

March 7-12, 2022

Genesis 37-41

“THE LORD WAS WITH JOSEPH”

Summary: *Genesis 37. Jacob loves and favors Joseph, who is hated by his brothers—Joseph dreams that his parents and brothers make obeisance to him—His brothers sell him into Egypt.*

Genesis 38. Judah has three sons by a Canaanite woman—Er and Onan are slain by the Lord—Tamar, disguised as a harlot, bears twins by Judah.

Genesis 39. Joseph, prospered by the Lord, becomes ruler of Potiphar’s house—He resists the advances of Potiphar’s wife, is falsely accused, and is cast into prison—The keeper of the prison commits the prison’s affairs into Joseph’s hands.

Genesis 40. Joseph interprets the dreams of Pharaoh’s chief butler and chief baker—The butler fails to tell Pharaoh about Joseph.

Genesis 41. Pharaoh dreams of the cattle and the ears of grain—Joseph interprets the dreams as seven years of plenty and seven of famine—He proposes a grain storage program—Pharaoh makes him ruler of all Egypt—Joseph marries Asenath—He gathers grain as the sand upon the seashore—Asenath bears Manasseh and Ephraim—Joseph sells grain to Egyptians and others during the famine.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What parallel does Joseph former days have with Joseph of Latter-days?

The account of ancient Joseph is

truly a chiasma paralleled by the story of a modern Joseph (Smith). It is a prefiguring of the Savior’s mission. This lesson covers Joseph’s life as he is chosen by his father and then rejected by his brothers. In slavery, his identity is unknown, yet he serves and saves those around him. Later, he serves and saves his brothers before identifying himself. Ancient Joseph was blessed and authorized by his father Jacob when Jacob laid his hands on Joseph’s head. “In the same way that priests lift their hands in blessing, so parents place their hands on the heads of their children when they bless them. (For example, in the Bible, Jacob blessed his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, by placing his hands on their

heads.) Placing the hands on another person is symbolic not only of transferring blessing but also of passing on authority. In *talmudic* times (135-500 C.E.), scholars received their rabbinic ordination through the symbolic act of placing of the hands (known as *semikhah*).” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

What does the “other part” of the House of Israel anticipate from a Joseph lineage?

In modern Judaism, there is a powerful cultural and legendary history of Joseph and his future role. Some of these excerpts can give “modern Joseph” a little insight to what the Jews are still anticipating. “Based on the famous story of Joseph and his brothers, the *Talmud* (Jewish Biblical interpretations) warns against favoring one child over another . . . Jealousy is considered such a serious evil that it is mentioned in the Ten Commandments where the tenth commandment is an outright prohibition of envy: . . . the rabbis of

the *Talmud* developed the philosophy that a truly rich man is one who is happy with his portion in life and does not envy others.”

(**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) In Jewish eschatology (the part of theology or the science of ‘last things’ concerning death, judgment, and destiny of the humankind) *Mashiach ben Yoseph* (Messiah son of Joseph), also known as *Mashiach bar/ben Ephraim* in Aramaic/Hebrew, is a Jewish messiah from the tribe of Ephraim, a descendant of Joseph. (**Rabbi Proessor Dr. Jacob Immanuel Schochet, "Moshiach ben Yossef,"** https://moshiach.com/?option=com_content&task=view&id=5&Itemid=30)

The origins of this personage are debated. Some regard it as a rabbinic invention, but others feel that its origins are in the *Torah*. (**D.C. Mitchell, *Messiah ben Joseph* (Newton Mearns: Campbell, 2016); 'Firstborn *shor and rem: A Sacrificial Josephite Messiah in 1 Enoch 90.37-38 & Deuteronomy 33.17'*, *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 15 Mar 2006, p. 211-28)**

“According to the *Talmud* (Jewish Biblical interpretations), the Messiah will be a descendant of the House of David and will be preceded by a secondary Messiah from the House of Joseph . . .”

(**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) When Avraham HaKohen Kook (1865-1935) was appointed the first *Ashkenazi* (European descendance) Chief Rabbi in Palestine in the 1920's, he was asked if the Jews could now build the Temple (destroyed since year 70 A.D.). His response was that the priestly rights were gone, and he referred to the great 12th century rabbi Moses Maimonides, who said, in effect, “We are waiting for a Messiah Ben-Joseph, to him will be given the keys of the gathering of Israel, he will restore Temple worship.”

How did Joseph's life reflect the Messiah's role?

The chiasm shows that ancient Joseph saved his family, and they did not know who he was. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe that beginning with the Latter-day Joseph (Smith) an Ephraimite (as well as Judah),

the order of “saving his brothers” has returned, (more foreign aid goes to Israel from the U.S.A., the land of Joseph, than from all other countries combined) and they (Israel) don't know that it is “Joseph.” In the meridian of times there was “One” who saved us all - and most people still don't know it.

What do Jews have to say about moral standards?

In reflecting on ancient Joseph's high standards and principles, we read of the modern Jewish attitude for themselves and others (non-Jews) on sexuality and morality. “Gentiles were expected to practice at least the seven Noachide Laws. These were considered by rabbinic tradition to be the minimum moral duties enjoined on all men and were derived from divine demands addressed to Adam and Noah. The laws consisted of prohibitions against idolatry, blasphemy, bloodshed, sexual sins, theft (including the taking of booty in war and dishonesty in economic life), and eating flesh from live animals, as well as the command to establish a legal system, presumably to enforce the prohibitions. The gentile was not obliged to acknowledge God but was at least obliged to abandon the worship of false gods. Unlike Jews, Noachides were not required to suffer martyrdom rather than break the law against idolatry; they were, however, required to choose martyrdom rather than shed human blood. In some instances, gentiles were also required to observe Sabbath and the festivals, and to fast on the Day of Atonement.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

How did God intend for us to be blessed with the Godly gift of procreation?

The Children of Israel, past and present are taught about the value of moral standards. “Feelings of hatred, envy, self-indulgence, sexual drives, greed are woven into man's nature as God created him. But these impulses can be redirected by the *yezer ha-tov*, (the good inclination) guided and disciplined by the laws of the Torah, so that instead of destructive forces they become

creative powers for good.” “Detailed legislation concerning sexual behavior can be found in the Bible as well as in the *Talmud* (Jewish Biblical interpretations) and subsequent rabbinic literature. Celibacy (complete abstinence from all sexual activity) is discouraged as an unnatural state and detrimental to the human personality.” “The primary restriction of sexual activity in Jewish law is that it should take place within marriage, as an expression of love between husband and wife as well as out of a desire to fulfill God’s commandments. An element of holiness is added by the laws of *niddah* (separation during the period of menstruation;) which ensure that the couple does not indulge in sex on impulse but rather directs the act to holiness.” “In general, moderation and self-control in sexual activity are encouraged. Chastity, the goal to be aimed for, does not mean the avoidance of all sex but of illegal sex. This includes adultery, incest, sodomy, rape and seduction.” “Judaism encourages modesty as one of the means to chastity. Thus, the Jewish woman is enjoined to dress and act modestly at all times. Furthermore, a man is forbidden to be alone with a woman with whom he is not permitted to have sexual relations from considerations of both chastity and modesty.”

([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

How awesome is it to be a good servant?

Ancient Joseph learned a profound lesson in becoming a slave. Once he changed his mind, he simply became the very best slave or servant he could be. He learned what the Lord would later teach to his disciples. “But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.” ([Matthew 23:11-12](#)) “He that is ordained of God and sent forth, the same is appointed to be the greatest, notwithstanding he is the least and the servant of all.” ([Doctrine and Covenants 50:26](#)) When his brothers sought “foreign aid” from the Egyptians, their own brother, Joseph, was the “servant” to save them.

First, he did so without revealing his true identity. When he finally revealed himself, it was in humble family circumstance, and he prophesied that in Latter-days another Joseph would save his family again. From the Book of Mormon, we find a restatement of that prophecy: “. . . For behold, thou art the fruit of my loins; and I am a descendant of Joseph who was carried captive into Egypt. And great were the covenants of the Lord which he made unto Joseph. Wherefore, Joseph truly saw our day. And he obtained a promise of the Lord, that out of the fruit of his loins the Lord God would raise up a righteous branch unto the house of Israel; not the Messiah, but a branch which was to be broken off, nevertheless, to be remembered in the covenants of the Lord that the Messiah should be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the spirit of power, unto the bringing of them out of darkness unto light--yea, out of hidden darkness and out of captivity unto freedom,” ([2 Nephi 3](#))

How can I understand more about the Latter-day Joseph?

Yea, Joseph truly said: Thus, saith the Lord unto me: A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins; and he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy loins. And unto him will I give commandment that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy loins, his brethren, which shall be of great worth unto them, even to the bringing of them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers . . . And his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father. And he shall be like unto me; for the thing, which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand, by the power of the Lord shall bring my people unto salvation . . . who shall do much good, both in word and in deed, being an instrument in the hands of God, with exceeding faith, to work mighty wonders, and do that thing which is great in the sight of God, unto the bringing to pass much restoration unto the house of Israel, and unto the seed of thy brethren.” ([Excerpts from 2 Nephi 3](#))

What started the restoration of the keys in these Latter-days?

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints feel this prophecy has been fulfilled in the nineteenth century through the mission of Joseph Smith Jr. Part of the testimony of Joseph Smith included the heavenly visitor who laid his hands on him and his companion, Oliver Cowdery. “. . . While we were thus employed, praying and calling upon the Lord, a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us, saying: Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.” (Joseph Smith History 1:68-69) Ancient Joseph overcame his “pride” and served his brothers forgivingly (at first without identifying himself). He thereby established a pattern for a latter-day Joseph, who for the time being is keeping his identity from Judah and should release all forms of pride as he serves his family forgivingly. The concept of being a servant is also paramount in Judaism: “Being the Chosen People means receiving God's love and protection, but it also means accepting responsibilities. The prophet Isaiah says that Israel, God's servant, has been chosen for the task of spreading salvation. Israel must convince the other nations of the world that there is only one God, and must spread the true religion, and through it, happiness.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

How will the people of Ephraim and Judah restore a temple in Jerusalem?

Another pattern that is interesting is that the first Israelite temple in the land of Israel was in the hands of the tribe of Ephraim. “Situated in the mountains of central *Erez* (land of) Israel, Shiloh was in the territory of the tribe of Ephraim and housed the “temporary sanctuary” or Tabernacle

containing the Ark of the Law.”

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) The latest temples outside the land of Israel are now in the hands of Ephraim, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The destiny is that Joseph and Judah will eventually come together to build the temple in Jerusalem. I see that clearly because the priesthood keys, the authority, the priestly rights have been restored to Ephraim. Add to that thought the lovely account of the prophet John Taylor (1808-1887) At the beginning of the century, the Prophet and President of the Church, John Taylor was speaking to Baron Rothschild as he was showing him the Salt Lake Temple. Rothschild said, “Elder Taylor, what do you mean by this temple? What is the object of it? Why are you building it?” President Taylor answered, “Your fathers had among them prophets, who revealed to them the mind and will of God; we have among us prophets who reveal to us the mind and will of God, as they did. One of your prophets said--The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, but who may abide the day of his coming? For he shall sit as a refiner's fire and a purifier of silver! . . . sir, will you point me out a place on the face of the earth where God has a temple?” Rothschild said, “Do you consider that this is that temple?” President Taylor answered, “No, sir, it is not . . . The Lord has told us to build this temple so that we may administer therein [ordinances] for our dead and also to perform some of the sacred matrimonial alliances and covenants that we believe in, that are rejected by the world generally, but which are among the purest, most exalting and ennobling principles that God ever revealed to man.” Rothschild asked, “Well, then, this is not our temple?” And President Taylor responded, “No . . . you will build a temple, for the Lord has shown us, among other things, that you Jews have quite a role to perform in the latter days, and that all the things spoken by your old prophets

will be fulfilled, that you will be gathered to old Jerusalem, and that you will build a temple there; and when you build that temple, and the time has arrived, `the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple.'" (**Gospel Kingdom, John Taylor, Page 293**)