

# The Story of Joseph

## Dislocating Israel

Part 52 – June 30, 2013

Joseph revealed himself to the brothers who betrayed him, forgave ‘em, found a way to remove their guilt and shame, and sent ‘em home with 20 loaded donkeys, to fetch their father.

... when they told him everything Joseph had said to them, ["The famine will last five more years, but I can give you the best of Egypt!"] and when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back, the spirit of their father Jacob *revived*. [He was raring to go, but not to stay] And Israel said, "I'm convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die." – Genesis 45:27-28 NIV



Jacob's Grandpa Abraham left the Promised Land, and went to Egypt, during a famine, *without* God's okay; and it almost led to his death. (Gen 12) Famine #2: God stops Jacob's dad, Isaac, as he heads toward repeating the *same* mistake, "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live." (Gen 26:1-2) Now, famine #3: Jacob's beloved son 'returns from the dead' and offers him the *best of Egypt ... if he'll leave the Promised Land!*

So Israel set out with all that was his, and when he reached Beersheba, [where his father, Isaac, had built an altar, (Gen 26:23-25) 28 miles south of his home in Hebron, on the edge of the Promised Land] he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. [whose name means 'laughter'] – Genesis 46:1 NIV



Wrecking yard in Beersheba

Jacob does something incredible, something that separates him from the men in his family (from all men in fact): he stops to ask for direction! Beersheba is where he grew up. It's where he defrauded his brother out of a birthright, and deceived his blind father into blessing him. At 130, he's going back to where he went so wrong, so long ago, and starting over! **He's done demanding God's blessing his way.** Have you put everything on the altar in order to put God first?

With the royal limos waiting to whisk him away to everything he's ever wanted, Jacob can suddenly see the blessing that has eluded him, and that all he's really wanted was to be in God's will. You see, **whenever we sacrifice the appropriate thing in an appropriate way, we gain even as we give.**

Is a dog ever asked to be more than a dog? A cow more than a cow? No. It is what it is. No need to change. No need to grow. No need to sacrifice. *But, you aren't what you is!* **You were created with the potential to become!** To be refined to reflect the One in whose image you were made. This is what God is trying to wrestle out of us. And, at 130, Jacob has had enough of wrestling with God. 34 years earlier ...

So Jacob was left alone, and a man [with the face of God] wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man [Jesus] saw that he could not overpower him, [i.e. 'get Jacob to end his hopeless wrestling match with God'] he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. [Yet, even this didn't convince Jacob to stop struggling against God] Then the man said, [sadly] "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. ['Jacob' means, "heel grabber," because he was born holding onto his twin; and, because of his tendencies, became synonymous with 'deceiver', which is why we still say, "He's pulling my leg."] Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, ['God prevails/wins'] because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." [Jacob sure hasn't thought so, until now, at 130, when his spirit revives, and he finally lets go on his own, and discovers the blessing that was there this whole time] Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" [It wasn't time for Jesus to reveal Himself] Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Peniel, [the face of God] saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared." [which can only happen through Christ] The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip. Therefore to this day [Moses writes, 430+ years later, as the vast nation of Israel exits Egypt, and wrestles with God in the wilderness, on their way back to the Promised Land] the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon. – Genesis 32:24-32 NIV



Sometimes the only way the Lord can get us where we most need to be (on our knees in surrender to His sovereign grace and love) is to poke us in a way that disjoints, dislodges, dislocates. To *this day* in our time, an unbroken lamb shank is dislocated and displayed on every symbolic Seder plate at every Passover dinner. **God must sometimes dislocate us to relocate us.** Jacob is ready to *limp* in the ways of the Lord! He finally fears the right thing: leaving the Promised Land.

And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, "Jacob! Jacob!" "Here I am," he replied. "I am God, the God of your father," [laughter] he said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there." – Genesis 46:2-3 NIV

And, it's because Jacob's greatest desire is to remain in God's presence, to wait for God's will, to get God's direction, and to go at God's command. Where are you at in that wrestling match? In Psalm 2, God laughs in scorn at any who contend with His Son.

He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter ..." – Psalm 2:7b-9a NIV

The only ones with nothing to fear are those who stop striving, accept their limping pride, and confess and surrender and rest.

[The Lord said to Jacob] "I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes." – Genesis 46:4 NIV

He's coming back in a box! **God's promises to us are intended to reach beyond us.** Jacob is looking past himself now. The body was destined for the box, the soul for the Promised Land. Question is, **are you a body with a soul, or a soul with a body?** My body is a tool that allows my soul to grow, in my Father's image, when I realize I'm His child. This is the blessing that had eluded Jacob all these years: it's all about family. God changed his grandpa's name from Abram (exalted father) to Abraham (father of a multitude) because the promise is children.

Then Jacob left Beersheba, and Israel's sons took their father Jacob and their children and their wives in the carts that Pharaoh had sent to transport him. They also took with them their livestock and the possessions they had acquired in Canaan, and Jacob and all his offspring went to Egypt. He took with him to Egypt his sons and grandsons and his daughters and granddaughters — all his offspring. — Genesis 46:5-7 NIV

**He has struggled. He has surrendered. He has overcome.** He has no clue what God will do with his little, dysfunctional family. From these 70, a Nation will arise, with prophets, poets, commandments, covenants, a Tabernacle, a Temple, and a Messiah. Imagine old Israel, limping to his limo, looking at those carts, taking stock of his children and their children: his *blessing!*

These are the names of the sons of Israel (Jacob and his descendants) who went to Egypt: Reuben the firstborn of Jacob. The sons of Reuben: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron and Carmi. The sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. The sons of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez and Zerah (but Er and Onan had died in the land of Canaan). The sons of Perez: Hezron and Hamul. The sons of Issachar: Tola, Puah, Jashub and Shimron. The sons of Zebulun: Sered, Elon and Jahleel. These were the sons Leah bore to Jacob in Paddan Aram, besides his daughter Dinah. These sons and daughters of his were thirty-three in all.<sup>1</sup> The sons of Gad: Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi and Areli. The sons of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi and Beriah. Their sister was Serah. The sons of Beriah: Heber and Malkiel. These were the children born to Jacob by Zilpah, whom Laban had given to his daughter Leah—sixteen in all.<sup>2</sup> The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. In Egypt, Manasseh and Ephraim were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphara, priest of On. The sons of Benjamin: Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim and Ard. These were the sons of Rachel who were born to Jacob—fourteen in all. The son of Dan: Hushim. The sons of Naphtali: Jahziel, Guni, Jezer and Shillem. These were the sons born to Jacob by Bilhah, whom Laban had given to his daughter Rachel—seven in all. All those who went to Egypt with Jacob—those who were his direct descendants, not counting his sons' wives [like the previously listed Canaanite]—numbered sixty-six persons.<sup>3</sup> With the two sons who had been born to Joseph in Egypt, the members of Jacob's family, which went to Egypt, [plus Joseph and Jacob himself] were seventy in all.<sup>4</sup> — Genesis 46:8-27 NIV

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<sup>1</sup> 33 = "sons" (not counting Er and Onan, who died) "and daughters" (Leah and the Canaanite daughter-in-law).

<sup>2</sup> 16 = "children" includes their sister, "Serah"

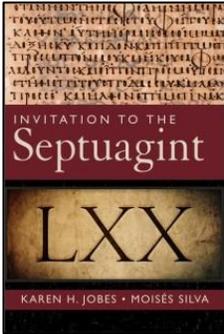
<sup>3</sup> 33 + 16 + 14 + 7 = 70. Subtracting Joseph, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Jacob's Canaanite daughter-in-law = 66.

<sup>4</sup> The **Septuagint** (Gen 46:27) and **Stephen** (Acts 7:14) say 75 instead of 70 because, they include the four sons and one grandson of Manasseh and Ephraim, who were adopted by Jacob, (Gen 48:5-6) from Numbers 26:28-35.



Noah's 70 direct descendants (listed in Genesis 10) established the world's first nations, including Noah's grandson ... Egypt (or, Mizraim) (Gen 10:6)

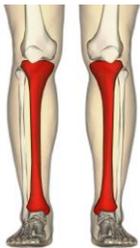
After Israel's exodus from Egypt, though Moses chose 70 men to govern, (Num 11:16) Israel continued to wrestle with God until the entire nation was dislocated and exiled for 70 years. (2 Chr 36:20-21)



About 100 years before Jesus came, God's Word was translated into the world's language, Greek, and called the Septuagint (i.e. Seventy), referring to the 70 Jewish scholars who completed it. Jesus sent 70 witnesses into Israel to testify of Him. (Luke 10:1) But the 70 members of the Sanhedrin court convicted Him. And the Temple that should've submitted to him was destroyed once again, in 70 AD. **There's only one we're called to wrestle with: the deceiver.** (Eph 6:12) In the Garden, when God cursed the deceiver, the serpent, God said that the Messiah, "will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." (Gen 3:15)



**The Anointed One, God's Son, won the battle by surrendering to the Father.** The 'iron scepter', in Jesus' hand, attached him, as The Branch,<sup>5</sup> to the cursed tree, (Gal 3:13) the cross. And likewise, his heel was struck, his ankles pierced, with a fang of iron, as the staff of the cross was rammed into the head-shaped, rock hill called The Skull.<sup>6</sup> (in Hebrew: Golgotha; in Greek: Calvary)



How beautiful upon the mountains, are the feet of him who brings good news; who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" – Isaiah 52:7 NKJ

That evening, as shankbones, which, like shinbones, connect the ankle to the body, were symbolically prepared and displayed, the soldiers came to hasten the deaths of those being crucified.

But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ... These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced." – John 19:33, 36-37 NIV

He is the God of **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**. The **Exalted Father** becoming the **Father of a Multitude**, who **laughs** at the **deceiver**, the **heel grabber**, because the **victory is His**. So, stop struggling. It's over. I mean, *this portion*, of God's story, for today.

<sup>5</sup> Zechariah 3:8, 6:12-13; Isaiah 4:2; and Jeremiah 23:5

<sup>6</sup> Mat 27:33; Mark 15:22; Luke 23:33; John 19:17; Golgotha is referred to in early writings as a hill resembling a skullcap