

# The Story of Joseph

## Four Fifths

Part 55 – August 4, 2013

When Israel moves his tiny Chosen-Nation into pagan Egypt, he and Joseph form a double-authority, both with *full* power, Jacob, the head of God's people, and Joseph, the head of Pharaoh's.



It's an incredible picture of the two natures of Christ: fully God (empowering Him to provide a sinless sacrifice), and fully Man (enabling Him to offer it on our behalf).<sup>1</sup> Double authority.

And, back when Benjamin met Joseph, and together they completed the picture of Christ,<sup>2</sup> Jacob sent along *double* the amount of silver. (Gen 43:12)

He's the double portion of the firstborn sons, the double-edged sword dividing soul and spirit, (Heb 4:12) the two atoning scapegoats, the true and better son Solomon says to divide in two. (1 Kings 3:25)

Song of Songs (6:6) says, "Your teeth are like a flock of ewes that have come up from the washing; all of them bear twins." Isaac and Rebecca bear twins. Judah and Tamar bear twins. Joseph and Asenath bear twins. And Elisha's twin bears maul 42 mockers. (2 Kings 2:24)

Don't get me started on 42!

He's our Twin-Engine Savior. Lion and Lamb. The most amazing miracle in the Bible! The fourth and finite expression of an eternal, infinite, undying Trinity, the Son of God becomes the Son of Man, to conquer *death* for us, by *dying* for us!

On the cross, I hear dual natures crying out: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Four Gospels tell of three nails that left four wounds in twin hands and twin feet. And, the four-layered veil of the Holy of Holies was divided in two. And, His clothes ...

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his *clothes, dividing them into four shares, [this was the "elegant robe" that Herod, the King of the Jews, had placed on Jesus<sup>3</sup> (Luke 23:11)] one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining.* – John 19:23a NIV

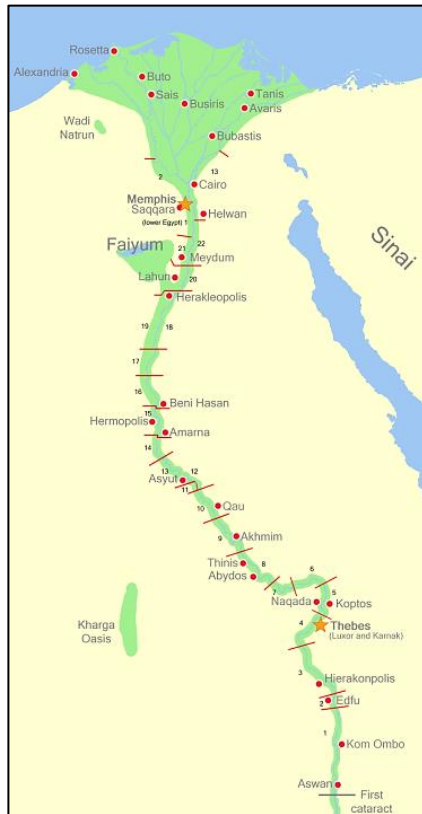
Remember the five sets of clothes Joseph gave Benjamin? They point to the cross, where Jesus' clothes are divided into five sets. Why?

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<sup>1</sup> We covered this in the Easter sermon, "Is the Gospel Graspable? The Integrity of the Trinity" (4/24/11)

<sup>2</sup> We covered this in the sermon, "A Skunk in the Offering" (3/17/13)

<sup>3</sup> We discussed this in the sermon, "Five Changes of Clothes" (6/23/13)



[After giving them property] Joseph also provided his father and his brothers and all his father’s household with food, according to the number of their children. [He was their *only* source of sustenance] There was no food, however, in the whole region because the famine was severe; both Egypt *and* Canaan [the Promised Land] wasted away because of the famine. Joseph collected all the money that was to be found in Egypt *and* Canaan in payment for the grain they were buying, [When Joseph was sold from Canaan into Egypt, think of the absurdity of imagining he’d be *taking all* the money of *every* Canaanite *and* Egyptian!] and he brought it to Pharaoh’s palace. [Remember little Sen? He’s discovering the astonishing benefits of turning control over to Joseph!] When the money of the people of Egypt *and* Canaan was *gone*, all Egypt [but, not Canaan. When their ability to save themselves ran out, their pride prevented ‘em from running to Joseph and begging for mercy] came to Joseph and said, “Give us food.” – Genesis 47:12-15a NIV

This would’ve been the 42 semi-independent nomarchs, [nom-arks] great chiefs of powerful families who governed 42 provinces, in a tenuous alliance with the Pharaohs.<sup>4</sup> Don’t get me started on 42!

“Why should we die before your eyes? Our money is used up.” [Not true in a bartering culture. They want to hold onto, and keep feeding, the things they think will bring ‘em security] “Then bring your livestock,” said Joseph. [They still haven’t accepted God’s warning (of a 7-year famine)] “I will sell you food in exchange for your livestock, since your money is gone.” So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and he gave them food in exchange for their horses, their sheep and goats, their cattle and donkeys. [Joseph even saves the animals; they would’ve been *eaten*!] And he brought them through that year with food in exchange for all their livestock. When that year was over, they came to him the following year and said, “We cannot hide from our lord [Intriguing choice of words] the fact that since our money is gone and our livestock belongs to you, there is nothing left for our lord except our bodies and our land. Why should we perish before your eyes—we and our land as well? [Now, notice, they *don’t ask* for a handout. They’ve come to realize that there’s only one way out of this alive: they must *surrender everything*. They could flee, but to where? They know what many of us have yet to learn: the whole world is starving] Buy us and our land in exchange for food, and we with our land will be in bondage to Pharaoh. [This seems rather harsh; but, only if you don’t know the plan God has laid out to Joseph] Give us seed so that we may live and not die, and that the land may not become desolate.” So Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh. The Egyptians, one and all, sold their fields, because the famine was too severe for them. The land became Pharaoh’s, and Joseph [the one sold into Egyptian servitude] reduced the people to servitude, from one end of Egypt to the other. [And, this would’ve included the Potiphars!] – Genesis 47:15b-21 NIV

<sup>4</sup> We discussed the 42 nomarchs in, “The White Space” (9/30/12) and “The Harvest Years” (12/2/12)



Young Senusret III, c. 1878 BC

At this precise point in history, given by the timespans of Genesis,<sup>5</sup> *secular historians* say little Sen established direct rule, and, without *any* resistance, broke the power the nomarchs held for over 1200 years (predating the first dynasty, about 3100<sup>BC</sup>).

They know *when* and *who*, but consider the *why* and *how* to be a great mystery. But, *Joseph* knows.



Old Senusret III, c. 1840 BC

Little Sen became the first king of Egypt to own *everything* and *everyone*, and *embody* what we think of when we think of a *Pharaoh*.

He became father and god (little 'g') to the Egyptian people. The same thing **Jesus came to collect: your power, property, security, independence ... *and trust*. Everything.**

**Simple choice: serve Father-God through the Bread of Life, or serve death through starvation.** Gotta choose. Gotta serve. **The great deception is that one of our choices is to be the master.** The religious leaders rejected Jesus because they were operating under the delusion that their self-righteousness was saving 'em.

However, [just as the religious fathers of Jesus' people (His sheep, His bride), saw no need to surrender to His offer] he [Joseph] did not buy the land of the priests, [which included the father of his bride, the Priest of On (41:45)] because they received a regular allotment from Pharaoh and had food enough from the allotment Pharaoh gave them. That is why they did not sell their land. Joseph said to the people, "Now that I have bought you and your land today for Pharaoh, [Oh, this should be good! He has 'em in the palm of his hand! He built the granaries. He holds the keys. These are those who bound him in chains, spit on him in the slave market, falsely accused him, and unjustly imprisoned him. Think of the speech he could deliver! Think of the terror he could inflict! He could crush 'em! But, everything God had permitted, had prepared him for this moment] here is seed for you so you can plant the ground. ["What ground?" "The ground you just gave me. The homes you know. The animals you love. You're royal servants now, in royal homes, on royal land, with royal animals. And I'll care for your needs; don't worry about food, I'll feed you, and I'll give you seed to plant. The famine is almost over you know."] But when the crop comes in, *give a fifth of it to Pharaoh*. The other *four-fifths* you may keep as seed for the fields and as food for yourselves and your households and your children." [He could've decreed just the opposite. And, how do you suppose they felt about a 20% flat tax? Well, they hailed him as their savior all over again!] "You have saved our lives," they said. "May we find favor in the eyes of our lord; we will be in bondage to Pharaoh." – Genesis 47:22-25 NIV

You see, **true freedom only comes when we're bound to Christ.** God's ironic logic is foolish to those wise in their own blind eyes. But, the truth is, **sin is slavery, and Jesus is freedom.**

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<sup>5</sup> We covered this in the sermons, "Dating Joseph" (10/7/12) and "Lord of the Feast" (12/16/12)

The freer I feel apart from Christ, the blinder I am. **To be free from Jesus is to be enslaved to something darkly deceiving.** Sin pretty much looks the same. **As light dims, sameness descends.**

Unforgiveness, bitterness, hatred, it's all alike.

But, **God's glory is reflected in an infinite spectrum**, like a rainbow (which can only be seen at a 42 degree angle; don't get me started on 42!) **With Christ in me I'm more myself, not less.**

And, this brings us back to the cross, and Jesus' undergarment.

So Joseph established it as a law concerning land in Egypt — still in force today [430 later, when Moses transcribed Joseph's account] — that *a fifth of the produce* belongs to Pharaoh. [Leaving Four Fifths to his people] It was only the land of the [darkly deceiving] priests [whose descendants turn their staffs into serpents against Moses] that did not become Pharaoh's. — Genesis 47:26 NIV

When Jesus dies, there's a fifth wound, and dual liquids, blood and water pour out, cleansing His people, His church, His bride. **The second Eve brought out of the side of the second Adam.**

The reason for the dual nature, the fourth expression, was to restore our intimate relationship and become one with God who lives inside us, fills us, and helps us find our full expression.

**His undergarment is you!** Close. Intimate. Cozy. Warm. Informal. He's inside, guiding, moving, teaching. He gives everything back. Here's the deal: **you get four-fifths, and He gets ... you.**

What'll it be? There were 10 virgins. Two sets. 5 foolish, 5 wise (Mat 25:1-3) 10 commandments. Twin tablets. 2 sets of 5. The first aimed at God; the second at man. Son of God, Son of Man.

He has you in the palm of His hand. Four fingers acting as one with one lone, opposable thumb. It's the fifth that can bow, and rest in the palm, and be covered by the other four-fifths.

And He doesn't leave you as a servant, but adopts us as sons and daughters of your True Father and God (big 'G'). We're *true* royalty now. And, that's why we need to learn to act like it!

And, this is where we have to close God's story for today.