloh being a person, not a place. Unger states, "*The gradual advance of messianic prophecy places the personal meaning of Shiloh beyond all possible doubt.*" "To make this a bit plainer, can you find any references to the name "Jesus Christ" in the Old Testament? The only references to "Messiah" are in Daniel 9:25-26. The concept of a coming Messiah developed over time in the Old Testament times and, in the book of Genesis, this is the first real reference to Him.

I think that, sometimes, we subconsciously assume that the Old Testament saints had the same sort of knowledge of God's plans that we do. Paul puts that notion to rest.

*To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, **which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God** who created all things through Jesus Christ;*

Ephesians 3:8-9 (NKJV)

***the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations,** but now has been revealed to His saints.*

Colossians 1:26 (NKJV)

*For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." **This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.***

Ephesians 5:30-32 (NKJV)

I am sure that Jacob's sons had not the least idea what he was talking about with respect to the future of Israel!

And to Him shall be the obedience of the people. Binding his donkey to the vine, Some translations have "foal" rather than "donkey." Either is better than "Binding his ass to a vine." But, what does this mean? First, there is that well known prophecy.

*"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your King is coming to you;
He is just and having salvation,
Lowly and riding on a donkey,
A colt, the foal of a donkey.*

Zechariah 9:9 (NKJV)

There are some references that bear on this you may not be aware of.

*After him arose Jair, a Gileadite; and he judged Israel twenty-two years. **Now he had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys;** they also had thirty towns, which are called "Havoth Jair" to this day, which are in the land of Gilead.*

Judges 10:3-4 (NKJV)

*After him, Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite judged Israel. He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, **who rode on seventy young donkeys.** He judged Israel eight years.*

Judges 12:13-14 (NKJV)

Before Saul, Israel was "governed" by judges, such as those noted above. Apparently they and their sons rode on donkeys as they traveled through Israel in the process of their judging.

If he binds his donkey to a vine, he won't be riding it. It will not be necessary in his rule over the people. They will respect and obey him.

*He washed his garments in wine,
And his clothes in the blood of grapes.
His eyes are darker than wine,
And his teeth whiter than milk*

is a poetic way of saying that the land of Judah would have an abundance of the most valuable produce of the land. Wine and milk. One would not wash his garments in wine (unless he wanted a wine-colored garment) but one would have to be rich to do so. As K&D say, "*Of wine and milk, the most valuable productions of his land, he will have such a superabundance, that, as Jacob hyperbolically expresses it, he may wash his clothes in the blood of the grape, and enjoy them so plentifully, that his eyes shall be inflamed with wine, and his teeth become white with milk.*"

*"Zebulun shall dwell by the haven of the sea;
He shall become a haven for ships,
And his border shall adjoin Sidon.*

*"Issachar is a strong donkey,
Lying down between two burdens;
He saw that rest was good,
And that the land was pleasant;*

*He bowed his shoulder to bear a burden,
And became a band of slaves.*

*"Dan shall judge his people
As one of the tribes of Israel.
Dan shall be a serpent by the way,
A viper by the path,
That bites the horse's heels
So that its rider shall fall backward.
I have waited for your salvation, O Lord!*

*"Gad, a troop shall tramp upon him,
But he shall triumph at last.*

*"Bread from Asher shall be rich,
And he shall yield royal dainties.*

*"Naphtali is a deer let loose;
He uses beautiful words.*

Genesis 49:13-21 (NKJV)

The blessing (prophecy) regarding Zebulun is somewhat echoed in that pronounced by Moses many years later.

They shall call the peoples to the mountain; There they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness; For they shall partake of the abundance of the seas And of treasures hidden in the sand."

Deuteronomy 33:19 (NKJV)

The prophecy is related to the name ("dwelling") of the tribe. Located on the Kishon River with but a little distance to the Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee on might call it a "haven of the sea." K&D say, *"This blessing on Leah's sixth son interprets the name Zebulun (i.e., dwelling) as an omen, not so much to show the tribe its dwelling-place in Canaan, as to point out the blessing which it would receive from the situation of its inheritance."*



Next comes Issachar. I shall let K&D describe his prophecy.

The foundation of this award also lies in the name which is probably interpreted with reference to the character of Issachar, . . . a daily labourer, as an indication of the character and fate of his tribe. "Ease at the cost of liberty will be the characteristic of the tribe of Issachar" (Delitzsch). The simile of a bony, i.e., strongly-built ass, particularly adapted for carrying burdens, pointed to the fact that this tribe would content itself with material good, devote itself to the labour and burden of agriculture, and not strive after political power and rule. The figure also indicated "that Issachar would become a robust, powerful race of men, and receive a pleasant inheritance which would invite to comfortable repose." . . . Like an idle beast of burden, he would rather submit to the yoke and be forced to do the

work of a slave, than risk his possessions and his peace in the struggle for liberty. To bend the shoulder to the yoke, to come down to carrying burdens and become a mere serf, was unworthy of Israel, the nation of God that was called to rule, however it might befit its foes, especially the Canaanites upon whom the curse of slavery rested (Deut 20:11; Josh 16:10; 1 Kings 9:20-21; Isa 10:27). This was probably also the reason why Issachar was noticed last among the sons of Leah. In the time of the Judges, however, Issachar acquired renown for heroic bravery in connection with Zebulun

K&D, Genesis 49:16-17

Next comes Dan.

Dan would not be behind the other tribes of Israel, but act according to his name and as much as any other of the tribes procure justice to his people (i.e., to the people of Israel; not to his own tribe, as Diestel supposes). There is no allusion in these words to the office of judge which was held by Samson; they merely describe the character of the tribe, although this character came out in the expedition of a portion of the Danites to Laish in the north of Canaan, a description of which is given in Judg 18, as well as in the “romantic chivalry of the brave, gigantic Samson, when the cunning of the serpent he overthrew the mightiest foes”

K&D, Genesis 49:16-17

Gad, Asher, and Naphtali follow, concluding all of the sons except those of Rachael. Not much can be gleaned from what is said about Gad except they would be brave and fierce warriors as is indeed shown in the following.

Some Gadites joined David at the stronghold in the wilderness, mighty men of valor, men trained for battle, who could handle shield and spear, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as gazelles on the mountains:

1 Chronicles. 12:8 (NKJV)

Going on to Asher, the prophecy indicates, “*The saying indicates a very fruitful soil. Asher received as his inheritance the lowlands of Carmel on the Mediterranean as far as the territory of Tyre, one of the most fertile parts of Canaan, abounding in wheat and oil, with which Solomon supplied and household of king Hiram.*”



Naphtali is, I suppose, the most difficult to interpret as far as the prophetic statement is concerned. His likeness to “*a deer let loose,*” is like the thought expressed by Job,

“Who set the wild donkey free? Who loosed the bonds of the onager,

Job 39:5 (NKJV)

It apparently refers to the freedom this tribe would have in its territory. It was the most northern and eastern of the tribes (which crossed the Jordan) except for a territory seized by the Danites (see reference above). As far as the second part of the prophecy is concerned, I shall let it go with, “*tribus Naphtali erit fortissima, elegantissima et agilissima et erit facundissima.*” (For those of you who read Latin!)

*"Joseph is a fruitful bough,
A fruitful bough by a well;
His branches run over the wall.
The archers have bitterly grieved him,
Shot at him and hated him.
But his bow remained in strength,
And the arms of his hands were made strong
By the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob
(From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel),
By the God of your father who will help you,
And by the Almighty who will bless you
With blessings of heaven above,
Blessings of the deep that lies beneath,
Blessings of the breasts and of the womb.
The blessings of your father
Have excelled the blessings of my ancestors,
Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.
They shall be on the head of Joseph,
And on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers.*

Genesis 49:22-26 (NKJV)

As one might expect, when Jacob reaches Joseph, the blessing/prophesy is much elongated. In this section the word "blessings" (or form thereof) is found six times. The first part deals with three things: (1) a fruitful bough, (2) a well, and (3) a wall. Joseph is likened to a בן פורת (ben porat), "the son of a fruit-bearer" which translates into the "English" as a "fruitful bough," a branch from a fruit tree which, itself will bear fruit.

"Well" is not a good translation of עין (ayin) which is really a spring. His being by a spring may be the same as the prophetic words of Moses.

*Then Israel shall dwell in safety,
The **fountain of Jacob** alone,
In a land of grain and new wine;
His heavens shall also drop dew.*

Deuteronomy 33:28 (NKJV)

Many, many years later, God would make a judgement on Israel and say,

*"Go up on her **walls and destroy**,
But do not make a complete end.
Take away her branches,
For they are not the Lord's.*

Jeremiah 5:10 (NKJV)

Thus, *The archers have bitterly grieved him, Shot at him and hated him. But his bow remained in strength, And the arms of his hands were made strong.* In addition to the judgement spoken of above, there is still hope in the fact that his "bow remained in strength." K&D say,

From the simile of the fruit-tree Jacob passed to a warlike figure, and described the mighty and victorious unfolding of the tribe of Joseph in conflict with all its foes, describing with prophetic intuition the future as already come (vid., the perf. consec.). The words are not to be referred to the personal history of Joseph himself, to persecutions received by him from his brethren, or to his sufferings in Egypt; still less to any warlike deeds of his in Egypt (Diestel): they merely pointed to the conflicts awaiting his descendants, in which they would constantly overcome all hostile attacks.

K&D, Genesis 49:25-26

We move on to a puzzling portion which deals with "The Stone." *By the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob (From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel). Note the following.*

*The Lord of hosts, Him you shall hallow;
Let Him be your fear,
And let Him be your dread.
He will be as a sanctuary,
But a **stone of stumbling and a rock of offense**
To both the houses of Israel,
As a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*

Isaiah 8:13-14 (NKJV)

*. . .but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a **stumbling block** and to the Greeks foolishness,
1 Corinthians 1:23 (NKJV)*

This is, clearly, a reference to the coming Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. What will this "stone" do? According to this text, *By the God of your father who will **help** you, And by the Almighty who will **bless** you With blessings of heaven above, Blessings of the deep that lies beneath, Blessings of the breasts and of the womb, The blessings of your father.* With all these blessings to be received, it is no wonder that he goes on with the notice that these blessings "Have excelled the blessings of my ancestors, Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers."

More need not be said, he was doubly blessed in the previous chapter and abundantly blessed in this.

"Benjamin is a ravenous wolf;
In the morning he shall devour the prey,
And at night he shall divide the spoil."

Genesis 49:27 (NKJV)

Lastly, we have a curious thing. Benjamin, the son over which Jacob mourned for so many years, gets only three lines of blessing. Remember that these words are more prophetic and blessing. They refer to the future of this tribe. Of this K&D say,

"Benjamin—a world, which tears in pieces; in the morning he devours prey, and in the evening he divides spoil." Morning and evening together suggest the idea of incessant and victorious capture of booty (Del.). The warlike character which the patriarch here attributes to Benjamin, was manifested by that tribe, not only in the war which he waged with all the tribes on account of their wickedness in Gibeah (Judg 20), but on other occasions also (Judg 5:14), in its distinguished archers and slingers (Judg 20:16; 1 Chron 8:40, 12; 2 Chron 14:8; 17:17), and also in the fact that the judge Ehud (Judg

3:15ff.), and Saul, with his heroic son Jonathan, sprang from this tribe (1 Sam 11 and 13; 2 Sam 1:19ff.).

K&D, Genesis 49:28

We looked at this quite a bit when we took note of the left-handedness of this tribe. They say that left-handed people think in the right side of their brains!

All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father spoke to them. And he blessed them; he blessed each one according to his own blessing.

Then he charged them and said to them: "I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, 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 as a possession for a burial place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah. The field and the cave that is there were purchased from the sons of Heth." And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.

Genesis 49:28-33 (NKJV)

This chapter closes with the same sort of request as we saw when Abraham was about to die and when Isaac was also about to die. All wanted to be buried in the family burial spot - a natural desire.

At that time, the "tomb stones" would have read: (1) Abraham (2) Sarah his wife, (3) Isaac, (4) Rebekah his wife, and (5) Leah. Strangely, Jacob's favorite wife is missing. She was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). (Genesis 35:19). What happened to Bilhah and Zilpah? I do not know. There is no mention of their deaths and, in fact, they may have still been alive at that time.

What a way to go! When Jacob had finished all he had to do, he kicked off his bedroom slippers, lifted the sheet, and drew his feet inside and, thus lying there comfortably, "breathed his last." That is the way I want to go. I would imagine we all would like to go like that. While our deaths may not be as easy as that physically,

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

1 Corinthians 15:22 (NKJV)

we can all die with the assurance of where we will be afterward. From what I have heard from time-to-time, that is the worst part of dying - not knowing what is going to happen to you (i.e. if you are not a Christian).

CHAPTER 50

Then Joseph fell on his father's face, and wept over him, and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. Forty days were required for him, for such are the days required for those who are embalmed; and the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.

Genesis 50:1-3 (NKJV)

It was Joseph who “fell on his father’s face.” It was he who received the greatest blessing! He then enlisted the name of the “physicians” to embalm him. Normally, we go to a physician to keep from being embalmed. No one else in the Old Testament, except Joseph himself, was embalmed. Therefore there are no other references to check and compare. Unger notes the following.

*Egyptians preserved the body to keep it in a fit state to receive the soul that once inhabited it. The soul was thought to depend on the body for its future fortunes. Physical decomposition robbed the soul of some part of itself and was even thought to cease existence when the corpse had entirely disappeared. Hence the Egyptians made every possible effort to preserve the body. There were various kinds of mummification, determined by the financial ability of the deceased. During the Old Kingdom the internal organs were removed to canopic jars of marble or alabaster. The lids of those jars were shaped like an animal deity who was supposed to watch over the body. During the seventy-day process of mummification the brain was removed and a resinous paste inserted into the cranial cavity. The body was then entwined elaborately in linen. After bandaging, the body was put into a papyrus carton that was painted with elaborate religious symbols. Nobles were encased in three coffins. A mummy of a great pharaoh, like Tutankhamen, was inserted into a series of precious containers. That particular monarch was entombed in incredible splendor. The inner case of solid gold was inlaid with lapis lazuli, carnelian, and enamel. Gorgeous jewels and scarabs bearing a royal seal of the ruler were placed in early Egyptian tombs. Occasionally a scepter was placed in the hands of the deceased king. For a discussion of the process of mummification, see A. Lucas, *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries*. pp. 307-90.) Herodotus tells of a kind of embalming adopted by the poor. In this process they cleansed the body by an injection of syrnoea and salted it for seventy days, after which time it was returned to the people who brought it. Hebrew. Joseph’s and Jacob’s embalming after the manner of the Egyptians was exceptional (Genesis 50:2, 26). However, wealthy people did anoint the bodies of their loved ones with costly oil (John 12:7), and they wound them in linen with aromatic spices (John 19:39).*

UNGER, “Embalm”

It sounds like an interesting process. I could not help but note that *the brain was removed and a resinous paste inserted into the cranial cavity*. Apparently, there are some politicians (and others) who have been partially embalmed already! There seems to be a discrepancy in Unger’s notes on how long the process took. The text says that forty days were involved, Unger says seventy - the number of days the text says they mourned for him.

And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak in the hearing of Pharaoh, saying, 'My father made me swear, saying, "Behold, I am dying; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me." Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father, and I will come back.' " And Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear."

One might ask, "Why did Joseph not go directly to Pharaoh and seek permission to go and bury his father. I believe K&D are correct when they state the following.

Joseph required the royal permission, because he wished to go beyond the border with his family and a large procession. But he did not apply directly to Pharaoh, because his deep mourning (unshaven and unadorned) prevented him from appearing in the presence of the king.

K&D, Genes 50:6-9

As we have seen all through this section, Pharaoh was more than happy to grant his request.

So 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, as well as all the house of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's house. Only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds they left in the land of Goshen. And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen, and it was a very great gathering. Then they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, and they mourned there with a great and very solemn lamentation. He observed seven days of mourning for his father. And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This is a deep mourning of the Egyptians." Therefore its name was called Abel Mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan.

Genesis 50:7-11 (NKJV)

We noted, in a previous lesson, that there were 70 men (including a few daughters) who went down into Egypt. Including the women and little children, there must have been well over a hundred. But this is seventeen years later and so the number must have grown quite a bit. That would make for quite a procession. That was not all!

In addition, Pharaoh's servants went as did the "elders" (governors, and other officers) of Egypt. This was a real funeral procession. When we buried my dad, they lead us all through Vallejo and it seemed like a long time before we finally got to the cemetery. In this case, they had some two hundred miles to go! This may well have been the biggest and longest funeral procession in history! Well, we did bury (ex)President Reagan not so long ago, starting in the east coast and ending in the west, but they flew in between, not rode in carts! The text says that it was "a very great gathering;"

Why did so many Egyptians go? Someone has noted that the Egyptians really liked to go on funeral processions (seems like a rather weird pastime to me!) There must have been a lot more Egyptians there than relatives of Jacob as the Canaanites looking on assumed it was an Egyptian funeral. Because of this, the place got an additional name, You will recognize part of it, אַבֵּל (abel) = "mourning," just as Adam and Eve had to "mourn" for their second son. The other part, מִצְרַיִם (misrayim) is the Hebrew word for "Egypt" Hence, the place was called "The Mourning of Egypt."

So his sons did for him just as he had commanded them. For his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite as property for a burial place. And after he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers and all who went up with him to bury his father.

Genesis 50:12-14 (NKJV)

When the bit funeral was concluded, all (except Jacob) returned to Egypt. Joseph is mentioned in particular. Some speculate that Pharaoh said to leave the little children in Egypt when they went as a guarantee that Joseph would return. This is possible, but I doubt it.

When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him." So they sent messengers to Joseph, saying, "Before your father died he commanded, saying, 'Thus you shall say to Joseph: 'I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you.' ' Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father.'" And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, "Behold, we are your servants." Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Genesis 50:15-21 (NKJV)

One last thing before we leave Joseph "in a coffin in Egypt. With Jacob gone, the boys feared that Joseph would now punish them for what they did. While Jacob was alive, even though an old man, might have prevented them from doing anything or, even worse, have cursed them like he did Reuban, Simeon, and Levi. Now they were on their own.

So they sent messengers to Joseph. Without even looking at McGee's commentary, I can imagine him saying what cowards they were - sending messengers rather than going themselves. Actually, he doesn't. He says,

Evidently the brothers had gone to Jacob before he died and had expressed their fears regarding what would happen to them after he was gone. They were afraid that Joseph would turn on them and be against them once the father was gone. So Jacob had given them a message to tell to Joseph, and he was sure that Joseph would not persecute them to attempt to get even with them.

McGEE, Genesis 50:15

The brothers must have not been far behind the servants since, as soon as Joseph began to weep, they appeared on the scene to speak for themselves. From this we must note several things about Joseph. "Am I in the place of God?" Have you ever been in a place where you might have done one thing but you knew that was not in the will of God so you did another? Joseph was a man who feared God and obeyed his God. What was going through Joseph's mind at this point?

- *you meant evil against me*
- *God meant it for good*

He realized it was God behind the whole of Genesis 37 to 50 was a plan which God ordained before time began. It was all a part of His grand scheme of things. Have you ever considered that when you goof up - goof up really bad, that God can still use it for good? Now, don't go out an goof up intentionally! But,

. . . we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

Romans 8:28-29 (NASB-U)

There was a certain man in the Church at Corinth who did a terrible deed, so bad that Paul told the Corinthians,

But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person. For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person."

1 Corinthians 5:11-13 (NKJV)

Now, this does not sound like forgiveness, he tells them to remove the man from their fellowship, which they evidently did. Why not forgive him instead? He had not asked for forgiveness as Joseph's brothers had. Even so,

This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him. For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

2 Corinthians 2:6-11 (NKJV)

Even with that, there comes a time when you must extend forgiveness in order to save a (potential) brother in the Lord. Joseph followed this principle when he said, "*Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.*" And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them." We have to allow God to do a work in our hearts so we may forgive the wrongdoings of another. Jesus gave the final answer in all this.

Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

Matthew 18:21-22 (NKJV)

In case you do not have your calculator, $70 \times 7 = 490$. But that is no matter because this is simply an idiom for "many times."

Note that *Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face*. This is the final time we seem them on their faces!

So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's household. And Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. Joseph saw Ephraim's children to the third generation. The children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were also brought up on Joseph's knees. And Joseph said to his brethren, "I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." So Joseph died, being one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Genesis 50:22-26 (NKJV)

Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

Genesis 41:46 (NKJV)

With his relationship with his brothers settled, once and for all and with the famine behind them, Joseph lived in Egypt for $110-30-14=66$ years. (The 14 is the number of years of feast and famine). At this time, Ephraim would have been over 100, so Ephraim could well have great-grandchildren by this time.

As he was about to die, he called his brethren for instructions, as did his fathers before him. He did two related things. First, he gave them the assurance that God would deliver them from Egypt and return them to the land of promise. Before his death, he made his brethren swear to carry his bones away from there because God was, of certainty, going to provide a deliverance for them. Note that he does not say when they should carry his bones away but connects it with their deliverance.

Joseph then died and was embalmed as was his father Jacob. He was then placed in a coffin **in Egypt**. There was a purpose in all of this. Even in death Joseph would serve as a deliverer for Israel. Every time one would see his coffin, the promised release from Egypt would be recalled and longed for.

And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you."

Exodus 13:19 (NKJV)

Many years later this was all fulfilled. How? You will have to undertake a study of Exodus to find that out. One note is in order before we end this study. If Joseph was embalmed, how is it that only his bones went to Canaan? Note that was the promise that Joseph exacted from Israel (verse 25) and Moses fulfilled this promise. I suppose you realize that a mummy contains, among other things, bones. So truly, he bones were taken to Canaan as he asked. It is only incidental that the rest of what remained of him went too.

As we conclude, we have seen a tremendous amount of History. We have gone from Adam to Noah. We have gone from Abraham to Joseph. From here, going on to Exodus, we shall no longer be dealing with families and patriarchs, but with a nation, the nation of Israel. The days of the patriarchs came to an end in Genesis 50. So, if you go on to Exodus, you will see a different kind of history.

Amen

Note: "Year from the Creation" would be better read, "Year from the Creation of Adam."

The Events	Year of Migration to Egypt	Year of Entrance into Canaan	Year from the Creation	Year Before Christ
Abram's entrance into Canaan		1	2021	2137
Birth of Ishmael		11	2032	2126
Institution of Circumcision		24	2045	2113
Birth of Isaac		25	2046	2112
Death of Sarah		62	2083	2075
Marriage of Isaac		65	2086	2072
Birth of Esau and Jacob		85	2106	2052
Death of Abraham		100	2121	2037
Marriage of Esau		125	2146	2012
Death of Ishmael		148	2169	1989
Flight of Jacob to Padan Aram		162	2183	1975
Jacob's Marriage		169	2190	1968
Birth of Joseph		176	2197	1961
Jacob's return from Padan Aram		182	2203	1951
Jacob's arrival at Shechem in Canaan		? 187	? 2208	? 1950
Jacob's return home to Hebron		192	2213	1945
Sale of Joseph		193	2214	1944
Death of Isaac		205	2226	1932
Promotion of Joseph in Egypt		206	2227	1931
Removal of Israel to Egypt	1	215	2236	1922
Death of Jacob	17	232	2253	1905
Death of Joseph	71	286	2307	1851
Birth of Moses	350	565	2586	1572
Exodus of Israel from Egypt	430	645	2666	1492

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