

## PART FORTY-SEVEN

### THE LAST DAYS OF JACOB AND JOSEPH

(Genesis 48:1—50:26)

#### *The Biblical Account*

48 *And it came to pass after these things, that one said to Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. 2 And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. 3 And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, 4 and said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a company of peoples, and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession. 5 And now thy two sons, who were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh, even as Reuben and Simeon, shall be mine. 6 And thy issue, that thou begettest after them, shall be thine; they shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance. 7 And as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when there was still some distance to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way to Ephrath (the same is Beth-lehem).*

8 *And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these? 9 And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, who God hath given me here. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. 10 Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them. 11 And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath let me see thy seed also. 12 And Joseph brought them out from between his knees; and he bowed himself*

with his face to the earth. 13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. 14 And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the first-born. 15 And he blessed Joseph, and said, The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God who hath fed me all my life long unto this day, 16 the angel who hath redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. 17 And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. 18 And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father; for this is the first-born; put thy right hand upon his head. 19 And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it; he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: howbeit his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. 20 And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee will Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh. and he set Ephraim before Manasseh. 21 And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God will be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your father. 22 Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

49 And Jacob called unto his sons, and said: Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the latter days.

2 Assemble yourselves, and hear, ye sons of Jacob;  
And hearken unto Israel your father.

- 3 *Reuben, thou art my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength;  
The pre-eminence of dignity, and the pre-eminence of power.*
- 4 *Boiling over as water, thou shalt not have the pre-eminence;  
Because thou wentest up to thy father's bed;  
Then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.*
- 5 *Simeon and Levi are brethren;  
Weapons of violence are their swords.*
- 6 *On my soul, come not thou into their council;  
Unto their assembly, my glory, be not thou united;  
For in their anger they slew a man,  
And in their self-will they hocked an ox.*
- 7 *Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce;  
And their wrath, for it was cruel:  
I will divide them in Jacob,  
And scatter them in Israel.*
- 8 *Judah, thee shall thy brethren praise:  
Thy hand shall be on the neck of thine enemies;  
Thy father's sons shall bow down before thee.*
- 9 *Judah is a lion's whelp:  
From the prey, my son, thou art gone up:  
He stooped down, he couched as a lion,  
And as a lioness; who shall rouse him up?*
- 10 *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,  
Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,  
Until Shiloh come;  
And unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be.*
- 11 *Binding his foal unto the vine,  
And his ass's colt unto the choice vine;  
He hath washed his garments in wine,  
And his vesture in the blood of grapes;*
- 12 *His eyes shall be red with wine,  
And his teeth white with milk.*
- 13 *Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea;*

*And he shall be for a haven of ships;  
And his border shall be upon Sidon.*

- 14 *Issachar is a strong ass,  
Couching down between the sheepfolds:*
- 15 *And he saw a resting-place that it was good,  
And the land that it was pleasant;  
And he bowed his shoulder to bear,  
And became a servant under task-work.*
- 16 *Dan shall judge his people,  
As one of the tribes of Israel.*
- 17 *Dan shall be a serpent in the way,  
An adder in the path,  
That biteth the horse's heels,  
So that his rider falleth backward.*
- 18 *I have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah*
- 19 *Gad, a troop shall press upon him;  
But he shall press upon their heel.*
- 20 *Out of Asher his bread shall be fat,  
And he shall yield royal dainties.*
- 21 *Naphtali is a hind let loose:  
He giveth goodly words.*
- 22 *Joseph is a fruitful bough,  
A fruitful bough by a fountain;  
His branches run over the wall.*
- 23 *The archers have sorely grieved him,  
And shot at him, and persecuted him:*
- 24 *But his bow abode in strength,  
And the arms of his hands were made strong,  
By the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob  
(From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel),*
- 25 *Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee,  
And by the Almighty, who shall bless thee,  
With blessings of heaven above,  
Blessings of the deep that coucheth beneath,  
Blessings of the breasts, and of the womb.*

26 *The blessings of thy father*

*Have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors  
Unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills:*

*They shall be on the head of Joseph,*

*And on the crown of the head of him that was separate  
from his brethren.*

27 *Benjamin is a wolf that raveneth:*

*In the morning he shall devour the prey,*

*And at even he shall divide the spoil.*

28 *All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them. 29 and he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, 30 in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a burying-place. 31 There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah—32 the field and the cave that is therein, which was purchased from the children of Heth. 33 And when Jacob made an end of charging his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.*

50 *And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him. 2 And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel. 3 And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of embalming: and the Egyptians wept for him threescore and ten days.*

4 *And when the days of weeping for him were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found favor in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying, 5 My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for*

me in the land of Canaan there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again. 6 And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear. 7 And Joseph went 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, 8 and all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house: only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen. 9 And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company. 10 And they came to the threshing-floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, and there they lamented with a very great and sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days. 11 And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abel-mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan. 12 And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them: 13 for his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field, for a possession of a burying-place, of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre. 14 And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.

15 And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, It may be that Joseph will hate us, and will fully requite us all the evil which we did unto him. 16 And they sent a message unto Joseph saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, 17 So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the transgression of thy brethren, and their sin, for that they did unto thee evil. And now, we pray thee, forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of thy father. And

*Joseph wept when they spake unto him. 18 And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we are thy servants. 19 And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? 20 And as for you, ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. 21 Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.*

*22 And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's house: and Joseph lived a hundred and ten years. 23 And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were born upon Joseph's knees. 24 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die; but God will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. 25 And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from hence. 26 So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.*

(1) Jacob's Last Days

1. *The Last Days of Jacob, 47:27—50:14*

(1) *Jacob's Request Concerning His Burial (47:27-31).* Although the years of Jacob's sojourn in Egypt were characterized by rather tragic economic problems for the Egyptians, for Jacob and his household in Goshen they were days of relative abundance and tranquility. Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years and lived to see his progeny "multiply exceedingly," v. 27. Then as his end drew nearer, he sent for Joseph and made him swear—by putting his hand under his father's thigh (cf. Gen. 24:2, 9)—that he would not bury him in Egypt, but take him out of Egypt and bury him in the sepulchre of his fathers (cf. 50:13). Egypt had served as a refuge in a time of

famine, but the patriarch—Israel—insisted that his bones be interred in the “land of promise” alongside the bones of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and his own first wife, Leah. This Joseph was, of course, most willing to do. Thankful that Joseph had assured him of a burial in Canaan, Jacob, or Israel as he is here named, “bowed down upon the bed’s head” (v. 31). Apparently he turned over on his bed, and bent his head toward the head of the bed, as if to prostrate himself before God in worship. The Septuagint, followed by the words of Heb. 11:21, suggests a different pointing of the Hebrew words, reading “bowed himself upon the top of his staff.” According to this reading, which is followed by the Syriac, Jacob used his staff to raise himself in bed and thus to worship, remembering God’s blessings throughout his life. The first reading is said to be the most natural one, and is followed by the Masoretic Text. Leupold suggests that the author of the Epistle quoted from the Septuagint—as he usually did—without suggesting a change because no vital point was involved. An act of worship certainly is intended, no doubt a thanksgiving to God for the peaceful close of his troubled life, and for the assurance he now had of being “gathered to his fathers.”

(2) *Jacob blesses the Sons of Joseph* (48:1-22). These developments came later (as will be noted). In the subsequent history of the nation of Israel, Joseph does not appear as one of the tribes. The reason for this is here indicated. Joseph became two tribes, for his sons Ephraim and Manasseh are hereby adopted by their grandfather and given an inheritance among his own sons. This was done when Joseph, hearing that his father was ill, went to visit him taking his two sons with him. The dying patriarch blessed Joseph and his sons in the name of the God of Abraham and Isaac, the *God who had fed him all his life long, the Angel who had redeemed him from all evil*. Joseph had enjoyed a position of special favor



with Jacob, as we know, and for this reason he now determines to adopt Joseph's two sons. The reference to Rachel, v. 7, shows how keenly he had felt her loss to the day of his death. His adoption of Joseph's sons seems to have been a special tribute to her. He claimed Ephraim and Manasseh for his own, placing them even before Reuben and Simeon, whose lust and violence had forfeited their birthright; and henceforth they were numbered among the heads of the tribes of Israel. Thus Rachel became the mother of three tribes: Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin.

Throughout this whole scene—it will be noted—Israel gave Ephraim the precedence over Manasseh. Though unable to see, he crossed his hands, disregarding Joseph's opposition, so that in blessing them his right hand was on Ephraim's head and his left hand on Manasseh's. Thus was added one more lesson of God's sovereign choice, to the examples of Abel, Shem, Abram, Isaac, and himself, all of whom were younger sons. He foretold for them a prosperity which would make them the envy of the other tribes; and he concluded by giving Joseph an extra portion above his brothers, thus marking him as his heir in respect of *property*; for the *royal power* was given to Judah, and the priesthood was assigned to Levi. "The *division* of these great functions of the patriarchal government is already a mark of the transition from the family to the nation" (ITH, 125).

It should be noted that Jacob mentions here a specific plot of ground which he allotted to Joseph. Whatever the location of this plot, and whatever the circumstances under which it was acquired, its identity continued to be a matter of tradition as late as New Testament times. Sychar is described as "near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son, Joseph" (John 4:5). (This could hardly have been the city of Shechem, having reference to the tragedy visited on that city (Genesis 34), by Jacob's sons, an act

which he indignantly repudiated. (The Nuzi tablets indicate that adoption was a common procedure in patriarchal times. They also show, we are told, that an oral blessing such as that pronounced by Jacob, was considered binding when contested in court. The blessing is a kind of "last will and testament." In Scriptural usage, such a blessing also conveys a prophecy concerning the future. Ephraim became the strongest of the twelve tribes. In the time of the divided kingdom the name of Ephraim was frequently used for Israel (the Northern Kingdom).

(3) *Jacob Blesses His Own Sons* (49:1-27). In poetic form a predictive blessing is pronounced by Jacob on his own sons. Although in some cases severe censure is given, in no case is a tribe disinherited. Some of the tribes had positions of greater honor and usefulness than did others, but the Israelites remained conscious of their descent from the twelve sons of Jacob. Jacob called his sons together to hear the last words of Israel their father (ch. 49). He plainly declared that his words were of prophetic import, and that their fulfilment would reach even *to the latter days* (v. 1). Could we expound these prophetic statements fully we should probably find that, in most, if not all the several blessings, there is a reference—first, to the personal characters and fortunes of the twelve patriarchs; secondly, to the history and circumstances of the tribes descended from them; and, lastly, a typical allusion to the twelve tribes of the spiritual Israel (Rev. 7). "We can trace the first two elements in all cases, and the last is conspicuous in the blessings on Judah and Joseph, the two heads of the whole family. But the details of the interpretation are confessedly most difficult" (OTH, 125). The whole prophecy should be compared with the blessing with which Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death" (Deut. 33). Like the latter, Jacob's prophecy contains a *blessing* on each tribe,

though in some cases it is almost disguised under the censure which his sons had incurred. (For a follow-up of the historical aspects of this last Testament of Jacob, we refer the student to the textbook, *Old Testament History*, by Smith and Fields, published by the College Press, Joplin, Missouri.)

(4) *Fulfillment of Jacob's Prophecies.* The history of all the tribes would furnish striking instances of the fulfillment of these prophecies, more particularly the history of the descendants of Judah and Joseph. From Judah the country was called "Judea," and the people "Jews." This tribe was famous: 1. For its conquests; 2. For the kingdom of David and Solomon; 3. For the birth of the Messiah; 4. For being a distinct people, having governors of their own down to the time of Messiah or Shiloh. Moreover, while the ten tribes of Israel were carried captive into Assyria and entirely lost (by enforced intermingling with their conquering neighbors), those of Judah and Benjamin were held in captivity in Babylon for seventy years only, after which they returned to the land of their fathers. They did not actually pass from the earthly scene as tribes until the fall of Jerusalem, A.D. 70. In Joseph, the blessing of Jacob was fulfilled in his being the progenitor of the two large tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, from whom sprang the great leader Joshua. The curse of Levi was afterward taken off on account of the zeal of the Levites in destroying the worshipers of the golden calf and consecrating themselves to God.

(5) *Death and Burial of Jacob* (49:28—50:1-14). Having concluded his prophetic benedictions, Jacob charged his sons to bury him in the Cave of Machpelah, and yielded up the ghost at the age of one hundred and forty-seven years. His body was embalmed by Joseph's physicians, a process which lasted, we are told, forty days (v. 3) and the mourning lasted in all seventy days (v. 3);

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after which, Joseph obtained permission of the Pharaoh to attend to the funeral of his father. Accordingly, all the house of Jacob and Joseph, together, together with all the servants of Pharaoh and elders of Egypt, left Goshen and made their sad journey back to Canaan, where they buried Jacob in the Cave of Machpelah, having mourned at the threshing-floor of Atad beyond Jordan for seven days; which place was called Abel-mizraim, or "the mourning of the Egyptians" (50:1-13). "Thus they came to *Goren Atad* beyond the Jordan, as the procession did not take the shortest route by Gaza through the country of the Philistines, probably because so large a procession with a military escort was likely to meet with difficulties there, but went round by the Dead Sea" (K-D, 410). This funeral cortege was certainly a magnificent tribute to Joseph and to the high regard in which he was held by the Egyptian powers and people. After having performed his filial duties, Joseph returned to Egypt with his brethren and all their attendants.

### 2. *The Last Days of Joseph*

(6) *Joseph Again Forgives His Brethren* (vv. 15-21). After Joseph's return to Egypt, Joseph's brothers feared that he might now seek revenge for their former cruelty, but, having sent a message praying for his forgiveness, he reassured them by many kind words and good offices.

(7) *The Death of Joseph* (vv. 22-26). At last, fifty-four years after the death of his father, Joseph having seen the grandsons of his two sons, felt that his dying hour was approaching. He assured his brothers that God would certainly lead them to the land of promise, and enjoined them to carry his bones with them. (Joseph's faith surely proves that he was never a prey to the paganism of the Egyptians, but to the end of his life cherished faith in the God of his fathers). He died, at the age of one hundred

and ten years; his body was embalmed and placed in a coffin in which it was preserved until the Exodus of the Children of Israel with them. The story ends as in a glorious sunset, as realized by comparing Hebrews 11:22 and Josh. 24:32.

## ADDENDA

### PREDICTIONS CONCERNING THE DESTINIES OF THE TWELVE

1. *Reuben*, the first-born, who had committed incest with Bilhah. "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel."

2. *Simeon*, 3. *Levi*, who had treacherously slain the Shechemites for their insult to Dinah: "Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."

4. *Judah*: "Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. . . . His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.*"

5. *Zebulun*: "Shall be an haven for ships."

6. *Issachar*: "Is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: . . . and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute."

7. *Dan*: "Shall judge his people, . . . shall be a serpent by the way, and an adder in the path."

8. *Gad*: "A troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last."

9. *Asher*: "His bread shall be fat."

10. *Naphtali*: "A hind let loose; he giveth goodly words."

11. *Joseph*: "A fruitful bough by a well. . . . The God of thy father, who shall help thee; and the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and blessings of the womb: . . . the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph."

12. *Benjamin*: "Shall ravin as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil." Gen. xviii. & xlix.—From *Analysis and Summary of Old Testament History*, by J. T. Wheeler, published 1879, by Work and Company, Philadelphia.

### THE DYING BLESSING OF JACOB

In its present form the Blessing of Jacob in Genesis forty-nine is a poem of the early days of the kingdom. In David's day the more ancient tradition regarding the patriarch's blessing was cast into this poetical form. The poem makes a striking series of characterizations of the different tribes,—the morally unstable Reuben, the socially disorganized Simeon and Levi, the warlike Judah, the ignobly lazy Issachar, the brave Gad and fortunate Asher, the prosperous Joseph and alert

little Benjamin. These are the conditions of the days of the developing kingdom. The tribes had varied fortunes. Some prospered, some had great reverses; some became pre-eminent, a few barely existed. The poem is very valuable as an expression of the "collective consciousness of Israel" on their conduct and destiny.—From *History of the Hebrews*, by Frank Sanders, Ph.D., Scribners, 1914.

### ON JOSEPH AS A TYPE

"One very noticeable feature of this 'history (*toledoth*) of Jacob' is the predominance of Joseph practically throughout the entire section. Yet for all that, though he is the mainspring of the movement of the history, Jacob is still the dominant character. We remind of this, for though Joseph is prominent, he is not to be esteemed too highly. God never appeared to him as He did to his father Jacob, or to Isaac and to Abraham. Joseph dare not be ranked higher on the level of faith than his forefathers. It is a case of misplaced emphasis to say that 'the hero himself is idealized as no other patriarchal personality is . . . (Joseph) is the ideal son, the ideal brother, the ideal servant, the ideal administrator.' In contact with non-Israelites Joseph surely achieved remarkable prominence, but for the inner, spiritual history of the kingdom of God he does not come up to the level of his fathers.

"There is another feature of his life which is rather striking and demands closer attention. In a more distinct way than in the lives of the fathers Joseph stands out as a type of Christ. Abraham exemplified the Father's love who gave up His only-begotten Son. Isaac passively typifies the Son who suffers Himself to be offered up. But in Joseph's case a wealth of suggestive parallels come to the surface upon closer study. Though these parallels are not stamped as typical by the New Testament, there can hardly be any doubt as to their validity. For as Joseph is a righteous man and in this capacity is strongly antagonized and made to suffer for righteousness' sake, but finally triumphs over all iniquity, so the truly Righteous One, the Savior of men, experiences the same things in an intensified degree.

"Lange lists the details of this type in a very excellent summary. He mentions as prefiguring what transpired in the life of the great Antitype, Jesus Christ, the following: 'the envy and hatred of the brethren against Joseph and the fact that he is sold; the realization of Joseph's prophetic dreams by the very fact that his brethren seek to prevent his exaltation by destroying him; the fact that the malicious plot of the brethren results in the salvation of many, however, in a very particular sense for the brethren and for Jacob's house; the judgment of the Spirit upon the treachery of the brethren and the victory of forgiving love; Judah's surety for Benjamin and his rivalry with Joseph in the spirit of self-sacrifice; the revival of Jacob in his joy over the fact that the son long deemed dead was alive and eminently successful'" (Leupold, EG, 950-951).

Pascal (Pensees) beautifully supplements this typology as follows: "Jesus Christ typified by Joseph, the beloved of his father, sent by his father to see his brethren, etc., innocent, sold by his brethren for twenty pieces of silver, and thereby becoming their lord, their savior, the savior of strangers, and the savior of the world; which had not been but for their plot to destroy him, their sale and their rejection of him. In prison Joseph innocent between two criminals; Jesus Christ on the cross between two thieves. Joseph foretells freedom to the one, and death to the other, from the same omens. Jesus Christ saves the elect, and condemns the outcast for the same sins. Joseph foretells only; Jesus Christ acts. Joseph asks him who will be saved to remember him, when he comes into his glory; and he whom Jesus Christ saves

asks that He will remember him, when He comes into His kingdom" (Everyman's Library Edition, p. 229, trans. by Trotter). "The ways of divine providence could hardly be stranger, and God's guiding hand in history is marvelously displayed to the eyes of faith" (EG, 951-2).

## ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE STORY OF JOSEPH

The substantial accuracy of the Joseph narratives has often been noted. What has been discovered in relation to Egypt in late years is in general accord with the allusions of these narratives to Egyptian usages and institutions. This supports the conclusion that they were put into form at an early date, since the Egypt of Joseph's day differs in many respects from the Egypt of later times. It also emphasizes our sense of reality as read the stories.

Dr. Speiser states the basic truths concerning the narrative about Joseph and the Egyptian background against which the events are painted. "No appreciable progress has been made in the effort to establish the historical setting of the episode, and with it the identity of the Pharaoh 'who knew Joseph.' A faint hint, but no more than that, may be contained in vs. 39, which has Pharaoh refer to God with obvious reverence. An Egyptian ruler of good native stock would not be likely to do so, since he was himself regarded as a god. When the Pharaoh of the Oppression speaks of Yahweh in Exodus, he does so in defiance, or in extreme straits, but never in sincere submission. The attitude of the present Pharaoh, therefore (barring an oversight on the part of the author), might conceivably suggest that he was not a traditional Egyptian ruler; and such a description would fit best some member of the foreign Hyksos Dynasty (ca. 1730-1570). It has long been assumed on other grounds that the Hyksos age offered the best opportunity for the emergence of someone like Joseph. Nevertheless, the narrative before us furnishes too slender a basis for historical deductions. On the other hand, *the incidental detail is authentically Egyptian.* Pharaoh elevates Joseph to the typically Egyptian post of Vizier (43). This is corroborated by the transfer to Joseph of the royal seal (42), inasmuch as the Vizier was known as the 'Seal-bearer of the King of Lower Egypt,' as far back as the third millenium. . . . The gift of the gold chain is another authentic touch. The three names in v. 45 are Egyptian in type and components; so, too, in all probability, is the escort's cry, Abrek.' While the story is the main thing, the setting is thus demonstrably factual. And although the theme and the setting together cannot as yet be fitted with an established historical niche, the details are not out of keeping with that phase of Egyptian history which can be independently synchronized with the patriarchal period." (ABG, 316).

Other Egyptianisms which may be cited are the following: Joseph's position as Potiphar's "major domo" was common in Egypt (39:5-6); Egyptian situations similar to that of Potiphar's wife appear from the later Egyptian "Tale of the Two Brothers" (39:7-20); from the Rosetta Stone is indicated the pharaoh's custom of releasing prisoners on his birthday and on other great days (40:20); shaving was an Egyptian custom, not Semitic (41:14); the investiture of an official with signet, linen, and neck chain, is commonly recorded (41:42); inscriptions indicate failure of the Nile to flood for as long as 7 years, and the distribution of grain by government officials in times of famine (41:54); nobility and priests are kept apart, even from commoners, much more, foreigners (43:32); Egyptians ostracized shepherds as beyond standards of cleanliness (46:34); crown and priests got all land titles some time before the New Empire (47:20); and embalming took time and substance (50:2-3).

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"That Jacob and his sons went down into Egypt under Joseph's viziership has been denied by some of the more radical critics. . . . But this historical tradition is so inextricably woven into the fabric of Jewish history that it 'cannot be eliminated without leaving an inexplicable gap' (Albright, FSAC, 183ff.). Numerous evidences of Israel's sojourn in Egypt appear in the Genesis-Exodus part of the Pentateuch" (UBD, 607). (1) Among such are the following: the surprising number of Egyptian personal names that show up in the Levitical genealogies. Such names as Moses, Hophni, Phineas, Merari, Putiel, and Asir, are unquestionably Egyptian: this fact is corroborated by 1 Sam. 2:27. (2) Local coloring which appears in numerous instances in the Pentateuch. Many of these bits of Egyptian coloring exist "which are beautifully illustrated by Egyptological discoveries" (Albright, in *Young's Analytical Concordance*, 20th Ed., 1936, p. 27. See his somewhat lengthy presentation (at the back of this book), "Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands." This article is 43 pages in length and is invaluable for archaeological corroboration of the Pentateuchal record). Among these "bits of local coloring" we mention the following: (1) the title of Egyptian officials such as the 'chief of the butlers' and 'chief of the bakers' (Gen. 40:2) which are the titles of *bona fide* palace officials mentioned in Egyptian documents (cf. also Gen. 39:4; 41:40; 41:42, 43). (2) Famines of Egypt are illustrated by at least two Egyptian officials who give a resume of their charities on the walls of their tombs, listing dispensation of food to the needy 'in each year of want.' One inscription from c. 1000 B.C., actually mentions the famine of seven years' duration in the days of Pharaoh Zoser of Dynasty III, about 2700 B.C. (3) Such matters as dreams, the presence of magicians (cf. 41:8), mummification (50:2, 26), and Joseph's life span of 110 years (50:22), the traditional length of a happy and prosperous life in Egypt, are abundantly illustrated by the monuments. (4) The family of Jacob's settlement in Goshen, some seventy persons (46:26-34). This area has been clearly identified with the eastern part of the Delta around the Wadi Tumilat. This region was one of the most fertile parts of Egypt, "the best of the land" (47:11). (4) A clear archaeological parallel is the representation of West Semitic immigrants going down into Middle Egypt around the year 1900 B.C. The scene is sculptured on the tomb of one of Senwosret II's officials named Khnumhotep at Beni Hasan, A party bringing products from Southwest Asia appear under the leadership of 'Sheik of the highlands, Ibshe.' The name and the faces are clearly Semitic. Their thick black hair falls to the neck, and their beards are pointed. They are dressed in long cloaks and are armed with spears, bows and throw sticks. The accompanying inscription reads, 'the arrival, bringing eye paint, which thirty-seven Asiatics bring to him' (Finegan. L.A.P., 1946, p. 83). (5) Canaanite place names in the Delta: Succoth (Exo. 12:37), Baal-zephon (Exo. 14:2), Migdol (Exo. 14:2), Zilu (Tel Abu Zeifah), and very likely Goshen itself (Albright, FSAC, 1940, p. 84).

"The sudden appointment of a foreign-born slave to unlimited authority over a rich, cultured, proud and powerful people could take place nowhere else than in an autocratically governed Oriental state. Probably it could not have occurred in Egypt except at one of two periods, the century when the Hyksos kings were rulers of Egypt (c. 1680-1580 B.C.) or the later portion of the eighteenth dynasty (c. 1580-1350 B.C.) when Egypt under the leadership of a series of conquering kings became a world power, ready to utilize brave, resourceful leadership from any source. The background of the Joseph-story is surely Egyptian. The data available do not enable us to determine with assurance under which group of rulers Joseph rose to dignity and ac-



completed his reforms. The very general conclusion that Rameses the Great of the nineteenth dynasty was the Pharaoh of the Oppression makes it rather necessary to choose between the two periods preceding. That Joseph's Pharaoh was a later king of the eighteenth dynasty is in excellent accord with the facts as we know them today, but no one can be positive in the matter. Kings Amen-hotep III and IV (1411-1358 B.C.) held close relations with Asia and her peoples. Their inscriptions mention foreigners who rose in Egypt to great authority. The three hundred clay tablets discovered in 1888 at Tel-el-Amarna in Egypt are letters exchanged between foreign kings and vassals and the reigning Pharaoh. In addition to throwing a frank and vivid light upon the life of Palestine and Egypt in that day, these letters exhibit the tolerant and friendly disposition of the rulers of Egypt. A Joseph would have found a welcome at their court" (HH, 44-45). (The Amarna letters, excavated from the mound of Amarna, about 200 miles south of Cairo. These were in the form of hundreds of clay tablets in Accadian cuneiform, sent to the Pharaohs by kings in western Asia and by petty princes in Palestine (Canaan) who were ruling there under the supervision of Egyptian inspectors in the 14th century B.C. (See BWDBA, or any up-to-date general work on Biblical archaeology.)

### HERODOTUS: ON EMBALMING IN EGYPT

"There are a set of men in Egypt who practise the art of embalming, and make it their proper business. These persons, when a body is brought to them, show the bearers various models of corpses, made in wood, and painted so as to resemble nature. The most perfect is said to be after the manner of him whom I do not think it religious to name in connexion with such a matter; the second sort is inferior to the first, and less costly; the third is the cheapest of all. All this the embalmers explain, and then ask in which way it is wished that the corpse should be prepared. The bearers tell them, and having concluded their bargain, take their departure, while the embalmers, left to themselves, proceed to their task. The mode of embalming, according to the most perfect process is the following: They take first a crooked piece of iron, and with it draw out the brain through the nostrils, thus getting rid of a portion, while the skull is cleared of the rest by rinsing with drugs; next they make a cut along the flank with a sharp Ethiopian stone, and take out the whole contents of the abdomen, which they then cleanse, washing it thoroughly with palm-wine, and again frequently with an infusion of pounded aromatics. After this they fill the cavity with the purest bruised myrrh, with cassia, and every other sort of spicery except frankincense, and sew up the opening. Then the body is placed in natrum for seventy days, and covered entirely over. (This included the whole period of mourning. The embalming in natrum (saltpetre or soda) occupied only forty days.) After the expiration of that space of time, which must not be exceeded, the body is washed, and wrapped round, from head to foot, with bandages of fine linen cloth, smeared over with gum, which is used generally by the Egyptians in the place of glue, and in this state it is given back to the relatives, who enclose it in a wooden case which they have made for the purpose, shaped into the figure of a man. Then fastening the case, they place it in a sepulchral chamber, upright against the wall. Such is the most costly way of embalming the dead.

If persons wished to avoid expense, and choose the second process, the following is the method pursued: Syringes are filled with oil made from the cedar-tree, which is then, without any incision or disemboweling, injected into the bowel. The passage is stopped, and the body laid in natrum the prescribed number of days. At the end of the time

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the cedar-oil is allowed to make its escape; and such is its power that it brings with it the whole stomach and intestines in a liquid state. The natrum meanwhile has dissolved the flesh, and so nothing is left of the dead body but the skin and bones. It is returned in this condition to the relatives, without any further trouble being bestowed upon it.

The third method of embalming, which is practised in the case of the poorer classes, is to clear out the intestines with a purge, and let the body lie in natrum for seventy days, after which it is at once given to those who come to fetch it away." (Herodotus, "Father of History," traveled extensively, and reported what he actually witnessed himself. His account of Egyptian embalming is generally acclaimed as being "on the whole very accurate." He lived in the 5th century B.C. The section quoted is from his History (*The Persian Wars*), Bk. II. chs. 86-91. Modern Library edition, trans. by George Rawlinson.)

### REVIEW QUESTIONS ON PART FORTY-SEVEN

1. How did the Israelites fare in Egypt?
2. How long did Jacob sojourn in Egypt?
3. With what great hopes did Jacob and his household start for Egypt? How were they received by the Pharaoh?
4. What promises did Jacob require Joseph to make?
5. Who was brought to Jacob when he became ill?
6. How did Jacob show affection for Joseph's sons?
7. What requests did Jacob make in regard to his burial?
8. How did Jacob show his affection for Joseph's sons?
9. How did Jacob arrange his hands on Joseph's sons? What did this signify?
10. Which of Joseph's sons was to become the greater? How was this fulfilled later?
11. What did Jacob bequeath especially to Joseph? To Judah? To Levi? What happened later with respect to Levi's descendants?
12. What do we learn about adoption in Canaan from the Nuzi tablets?
13. What was the specific ground allotted to Joseph? How is this related to what New Testament passage?
14. For what purpose did Jacob call his own sons together?
15. What three references were implicit or explicit in the blessings which Jacob pronounced on his sons?

16. What striking fulfillments occurred with respect to Jacob's blessing on Judah?
17. In what sense was this blessing Messianic? When and how was it fulfilled?
18. How was the blessing pronounced on Joseph fulfilled?
19. Describe the circumstances of the death and burial of Jacob. Where did it take place?
20. What other persons were interred in this burial place?
21. After the interment, what did Joseph do? What attitude did he take toward his brothers at this time?
22. How old was Joseph at his death? What evidence do we have that Joseph was faithful to the faith of his fathers? What does this indicate as to his character?
23. What was done with his corpse, and why was it done?
24. Describe the art of embalming as Herodotus describes it in his *History*.
25. Where was Joseph ultimately buried?
26. State the analogies between the life of Joseph and the "life" of Christ.
27. Name the progenitors of the twelve tribes as they appear when finally rearranged by the substitution of the two sons of Joseph.
28. Discuss the archaeological accuracy of the Joseph Narratives. List the Egyptianisms that occur in these accounts.
29. Where was the Land of Goshen and what were the special characteristics of this Land?
30. Correlate Heb. 11:22 and Josh. 24:32, and show the significance of this related testimony.
31. For what great events was the stage now set for the future unfolding of God's Eternal Purpose?
32. How many generations of his descendants did Joseph live to see?