

The Story of Joseph

Just Fine

Part 50 – June 16, 2013



Bes, c. 1800-1750 BC

Ancient Egyptians excelled in the worship of gods, goddesses, and rulers considered to be demigods (*partly* god). This is Bes, an Egyptian idol of protection from the Middle Kingdom, Joseph's day. Do you know the difference between idol worship and worshipping the God of Joseph? **Idols are always and only served as a means of *getting* something, which makes *all* idol worship, *self-centered*.** This is the opposite of what Jesus came to accomplish.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father — to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. — Revelation 1:5b-6 NIV

Fulfillment comes as we serve our Father with joyful, grateful worship, in response to His great love and deep desire to bless us, and give us our eternal best. **Why did you come to church: to *only get*, or to *also give*?** If it's *only* to *get*, you might be worshipping *yourself*!

But, what can we give *God*? *One thing*. **The *only thing* He asks you to give: your heart.** We can't earn or add-to *anything* He's done; but, **I give Him my heart in appreciation, intimacy, and obedience.**

As we wind down Joseph, I've been thinking about those who said they'll be back when this series is over, because they don't see how the OT names and interactions and parallels relate to *them*.



I understand those who don't care for the *style*, but the Old Testament is the Bible that young Yeshua bar Yosef (Jesus, son of Joseph) grew up with; *it relates to Him! It's the part that's filled with what He came to fulfill.* And, we'll fail to appreciate *so much* of the New Testament, *and* Covenant, without the Old. It greatly shapes the way we see Him and serve Him. **How do you perceive the Bible? Rule book? Policy manual? Antique newspaper (with a few familiar names and places, but mostly outdated reports)?** Jesus' Bible, the Old Testament, says, "Your Word is a lamp". (Psalm 119:105) Jesus told His followers that ...

"No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light. For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has **entered in** will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him." — Luke 8:16-18 NIV

I see the Bible as an adventure, to be entered into, and experienced with my Father, the Author, who loves to reveal Himself, and relate to me, in every jot and tittle!¹ So many of you have been asking how I'm finding what I've been teaching. I'll show you! But, I have to warn you, it's *fun*. Jesus didn't say *anything* without using riddles and parables. (Mark 4:34)



We left off after Joseph revealed himself to his brothers.

Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, **[and they ran in alarm to report it]** and Pharaoh's household heard about it. – Genesis 45:1-2 NIV

Which means Potiphar, Captain of the Palace Guard, heard about it, which means his elite squad was armed, assembled, and *eavesdropping*.



[We pick up the story, 14 verses later] When the news reached Pharaoh's palace that Joseph's brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased. **[Phew!]** – Genesis 45:16 NIV

Little Sen was mentored by Joseph. He loved Joseph and relied on Joseph now that His own father, who released Joseph, had died.² And, he knew about Joseph's desire to reunite with his family.

Senusret III, 5th King, 12th Dynasty

Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and return to the land of Canaan, **[in Hebron, in Israel]** and bring your father **[Jacob]** and your families back to me. **['families' is plural because Joseph had three step-moms, Leah, Bilhah, and Zilpah, in his father's dysfunctional, polygamous, tribe]** I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you can enjoy the fat of the land.' **[The grazing land of Goshen, preapproved for Jacob's tribe by Pharaoh, and mentioned by Joseph in 45:10]** You are also directed to tell them, 'Do this: Take some carts from Egypt for your children and your wives, **[the royal, black Cadillacs, with the gold rims and the Corinthian leather]** and get your father and come. Never mind about your belongings, because the best of all Egypt will be yours.'" So the sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them carts, as Pharaoh had commanded, and he also gave them provisions for their journey. To each of them he gave new clothing ... – Genesis 45:17-22a NIV

He owed 'em the clothes. Know why? They tore theirs in grief when he made 'em think Benjamin stole his silver cup. (44:13) But, they tore *his* robe when he was young; so, aren't they *even*? In their shame-based-culture, a man had to pay a just fine, in a demonstrable way, or his public shame couldn't be removed. If a poor man wronged a rich man, the rich man was considered evil if he didn't offer a just, demonstrable way for the poor man to pay.

... but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver – Genesis 45:22b NIV

¹ "I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, **not the smallest letter**, [i.e. jot] **not the least stroke of a pen**, [i.e. tittle] **will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.**" (Matthew 5:18)

² We covered this in the message, "**Lord of the Feast**" (12/16/12)

Why would he give such a large gift *only* to Benjamin? Last week, when they confessed their sin, Joseph removed their guilt by reassuring them that God had worked *their sin* into *His plans*.

To remove their shame, he must find a way to let 'em pay in a demonstrable way, which he clearly does, because they return home, heads held high, bearing gifts from the one they wronged. But, no punishment or fine of *any* kind is cited after he reveals himself. So, how'd he do it? He deducted a fine from a gift!

“Besides the carts, provisions, and clothes, I’m giving you each \$300 shekels of silver. However, I’m charging you each \$300 shekels for your crime. And, since only Benjamin is innocent, only he will receive the silver. So, when you return home, you need only point to Benjamin (who also foreshadows Jesus) to prove to yourselves and others, that a \$3,000 debt (\$300 x 10 brothers) was paid.”



By giving Benjamin the silver, Joseph gives his brothers redemption and self-respect. **Joseph, like Jesus, found a way to pay the price on their behalf and take their shame.** There was just no way that they could pay the just fine for what they'd done. So, the debt was paid to Joseph, *by* Joseph.

Do you demonstrate *your* gratitude for how Jesus paid *your* debt?

Why \$300 shekels? What an odd thing for Moses to record and not explain. And this is precisely *why* it stands out! I *know* there's an answer; I know the Lord has *concealed* something. So, I *enter in*. I pray. I read the commentaries. I Google. I Wikipedia. And, I ask everyone who comes across my path! If you came in early this week, chances are I asked *you*. Why 300?

It is the glory of God to conceal a matter. (Prov 25:2) Seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened. (Mat 7:7) You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. (Jer 29:13)

So, I talk to the Author who's hidden *something* in there. Sometimes out loud. Am I getting warmer? What am I missing? Come on, give me a clue. And, I *don't* give up. **I know He'll reveal if I'll pursue!** How do you read your Bible? The ol' boring way? I approach it like a riddle, a puzzle, an incredible game of seek-and-find, that contains all the secrets of purpose and meaning! There's only *one* other place in the whole story where shekels are mentioned.

... his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites ... – Genesis 37:28b NIV

It must have *something* to do with *20 shekels*. He gave Benjamin 300 shekels; 300 divided by 20 is 15. 15 what, God? What in the story equals 15, or adds up to 15? I know there's *something!* I've got some head-scratchers I've been working on for *years*. But, I won't give up, because I know there's *nothing* hidden He won't disclose, nothing concealed He won't bring into the open. Then, while we were praying for people at staff meeting. BANG!

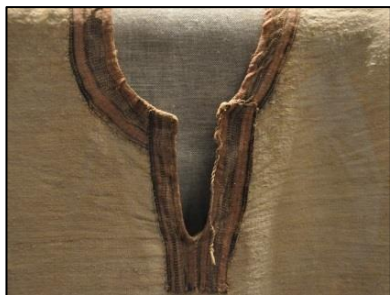
The brothers charged the Ishmaelites 20 shekels when they took Joseph. So, Joseph sets a just fine at 20 shekels for the eleven brothers, three step-mothers, and one father they took from *him*. That's 15, and 15 x 20 = 300, the amount paid to Benjamin!

And, while I was searching for the silver shekels, I stumbled across something else hidden in the story. This is the last time silver [Strong's H3701, keceph] is mentioned in regard to the brothers.

Keceph is repeated so often when the brothers arrive, that translators combine some, and use the word *money* for variation. I've condensed the verses to include every keceph (silver) regarding the brothers. Count out loud when you hear the *keceph*.

... put each man's **silver** back in his sack ... (42:25) ... he saw his **silver** ... (42:27) "My **silver** ..." (42:28) ... each man's **silver** ... their bundles of **silver** ... (42:35)³ "... double the amount of **silver** ... return the **silver** ..." (43:12) ... double the amount of **silver**... (43:15) ... because of the **silver** ... (43:18) "... every man's **silver** ... our **silver** ..." (43:21)⁴ "... additional **silver** ... our **silver** ..." (43:22) "I received your **silver**." (43:23) "... put each man's **silver** ..." (44:1) "... my cup, the **silver** one ... with the **silver** ..." (44:2) "... the **silver** ... why would we steal **silver** ...?" (44:8) ... but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of **silver** ... (45:22)

Just as Joseph hid silver in the sacks, the Lord hid silver in the story! So, what's the hidden message? **Your Father is much more playful and relational than you give Him credit for!**



Linen Tunic, c. 1428-1351 BC

To Benjamin he gave 300 shekels of silver and five sets of clothes. – Genesis 45:22c NIV

Why five sets of clothes? It's not cultural. And, it's not explained. It's an invitation! To discover something that's only revealed to those who seek, knock, ask, and pursue. So, are there five sets of clothes hidden in the story? YES! And all five are ... next week.

Until then, your Father is calling you to come out, or rather, come in, and play. It's not a rule book. It's not a policy manual. It's not an out-of-date newspaper. It's a relationship. And it's alive!

You don't need to know the culture or the language to find the five sets or what they represent. But, it is tricky. Hint: The 1st one's in chapter 37 and the 5th one's in chapter 41. God put 'em in the first *five* chapters ... *of course He did!*

And, if you want to see something really powerful, look for what the Father hid even under Joseph's and Moses' noses. Jesus had the same five sets of clothes!

³ Young's Literal Translation

⁴ Revised Standard Version uses the word twice, as in the original Hebrew, but translates "Key'sef" as "money"