

Dothan – The Gateway to Salvation

This is a pretty amazing statement to make, but let's see if we can substantiate it. Dothan is only mentioned in two scriptures in the entire bible, yet it is one of the most important places in all of history. Without Dothan, history as we know it would be much different. Our salvation would only be a dream.

To grasp the importance of Dothan, let's review events that solidified its place in history. Let's begin with the story of Joseph in Genesis chapter 37 and recount the events leading to Dothan. The parallels between Joseph and Yahshua are very evident in the account. Joseph was a type of Yahshua and events in his life are reflected in what Yahshua also came to do and did.

Gen 37:1 *And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.*

This was in Hebron.

Gen 37:2 *These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.*

Joseph was out attending the flock with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah when he tattled on them for something that is not disclosed. No one really knows what the "evil" report was that he brought to Jacob. His mother Rachael was dead and Leah was apparently also gone, so he grew up with the sons of the bonds women. So this tattling on them for something that they may not have done was one of the reasons they began to dislike him.

Jacob was 108 at this time which was 9 years after he returned home and is also around the time that Leah died according to the Stone Ed. Chumash. Also, the use of the word "nar" (Lad) implies that the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah treated Joseph as their errand boy or "gofer".

Gen 37:3 *Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.*

Green's interlinear translates this as a "long coat reaching to the feet". The word 'c'tonet' means "coat" and 'pasim' means "stripes". The colored stripes were also a sign of nobility as can be seen in 2 Sam 13:18.

The Stone edition Chumash reports that it was a garment of fine wool. It was a long sleeved embroidered tunic made of variously colored strips of fine wool (Yafeh Toar). The tunic was a mark of leadership. After Reubens failing, Jacob elevated Joseph to the status of the "first born" and made the tunic to symbolize his new position in the family.

The coat of many colors reminds us of the multi-colored rainbow that YHWH placed into the heavens as a sign of a covenant between Him and all flesh. I believe Joseph's coat of many colors was also a sign of the promise of another everlasting covenant with mankind in the person of His only begotten son, Yahshua our Messiah.

The symbolism of the elevated status of Joseph wasn't lost upon his brothers and increased their animosity toward him. Further, Jacob made no attempt to hide his favoritism towards Joseph which heightened the jealousy of his brethren towards him. This jealousy of Joseph by the Jews still exists even today.

The fact that Jacob is called Israel here may imply that Jacob loved Joseph more than the others because he perceived a higher spiritual nature in the boy.

Gen 37:4 *And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.*

They resented him so much that they couldn't even be civil to him anymore. Then Joseph dreamed a dream and told it to his brethren.

Gen 37:5 *And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.*

Gen 37:6 *And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:*

Gen 37:7 *For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.*

Gen 37:8 *And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.*

His brothers were incensed at his dream because they correctly interpreted its meaning that they would one day be in subjection to him. This caused their resentment and jealousy to turn to hatred. Joseph had to have known that this would enrage his brothers, but may have reasoned that if they thought they might be under him some day they would treat him a little better now. But then he dreamed another dream and again related it to his father and brothers.

Gen 37:9 *And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.*

Gen 37:10 *And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?*

Gen 37:11 *And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.*

We see in Genesis 41:32 that when a dream is repeated twice, it will surely come to pass. The dream was metaphorically the same as the first one and was to have its ultimate fulfillment 22 years later. But this set off an ensuing chain of events that would eventually bring it about.

His father was angered and rebuked him, possibly to appease his brothers. His mother was already dead at this point, so there was no way this part of the dream could be fulfilled. But perhaps Bilhah was meant as she was raising Joseph after Rachael died.

His brethren were jealous of him, but his father who was well acquainted with prophetic dreams took note of the dream and kept it in mind

Gen 37:12 *And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.*

‘Shechem’ means “shoulder” or burden bearing. This was the first place that Abraham built an altar after entering the Promised Land. It is the place that the ten tribes rebelled and the kingdom was divided. This is also the place where Joshua reaffirmed the covenant of the law (Jos. 24:1-27). Shechem was a place of witness, sorrow, sin, slaying, lust and everything worldly.

As Joseph represents a type of Yahshua, this is where the story of our redemption begins. The brethren were sent to feed the fathers sheep. They could represent preachers and those who take the gospel to our Heavenly Fathers sheep. Yahshua told Peter that if he loved him, to feed his sheep. We are also to feed the Fathers sheep.

Now there is something very interesting in the Hebrew in this verse. There are a series of dots over the ‘et’ (alef –tav) in this verse.” These are called jots and were mentioned by Yahshua in Matt 5:18. When special markings such as this are made in Torah, it is telling us to pay close attention that something important is being revealed. The ‘et’ is a common pointer in Hebrew that is not translated into English. It points to the direct object (father’s sheep) of the verb (feed). The special emphasis is on feeding the fathers sheep.

The dots above the word “et” look like fang marks which might indicate that the serpent would strongly oppose and even try to kill those that feed the Father’s sheep. We are reminded that Yahshua is the alef tav (et) and is the seed of the woman who was prophesied in Gen. 3:15 to crush the head of the serpent and the serpent would bruise his heel.

Gen 37:13 *And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I.*

Gen 37:14 *And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.*

Jacob is again called Israel here as he is about to send his son on a mission that would have deep spiritual significance. Shechem, as we have seen, was

a place that represented the world. Just about everything both good and bad took place at Shechem. The law was affirmed and rebelled against there and it was also the place where Dinah was defiled prompting Jacobs's sons to seek revenge sacking the town and killing the inhabitants.

Jacob had not heard word from his sons tending the sheep in a long time and knowing they were in hostile territory, decided to send his son Joseph to inquire after them. Even knowing that his brothers hated him, Joseph didn't hesitate to do his fathers will. Who else can we think of that didn't hesitate to do his Father's will?

Just as Joseph was sent to seek out his brethren and his fathers sheep, Yahshua also was sent by his Father into a hostile world to seek out the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Shechem (Sychar) was the first place that Yahshua went outside of Judah to seek out his lost sheep. He met the Samaritan woman there as he sat at Jacobs well and offered her living water (John 4:7).

Shechem was about 50 miles from Hebron where Jacob lived. So Joseph had quite a journey to locate his brothers who it was supposed were in Shechem.

Gen 37:15 *And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou?*

Gen 37:16 *And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks.*

Joseph was wandering around lost looking for his father's sheep in the place where they were supposed to be. Then suddenly a certain man "found" him. The Jews believe that this certain man was the angel Gabriel. I am more inclined to believe it was the pre-incarnate Yahshua or a type of Ruach HaKodesh showing him the way he should go.

Gen 37:17 *And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.*

How did this mysterious man just happen to hear the brothers say "let us go to Dothan?" Surely the sheep were bleating which would have prevented anyone from easily overhearing a conversation unless they were right there.

Now Dothan was 15 miles to the north of Shechem. Joseph had already come about 50 miles and it would have been very easy for him to just return to Hebron, but he went on to Dothan because it was his father's will that he locate his father's sheep. This was his destiny.

The only other place that Dothan is mentioned is in 2 Kings 6:12-19. Elisha lived there and was being sought by the king of Syria. Elisha's servant became very afraid when he saw the Syrian army, but his eyes were opened and he saw the angels and chariots of fire round about to protect them.

Dothan is translated to mean "two cisterns". They were pits dug to catch rain water. However, the Art Scroll Stone Ed. Chumash says that Dothan comes from the word "dath" which means "law, decree or edict". The church erroneously says that Dothan represents the burden of the law which Yahshua supposedly abolished.

However, a look at the word Dothan in the ancient Hebrew pictographic alef bet reveals something truly amazing. The word Dothan is written דֹּתָן. The first character is a 'dalet' and represents a doorway, gate or path. The next character is a 'tav' which represents the covenant and the last character is a seed which indicates perpetuity. Putting it all together we have the door or gateway to the eternal covenant. Dothan was the door that led to our salvation.

Gen 37:18 *And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.*

They probably identified him by his multicolored coat. The Jews also conspired to kill Yahshua.

Gen 37:19 *And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.*

Literally the "master of dreams" as if he could just conjure them up of his own will.

Gen 37:20 *Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.*

Gen 37:21 *And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.*

Gen 37:22 *And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.*

Gen 37:23 *And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him;*

Yahshua was also stripped of his tunic at his crucifixion.

Gen 37:24 *And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.*

They threw him into a dry pit. Yahshua also went into the pit when he descended into Sheol. The words "they took" is actually singular in the text and should say "he took". "He" was probably Simeon that threw Joseph into the pit.

Gen 37:25 *And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.*

They had no concern for their brother's cries from the pit and Jewish writings say they moved about a bow shot away so they could eat their meal in peace without hearing his cries for help. Reuben did not want to slay Joseph, so he excused himself and left on some pretense. But, he intended to come back later in the night and draw Joseph from the pit. He wasn't doing this out of kindness, but because he was the eldest and was the one responsible to his father.

The callousness of the brothers to Joseph's cries for help haunted them as they stood before Joseph 22 years later thinking that it was their treatment of him that was the reason for their dire predicament now (Gen 42:21).

They sold Joseph to a travelling caravan of Ishmaelites for 20 pieces of silver, the price of a boy (Lev 27:5). The rest of the story is well known, so no further commentary is necessary. Thus begins the story of the redemption of Israel.

YHWH orchestrated all of this for His purposes to redeem lost man back to Himself.

Conclusion:

Had not Joseph gone on to Dothan seeking his brothers and his fathers sheep, he would not have been sold into slavery. There would not have been a Jewish captivity and sojourn in Egypt for 400 years. There would have been no Passover or Feast of Unleavened Bread. There would have been no Moses leading YHWH's people out of Egyptian bondage. There would have been no miraculous crossing of the Red Sea. There would have been no law given at Sinai and no entry into the Promised Land. There would have been no Covenant to renew. Yahshua would not have been born to die on the crucifixion stake for our transgressions. There would have been no salvation for us. The Torah would not have been written and we would still be in our sins.

However, since these things had been prophesied it would have been easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for YHWH's word to fail. Joseph's journey to Dothan had been divinely decreed and therefore, had to come to pass.

Dothan was the gateway divinely ordained which led to our salvation and set the course of all history.

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