

Genesis 37-41 Podcast Quotes and Notes

What was missed: Genesis 34, 35, 36

Genesis 34 The Ravishing of Dinah: A Thing Not to be Done

1. Dinah is sexually assaulted by Shechem son of Hamor¹ – Gen. 34.1-5.
2. The sons of Jacob are angry, and “Jacob held his peace” - Gen. 34.5-7.²
3. Jacob’s sons tell the Shechemites to be circumcised - Gen. 34.8-24.
 - a. Deceitfully the brothers plan a plot – Gen. 34.13.³
4. Simeon and Levi “slew all the males” of Shechem in their sore condition, and take all of their wealth – Gen. 34.25-29.
5. Simeon and Levi have the last word, “Should our sister be treated like a harlot?” – Gen. 34.31.⁴

Genesis 35: Jacob speaks to God, Rachel dies, Reuben sins

1. God speaks to Jacob: Go to Bethel and make an altar – Gen. 35.1.
2. Jacob to his house, “Put away the strange gods” – Gen. 35.2.
3. Jacob hides the “strange gods” under the oak by Shechem – Gen. 35.4.
4. Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, dies – Gen. 35.8.
5. God appears to Jacob and tells him the divine name: El Shaddai, commanding Jacob to “be fruitful, and multiply” – Gen. 35.10-15.
 - a. Your name is Israel, no more Jacob – Gen. 35.10.
 - i. Note that this is another example of a doublet in the narrative. Jacob’s name was already changed to Israel back in Genesis 32.28! This previous name change occurred under the direction of either an angel,⁵ or man (Gen. 32.24), or God (Gen. 32.30). Either way, Jacob has already had his named changed by an

¹ Both 33:19 and Joshua 24:32 refer to “the children of Hamor.” Judges 9:28 indicates that in the period of the judges the Hamorites were regarded as pure-blooded aristocrats, the remnant of the ancient Shechemite nobility. The term humor means “ass.” The phrase “to kill 8 donkey foal” means “to conclude a covenant” in the Mari texts. Hence, “sons of Hamor” may be a term for “those bound together by treaty” or “sons of a confederacy.” The city-state of Shechem appears to have had a mixed population. It may well have originated through a confederacy of various clans. Nahum Sarna, *JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis*, The Jewish Publication Society, p. 233.

² Even more terrible than the offense against the person and dignity of the girl and the assault upon the honor of the family is the pollution of the moral environment. The entire community becomes infected by such wanton deeds. Sarna, p. 234.

³ The Narrator informs us at once that the brothers’ seeming acceptance of intermarriage with the Shechemites is merely a ruse. No moral judgment is intended and would, in fact, be gratuitous. **The victim of the assault is still being held by the perpetrator** (vv. 17,26), **who has not even admitted to a crime, let alone expressed regret**. There is no way that Dinah can be liberated by a tiny minority in the face of overwhelming odds—except by the exercise of cunning. Sarna, 236.

⁴ The two brothers have the last word. As with the Book of Jonah, the closing rhetorical question provides an irresistible argument. The women of Israel are not to be regarded as objects of abuse. They cannot be dishonored with impunity. Sarna, p. 238.

⁵ Sarna posits that this is **a divine being that Jacob wrestles with**, writing, “The most plausible solution, therefore, is to see in this mysterious being the celestial patron of Esau. This, indeed, is the interpretation given in a midrash. Throughout the ancient world, the idea was current that each city-state, each people had its divine protector. In monotheistic Israel such a notion was intolerable. It therefore became transmuted into a belief in the existence of subordinate tutelary spirits who were part of the celestial host.” Sarna, p. 403-404.

unidentified, though special kind of being. Here in Gen. 35 it is El Shaddai, “God Almighty” who is authorizing the name change.

- b. A company of nations shall be of thee – Gen. 35.12.
 - c. Jacob “set up a pillar” – Gen. 35.14.
 - d. Jacob poured oil and a drink offering on the stone – Gen. 35.14.
6. Jacob continues on his journeys – Gen. 35.15-28.
- a. Rachel gives birth to Benjamin and dies – Gen. 35.18.⁶
 - b. The tomb of Rachel – Gen. 35.19-20.⁷
 - c. Reuben lies with Bilhah – Gen. 35.22.⁸

Genesis 36: The line of Esau

Genesis 37: Joseph’s Betrayal and Descent into Egypt⁹

⁶ Rachel names the child Ben-oni, “son of my sorrow,” or “son of my distress.” It could also mean “son of my vigor,” a euphemism for “son of my debility,” meaning “his birth drained my strength.” Sarna, p. 243. Jacob changes the name to Benjamin, “son of my right hand,” the right being a symbol of dexterity, power, protection. Another rendering is “son of the south,” that is, “the one born in the south.” Such a meaning, suggested by Rashi, finds analogy in the Mari texts, which refer to tribal confederations of DUMU *Mes-yamina*, “sons of the south, Southerners,” as opposed to DUMU *Mes-sim’al*, “sons of the north, Northerners.” A third possibility, put forward by Rashbam, takes *yamin* for *yamim*, “days,” so that Benjamin would mean “son of my old age.” In 44:20 he is called “a child of his old age.” This is the interpretation given in the Testament of Benjamin 1:16 of Second Temple times. In the Samaritan Pentateuch the name is regularly written “Minyamin.” Sarna, 243.

⁷ The text tells of the death and burial Rachel and of a stone memorial marker set up over her grave. It is clear from 1 Samuel 10:2 that in the time of Samuel, about 1020 B.C.E., “the tomb of Rachel” was a famous landmark. The traditional site, presently so-called, lies about 4 miles south of Jerusalem and 1 mile north of Bethlehem. It is repeatedly described in Christian, Jewish, and Muslim sources since the fourth century C.E. Through the ages it has served as a place of pilgrimage for Jews on New Moons, during the month of Elul, and on the fourteenth of Marheshvan, the traditional anniversary of Rachel’s death. The present small, square-shaped, domed structure, which was featured on the pictorial stamp issued for Palestine by the British government between 1927 and 1948, is relatively modern. In 1841 the tomb was renovated through the generosity of Sir Moses Montefiore. In 1948 it was taken over by Jordanian invaders, Jews were excluded from it, and the area was converted into a Muslim cemetery. It was liberated by Israel in 1967. Sarna, p. 244.

⁸ This can be read as Reuben trying to lay claim to his inheritance. It is apparent from several biblical stories and from ancient Near Eastern texts that in matters of leadership, possession of the concubine(s) of one’s father or of one’s vanquished enemy on the part of the aspirant or usurper bestowed legitimacy on the assumption of heirship and validated the succession. We see this Absalom’s efforts to claim King David’s authority by taking his concubines and in Adonijah’s request for Abishag in 1 Kings 2.13-25.

⁹ The story of Joseph and his brothers differs markedly from the preceding patriarchal narratives. By far the longest and most complete narrative in Genesis, it is set forth by a master storyteller who employs with consummate skill the novelistic techniques of novelistic delineation, psychological manipulation, and dramatic suspense. Another unique feature is the outwardly “secular” mold in which the narrative is cast, the miraculous or supernatural element being conspicuously absent. **There are no direct divine revelations** or communications to Joseph. **He builds no altars.** He has no associations with cultic centers. **God never openly and directly intervenes in his life.** No wonder that Joseph is not included among the patriarchs (cf. Exod. 2:24) and that Jewish tradition restricts that category to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Ber. 16b). Nevertheless, the secularity of the story is superficial, for the narrative is infused with a profound sense that God’s guiding hand imparts meaning and direction to seemingly haphazard events: when Joseph is lost he meets “a man” who knows exactly where his brothers are (37:15); the caravans of traders happen to be going to Egypt (37.25, 28); the Lord is with Joseph in

1. Joseph, a young man of 17 years (Gen. 37:2), with the handmaidens of Jacob, the beloved son of Jacob, a man with a “coat of many colors” χιτώνα ποικίλον¹⁰ – Gen. 37.1-3.¹¹

Potiphar’s house (39:2) and in prison (39:21f.). It is significant that the name of God comes readily to Joseph’s lips at critical moments: when he is confronted by Potiphar’s wife (39:9); when he interprets dreams (40:8; 41:16 et seq); and when he tests his brothers (42:18). The ultimate interpretation of events is given by Joseph himself at the dramatic conclusion of the narrative: “God has sent me ahead of you to ensure your survival on earth, and to save your lives in an extraordinary deliverance. So, it was not you who sent me here, but God” (45:7,8). Sarna, p. 254.

¹⁰ ποικίλον can mean “variegated,” or “of various sorts,” as well as “of various colors.” Homer (*Iliad*, book 5, line 735) uses *poikilon* - ποικίλον to describe the beautiful soft robe of Athena, and it is translated as “richly embroidered.” See the translation by A.T. Murray, Ph.D. at [Perseus](#). See also: [Iliad 14.215](#), [Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 923](#). Smythe translates ποικίλοις as “tapestries” in Agamemnon’s speech to Clytaemestra. The word is associated with many colors, but probably is more specific to the nature of its varied appearance or embroidered craftsmanship, and I would agree with Hugh Nibley’s assessment that the use of the this word is connected in this way to Joseph’s coat, meaning that this is a work of various embroidery.

¹¹ Hugh Nibley had this to say about the “coat of many colors,” the *ketonet passim* כִּתוֹנֵת פַּסִּימ : The idea of a garment of many colors is an invention. If you look in your Bible every time it mentions many colors the word colors (even in the commentary) is in italics [the word in italics is actually *many*] because it is put in there by modern editors. It’s found in no ancient source. **It’s not a garment of many colors at all. A garment of certain marks is the term that’s used here.** We’ll see what it is in a second. “This garment had belonged to Abraham, and it already had a long history.” Its history was lengthy because it went back to the Garden of Eden, you see. That’s the garment; it’s the only one. Just as we treat the story of Cain and Abel, we trivialize this. We say, “Joseph was the youngest kid, so his father favored him and gave him a pretty garment of many colors.” There is no mention in any ancient source of a garment of many colors. That’s an invention of modern editors trying to explain it. But here it was the garment he gave him. **It was the garment of the priesthood.** No wonder they were jealous of him, they being the elder brothers and he the younger in the patriarchal line coming down from Abraham. This garment had belonged to Abraham and had come down to Joseph instead of to the other brethren. See: Hugh Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, 51-52. See also: [Bryce Hammond, Joseph’s Coat of Many Marks, Temple Study](#). accessed 2.1.2022.

When Joseph’s brethren returned to give the coat back to Jacob, other ancient documents and literature as well as understanding the meaning of the source languages help us understand what happened next:

Here we have “I detect, I perceive, I note.” (He’s blind, you see.) “the odor, the spirit, the smell of Joseph, if you do not think me out of my head from old age and a bit barmy.” It talks about the spirit that is in it, the east wind that has brought it, etc. And this is a very important thing: “When they placed it upon the face of Jacob, he smelled also the smell of the Garden of Eden. For behold there is not in all the earth another garment that has that smell in it.” **This is a unique thing; this is the garment.** “For there is not in any other garment on earth of the winds of the garden of Eden, unless it is in this one garment.” So you can see why the brethren were so jealous; it was the garment of the priesthood. **The commentator says he recognized that it was Joseph’s garment by feeling it first because it had three marks in it.**

What they translate as “coat of many colors” is first *ketonet*. Our word cotton is related to that. *Ketonet* is a cotton shirt. The Hebrew is *ketonet passim*. That means it reached down to his wrists and his ankles. The Hebrew actually tells us that it was of adequate length. A garment which is *passim* means a long garment which reaches down to the wrists and to the ankles. It’s quite different [from the other story]; there’s no mention of color there of any kind. The Vulgate says it was *tunicam polymitam*, which means it was **worked very subtly with extra threads**. *Polymitan* means “**extra thread work, special embroidery, special technique.**” The Greek is *chitona poikila*. *Poikilos* means “**tattooed, embroidered, elaborate work.**” A derived term of *poikila* is “of various colors, **with spots or dots.**” But it means with marks on something. Here it says he knew it because it had three marks on it. He recognized it from the marks. Of course, they couldn’t have been colored marks because he was blind when he felt the marks. He recognized it as belonging to his son Joseph. ((*ibid.*))

2. The Jealousies of the brethren toward him are manifest – Gen. 37.4-20.
 - a. His dreams visions – Gen. 37.5-10.
 - i. Sheaves – v. 7-8.
 - ii. Stars – v. 9-10.
 - a. Joseph is sent by his father to see “whether it be well with thy brethren,”- literally "the shalom of your brothers."¹² This phrase is telling, given the absence of "shalom" in the family!
 - b. Let us go to Dothan – Gen. 37.17.
 - c. They conspired against him – Gen. 37.18.
 - d. Let us slay him – Gen. 37.20.
3. The plan(s) and the capture(s) – Gen. 37.21-36.¹³
 - a. Reuben: “Shed no blood... cast him into this pit” – Gen. 37.22.¹⁴
 - b. Judah: “What profit is it if we slay our brother?” – Gen. 37.26.¹⁵
 - c. Midianites lift Joseph up out of a pit – Gen. 37.28¹⁶
 - d. The Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead purchase Joseph, not pulling him out of a pit – Gen. 37.26-27.¹⁷
 - e. The deception of the father – Gen. 37.31-35.¹⁸

Where Nibley says that Jacob recognized it because it had three marks on it, he is quoting from a man commonly known as Tha'labi. Nibley introduces him:

In the tenth century of our era the greatest antiquarian of the Moslem world, Muhammad ibn-Ibrahim ath-Tha'labi, collected in Persia a great many old tales and legends about the prophets of Israel. See: Hugh Nibley, *Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 218.
Nibley's translation of Tha'labi is:

“and there were in the garment of Joseph three marks or tokens when they brought it to his father.” ((ibid.))

((Hugh Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, 51-52))

¹² לְךָ-נָא רְאֵה אֶת-שְׁלוֹם אֶחְיָךְ – Please go and see the Shalom of your brothers! I find this fascinating, as the brothers could not speak shalom to Joseph. We read in verse 4: אֲתוּ וְלֹא יָכְלוּ דַבְּרוּ לְשָׁלֹם – they could not speak shalom to him. שְׁלוֹם Shalom: A Hebrew word that is usually translated as "peace," but more literally means "to be whole and complete," or "safe," or "safe and sound." It is derived from a root *shaw-lam* שָׁלַם meaning to "be whole."

¹³ Strong evidence indicates that there are indeed two stories stitched together that portray Joseph's capture and subsequent trip into Egypt. One source, from the North, called "E," and another from Judah, called "J." Both stories, a combined JE, have been stitched together and therefore compose a composite narrative of the sale of Joseph. Some obvious contradictions when read together include the captors of Joseph: was it the Ishmaelites or the Midianites? Whose idea was it to not kill Joseph? Was it Reuben's or Judah's? See: The [Betrayal of Joseph](#).

¹⁴ Reuben is from the northern Kingdom, hence this is a northern Elohistic tradition.

¹⁵ Judah speaking in favor of preserving Joseph is a text from the south, from the Kingdom of Judah during its monarchy, what scholars called "J," or the Yahwist.

¹⁶ This tradition comes from E.

¹⁷ This tradition comes from J.

¹⁸ Some scholars have noted the “certain poetic justice to the brother's cruel deception,” as Jacob also used kids to deceive his father in the taking of the birthright (see Gen. 27.5-23). See: Berlin, Brettler, and Fishbane, *The Jewish Study Bible*, The Jewish Publication Society, p. 76.

- f. Jacob “refused to be comforted” – Gen. 37.35. This brings to mind Rachel’s lament in Jeremiah 31:15, “A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted...”¹⁹

Genesis 38: Tamar, Judah, the Deception, and Beauty of Ashes

1. Judah has three sons. His sons, Er and Onan, (one at a time) marry a woman named Tamar, and they men die before bearing seed – Gen. 38.1-10.
 - a. Shuah (Judah’s Canaanite wife) bears Er, Onan and Shelah- Gen. 38.3-5.
 - b. Er and Onan die before Tamar can have children – Gen. 38.6-10
2. Judah tells Tamar to wait and remain a widow – Gen. 38.11.
3. Tamar takes matters into her own hands – Gen. 38.12-26.
 - a. Tamar dresses as a harlot, and Judah gives her seed – Gen. 38.14-18.
 - b. Judah proclaims his righteous indignation at hearing Tamar is unmarried and with child – Gen. 38.24.
 - c. Tamar gets over on Judah by producing the evidence of paternity, Judah is forced to acknowledge the truth – Gen. 38.26. “And he knew her again no more.”
4. Tamar bears twins: Pharez and Zarah – Gen. 38.27-30.
 - a. These twins are significant in the genealogical line of the Savior Jesus Christ, as Pharez is an ancestor of King David ([Matthew 1.3](#)).
 - b. This is the “**great exchange**” principle, where God exchanges “beauty for ashes” פָּאָר תַּחַת אֲפֹר - *peh-ayr' takh'-ath ay'-fer* = “beauty for ashes.” See [Isaiah 61.3](#). God has to power to turn our worst stories into something that can suit his purposes. His power to redeem is more than we can comprehend.

Genesis 39: Joseph in Potiphar’s household, his descent into the abyss

1. This chapter shows Joseph’s further descent into the abyss, from the descent into the “pit,” and then down into Egypt, then to the home of the “captain of the guard” (שַׂר הַטְּבָחִים) *sar hatabachim*, the chieftain of the executioners, guardsmen, or cooks.²⁰
2. The emphasis on Potiphar’s identity as “The Egyptian” is repeated three times for emphasis – Gen. 39.1-5.²¹
 - a. Joseph found grace²² in Potiphar’s sight (and the Lord’s!) – Gen. 39.4.
 - b. “in the house and in the field” וּבַיִת וּבַשָּׂדֶה this is a merism which expresses totality – Gen. 39.5.

¹⁹ וַיִּמְאֵן לְהִתְנַחֵם – “He refused to be comforted,” Gen. 37.35. The verb construction is slightly different between Jacob and Rachel’s lament, but the idea is the same. Jer. 31.15 reads רָחֵל מְבַכָּה עַל-בְּנֵיהָ מֵאֲנָה לְהִנָּחֵם – “Rachel, weeping for her children, refused to be comforted.”

²⁰ Hebrew *tab-bawkh'* yields the possibility of either “cook” or “slaughterer,” that is, executioner. The title “chief cook” would correspond to the Egyptian *wdpw*, which originally also meant “cook,” but which came to be a general designation for persons attached to the services of nobles, princes, and kings. Sarna, p. 263.

²¹ The national identity of Joseph’s master is repeated three times for emphasis (vv. 1,2,5), probably because the sale of Joseph into Egyptian slavery sets the stage for the looming enslavement and subsequent redemption of Israel. **The prophecy of 15:13 to Abraham is being fulfilled.**

²² Grace, the word translated from the Hebrew *khane* חַן, denotes favor, charm, acceptance, and elegance.

- c. “Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.” יֹסֵף יִפְהַתְּאֵר וְיִפְהַ מְרָאָה – *Yoseph yipe toar viyapeh mar-eh* – Gen. 39.6. This describes Joseph as fair of form or fair of visage and fair of mar-eh- sight or appearance.²³
3. The seduction, accusation, and descent into prison – Gen. 39.7-20.
- a. **His resistance to temptation.** Joseph’s answer to the advances of Potiphar’s wife shows his great personal righteousness. King Benjamin taught the Nephites that “when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” ([Mosiah 2:17](#)). If that principle were to be stated negatively, it would read, “When ye are exploiting or sinning against your fellow beings, you are only sinning against God.” Joseph understood this principle perfectly and answered Potiphar’s wife by pointing out that it would be a terrible thing to take advantage of his master in this way. He took the next logical step when he added, “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”²⁴
- b. **Cultural considerations.** Joseph’s spontaneous response is a categorical no. His moral excellence can be appreciated all the more if one remembers that he is a slave and that sexual promiscuity was a perennial feature of all slave societies. Moreover, an ambitious person might well have considered that the importuning woman had presented him with a rare opportunity to advance his personal and selfish interests.²⁵
- c. **The Hebrew servant.** How is this term used in the Hebrew Bible? Sarna writes, “The designation “Hebrew(s),” ‘ivri(m), is to be found about thirty times in the Hebrew Bible. It can only derive from an original ‘iver or ‘ever, and its form permits a connotation that is either geographic or gentile—that is, having an ethnic denotation like *kena’ani*, “Canaanite” or *mo’abi*, “Moabite.” The former possibility is based on the use of ‘ever, meaning “the region beyond,” as used in Genesis 50:10 and Numbers 21:13, so that ‘ivri is “the man from the other side.””²⁶

²³ I see a possible connection between Joseph being “fair of sight” יֹסֵף יִפְהַתְּאֵר and the tree that is mentioned in the visions of the patriarchs, (Gen. 12.6) the oak tree called Moreh – מוֹרְהָ. Although the KJV text says that Abram approached “the plain of Moreh,” the Hebrew text states that he approached ‘*elôn* (of) *môrê*, “the tree of the teacher” or “the tree of the oracle giver” מוֹרְהָ אֵלֹן. Joseph is going to be an oracle giver, a teacher, and a restorer to the House of Israel in this narrative. See also Nahum Sarna, [JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis](#), 2001, Jewish Publication Society p. 91.

²⁴ [Old Testament Institute manual](#).

²⁵ Sarna, p. 273.

²⁶ Sarna, p. 377. Sarna relates that the term “Hebrew” fell into disuse with the founding of the Kingdom of Israel, only to be revived in our time. He continues, “The foregoing data overwhelmingly support the view that ‘*ivri* is an ethnic term. The alternative geographic explanation is, moreover, discounted by the fact that Abram’s family back home in Mesopotamia “beyond the river” is not called “Hebrew,” but “Aramean” (Gen. 25:20)... The true origin of the term “Hebrew” is still to be determined.” He also asks the question, “Why does Abram, alone of the three patriarchs, bear this epithet, and why only in Genesis 14:13? Why are the other peoples who are related to Israel and also descended from Eber, grandson of Noah, called “sons of Eber” (10:21) but never “Hebrews”? And why is the description reserved exclusively for the descendants of Abraham through the line of Isaac and Jacob but not used of the lines of Ishmael or Esau? Not all these questions can be satisfactorily resolved in the present state of our knowledge.”

- d. **His descent into the prison - הסהר *hasohar*.**²⁷ Joseph's descent involves his descent into darkness: the darkness of the pit and the darkness of the prison, as well as the symbolic darkness of Egypt. Oftentimes in the text, we are told that heroes in the Bible descend "down" into Egypt. (see Genesis 46.3-4) I find it noteworthy that when the Pharaoh summons Joseph (Gen. 41.14), he is brought forth "out of the dungeon," מִן־הַבּוֹר *min-*

²⁷ So'-har סֹהַר, prison (noun-masculine), according to BDB Lexicon, is the name of a prison, but also perhaps an Egyptian word Hebraized. Genesis' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon notes that the word means "a tower," so called from its being round, a castle, used of a fortified prison. Other words or phrases used for prison include *maṭṭārâ* מַטָּרָה, the "guard," "ward," or "prison." We see *maṭṭārâ* used throughout the story of Jeremiah's life (see Jer. 32.2, 8, 12; 33.1; 37.21; 38.6, 13, 28; 39.14, 15). Another term used is "house of fetters," *bayit hasuriym*, see Ecclesiastes 4.14.

I see a possible bit of wordplay with Joseph being in a *so-har* and the idea of light, or *tso-har* צֹהַר, the stone used to light the *teba* in Genesis 6 in the flood narrative. It is noteworthy that Joseph feeds his brethren "at noon," the phrase translated from *tso-har* in the account of his reunion with them in Genesis 43. The word *tso-har* צֹהַר can mean light, a double light, or even noon or midday. The word *zohar* זֹהַר means splendor, or radiance. Zohar only appears in a couple of texts in the Old Testament, Ezekiel 8.2, and Daniel 12.3. In the mythic tradition, the *tso-har* was a sacred stone passed from Adam to his descendants (see [Gen. 6.16](#) footnote a). Howard Schwartz explains, "In mythic tradition, *Tzohar* is sacred and is fully entrusted to worthy prophets for the benefit of all. Adam and Eve lose *Tzohar* at the Fall but receive part of it again in the form of a stone from the angel Raziel after their expulsion from the garden. Adam gives the *Tzohar* stone to Seth on his deathbed. Seth passes the light to Enoch who in turn gives it to Methuselah. Lamech, Methuselah's son, delivers the sacred light to Noah who uses it in the ark but loses it while drunk after the ark has landed. Abraham wore the stone on his person all the days of his life, and before his death, gave the stone to Isaac, who gave it to Jacob at the time of his blessing.

The trajectory of the sacred light continues as the stone is possessed by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Jacob made Joseph promise to wear the stone at all times, but he did not reveal its power, which he knew well. And because Joseph's brothers did not know that the amulet was precious, they did not take it from him when they stripped him of his coat.

Myth says that Jacob had the light stone when he had the ladder dream, and the stone saved Joseph from snakes when his brothers threw him into a pit. When Joseph was imprisoned in the dungeon, he discovered that if he placed the *Tzohar* inside his cup and peered into it, he could read the future and interpret dreams. That is how he interpreted the dreams of the butler and baker, and later the dreams of Pharaoh that prophesied the seven years of famine.

Later, Joseph put the stone in the cup that he hid in Benjamin's sack. It was in the cup because Joseph used it and the cup for divination. "Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth?" (Gen. 44:5). That cup, with the precious jewel in it, was placed inside Joseph's coffin at the time of his death, and it remained there until Moses recovered Joseph's coffin and was told in a dream to take out the glowing stone and hang it in the Tabernacle, where it became known as the *Ner Tamid*, the Eternal Light. And that is why, even to this day, an Eternal Light burns above every Ark of the Torah in every synagogue. See: [Howard Schwartz, *Tree of Souls: The Mythology of Judaism*, Oxford University Press, 2007, pages 85-86](#). Roger Baker, writing for [BYU Studies](#), asks the question, "Does not the *Tzohar* myth resonate with LDS traditions of translation, light, stones, and restoration of truth?"

Schwartz offers this as a way to understand Zohar and its related words: *Midrash Aggadah* states that God commanded Noah to bring a diamond with him on the ark, to give them light like midday, because the ark would be dark. "*Tzohar*" is probably linked to *tzoharayim*, the Hebrew word for "noon." The sound of the word is suggestive of *zohar*, which means "splendor" or "illumination," and is the title of the central text of Jewish mysticism. What seems clear is that it indicated some kind of light, whether shining through a window or reflected from a glowing jewel. See: Schwartz, p. 87.

habôr, with the word used for “dungeon” being *bôr*, בּוֹר, a word usually translated as “pit” or “well.”

Genesis 40: Joseph interprets dreams while in prison

1. Joseph meets the butler and the baker of the Pharaoh – Gen. 40.1-4.
2. They “dreamed a dream” and Joseph interprets the butler’s dream – Gen. 40.5-13.
3. “Think on me when it shall be well with thee!” – Gen. 40.14.
4. The dream of the baker is not so good – Gen. 40.15-19.
5. The butler is restored, and forgets Joseph – Gen. 40.20-23.

Genesis 41: Pharaoh’s dream and Joseph’s ascent to the court

1. Pharaoh’s dream – Gen. 41.1-8.
2. The butler remembers Joseph – Gen. 41.9-13.
3. Pharaoh calls for Joseph, he interprets the dream, and advises the king. Joseph is then invested²⁸ with the authority of the king – Gen. 41.14-36.
 - a. Joseph is brought **out of the pit** (Gen. 41.14) מִן־הַבּוֹר.
 - b. Joseph is then shaved (Gen. 41.14), the root verb being used is *gaw-lakh'* גָּלַח, denoting nakedness.²⁹
 - c. Joseph’s **clothing** is changed (Gen. 41.14). Clothing has been a constant theme in Joseph’s story up to this point. The change of clothing signifies that something new in the story is about to begin.³⁰

²⁸ The ancient rite of investiture is linked with the installation. It consists of the giving of a ring, clothing with a festal garment, laying on of the golden chain, and arranging for the chariot. There is an abundance of parallels for installation in office and the accompanying investiture. The rites are similar across a broad cultural area throughout the world. Hence the parallels say no more than that the investiture narrated here is similar to many others known from elsewhere. Claus Westermann, [Genesis 37-50: A Continental Commentary](#), Fortress Press, 1986, p. 94.

²⁹ From *Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon* we read: גָּלַח unused in Kal, prop. to be smooth; hence *to be naked*, specially *to be bald*.

³⁰ **This changing of clothing, the linen (white) garments, the receiving the ring, the chain and the chariot, as well as the new name, Zaphnath-paaneah (Gen. 41.45), are all connected.** On the Day of Atonement when the high priest entered the Holy of Holies he was, as we have seen, to be clothed entirely in white linen garments. The necessity of proper dress is a constant theme in the accounts of prophets being taken into the presence of the Lord. In 2 Esdras, one of the intertestamental books, we are told of a heavenly feast to be attended by those who have been “sealed.” Here they are to “receive glorious garments from the Lord.”

Similarly, in the Secrets of Enoch we have an account of Enoch being taken unto the presence of the Lord. In this instance the Lord instructs Michael, “Go and take Enoch from out his earthly garments, and anoint him with my sweet ointment, and put him into the garments of My glory.” This having been done, Enoch records, “I looked at myself, and was like one of his glorious ones.” (2 Enoch 22:8-9.) In another Enoch manuscript, an account is given of Enoch being taken again into the heavenly court, clothed with the garments of glory, and invited to sit upon the heavenly throne. He had a crown placed upon his head, and was called the “Lesser YHWH” (Jehovah) in the presence of the heavenly household. (3 Enoch 12:2-5.)

Describing the manner of his dress when he was taken to the heavenly court, Levi said he “put on the robe of the priesthood, and the crown of righteousness, and the breastplate of understanding, and the garment of truth, and

the plate of faith, and the turban of the head, and the ephod of prophecy." In so doing he was assisted by seven angels.

In the [Testament of Levi](#) (a portion of the [Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs](#), an apocryphal text) we read:

And there again I saw a vision even as the former, after we had spent there seventy days. And I saw seven men in white raiment saying unto me: Arise, put on the robe of the priesthood, and the crown of righteousness, and the breastplate of understanding, and the garment of truth, and the plate of faith, and the turban of the head, and the ephod of prophecy. And they severally carried (these things) and put (them) on me, and said unto me: From henceforth become a priest of the Lord, thou and thy seed forever. And **the first anointed me with holy oil**, and gave to me the staff of judgement. The **second washed me with pure water**, and fed me with bread and wine (even) the most holy things, and clad me with a holy and glorious robe. **The third clothed me with a linen vestment** like an ephod. **The fourth put round me a girdle** like unto purple. The fifth gave me a branch of rich olive. **The sixth placed a crown** on my head. **The seventh placed on my head a diadem of priesthood**, and filled my hands with incense, that I might serve as priest to the Lord God. ([Testament of Levi 8:2-11.](#))

In 2 Enoch, Enoch is brought to the 10th heaven, and in so doing approaches the Lord. In 2 Enoch 22 we read:

And the LORD said to Michael, "Go, and **extract Enoch from (his) earthly clothing**. And anoint him with my delightful oil, and put him into the **clothes of my glory**." And so Michael did, just as the LORD had said to him. He anointed me and clothed me. And the appearance of that oil is greater than the greatest light, and **its ointment is like sweet dew, and its fragrance myrrh**; and it is like the rays of the glittering sun. And **I looked at myself, and I had become like one of his glorious ones, and there was no observable difference.**" ([2 Enoch 22.7-10](#))

We also have an account of Isaiah ascending to heaven, where he sees the manner in which the angels are clothed. He is told that when he is so clothed he will be equal to them. He also records, " And there I saw Enoch and all who were with him, stript of the garments of the flesh, and I saw them in their garments of the upper world, and they were like angels, standing there in great glory." ([Ascension of Isaiah 9:9.](#))

From an ancient [Syrian source](#) we find the plan of salvation depicted in an allegory. It is a story of a king's son who is required to leave his father's kingdom, where he enjoyed great wealth, to obtain a pearl. The pearl, it becomes quite apparent, is his own soul. His parents see that he is properly provisioned for his journey, though before leaving their presence he must surrender his splendid robe. This robe, or garment of light, we are told, had been woven to the measure of his stature. Before he leaves his parents' presence he enters into a covenant with them to obtain the pearl and return, that he might once again enjoy their presence and wear his splendid robe. The covenant is written upon his heart.

Though the way is dangerous and difficult, an intimate friend, referred to as "an (anointed one)," warns him of the dangers that beset him. Notwithstanding all this he soon forgets that he is a king's son and forgets his mission to obtain the pearl. At this point a council is held, attended by his father, mother, brother (the crown prince), and many other great and mighty ones. They determine to send him a letter imploring him to awake and remember who he is and what king he serves. He is encouraged to remember his splendid robe and to so conduct himself that his name might be written in the book of the heroes and that he with his brother might be an heir in his father's kingdom.

Thus reminded, he commences again his efforts to obtain the pearl, which he must wrestle from a terrible serpent. This he is able to do only by naming his father's name, that of his brother, and that of his mother. Having obtained the pearl he flees Egypt, sheds his dirty and unclean garments, and is further guided by the letter. At this point he is greeted by messengers from his parents who clothe him once more in his royal robe, and he returns as an heir to his father's kingdom. Joseph Fielding McConkie, [Gospel Symbolism](#), Bookcraft, 1985. See also: [The Hymn of the Pearl](#), translated by G.R.S. Mead)

- d. Joseph hears and interprets the dream – Gen. 41.28.³¹
 - e. “**Thou shalt rule** over my house” – Gen. 41.40.
 - f. Joseph receives the Pharaoh’s **signet ring** – Gen. 41.42. Hebrew *tabbu’at* derives from Egyptian... (and is) attested in Egyptian Old Kingdom texts (29th—23rd cent. B.C.E.). The transfer of the ring bearing the royal seal from the finger of Pharaoh to that of Joseph signifies the delegation of authority; it enables the new official to validate documents in the king’s name.” The title “Royal Seal—Bearer” was well known in the Egyptian bureaucracy.³²
 - g. Joseph receives “vestures of fine linen” שֵׁשׁ - Gen. 41.42. Hebrew *shes* is a loan word from Egyptian... “byssus,” used for cloth of exceptional quality. The same material was used in Israel for the **Tabernacle furnishings and the priestly vestments**.³³
 - h. A gold chain is given to Joseph – Gen. 41.42.
 - i. The second chariot is given to Joseph – Gen. 41.43.³⁴
4. Pharaoh places Joseph in charge of the food storage program – Gen. 41.37-57.
- a. The birth of Manasseh מְנַשֶּׁה and Ephraim אֶפְרַיִם – Gen. 41.51-52. There is some wordplay in the naming of the sons here as well as Joseph’s statement that “God hath caused me to be fruitful” in Gen. 41.52. Men-ash-sheh' מְנַשֶּׁה means “causing to forget,” and ef-rah'-yim אֶפְרַיִם can mean “fruitful,” or “I shall be doubly fruitful.” Sarna adds the following commentary regarding these names: The name originally must have meant either “fertile land,” from the stem p-r-h, or “pastureland,” from *afar*, preserved in postbiblical Hebrew. Either etymology would aptly describe the future territory of the tribe bearing this name, which was located west of the Jordan in the central region. It was blessed with good soil and rainfall. (The phrase) made me fertile Hebrew הִפְרֵנִי *hifrani*, (is) an obvious word play on Ephraim (cf. Hos. 13:12,15). All biblical Hifil forms of the stem p-r-h refer to the blessing of abundant posterity. However, it is curious that such language should be used here after the birth of only the second child. There may be a hint here of the later history of the tribe: Moses bestows upon Joseph a fertility blessing in his farewell address in Deuteronomy 33:13—17, and he explicitly refers to “the myriads of Ephraim” and “the thousands of Manasseh.”³⁵ I see Ephraim אֶפְרַיִם

³¹ Hebrew *her'ah* הִרְאָה expresses the language of vision - that is, of visual imagery—as distinct from verbal articulation. Sarna, 284.

³² Sarna, p. 286.

³³ Sarna, p. 286. In later Hebrew, *shesh* was replaced by *buts*, the term current in the Mesopotamian—Syrian area. See also: Claus Westermann, p. 95.

³⁴ Westermann (p. 95) explains: “Horse and chariot are found in representations of the 18th dynasty. **The second chariot refers to his position as the second man in the state**; the people must pay him homage, and the heralds summon them to it with the cry, אֶבְרֵךְ "Abrek." J. Vergote, pp. 135-141, and D. B. Redford, pp. 226-228, maintain that "Abrek" is the imperative of a verb, a Semitic loanword. The meaning is clear and was already recognized by A. Dillmann: "Heralds went before him and sounded the call to homage"; so far there has been no precise philological explanation. J. S. Croatto's derivation from the Akk. *abarikku* = "administrator" (with H. C. Schmitt and others) does not accord with the context" (VT 16 [1966] 113-115).

³⁵ Sarna, p. 289.

being identified with the verbal root *pārâ*, פָּרָה meaning “to bear fruit,” or “to branch off.”