

A Rood Awakening!

Presents

Awakening in the Word

By Glenn McWilliams of TK TORAH KEEPERS
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THE OVERVIEW

Having been granted both permission and direction from the Holy One, Israel and his descendants make their journey to Egypt. Judah is sent ahead of Jacob and the family to serve as an emissary. Joseph must now make preparation for the arrival of his father and extended family in Egypt. The reunion between Israel and Joseph is joyously tearful. Joseph instructs and prepares his brothers for an audience with Pharaoh. Pharaoh meets Joseph's brothers and then his father. The children of Israel are settled into the land of Goshen, where they will serve as keepers of Pharaoh's herds. The famine continues to take its toll upon the people of Egypt and elsewhere. Joseph continues to serve Pharaoh by enlarging his holdings and power over Egypt. Our portion ends with the ominous story of Israel asking Joseph to swear an oath to bury him in Machpelah in the land of Canaan at the time of his death.

THE OUTLINE

- Genesis 46:28 Judah sent as emissary
- Genesis 46:29-30 Israel and Joseph reunited
- Genesis 46:31-34 Joseph instructs and prepares his family
- Genesis 47:1 Joseph reports to Pharaoh
- Genesis 47:2-6 Joseph's brothers stand before Pharaoh
- Genesis 47:7-10 Jacob stands before Pharaoh
- Genesis 47:11-12 Israel settles in Goshen
- Genesis 47:13-26 Joseph continues to serve Pharaoh
 - Genesis 47:15 Joseph trades food for money
 - Genesis 47:16-17 Joseph trades food for cattle
 - Genesis 47:18-22 Joseph trades food for land
 - Genesis 47:23-26 Joseph trades food for service
- Genesis 47:27-28 The children of Israel are possessed by the land
- Genesis 47:29-31 Israel prepares for his death

SUGGESTED STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why does Jacob send Judah on ahead of the rest of the family?
2. What prophetic shadow picture is seen in the events of this narrative?
3. Who greets Joseph?
4. Where else are Israel's words echoed?
5. What does Israel mean by his words to Joseph?
6. What instructions does Joseph give his brothers?
7. Why are shepherds an abomination to the Egyptians?
8. Why does Joseph instruct his brothers to admit they are shepherds?
9. Why does Joseph present Jacob to Pharaoh only after he presents his brothers?

10. What does Jacob do when he sees Pharaoh?
11. Why is it Jacob, not Israel, who stands before Pharaoh?
12. How does Jacob describe his life to Pharaoh?
13. What is meant by “the days of the years of my life”?
14. What does Israel make Joseph swear?
15. Why does Israel make Joseph swear?
16. How do Joseph’s actions come back later to haunt the children of Israel?

THE TEXT

Bereshit 46:28-47:31 *And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen. ²⁹And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. ³⁰And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive. ³¹And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me; ³²and the men are shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have. ³³And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation? ³⁴That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.*

^{47:1}*Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen. ²And he took some of his brethren, even five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh. ³And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our fathers. ⁴They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come; for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen. ⁵And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee: ⁶the land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle. ⁷And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. ⁸And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? ⁹And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. ¹⁰And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh. ¹¹And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, 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.

¹² *And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families.* ¹³ *And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine.* ¹⁴ *And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.* ¹⁵ *And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? For the money faileth.* ¹⁶ *And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail.* ¹⁷ *And they brought their cattle unto Joseph: and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year.* ¹⁸ *When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands:* ¹⁹ *wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate.* ²⁰ *And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh's.* ²¹ *And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof.* ²² *Only the land of the priests bought he not; for the priests had a portion assigned them of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they sold not their lands.* ²³ *Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land.* ²⁴ *And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones.* ²⁵ *And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.* ²⁶ *And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part; except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaoh's.* ²⁷ *And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly.* ²⁸ *And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years.* ²⁹ *And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt: ³⁰but I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace. And he said, I will do as thou hast said.* ³¹ *And he said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head.*

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After more than twenty years apart, Israel and Joseph are once again united. We note from the start of this portion that there is a peculiar pattern present in the lives of Jacob and Joseph. We know from the beginning of this conflict-laden narrative that Joseph was seventeen years old when he left Israel to visit his brothers.

These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report. (Genesis 37:2 KJV)

In this week's portion we learn that Jacob is 130 years old when he meets Pharaoh, and a little later in the portion we are told that Jacob lives to the age of 147. This means that Jacob was in Egypt for seventeen years before he died.

And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years. (Genesis 47:28 KJV)

We observe the following pattern:

- Israel is with Joseph for seventeen years
 - Israel is bereft of his son for more than twenty years
- Israel is with Joseph for seventeen years

This pattern seems to highlight the more than twenty years that Israel was bereft of his son. We should not miss the fact that Isaac, Jacob's father, was likewise bereft of his son for over twenty years. Because of Jacob's deception of Isaac and the stealing of Esau's blessing, Jacob was forced to flee to Haran for safety. Rebekah sent Jacob away from the family for "a few days."

*Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; ⁴⁴and **tarry with him a few days**, until thy brother's fury turn away; ⁴⁵until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day? (Genesis 27:43-45 KJV)*

But Jacob quickly fell in love with Rachel and agreed to work for her father for seven years as a dowry for his bride to be.

*And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee **seven years** for Rachel thy younger daughter. ¹⁹And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me. ²⁰And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her. (Genesis 29:18-20 KJV)*

After seven years of labor, however, Laban deceived Jacob and gave him Leah, the older sister, instead of Rachel. When confronted with his deceitful action, Laban convinced Jacob to work yet another seven years for Rachel.

*And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? Did not I serve with thee for Rachel? Wherefore then hast thou beguiled me? ²⁶And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. ²⁷Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me **yet seven other years.** ²⁸And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also. (Genesis 29:25-28 KJV)*

When Jacob fulfilled his seven-year commitment for Rachel, Laban once more convinced Jacob to stay for yet another six or seven years to tend Laban's flocks. However, tensions mounted between the two men, and Jacob eventually left with his family. In a heated argument of accusations against one another, Jacob revealed that he had been with Laban for twenty years.

***This twenty years** have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. (Genesis 31:38 KJV)*

Jacob left Canaan after hearing of the threats of his brother Esau and willingly remained separated from his mother and father for more than twenty years. For twenty years Isaac and Rebekah grieved the absence of their son. Now Jacob was suffering the same grief for his son for over twenty years. Could this be another example of YHWH'S measure-for-measure justice? I can remember on a few occasions when I was being a little stubborn or quick-witted (mouthy) that my own father would ask the Creator to bless me with children just like me! I knew he was truly asking for justice. I would suggest that it is possible that Jacob was being chastised for his voluntary absence from his aging mother and father.

If Jacob's grieving was a matter of chastisement for grieving his parents, what is clear is that after twenty years, the time of separation and grief is over. As Jacob eventually returned home and was reunited with his father Isaac, so now Israel is to be reunited with his beloved son Joseph. Israel has received not only direction and permission to travel down to Egypt but also a powerful promise that YHWH will be with him during his time of sojourning in the land of Egypt.

And Elohim spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. ³And He said, I am Elohim, the Elohim of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: ⁴I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes. (Genesis 46:2-4 KJV)

Emboldened by this promise, Israel loads up his family, seventy souls in all with all their possessions, and heads down to Egypt. With so many people and possessions, the journey from Beersheba to Goshen could take several days to several weeks. Judah is sent ahead of the caravan to Joseph to make preparations for the arrival of the family. Note here that Judah has indeed risen to a position of some prominence within the family. We might ask why Judah is the one chosen to lead the way and announce the family.

Normally, such an honor and responsibility would fall to the firstborn. We have already observed, however, that Reuben, the firstborn son of Jacob, was discredited in his father's eyes because of his behavior with Bilhah, his father's concubine.

And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve. (Genesis 35:22 KJV)

Before he dies, Jacob prophesies over his children and recalls this shameful event, which must be a heavy weight upon his heart.

Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: ⁴unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch. (Genesis 49:3-4 KJV)

We also witnessed how Reuben's attempt to persuade Jacob to allow Benjamin to travel to Egypt with him and his brothers was likewise rejected.

And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again. ³⁸And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. (Genesis 42:37-38 KJV)

Clearly Reuben has lost favor in the eyes of his father.

Simeon and Levi would be next in line according to the birth order of the brothers, but these two sons likewise acted impulsively and evoked their father's rebuke.

And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. (Genesis 34:25 KJV)

And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house. (Genesis 34:30 KJV)

We also recall that it was Simeon that Joseph cast into prison until his brothers returned.

If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses. (Genesis 42:19 KJV)

And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes. (Genesis 42:24 KJV)

It may well be that Jacob thinks that Simeon, with his propensity toward impulsive violence, still holds a grudge for the time spent in prison and, therefore, may not be dependable in service as an emissary.

This leaves Judah as the next in line according to the brothers' birth order. Although Judah had earlier fallen into a life in the flesh, he proved himself successful before Joseph in obtaining Benjamin's and Simeon's release from bondage. Since Judah already gained favor with Joseph at their last meeting, it seems apparent that Judah is the best emissary to send ahead to Joseph to make preparations for the family's arrival. Yet, there may be another prophetic reason that Judah is sent to Joseph.

To understand this prophetic shadow picture we must leap forward in time to another stage in the history of the children of Israel. After forty years of wandering in the wilderness, the children of Israel finally cross over the Jordan River and enter the promised land. Under the leadership of Joshua, the conquest of the land of Canaan begins. The land of Canaan eventually becomes the land of Israel. Each tribe is given a

portion of the land as its inheritance.¹ The land of Israel is ruled by judges the Sovereign One raises up to govern the various tribes.² During this time the children of Israel live as a loose confederation of tribes bound together by a common faith. It is not until the anointing of King Saul that Israel begins to take shape as a nation.³ It is King David, however, who truly unites the tribes and makes Israel a single nation.⁴ Unfortunately, this time of unity is not long-lasting. David reigns over a united Israel for forty years. After King David's death, his son Solomon reigns in splendor for forty years. After Solomon's death, his son Rehoboam becomes king. It is under Rehoboam's reign that a tax revolt splits the kingdom of Israel into two houses – the House of Judah and the House of Israel, which is also known as the House of Joseph or the House of Ephraim.

And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against the king.²⁷ And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father.²⁸ And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph. (1 Kings 11:26-28 KJV)

That they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying,⁴ Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.⁵ And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.⁶ And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people?⁷ And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.⁸ But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him:⁹ and he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?¹⁰ And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.¹¹ And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.¹² So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day.¹³ And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him;¹⁴ and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.¹⁵ Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from YHWH, that He might perform His saying, which YHWH spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat. (1 Kings 12:3-15 KJV)

So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. (1 Kings 12:16 KJV)

¹ Numbers 26:55

² Judges 2:16

³ 1 Samuel 10ff

⁴ 2 Samuel 5:3-5

From this time forward the two houses of Israel are at odds with one another. Each has its own king and its own cultic practices, priesthood, and temples. YHWH eventually judges the House of Israel for its idolatrous practices, and it is dispersed into exile to the four corners of the earth.⁵ The House of Judah is also exiled to Babylon, but the House of Judah repents and returns to the land of Israel. The House of Joseph, however, remains scattered among the nations to this very day. We know that eventually, the two houses must be reconciled.

The word of YHWH came again unto me, saying, ¹⁶Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: ¹⁷and join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. ¹⁸And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these? ¹⁹Say unto them, Thus saith Adonai YHWH; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in Mine hand. ²⁰And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. ²¹And say unto them, Thus saith Adonai YHWH; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: ²²and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: ²³neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be My people, and I will be their Elohim. (Ezekiel 37:15-23 KJV)

In the story of the reconciliation of Judah and Joseph we see a prophetic shadow picture of the reconciliation of the whole nation of Israel. If this is so, then there are some details in this narrative that we should be mindful of. First, we should note that Judah leaves the land of Israel and turns to Joseph in Egypt twice for help and survival. We should note that Judah does not recognize his brother on the first visit. I believe that the House of Judah has already turned to his brother Joseph once, albeit unknowingly, at the time of World War II. This was especially so during the time leading up to the creation of the nation of Israel by the United Nations in 1948. During this time of great persecution, many of the House of Israel among among the churches of various nations fought for and risked much for their brother Judah's survival.

I believe there will come yet a second time when Judah (the nation of Israel) will be under attack (perhaps Zechariah's thermonuclear war),⁶ and they will once again be forced by conditions beyond their control to turn to their brothers among the nations for help and deliverance. It will be at this second visitation that their eyes will be opened and they will recognize their brother Joseph (the scattered House of Israel).

There are two details which I feel are critical we understand. First, we should note that Judah comes to Joseph, not the other way around. There is much teaching in the Hebrew Roots/Messianic Movement that attempts to bend Joseph to Judah. For many in this movement, Judah is being defined exclusively and erroneously as rabbinic or Pharisaic Judaism. These same teachers seek to bring the House of Israel, in particular the believers in Yeshua as the Messiah, under the Talmudic influences that are polluting the House of Judah. This attempt to move Joseph (the House of Israel, including Messianic believers) into rabbinic Judaism is contrary to the Scriptures.

According to our narrative, the reconciliation between the brothers begins when Judah comes to Joseph, not the other way around. In other words, the two houses of Israel will be reconciled only when the

⁵ Leviticus 26:33; Deuteronomy 4:27; Nehemiah 1:8

⁶ Zechariah 5:1ff

House of Judah comes to the House of Joseph, forsakes its rabbinic *takanot* and *ma'asim*,⁷ and begins living the pure Torah as Moses received it and Yeshua taught it. Once Judah comes to Joseph, his brother will be revealed to him through the works of the pure Torah! Eventually, the reconciled houses will be restored and led out of the nations to inherit the full land⁸ of promise.

Again, I want to emphasize that the reconciliation does not happen because the House of Joseph bends to or accepts the pollution of Judah. Reconciliation happens when Judah renounces and repents of its Babylonian pollutions and begins living the pure Torah. Although we may yet be living in exile among the nations, the House of Joseph, moved by the Spirit of the Holy One, has begun seeking out and living by the Torah as Moses received it and Yeshua taught it. As Joseph has clearly stated to his brothers, it is Elohim who has brought us into nations that we may be a means of preservation and deliverance to our brother Judah.

Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for Elohim did send me before you to preserve life. ⁶For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. ⁷And Elohim sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. ⁸So now it was not you that sent me hither, but Elohim: and He hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. (Genesis 45:5-8 KJV)

Joseph welcomes his brothers but does not bend to their treacherous ways. Joseph was brought down to Egypt⁹ but remained in the spiritual realm. Therefore, we need to hold our ground and not bend to the false pressure to bring about the reconciliation of the two houses by compromising the pure Torah. In exile we must learn to live in the world and yet not be of the world. We must learn to protect the pure Torah. The same may be said of our dealings with our brother Judah. When communing with our brother Judah, we must be careful not to bend to the Babylonian pollution of their exile. There is no gain to be found in leaving the pollution of our own exile only to embrace the pollution and mixture of Judah's exile. YHWH is calling us both to return to the pure Torah. The reconciliation of the two houses of Israel will not be found in man-made policies or religious traditions; it will be found in the Spirit of the Holy One.

The reality of the spiritual nature of this reunion is confirmed in the fact that it is Israel (the spiritual man), not Jacob (the carnal man), who greets his son Joseph.

And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. ³⁰And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive. (Genesis 46:29-30 KJV)

We may recall that it was also Israel who sent Joseph on a mission of peace to his brothers more than twenty years ago.

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. (Genesis 37:3 KJV)

And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I. (Genesis 37:13 KJV)

Here we see that the special bond that exists between Israel and Joseph is more than merely a father/son bonding. There is a great spiritual bond between these two men. By the use of the name Israel, we see

⁷ *Takanot* and *ma'asim* are authoritarian injunctions and edicts made by the rabbis which often contradict the Torah.

⁸ Genesis 15:18

⁹ Genesis 39:1

that both Joseph and Israel have the spiritual strength to go down geographically into a land of paganism, idolatry, perversity, and darkness and continue to live their lives in the spiritual realm.

When Israel meets Joseph, there is much embracing and weeping. Israel's greeting to Joseph may seem somewhat peculiar.

And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive. (Genesis 46:30 KJV)

Israel's words are not a death wish; they are an expression of great joy and gratitude. It is as though Israel is declaring that he can expect nothing else in life that could bring him greater fulfillment. For Israel, life is now complete. Let us compare these words to those uttered later by another great spiritual man.

*And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Spirit of the Holy One was upon him. ²⁶And it was revealed unto him by the Spirit of the Holy One, that he should not see death, before he had seen YHWH'S Messiah. ²⁷And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Yeshua, to do for him after the custom of the law, ²⁸then took he him up in his arms, and blessed Elohim, and said, ²⁹**YHWH, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace**, according to Thy word: ³⁰for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, ³¹which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; ³²a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel. (Luke 2:25-32 KJV)*

Like Israel, Simeon could not imagine a greater blessing than the fulfillment of the promise made to him to see the Savior of Israel.

We have already stated that Joseph and Israel are blessed with the fortitude to live in the spiritual realm even while living in a very carnal culture. Therefore, Joseph now prepares to protect his brothers as well. In his preparation for his family's introduction to meet Pharaoh, Joseph gives his brothers very precise directions.

And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me; ³²and the men are shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have. ³³And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation? ³⁴that ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians. (Genesis 46:31-34 KJV)

Joseph intends to settle his brothers in the land of Goshen, which is a very fertile flood plain of the Nile. This land is indeed very suited for raising cattle and sheep. What is peculiar in these instructions is that Joseph tells his brothers to admit to Pharaoh that they are something the Egyptians consider an abomination. If one is trying to make a good impression upon Pharaoh and win political favor, it would seem quite counterproductive to declare oneself an abomination. Joseph's intention is clearly something other than mere political gain. To understand this part of his instructions requires us to understand a little of the history of Egypt.

While there is much debate among modern scholars concerning the meaning of these words, the best explanation still seems to be found in the popular understanding based upon the words of an ancient Egyptian historian named Manetho.

Tutimaeus. In his reign, for what cause I know not, a blast of God smote us; and unexpectedly, from the regions of the East, invaders of obscure race marched in

confidence of victory against our land. By main force they easily overpowered the rulers of the land, they then burned our cities ruthlessly, razed to the ground the temples of the gods, and treated all the natives with a cruel hostility, massacring some and leading into slavery the wives and children of others. Finally, they appointed as king one of their number whose name was Salitis. He had his seat at Memphis, levying tribute from Upper and Lower Egypt, and always leaving garrisons behind in the most advantageous positions. Above all, he fortified the district to the east, foreseeing that the Assyrians, as they grew stronger, would one day covet and attack his kingdom. In the Saite [Sethoroite] nome he found a city very favorably situated on the east of the Bubastite branch of the Nile, and called Auaris after an ancient religious tradition. This place he rebuilt and fortified with massive walls, planting there a garrison of as many as 240,000 heavily-armed men to guard his frontier. Here he would come in summertime, partly to serve out rations and pay his troops, partly to train them carefully in maneuvers, and to strike terror into foreign tribes.¹⁰

Donald B. Redford points out that the word “obscure” used in the English translation of Manetho’s description would better be translated as “vile” or “ignoble.”

The Greek asamoi means simply “vile, ignoble,” which is surely only a rendering of the common Egyptian hsy, “vile,” which in Egyptian texts of all periods characterizes foreign peoples. As such, it is not a confession of ignorance but a pejorative. Moreover, “Hyksos” is not a gentilic at all, but as numerous examples from the third and second millennium will attest, merely the Greek garbling of the common way of designating a “foreign ruler.”¹¹

The Hyksos invaded Egypt in the seventeenth century B.C.E. and reigned for roughly a century before being driven out just prior to Joseph’s journey to Egypt. The Hyksos were said to be a vile and cruel people. It was also taught that they were a Semitic speaking nomadic people who were shepherd warriors. We have already discussed the Egyptians’ xenophobic nature in previous portions. But here we can understand why the Egyptians would be leery of Semitic speaking shepherds from the east coming to dwell in their land. The question we must raise is why Joseph would desire to identify his family with such a vile and despised form of people. The answer can be seen in the fact that Joseph is not concerned with political gain. Instead, Joseph seeks to situate his family in a place somewhat separated from the urban centers of carnality and the cultic centers of Egypt. By admitting that one’s family practices that which is considered vile and abominable in Egypt, the children of Israel will be separated from all that is considered vile and abominable to YHWH.

And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. ²⁶Ye shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: ²⁷(for all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;)²⁸that the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you. ²⁹For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people. ³⁰Therefore shall ye keep Mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am YHWH your Elohim. (Leviticus 18:25-30 KJV)

When YHWH thy Elohim shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land;³⁰take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before

¹⁰ Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times, Donald B. Redford, Princeton University Press, Pg. 98

¹¹ Ibid., Pg. 100

thee; and that thou enquire not after their elohim, saying, How did these nations serve their elohim? Even so will I do likewise. ³¹Thou shalt not do so unto YHWH thy Elohim: for every abomination to YHWH, which He hateth, have they done unto their elohim; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their elohim. (Deuteronomy 12:29-31 KJV)

Joseph's brothers follow Joseph's instructions and admit to Pharaoh that they are indeed shepherds. While this occupation may be abominable to the Egyptians, Pharaoh nonetheless promotes Joseph's brothers to the position of royal shepherds and guardians of the royal flocks. Under Joseph's rule, this position becomes very prominent. As the famine worsens in the land, the citizens of Egypt soon find themselves unable to buy grain; therefore, they begin to barter with Joseph for their livestock. All the herds and flocks become the property of Pharaoh.

And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? For the money faileth. ¹⁶And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail. (Genesis 47:15-16 KJV)

After presenting his brothers to Pharaoh, Joseph presents his aged father. We might ask why Joseph does not present Jacob, the head and patriarch of the family, before he presents his brothers. I would suggest that since the first presentation involves the humble request for refuge and land, Joseph spares his father's dignity from this humbling position. It is fine for the brothers to humbly request land in which to graze their sheep and to admit that they are shepherds, but Israel is something more than this. Therefore, Joseph presents his father to Pharaoh only after all the formalities are out of the way. It is interesting to note that Jacob blesses Pharaoh.

And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. (Genesis 47:7 KJV)

There are two points we must make concerning the matter of the blessing. First, we should note that it is customary for the greater to bless the lesser.

And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. (Hebrews 7:7 KJV)

Thus, we see that in this interaction, Jacob takes the position of the greater or the better. We should also note, with some sense of surprise, that it is Jacob, not Israel, who blesses Pharaoh. Generally, we would expect to see Israel performing a spiritual matter such as a blessing. Instead, it is the carnal man Jacob who assumes the greater position and blesses Pharaoh. I will suggest two reasons for this subtle change. First is the reality that spiritual men still possess and live in the carnal realm and world. What is different between Jacob and Pharaoh is the fact that as a spiritually motivated man, Jacob exercises dominion over his animal nature; therefore, he sanctifies even his carnal nature. We may also recall that Pharaoh is considered a deity in Egypt; thus, the Torah may be making the very profound statement that the sanctified carnal nature of Jacob is superior to even the deities of Egypt! This may also be a part of the reason that shepherds are an abomination in Egypt. We should remember that Abel was a shepherd, and, as such, he exercised dominion over the animal realm. Thus, he offered an acceptable offering unto YHWH. Cain, on the other hand, was a man of the earth. He brought forth the fruit of the flesh (dust), which was unacceptable to YHWH. Here too we witness that the spiritual man who exercises dominion over his animal nature, sanctifying even his flesh, is more acceptable than the one who glorifies his flesh, as was the case in Egyptian culture. A second reason that it is Jacob and not Israel who blesses Pharaoh is because Pharaoh is not a spiritual man. In some manner, to grant a spiritual blessing would be to cast pearls before swine. Would Pharaoh appreciate or even understand the significance of a spiritual event such as a true blessing, or would he simply dismiss it as pleasantries?

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. (Matthew 7:6 KJV)

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit of the Holy One teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of Elohim: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:13-14 KJV)

So it is that we witness Jacob, not Israel, blessing Pharaoh.

Note that in the exchange between Pharaoh and Jacob, Jacob describes his life as a pilgrimage.

And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. (Genesis 47:9)

In other words, Jacob does not see his life in this world as permanent. We should also note that he describes his age in terms of "the days of the years." Once again, we should understand this as the sign of a righteous life. We see this pattern repeated throughout the Scriptures when speaking of the righteous line or of righteous people.¹² We should never take our days for granted. We should never assume that there will be a tomorrow or a next year. Instead, we should learn to number our days and live each one to the full.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. (Psalm 90:12 KJV)

Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: ¹⁴whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. ¹⁵For that ye ought to say, If YHWH will, we shall live, and do this, or that. (James 4:13-15 KJV)

We can also understand from Jacob's use of the word "pilgrimage" that he does not intend to dwell in Egypt permanently. This truth is made abundantly clear through the oath he makes Joseph swear to him before his death.

And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt: ³⁰but I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying place. And he said, I will do as thou hast said. ³¹And he said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head. (Genesis 47:29-31 KJV)

There are two questions that should be raised at this time. The first addresses the reason Jacob is concerned about where he would be buried, and the second addresses why he makes Joseph swear an oath. To understand Jacob's concern about his burial place, we must first understand a statement made in an earlier verse. The narrative of Israel's settling in the land of Goshen is interrupted in part by the story of Joseph's continued exploits as the governor of Egypt. In other words, Genesis 47:13-26 is an insertion into the story of Israel's settlement in Egypt. It is clear that Genesis 47:27 could easily be placed immediately after Genesis 47:12, as follows:

And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, 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. ¹²And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with

¹² Genesis 5:8, 14, 17, 20, 23, 27, 31; 9:29; 11:32; 35:28

bread, according to their families. ²⁷And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly. (Genesis 47:11-12, 27 KJV)

In these verses we read twice that Joseph gives his brethren “possession” in the land of Egypt. Owning land and homes in Egypt brings with it a sense of stability and citizenship. Thus, it is possible that Jacob is witnessing a growing identification and acceptance of life in Egypt as opposed to their life as heirs of the land of Canaan. Confirming this reality is the fact that the Hebrew of Genesis 47:27 may be read as follows:

*And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; **and the land possessed them**, and they grew, and multiplied exceedingly. (Genesis 47:27 KJV)*

We see in this variant reading that the rich, fertile land of Goshen and the power, prominence, and privilege of being Pharaoh’s officers and official shepherds may be turning the sons of Jacob from their inheritance in the famine-stricken land of Canaan. I would suggest to you that Jacob’s impassioned plea to Joseph to bury him in the land of Canaan is Israel’s final effort to return his children’s affections toward their fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and himself) and to the land of their inheritance. Israel may feel that if he can cause his sons to leave the confines of Egypt and return to the land of promise, the enchantment of Egypt will be broken and they will again return to their rightful place as heirs of the promises to Abraham.

As we learned earlier in the story of Eliezer swearing an oath to Abraham, the reason for the oath was not a lack of trust but to give strength to the one taking the oath. Jacob clearly understands the position that Joseph is in. The purpose of the oath is not because Jacob lacks faith in Joseph; it is because he knows that the oath may be necessary for Joseph to convince Pharaoh of his need to leave Egypt and return to the land of Canaan. This will indeed prove true, as we shall see in future portions.

One final point that should be addressed is the insertion of the narrative of Joseph’s exploits into the narrative of Israel’s settlement in Goshen. The reason for this insertion is not arbitrary. Rather, what we learn from this insertion are the details as to how Pharaoh becomes the “owner” of Egypt. We are told that as the years of famine continue, Joseph systematically acquires the property and people of Egypt.

Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. ²⁴And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones. (Genesis 47:23-24 KJV)

These words help to set up the scenario we shall encounter in the opening chapters of the book of Exodus, where the children of Israel are already the slaves of Pharaoh. It is ironic that the one who saves Egypt by enslaving it to Pharaoh will eventually be forgotten in the conscience of the Egyptians, and his own family will become enslaved by the very policies he enacts in his efforts to save Egypt.

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