

Genesis 42-50 Podcast Quotes and Notes

Genesis 42: The Famine causes Jacob to send his sons to Egypt

1. Jacob saw that there was “corn”¹ in Egypt, so he sent his sons “down” into Egypt – Gen. 42.1-5.
2. The brothers meet Joseph, the governor of the land, not knowing who he is – Gen. 42.6-24.
3. Joseph has servants fill the brothers sacks with grain and sends them away – Gen. 42.25-26.
4. The brothers see that their money is restored to their grain and they are afraid – Gen. 42.27-35.
5. Jacob worries about this. Reuben offers to help – Gen. 42.36-38.

Genesis 43: Jacob sends Benjamin down to Egypt

1. Judah steps up to offer his help to secure grain, offering him self up as surety – Gen. 43.1-9.
2. Jacob’s instructions to this sons: send a gift and double the money! – Gen. 43.10-14.
 - a. The name of El Shaddai is invoked (Gen. 43.14) in the quest to preserve life.
3. The brothers take Benjamin down to Egypt, stand before Joseph and confess that they still had their original money – Gen. 43.15-25.
 - a. “These shall dine with me at noon” – Gen. 43.17, v25. בְּצַהֲרָיִם = from the root verb צָהַר *šōhar*. This is related to the idea of brightness, and I see this as connected to Joseph’s story, one of double-light, meaning that he is a seer, a shining one. He had the Zohar in Jewish legend, and he is a prophet in the full sense of the word.²

¹ שֶׁבֶר *šēber* – grain, broken, i.e. threshed. See: *Brown-Driver-Briggs*.

² I see a bit of wordplay with Joseph being in a *so-har* (his prison house) and the idea of light, or *tso-har* צָהַר, the stone used to light the *teba* in Genesis 6 in the flood narrative, and the time of day when he has his feast with his brethren. 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* צָהַר can mean light, a double light, or even noon or midday. The word *zohar* זֹהָר 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.

4. Joseph and the brothers feast in his home – Gen. 43.26-34.

Genesis 44: Joseph arranges to put the brothers in a difficult situation

1. Joseph again fills the cups of the brothers with money – Gen. 44.1-3.
2. The brothers are stopped, questioned, and searched on their way out of Egypt – Gen. 44.4-13.
 - a. The money is found in Benjamin’s sack – Gen. 44.12.
3. The brothers return to Joseph’s custody – Gen. 44.14-34.
 - a. Judah offers himself up as a bondman – Gen. 44.33.³

Genesis 45: Joseph reveals himself to his brothers

1. Joseph weeps, reveals himself as Joseph, and tells them not to grieve – Gen. 45.1-8.
2. Go and get Jacob and bring him here! – Gen. 45.9-15.
 - a. Joseph falls upon Benjamin’s neck, kisses his brethren – Gen. 45.14-15.
3. Pharaoh tells Joseph to secure Jacob’s arrival, and offers “the good of all the land of Egypt”⁴ – Gen. 45.16-24.
4. Jacob is told, “Joseph is yet alive!” – Gen. 45.25-28.

Genesis 46: God instructs Jacob to go down into Egypt, father and son reunite in Egypt

1. Jacob’s vision at Beersheba – Gen. 46.1-4.
 - a. “Fear not to go down into Egypt!” – Gen. 46.3.
 - b. “I will there make thee a great nation!” – Gen. 46.3.
 - c. “I will go down with thee... I will bring thee up again, and Joseph will put his hand upon thine eyes”⁵ – Gen. 46.4.

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.

³ וְעַתָּה יִשָּׁבְנָא עַבְדְּךָ “Now, let it be/let it dwell (Jussive 3PMS) please that I be your slave” (Gen. 44.33).

⁴ כִּי-טוֹב קָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם

⁵ יוֹסֵף יָשִׁית יָדוֹ עַל-עֵינַיִךָ “Joseph’s hand shall close your eyes.” Literally, “Joseph shall place/set his hand on your eyes,” understood as a reference to the custom that the eldest son or nearest relative would gently close the eyes of the deceased. Such has remained time honored Jewish practice to the present day. The promise, then, is that Joseph will outlive Jacob and will be present at the moment of his death. The promise was indeed fulfilled, as told in 49:33 and 50:1. Sarna, p. 313.

2. The Genealogy of Jacob – Gen. 46.8-27.⁶
3. They inherit the land of Goshen, Joseph and Jacob embrace – Gen. 46.28-29.
4. Preparation for the audience with Pharaoh – Gen. 46.30-34.
 - a. One gets the impression that Joseph wishes to obscure the fact that the brothers have an additional occupation. This may support the suggestion that the Hebrews were also traders (Gen. 46.34).⁷
 - a. כִּי־תוֹעֲבֹת מִצְרַיִם כָּל־רֹעֵה אֶאֱנִי “For all shepherds are abhorrent to Egyptians” - This remark is probably occasioned by the undoubted fact that the townsfolk held the shepherd in very low social esteem.⁸

Genesis 47: Israelites in Egypt, the Land of Goshen

1. Pharaoh and Joseph’s brothers – Gen. 47.1-6.
2. Pharaoh and Jacob – Gen. 47.7-10.
 - a. “few and evil” have been the days of the years of my life – Gen. 47.9.⁹
3. Joseph’s agricultural policies – Gen. 47.11-27.
 - a. “Joseph nourished his father” יוֹסֵף אֶת־אָבִיו – Gen. 47.12.
 - b. A massive economic collapse – land is sold to secure bread – Gen. 47.20.
4. Jacob prepares for his death – Gen. 47.28-31.

Genesis 48: Ephraim and Manasseh¹⁰

1. Jacob tells of his meeting with God, El Shaddai אֱלֹהֵי שָׁדַי, and the blessing that Jacob would be fruitful, and multiply – Gen. 48.1-4.
2. Ephraim and Manasseh are “called after the name of their brethren” – Gen. 48.5-7.
3. Who are these? – Gen. 48.8-9.¹¹
4. Jacob blesses them, kisses them, and gives the birthright to Ephraim, the younger brother – Gen. 48.10-22.¹²

⁶ The genealogical list here has many problems that derive from apparent inconsistencies contained within the information given and from a comparison with parallel lists found elsewhere in the Hebrew text as well as of the Septuagint version. For a more detailed explanation, see: Sarna, *JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis*, 2001, Jewish Publication Society, p. 411.

⁷ Sarna, p. 318.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ מְעַט וְרַעִים can be translated as “little and hard,” or “few and malignant,” or “small and unhappy,” as well as how the KJV translators rendered the phrase. All the of the patriarchs could probably make this statement, meaning that our sojourn upon this earth is not very long, and the lives that these men lived were filled with difficulty. I would add that Jacob’s story was especially hard, considering his birth, the challenge with the birthright, the struggle with Laban, his plural wives, the enmity within his household, and the tragic circumstances surrounding the loss of Joseph. Jacob was truly a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief and loss.

¹⁰ Genesis 48 has two main themes: the elevation, by adoption, of Joseph’s two sons to the status of Israelite tribes and the advance in status of Ephraim over the first-born Manasseh. Sarna, p. 324.

¹¹ This clearly is another strand of tradition from Genesis 48.1-7.

¹² The JST gives the following information: Joseph Smith made the following changes in this passage when he worked on the inspired translation of the Bible:

“And now, of thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt, before I came unto thee into Egypt; behold, they are mine, and the God of my fathers shall bless them; even as Reuben and

- a. “One portion above thy brethren,” or a “double portion” is given to Joseph – Gen. 48.22.¹³

Genesis 49: The Testament of Jacob¹⁴

Simeon they shall be blessed, for they are mine; wherefore they shall be called after my name. (Therefore they were called Israel.) “And thy issue which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance, in the tribes; therefore they were called the tribes of Manasseh and of Ephraim. “And Jacob said unto Joseph when the God of my fathers appeared unto me in Luz, in the land of Canaan; he sware unto me, that he would give unto me, and unto my seed, the land for an everlasting possession.

“Therefore, O my son, he hath blessed me in raising thee up to be a servant unto me, in saving my house from death; “In delivering my people, thy brethren, from famine which was sore in the land; wherefore the God of thy fathers shall bless thee, and the fruit of thy loins, that they shall be blessed above thy brethren, and above thy father’s house; “For thou hast prevailed, and thy father’s house hath bowed down unto thee, even as it was shown unto thee, before thou wast sold into Egypt by the hands of thy brethren; wherefore thy brethren shall bow down unto thee, from generation to generation, unto the fruit of thy loins forever; “For thou shalt be a light unto my people, to deliver them in the days of their captivity, from bondage; and to bring salvation unto them, when they are altogether bowed down under sin.” ([JST, Genesis 48:5–11.](#))

¹³ “When Jacob blessed Joseph, he gave him a double portion, or an inheritance among his brethren in Palestine and also the blessing of the land of Zion—‘the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.’ He also blessed him with the blessings of heaven above, of the deep which lieth under, and of posterity [[Genesis 49:22–26](#)]. Jacob also blessed the two sons of Joseph with the blessings of their father, which they inherited, and he placed Ephraim, the younger, before *Manasseh*, the elder, and by inspiration of the Lord conferred upon Ephraim the *birthright in Israel*.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:250–51.)

Nahum Sarna offers the following: תַּנְחֵם דְּזַבְיָן *šəkem 'ehād* is of uncertain meaning and has generated varied interpretations. The present rendering, which is that of the Targums, Peshitta, and Vulgate, has been overwhelmingly accepted by Jewish commentators although devoid of philological support. If correct, it means that Jacob gives Joseph a double share, thus elevating him to the status of firstborn. Such a tradition is indeed preserved in 1 Chronicles 5.1-2. Because Hebrew *šəkem* usually means “shoulder,” it has been assumed that, like its synonym *katef* in Numbers 34:11 and Joshua 15:8, *shekhem* can be used in the sense of “shoulder,” that is, “side/slope, of a mountain.” However, this usage too is not otherwise paralleled. Most likely, *shekhem* must be connected with the city of Shechem, which is so intimately associated with Jacob and Joseph. Jacob bought a parcel of land there (Gen. 33:181.; Josh. 24:32), the seduction of Dinah took place there, and Simeon and Levi massacred its inhabitants (Gen. 34.). It was to Shechem that Jacob sent Joseph to visit his brothers (Gen. 37.12, 14), and Joseph himself is to be buried in the city (Josh. 24:32). Moreover, Shechem lay within the future territory of Joseph’s two sons near the border between the two tribes Ephraim and Manasseh (Josh. 17:7), and it was to become the most important city in the kingdom of northern Israel (cf, 1 Kings 12.1, 25). Sarna, p. 330.

¹⁴ Before his death Jacob summons all his sons to his bedside to hear his farewell words, addressing each individually through a series of aphorisms in poetic form. This document (vv. 1—27) is the first sustained piece of Hebrew poetry in the Torah. It is a combination of three literary genres: the deathbed blessing familiar to us from earlier patriarchal narratives, such as Gen. 27:27, 28.1-4 and 39; the farewell address found later in the Bible, as in Joshua 23f. and I Kings 2.1-9; and the tribal poem, as in Deuteronomy 33 and Judges 5. Although the composition of these verses conforms to the general patterns that characterize biblical poetry, **there is much uncertainty of meaning**, extreme allusiveness, and considerable double entendre. **The chapter is the most difficult segment of the Book of Genesis.**

Genesis 49 is widely known as “The Blessing of Jacob.” However, as Ibn Ezra recognized long ago, this designation is not strictly accurate because the poems contain material of a very mixed nature. Blessings and curses, censure and praise, geographical and historical observations—all are included. For this reason, a title such as “The Last Words of Jacob” or “The Testament of Jacob” better suits the context. Sarna, p. 331.

1. The things discussed in these blessings of Jacob to his sons have caused much discussion, and there is no agreement among interpreters. The collection of sayings is organized according to the mothers, in the order of Leah, Zilpah (her handmaiden), Bilhah (Rachel's handmaiden), and Rachel. The first four Leah tribes-Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah-appear in the order of their births, as do those descended from Rachel, Joseph and Benjamin. But whereas in the narrative the sons of the handmaidens appear in the order of Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, and are followed by Leah's last two sons, Issachar and Zebulun, in the tribal sayings of Genesis 49, the order is Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali.¹⁵
2. Reuben – Gen. 49.3-4.¹⁶
3. Simeon and Levi – Gen. 49.5-7.
 - a. Alternate translations of this text have been evaluated, for example, instead of verse 6 reading “in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall,” we read “for when angry they slay men, and when pleased they maim oxen.”¹⁷ The reason for these discrepancies and their meanings depend on translation and are openly discussed among scholars. עֲקְרוּ-שׁוֹר וּבְרִצְנָם עָקְרוּ-שׁוֹר can be translated “and in their pleasure they hamstrung an ox.”¹⁸
4. Judah – Gen. 49.8-12.
 - a. Genesis 49.8 is a “fanfare of sound-play¹⁹”: יהודה אַתָּה יְהוּדָה אַתָּה יְהוּדָה אַתָּה - *Yehudah, 'atah yodukha 'ahekha*. “Judah, you, shall your brothers acclaim!”

¹⁵ Berlin, Brettler, and Fishbane, *The Jewish Study Bible*, The Jewish Publication Society, p. 96.

¹⁶ *you'll no more prevail*. The verb here may rather mean “you'll not remain” (or pun on that meaning)—a reference to the early disappearance of the tribe of Reuben, perhaps before the period of the monarchy. Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary*, p. 293.

¹⁷ *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 97. Carmichael explains it thus: Commentators do not doubt a connection between the the story about Hamor, Shechem, and the house of Jacob (34). Von Rad points out that in one detail only, the hamstringing of the ox, does this saying go beyond what is reported in the story.¹ But is this the case? Why not the following animal comparisons, implicit in one instance, explicit in the other, “For in their anger they have slain a man [Hamor= Ass], and in their zeal hamstrung an ox [=Jacob/Israel]”? The slain man is Hamor, in Hebrew the he-ass, who represents the Hivites slaughtered by Simeon and Levi’s action. **The hamstringing is thus an allusion which takes up the words of rebuke previously addressed to Simeon and Levi by Jacob in Genesis 34...** The hamstringing of an animal occurs in warfare. Its effect is the crippling of an enemy’s fighting strength... In the case of Simeon and Levi their actions against the Hivites is understood by Jacob as an action against his own house because of the vulnerable position it places him in regard to the Canaanites. See: Calum M. Carmichael, Some Sayings in Genesis 49, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Dec. 1969, Vol. 88, No. 4, p. 435-6.

¹⁸ The Greek text of the end of this verse reads: καὶ ἐν τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ αὐτῶν ἐνευροκόπησαν ταῦρον. I would translate this as “and in their passion they hamstrung a bull.”

¹⁹ Robert Alter, p. 294. Alter continues, “Up to this point, Jacob's testament to his first three sons has actually been nothing but curses. Rashi neatly catches the transitional force of “Judah, you . . .” when he notes, “Inasmuch as he had heaped condemnations on the previous ones, Judah began to back away and his father called to him with words of encouragement, ‘Judah, you are not like them.’” Judah now displaces the three brothers born before him, and his claim to preeminence (“your brothers acclaim”) is founded on his military prowess (“your hand on your enemies' nape”). All this has a distinctly Davidic coloration. “Acclaim” is a more precise equivalent for the verb in context than the usual “praise” because what is involved is recognition of Judah's royal status.

- b. Kings are to come from the lineage of Judah (Gen. 49.9-10). Indeed, the House of David will eventually come from Judah's illicit connection to Tamar.²⁰
 - a. The preeminence of Judah is probably related to the fact that the House of David comes from Judah. Scepter and staff may be royal symbols, although they can also designate the stick or club of any military commander or tribal leader.²¹ The Hebrew מִקְלֶה *mehoqeq* refers to a ruler's long staff, a clear parallel to "scepter."²²
 - b. The scepter will not depart – Gen. 49.10. This is a very complicated prophecy.²³
 - c. "Eyes darker than wine, teeth whiter than milk," seems to be a reference to the leader's beauty. It could also be a reference to an abundance of wine under the coming king. It could be translated as "his eyes are dark with wine and his teeth are white with milk." Canaan is often described as a land "flowing with milk and honey" (Ex. 3.8, 17; Num. 13.27; Deut. 6.3). An Arabic proverb being "red with wine" is a metaphor for being very rich. Isaiah 7.21-23 reflects on the abundance of milk and vineyards.²⁴
- 5. Zebulun – Gen. 49.13.²⁵
 - 6. Issachar – Gen. 49.14-15.²⁶

²⁰ The blessing given to Judah indicates that kings would come from his lineage (see [1 Chronicles 5:1–2](#); [Hebrews 7:14](#)). Old Testament history teaches that this promise was fulfilled. King David, King Solomon, and King Rehoboam are just three of the kings who came through Judah's lineage. The King of Kings, Jesus Christ, referred to here as Shiloh, also came through this line. Elder Ezra Taft Benson said of this promise:

"The great blessing to Judah is that it contemplated the coming of Shiloh who would gather his people to him. This prophecy concerning Shiloh has been subject to several rabbinic and Christian interpretations and the object of considerable controversy. The interpretation given this passage by the Mormon Church is one based on revelation to modern prophets, not on scholarly commentary. It was revealed to Joseph Smith that Shiloh is the Messiah. (See [\[JST, Genesis 50:24\]](#).)" (Ezra Taft Benson, "[A Message to Judah from Joseph](#)," *Ensign*, Dec. 1976, p. 71.)

²¹ *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 97. The authors continue to explain: Some commentators, beginning as early as the Aramaic translation known as *Targum Onkelos*, read the word rendered here as tribute . . . to /him as "his due" (Heb "*shelo*"): God shall uphold His promise to Judah even till the royal figure comes to claim the dominion that is his due. Ibn Ezra, on the other hand, considers it possible to retain the traditional wording, "Shiloh," in place of "shai loh" (*tribute . . . to him*). Reading shall come in the sense of "shall come down," like the setting sun (in Lev. 22.7, the verb is translated "sets"), he connects this verse to Ps. 78, which reports that God "forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh," "did choose the tribe of Judah" and "David, His servant" (vv. 60, 68, 70; see 1 Sam. 3.19-4.22; Jer. 7.12-15).

²² Robert Alter translates Gen. 49.10 as "The scepter shall not pass from Judah, nor the mace from between his legs, that tribute to him may come, and to him the submission of peoples." Alter, p. 295. He explains, "There is no reason to construe it, as some have done, as a euphemism for the phallus, though the image of the mace between the legs surely suggests virile power in political leadership."

²³ James Kugel breaks down some of the ways to view this prophecy. See: James Kugel, *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now*, Free Press, 2008, p. 311-314 electronic version.

²⁴ Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 16-50 World Biblical Commentary*, p. 481.

²⁵ The boundaries of Zebulun in Josh. 19.10-15 suggest that it was an inland tribe, but perhaps this was not always the case. *Jewish Study Bible*, p. 97.

²⁶ The Jewish Study Bible renders the following translation:

Issachar is a strong-boned ass,
Crouching among the sheepfolds.
When he saw how good was security,
And how pleasant was the country,
He bent his shoulder to the burden,

7. Dan – Gen. 49.16-18.
 - a. Dan... a serpent on the road.²⁷
8. Gad – Gen. 49.19. The text of this blessing is a long string of puns.²⁸
9. Asher – Gen. 49.20.²⁹
10. Naphtali – Gen. 49.21.
 - a. Is Naphtali a “hind” or a “tree”?³⁰

And became a toiling serf.

Commenting on this passage, the authors offer the following:

The pronouncement on Issachar seems to be a criticism. It is a strong, but lazy, tribe that became a toiling serf, presumably for Canaanites in the northern regions that were its home (Judges 1.33). There is probably a play here on the tribe's name (as if it were "ish sakhar," "hired man"). *Jewish Study Bible*, p. 97. שָׂכָר *śākār* means “wages,” “hire,” and is related to one who works for pay. אִישׁ *īš* is the word for “husband,” or “man,” and the combination of these two words could be a word-play on Issachar's name יִשָּׂשכָר *yīśśāśkār*.

²⁷ The idea that Dan is small but potent is certainly conveyed by the image of him as a deadly snake. “A horned viper.” But what is the point of comparing Dan to a horned viper? In that and other sayings nearly all appear to relate to the experiences of the tribes between the settlement and the rise of the monarchy, it is natural to look for the fulfilment of Jacob's prediction within the Book of Judges. And this is what the Targums do. “The venomous serpent... he is Samson bar Manoah.” As do most of the medieval Jewish commentators. Through his own tricks and strength, Samson defeated the Philistines on various occasions (Judges 13-16). Later the small tribe of Dan migrated northward and sacked Laish (Judges 17-18). Yet despite the prominence of Danites in the Book of Judges, modern commentators are strangely reluctant to link these sayings about Dan here with the exploits of Samson or his tribe. See: Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 16-50 World Biblical Commentary*, p. 481.

²⁸ גָּד גִּדּוּד וּגְוֹדֵהוּ וּחֹּהּ יָגוּד עֵקֶב *gad gudood vugookehnoo vuhoo yagood akev*.

²⁹ Alter gives the following translation for Genesis 49.20:

Asher's bread shall be rich

and he shall bring forth kingly dishes.

He explains: The Masoretic Text reads "from Asher, his bread," but several ancient versions, quite plausibly, attach the initial consonant *mem* ("from") to the end of the preceding word 'aqev ("heel"), turning it into "their heel." Alter, p. 297. *The Jewish Study Bible* offers the following: The royal dainties may have been served to Canaanite kings. I will translate יִתֵּן מִעֲדָנֵי-מֶלֶךְ וְהוּא יִתֵּן מִעֲדָנֵי-מֶלֶךְ as follows: “From Asher his bread will be *shamanah*, and he will give/produce the delicate food of a king.” I translate *ma'ādān* as “delicate food.” *Shamanah* comes from *šāmēn*, a word associated with oil and fat. This word is tied to the word Gethsemane, the “oil press.” It can mean “rich,” “lusty,” “stout,” or “robust.” See: *Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon*. What is associated with the providing of the food of a king or kings? What is associated with the sacred oil and bread? The temple, of course. We can also see the associated of the word אֲשֵׁר Asher (“happy”) and it closely connected word אֲשֵׁרָה Asherah, the sacred tree in the Holy of Holies in the First Israelite Temple, also the divine feminine being the Israelites acknowledged, according to many Biblical scholars. See: [Peterson, “Nephi and his Asherah.”](#) This bread, smeared in oil, connected to the sacred tree, is the bread of the Gods.

³⁰ The way the Masoretes voweled the text of the Hebrew renders a different meaning than what existed in the 3rd century BC, as it is read thus: אִילַי נַפְתָּלִי אִילַי which reads “Naphtali is a hind” or a female deer. This voweled version of the Hebrew text renders this as the only tribe designated as a female animal. The Greek translation of the text reads totally differently:

Νεφθαλι στέλεχος ἀνειμένον ἐπιδοῦς ἐν τῷ γενήματι κάλλος. I translate this as follows: “Naphtali is a στέλεχος tree trunk, having released, giving over in his offspring, beauty.” This is another connection to the First Israelite Temple, as “beauty” can be many things, one of which his goodly words, or the אֲמֵרֵי-טוֹב “goodly words” that come forth from God. “Goodly words” and “beauty” can be connected in a temple context. Both ideas denote the idea of saying the words necessary, covenanting with one's mouth, to God, in order that they may connected to God. This, to me, is tied to the image of the tree, especially as it relates to how Nephi is showing this to us visually.

11. Joseph – Gen. 49.22-26.

- a. Gen. 49.22, Joseph is a “fruitful bough” פֶּרֶת בֶּן פֹּרָת *bane porat*.³¹
- b. [Gen. 49.24](#), “The Mighty God of Jacob” אֱבִיר יַעֲקֹב – this can actually be read as “the bull of Jacob.”³²
- c. The Land of the “everlasting hills” – Gen. 49.26.³³

The question must be asked, why did the Greeks translate “hind” as a “stump”? Nahum Sarna explains: “In Proverbs 5:19, Hebrew *’ayyalah* is a symbol of beauty. In Psalms 18:34 and Habakkuk 3:19 it typifies fleet-footedness. The Hebrew consonants can also be read *’e(y)lah*, “a terebinth,” which is the way the Septuagint took it. The Hebrew text without vowels would read as follows: נפתלי אילה שלחה and can read as “Naphtali is a tree stretching out.” Indeed, John Calvin, in his commentary on this verse wrote that the word אילה that was translated as “hind” sometimes also means “tree.” He then cites other translators who defend this position, “Bochart suggests this translation: “Naphtali is a spreading oak, producing beautiful branches.” See: John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses called Genesis*, Volume 2, p. 403.

³¹ Many translators translate this as “wild ass.” [Jeffrey Bradshaw](#) explains, “The main argument for the ‘wild ass’ is that it preserves the animal imagery [in the blessings of other brothers], but there are several other tribes in the poem that have ... no animal icons. A link between *porat* and the root *p-r-h*, to be fruitful, is less of a grammatical stretch, and is encouraged by Joseph’s play on that same root in naming his son Ephraim. See: Jeffrey Bradshaw, [How should we understand the symbolism of Jacob’s blessings of Judah and Joseph?](#) *Meridian Magazine*, March 19, 2018. Accessed 2.1.2022. *Bane* is usually translated as “son” in the Hebrew Bible (around 3,000 times), and is also translated as children, grandson, youth, or even people. *Porat* in this specific verse is in the participle form. It comes from פָּרָה, a word that is translated as “fruitful,” “increase,” or other words associated with bearing fruit. Robert Alter translates Genesis 49.22 as “A fruitful son is Joseph,” a translation that is closer to the original and literal meaning of פֶּרֶת בֶּן פֹּרָת יוֹסֵף. See: Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary*, W.W. Norton & Company, 1996, p. 298. Alter explains his rendition, saying that the connection between *porat* and *per’e* “wild ass,” seems strained.

³² An animal important in ancient Israelite religion. Bulls were often sacrificed in the Temple. A designation for Israel’s God in Genesis, commonly translated “Mighty One of Jacob,” was originally in Hebrew “Bull of Jacob” ([Gen. 49.24](#)). Hebrew *’abir* originally meant “bull,” or “stallion.” The names of male animals were used often in Old Hebrew and Ugaritic to apply to nobles, lords, or heroes. See: Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*, Harvard University Press, 1973, p. 15.

Statues of bulls were erected in Israel presumably as animal thrones for the invisible deity. Still, in Israelite religion, there was always concern that the animal throne would itself become the object of worship. The bull had dual associations in the iconography of early Israelite religion: this was a god that was often pictured as standing on a bull, a symbol of virility, and the bull was the “Bull El of your father,” the god of many of these early Israelites. This danger was actually realized, according to the Deuteronomist telling the story, in the two bulls that Jeroboam I set up in Bethel and Dan in the tenth century BCE (1 Kgs. 12.28; Ex. 32.4). This was a rival claim to the authority of those in Jerusalem that maintained that there was only one place where the name of God would dwell. Cross explains that a god and his animal “participate in each other,” and while the god may be conceived as enthroned or standing on the bull in Canaanite mythology and iconography, he also is immanent in his animal so that the two may be confused. Cross, *CMHE*, p. 73.

³³ “I suppose that Jacob saw this land as well as Moses, and he designates it a land afar off; the utmost bounds would signify a very distant land. He said this land was over and above, what his progenitors gave to him and he would give it to Joseph. ... The precious things of heaven were to be given to Joseph on this land. Blessed of the Lord be his land for the precious things of heaven, more precious than the fullness of earth, more precious than the productions of the various climates of the earth, more precious than the grain, and the gold and silver of the earth. The precious things of heaven revealed to the people of Joseph on the great land given to them unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills.” (Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 18:167–68.)

12. Benjamin – Gen. 49.27.
13. Jacob’s command regarding his burial, and his death – Gen. 49.28-33.

Genesis 50: Jacob is embalmed, and is buried in the land of Canaan. Joseph prophesies that Israel will be visited by God and be restored to their homeland.

1. Mourning and burial – Gen. 50.1-14.
 - a. Jacob was embalmed – Gen. 50.3.³⁴
2. Joseph and his brothers: The Finale – Gen. 50.15-21.
 - a. “Joseph will peradventure hate us,” – Gen. 50.15.³⁵
 - b. “I will nourish you” – Gen. 50.21. This is an interesting phrase, as the famine is over. I see this in a spiritual context, as Joseph is a seer, a man of God who can sustain the children of Israel. See the [JST of Gen. 50.24-38](#) for more on this connection.³⁶
3. Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel to take his bones back to Canaan to be buried, and dies – Gen. 50.22-26.

George Albert Smith related to the prophecy of the “everlasting hills” thus:

We live in a wonderful age. I wonder if we appreciate what it is to live today with all the advantages gained in the nearly six thousand years since our first parents came into the world. Here we are in the tops of these everlasting hills [Gen. 49:26 D&C 133:31](#) in this building today that was erected when the people were very poor and in distress. The building itself yet unsurpassed in all the world as a house of worship where one's voice may be heard by so many people. (President George Albert Smith, “Our Father’s Work,” *Conference Report* Oct. 1949, p. 4-9)

Apostle LeGrand Richards also tied “the everlasting hills” to the American continent. See: LeGrand Richards, “The Book of Mormon,” *Conference Report*, April 1967, p. 18-23. See also: [Genesis 49 – Israel blesses his sons](#).

³⁴ Joseph orders the embalming of his father. He too is to be embalmed at death (V. 26). Such a practice is never again referred to in the Bible. It is well known that mummification, with all its elaborate ritual, played a crucial role in the Egyptian religion and was bound up with the cult of Osiris and conceptions of the afterlife. Survival of death was taken for granted by the Egyptians. Central to this notion was the belief in the importance of the physical preservation of the body. They took meticulous care to prevent the putrefaction of the corpse in order to ensure the right of the deceased to immortality. Sarna, p. 347.

³⁵ Another way to translate $\text{qoi' } \text{w}^{\text{h}}\text{u}^{\text{h}}\text{! } \text{w}^{\text{h}}\text{!}$ is “What if Joseph will have enmity towards us?” or “What if Joseph will bear a grudge against us?” The conditional particle $\text{w}^{\text{h}}\text{!}$ gives some flexibility here, suggesting a wish, or a potential condition. In this context, I would go with the potential with this particle. The Greek translators rendered the part of this verse as follows: μήποτε μνησικακήση ἡμῖν Ἰωσήφ which can be translated as “And what if Joseph remembers past injuries?” The Greek word μνησικακήση is the 3PS aorist subjunctive of μνησικακέω and is tied to the Greek word for remember, μμνήσκομαι. I see this as a deliberative subjunctive in this context.

³⁶ [JST 50.24-38](#) teaches us that Joseph in Egypt prophesies of Moses freeing Israel from Egyptian bondage; of a branch of Joseph’s descendants being led to a faraway land, where they will be remembered in the covenants of the Lord; of God calling a latter-day prophet named Joseph to join the records of Judah and of Joseph; and of Aaron serving as a spokesman for Moses. See also 2 Nephi 3.4-22.