

The Story of Joseph

Lord of the Feast

Part 35 - December 16, 2012



According to Biblical timespans and Oxford's radiocarbon dated chronology (See "Dating Joseph"), Senusret II was the king who released Joseph and ruled during the seven years of abundance.

And Senusret's greatest accomplishment was the creation of a 570-square-mile agricultural oasis, originally fed by the 10-mile-long Bahr Yussef¹ (i.e. Joseph's Canal) the *only name* ever documented for the canal in recorded history!



Imagine Joseph standing on the threshold of 570-square-miles of amber waves of grain, gently bowing in the breeze to Joseph. That's Canada to California *if* I-5 was 1-mile wide!



Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure. [A critical detail in Joseph's foreshadow of Jesus, the Bread of Life] – Genesis 41:49 NIV

Imagine Joseph, now 37, on the crest of that life-giving, world-saving banquet, a prepared feast unparalleled in human history!

The seven years of abundance in Egypt came to an end ... [And so did Senusret! Evidently these were the final 7 years of his reign] - Genesis 41:53 NIV

Senusret II's son, the aptly named, Senusret III (we'll call him Little Sen), took the throne just as the 7-year famine began.



Now, the Egyptians of Joseph's day deified the star, Sirius², because its annual pre-sunrise appearance, after a 70-day absence, ushered in the rise of the Nile, which was absolutely *critical* for crop growth. This celestial appearance is referred to, in fancy talk, as the heliacal rising³ of Sirius. I mentioned this in "Dating Joseph" because two ancient recorded 'heliacal risings of Sirius' have been discovered, coupled with a specific day, month, and year of a Pharaoh's reign.

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahr_Yussef

² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sopdet>

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heliacal_rising



Senusret III, 5th king, 12th Dynasty

These are chronological golden anchors!

Incredibly, one was recorded just before Moses was born, the other in the 7th year of Little Sen's reign, "month IV, of season Peret, day 16" ... roughly July 17, 1872^{BC}.⁴

But, let's not get ahead of ourselves. Back up to when Little Sen took the throne.

... and the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said. There was famine in all the other lands, but in the whole land of Egypt there was food. - *Genesis 41:54 NIV*



Senusret III, 5th king, 12th Dynasty

Egypt was the world's greatest nation, and Little Sen the most productive ruler and military campaigner of the 12th Dynasty.

But, there's a mysterious historical fact that continues to puzzle secular scholars: this powerful leader and prolific conqueror was idle the first seven years of his reign! What was he waiting for? It's like he was completely distracted! But, in his *eighth* year he's off and running!

And Little Sen may shed some light on a mysterious *Biblical* detail that has puzzled many. It's something Joseph tells his brothers, when he reveals himself, two years from this point.

"So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt." - *Genesis 45:8 NIV*

It's a title of highest honor, but it insinuates a father/mentor relationship that Joseph didn't have with the king who released him. But, look what the Psalmist says about the king's son ...

The king sent and released him [Joseph], the ruler of peoples [Senusret II] set him free. He made him master of his household, ruler over all he possessed, to instruct his princes [like Little Sen!] as he pleased ... [Joseph mentored Little Sen!] - *Psalm 105:20-22a NIV*

The absence of a coregency suggests dad's death was unexpected. Can you imagine how Little Sen would've leaned on his instructor and his father's most trusted advisor!

When all Egypt began to feel the famine, the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Then Pharaoh [Little Sen] told all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph and do what he tells you." - *Genesis 41:54b-55 NIV*

And right here, God elevates Joseph above *every power* on earth! To those who are starving, the man with food is king. Little Sen is Lord of the famine, but Joseph is Lord of the feast!

⁴ Papyrus Berlin 10012: The heliacal rising of Sirius in an entry from a temple register from el-Lahûn : Year 7 [of the reign of Sesostris] ... The Prince and Overseer of the Temple Nebkaure has said to the Chief Lector Priest Pepyhotep : "You should know that the Going Forth (heliacal rising) of Sothis (Sirius) takes place on [Month] IV [of Season] Peret, Day 16 ... You might wish to inform (?) the lay-priests of the Temple of the city called "Mighty is Sesostris the Justified" and [of the Temple] of Anubis and of [that of] the Crocodile-god ... And let this letter be produced for the announcement-board of the temple."

This is the Gospel for Egypt: “Go to Joseph and do what he tells you. He’ll care for you. He was appointed by my father to save us! Do whatever he tells you.”



The ruins of Khirbet Cana, Galilee

Where have we heard that before? Oh, last time, at the wedding in Cana. When the wine ran out, Jesus’ mother said to the servants: “Do whatever he tells you.” (John 2:5) And Jesus turns the water into wine, and John says that this was *more* than a miracle; it was nothing less than His *calling card!*

This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory ... – John 2:11a NIV

He’s the Son of God; shouldn’t He open with *walking on water*?! It seems *frivolous* for the One who came to suffer and die for sin, to reveal Himself by redeeming a *potential social embarrassment*, and saving a dying *party* from ending too soon. So what’s up?

Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, [Water was ladled over each guests’ hands, to symbolically purify them; and each dried with a bright and clean, fine linen cloth] each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. [That’s 120-180 gallons; that’s a *big party!*] Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; [He could’ve had ‘em fill the empty wine jugs, but *this is the ‘sign’*] so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.” [The host] They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. [About 756 bottles!] He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. [Hmm ... only the servants knew] Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; [which means what you think it means] but you have saved the best till now.” – John 2:6-10 NIV

For His first miraculous sign, Jesus offers His divine wine to an oblivious host and Jewish guests too inebriated to appreciate it! And *that* in itself is a sad picture of His ministry to come. But the *servants* knew who the *true* Master of the Banquet was. “Yes, I’ve come to suffer and die, but these are means to an end; the end is to reveal Myself as Lord of the Feast! The greatest parties ever known ... *kid stuff!* Of all the things I could show you or tell you, the first, the primary, is that I’ve come to bring celebration unending!”



The Temple Mount in Jerusalem

On this mountain [in Jerusalem] the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine — the best of meats and the finest of wines. On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The Lord has spoken. In that day they will say, “Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the Lord, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.” – Isaiah 25:6-9 NIV

So many starving souls have tasted religion and concluded that Christianity is all about sucking lemons and renouncing pleasure! It’s one thing to reject Jesus intelligently; it’s *another* to reject Him stupidly! “You reject me because you *want* joy?! You don’t even know. There are reasons to reject Me – *this* isn’t one of ‘em!”

[Jesus loved to describe His kingdom as a feast] “I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.” – *Matthew 8:11 NIV*

If you’re not a person who clearly loves life, who doesn’t have a note of festival joy in your walk of faith, it’s on *your* head.

Taste and see that the Lord is good ... – *Psalms 34:8a NIV*

But you’ll never take a real taste unless you hunger and thirst for righteousness. And that only comes to those who begin to see (with the help of His Spirit), how the Righteous One sees *you*.

What’s a single, 30-year-old man ponder at a wedding? His future. His life. His future wife. The wedding feast takes place in the house of the groom’s father, when he returns with his bride. And in this setting, surrounded by unbridled joy and laughter, I think He’s thinking about *His* future bride. You. Me. Us.

Ministers get to see what the groom sees when his bride comes down the aisle. And what we see is this: no matter what she looks like in *reality*, in that moment she’s astonishing! Grooms often tear up at this point. He’s *never* seen her look *this* good! That’s how Jesus sees us when we let Him cleanse us, and he wants to make that moment last forever ... *literally*.

He calls us a bride and Himself a groom as a way to convey the profoundly intimate, jubilant relationship He lovingly longs for. The plan was *always* to return to His Father’s house with His bride.

“Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’” – *Revelation 19:7-9a NIV*

The other thing Jesus must be pondering as He stands on the threshold of revealing Himself as the Great Bridegroom and Lamb is the *cost* of providing the wine for His own wedding feast. By turning ritual water into wine, He prefigures a time when His blood permanently cleanses us and ritual is replaced with joyful.

Just as Joseph was sent down to Egypt to suffer, in order to become the lord of the feast, so too, Jesus was sent to earth, not only to save the world, but to bring us joy *beyond measure*.

When the famine had spread over the whole country, Joseph opened the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout Egypt. [Can you imagine the joy and relief upon seeing Joseph’s seemingly infinite supply of grain?!] And all the countries came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the world. – *Genesis 41:56-57 NIV*

And all it takes to join the feast is to admit you’re starving, go to the Lord of the Feast, and respond to what he tells you.