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The Place of Ephraim in Israel—The Patriarchal Tribe

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“Now the sons of Reuben, the firstborn in Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, for as much as he defiled his father’s bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel; and the genealogy is not to be reckoned as the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph’s)” (*I Chron. v:1-2*).

This is rather a startling item of information which changed considerably the relationship in the princes of the tribes of Jacob, son of Isaac, and the grandson of Abraham, the real founder of Israel.

It is quite evident from the bargain which Jacob made with Laban, that Rachel was the first wife of Jacob, and in that event—had that arrangement been completed—her son would have held the patriarchal right in Israel—the right of the firstborn. But Rachel was barren some time and then her first son was born, Joseph, and afterwards Benjamin. Meantime the sons of Jacob grew to manhood and it developed that Jacob greatly loved his son Joseph and placed marks of distinction upon him. Yet his wife Leah had borne him a son, Reuben, the firstborn in the patriarch’s household, and to him was the patriarchal right for a time accorded. Then came an incident which deprived him of that right of the firstborn, for he was guilty of the frightful sin of defiling his father’s wife Billhah, given to Jacob by Rachel; for Billhah was handmaid to Rachel, and because of his hideous sin according to the text at the head of this division, Reuben lost his birthright, and hence the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright of the firstborn, but unto him to whom it was appointed by inspiration in Jacob. This was to Ephraim, the younger son of Joseph. There seems to be something like poetic justice in the working out of this adjustment; for to the grandson of Rachel—intended first wife

of Jacob—was appointed the birthright, the patriarchal right in Israel. Hence we have the Lord saying in the *Old Testament*: “I am a father to Israel and Ephraim is my firstborn” (*Jer.* xxxi:9). Thus a descendant of the intended first wife was given the patriarchal right in the great historical household. The coming about of this circumstance is detailed in the *Bible* as follows:

Jacob before his death blessed his descendants and put them in their proper relationship by giving to them their patriarchal blessings; indicating by generalization what would be the characteristic events attending upon his twelve sons. In the case of Judah it was:

“Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father’s children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion’s whelp; from the prey my son thou art gone up; he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be” (*Gen.* xlix:8-10).

From thence came the royal line of David of whom Messiah, the Christ, was the greater descendant, even “the Son of God”; and hence, as in our text at the head of this division—“Judah prevailed above his brethren and of him came the chief ruler.” But when the patriarch Jacob, or more properly “Israel”, in blessing came to Joseph, of him he said:

“Joseph is a fruitful bow even a fruitful bow by a well, whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him and hated him: But his bow abode in strength and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb: The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, and

unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren" (*Gen. xlix:22-6*).

And with this mighty blessing, must be added the circumstance of conferring it upon Joseph's sons detailed in chapter *xlvi* of *Genesis*.

Word came to Joseph saying:

"Behold thy father is sick; and he took with him his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim: And one told Jacob, Behold thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself and sat upon the bed. And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me. And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession.

"And now thy two sons Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine: as Reuben and Simeon* [the first and second sons of Jacob and Leah] they shall be mine. And thy issue, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.

"And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan, in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem.

"And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these? And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And

*"Thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh are mine, as Reuben and Simeon" (*Gen. xlix:3-7*). The reason for Reuben's displacement in the tribes of Israel, and the right of the firstborn being transferred to Ephraim we learn from the Scripture at the head of this division; but the reason for Simeon's displacement is not given there. If the reader will take the statement of Jacob in respect of Reuben in the above passage (*Gen. xlix:3-7*) in connection with *Genesis xxx*, he will see that it was because of a deliberately planned massacre of a whole tribe of men to avenge the seduction of Dinah, the daughter of Leah—full sister of Simeon and Levi. Thus the two sons of Leah were displaced by the two grandsons of Rachel, sons of her son Joseph of Egyptian fame.

he [Jacob] said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he [Joseph] brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them. And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face; and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed. And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn. And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head [which in blessing is the symbol of power—of superiority]. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. And he blessed them that day, saying. In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh. And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die; but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow" (*Gen. xlviii*).

To these superb blessings given by the patriarch to his son Joseph is to be added the blessing of Moses upon the tribes

of Israel, and especially the blessings upon Judah and Joseph, who seem to rise above the others in the dignity of the characteristics named in relation to them, and the blessings and the promises given to them in Israel. Of Judah Moses said:

“This is the blessing of Judah: and he said, Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him; and be thou an help to him from his enemies. * * *

“And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew and for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush; [i. e. referring doubtless, to the Lord speaking from the burning bush to Moses]. Let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh” (*Deut.* xxxiii:7, 13-17).

To speak of these several blessings upon Judah and upon Joseph and his sons, would be superfluous. To have their greatness and far-reaching effects manifested it will only be necessary to couple them up into a union. But to understand them fully it is necessary to call attention to some features of their fulfillment, and perhaps their prospective fulfillment. In the first place let there be noted the operation of unconscious justice in action in the case of Joseph and of Benjamin, both of them the sons of Rachel the intended first wife—and therefore the head of his house—his chosen and beloved one of all the wives that made up his household. Cheated by Laban her father in the interests of a technical and most likely an obsolete law—even in his race—and also in the interests of his eldest daughter—of her right to a husband before the younger

daughter—Rachel is denied her place in Israel's family, and her sons deprived by those things of their proper place and dignity. These misadventures are finally recompensed by her two grandsons taking the places and stations of Reuben and Simeon, the first and second sons of Jacob and Leah. By appointment of Jacob Ephraim is given the place of birthright, the patriarchal position among the tribes.

To Joseph, also, it is said, not only that he should be a "fruitful bow", "the shepherd, the stone of Israel", but that his land should be a wonderfully blessed land by the Almighty, "with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb"; and that the blessings of his father, have prevailed above the blessings of his progenitors, unto "the utmost bound" of the everlasting hills: "They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren" (*Gen. xlix:22-26*). The fullness of these things can not be realized in thought from anything that is written in the *Bible* alone, nor even understood in their fullness by what is set down by Jacob, nor by the promises of Moses. To get full appreciation of these superior blessings upon the head of Joseph something must be understood concerning the blessings upon Ephraim and Manasseh and Judah on this choice land of America—"the land choice above all other lands". The inhabitants of ancient America participate in these things.

It is represented in "The American Volume of Scripture", known to the world as the *Book of Mormon*, revealed of God through Joseph Smith, that the inhabitants of America, discovered by Europeans through the voyage of Columbus to America and those who followed him after he had marked the way, were build up by two colonies. First, the colony led by Lehi made up of two branches: Lehi himself leaving Jerusalem about 600 B. C., was of the tribe of Ephraim; and another family which joined him in his journey—one Ishmael, with a large number of daughters in his family—was of Manasseh; and they made the journey together to the western hemisphere, since called the "New World". These families intermarrying became the pro-

genitors, in the main, of the Nephite and Lamanite peoples; and to them it was revealed that this land of America, the two continents of north and south America, were to be known as the land of Joseph, son of the patriarch Jacob, and in them were mingled the descendants of Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh.

Shortly after the arrival of Lehi's colony in the western continent another colony—leaving Palestine after the fall of Jerusalem which ended the dynasty of Zedekiah, king of Jerusalem, and after the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem, to be followed by the seventy years of captivity in Babylon—a colony of Jews—in which was one of the younger sons of king Zedekiah, one Mulek, whose name was given to the colony—hence Mulek's Colony—arrived in America, wandered about amid the ruins of other peoples until finally they founded and developed a great city known as "Zarahemla", and here they were discovered by the Nephite branch of Lehi's descendants and became one people. And so the ancestry of the American Indians, according to this *Book of Mormon*, were comprised of these two colonies and hence the native Indians as found by Columbus and the associate discoverers of America, were descendants of Joseph and of Judah the patriarchal tribe and the chief rulers of Israel;* "for Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler, but the birthright was Joseph's." And when we think of Joseph's descendants from his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, possessing these two western continents, as the land of his inheritance, we can understand how it is that Joseph is characterized as "a fruitful bow whose branches run over the wall, * * * whose blessings have prevailed above the blessings of my [Jacob's] progenitors;" and extend "unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills."† Also as described by Moses when of Joseph he said:

"Blessed of the Lord be his land for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that

*See the author's *New Witnesses for God*, vol. II, ch. x.

†Gen. xlix.

coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof, and for the good will of him [God] that dwelt in the bush; let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren" (*Deut.* xxxiii: 13-16).

Surely a double portion has come upon Joseph through his sons Ephraim and Manasseh, through the grandsons of Rachel, wife of Jacob, in that to him was given not only the birthright of Reuben and Simeon but also more than a double portion in the extent and grandeur of his lands—north and south America; and for the blessings of their limitless resources. Surely Joseph's blessings prevailed above the blessings of his father's ancestors!

It is also said of Ephraim that—

"His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorn; with them he shall push [gather] the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh" (*Deut.* xxxiii: 17).

And now the subject takes on another phase. We have already quoted copiously from the Scriptures of the great promises that God has made to restore Israel to his lands, gathering them together to all the lands given to their fathers; the return to Palestine, in the eastern continent, of Judah; and now we have seen the enlarged area in lands granted to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, descendants of Joseph in the revealed fact of the two American continents being their lands—the lands of Joseph.

There is still another element entering into this ever enlarging theme, the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a New Dispensation of it to the world in these last days, known as the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times spoken of by St. Paul as being the dispensation into which will be gathered all previous

dispensations, the assembling in one consistent whole of the truths spoken by the mouths of the holy prophets since the world began (*Eph. i*); and by St. Peter spoken of as the "times of refreshing" which shall come from the presence of the Lord, and in which times of refreshing God shall again send Jesus Christ, "which before was preached unto the Jews but whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouths of all his holy prophets" (*Acts iii:19-21*).

And this dispensation so described by these two great Christian apostles is to be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people—to all the world in fact, since in this New Dispensation it is revealed that men have departed from the truth of God as revealed and expounded in the Christian Dispensation of the Meridian of Times, in which the Christ wrought and made his great sacrificial atonement for the redemption of man from death, and salvation from sin and its consequences, leading up to union with God through the Holy Ghost. Also it is part of this New Dispensation of the truth that God has emphasized the fact that Israel is to be gathered to the lands appointed unto them; and so, the authorized servants of God, have gone forth in this New Dispensation with their message, for the gathering together of Israel; and in obedience to the deliverance of this message, concerning the gathering of Israel, great response has been made, as if there had been note taken of the warning by Isaiah—

"See ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye" (*Isa. xviii:3*).

had been sounded, and there had occurred in large measure the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, which says:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's House shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the House of the God of

Jacob: and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (*Isa. ii*).

Now this New Dispensation, here referred to, came forth in the land of America. God spoke to his chosen prophet, Joseph Smith, and revealed to him the great need of the world, since they had "transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances and broken the everlasting covenant"—namely restoring this covenant, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ which goes with it; and in the organization of the restored priesthood of this church, is the office of "patriarch" to whom it is given to bless the people, who come into the church, as patriarchs blessed the people in ancient times, and gave them place in Israel, and blessing according to character and the future callings of God unto them, as also to indicate their place in the forming modern Israel of God, and lo, these officers are proclaiming the tribes to which the people belong, and it is learned through this inspired source that up to the present the people gathered into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by the proclamation of the gospel, are descendants of Ephraim the patriarchal tribe of Israel; the tribe that holds the birthright and patriarchal blessings, whose "horns are as the horns of the unicorn in pushing the people together from the ends of the world" (*Gen. xlix, Deut. xxxiii*). This tribe has been and is being gathered to the land of Joseph—America—to whom was given these patriarchal functions in Israel.

From modern revelation we learn that the time has come when the voice of the Lord is unto all the inhabitants of the earth. This revelation in the collection of such documents, in the New Dispensation, is known as the "Appendix", which was written at the time of the first collection of revelations to be published to the world. This in November, 1831. It was given, said the prophet to whom it came—Joseph Smith—"to gratify the desire the elders of the church had at that time, relative to preaching the gospel to the inhabitants of the earth, and the gathering of Israel". In order that they might walk by the "true light" and be instructed from on high—instructed of God,

in fact. Hence the prophet inquired of the Lord and received the above-mentioned revelation. Summarized it stands thus in substance:

The people, called God's Church, are to sanctify themselves; to gather together upon the land of Zion, which land, in this instance, refers to the land of Joseph identical with the American continents; the center place of which is Jackson county in western Missouri. In other revelations of the New Dispensation we learn that this is to be "the place of the New Jerusalem" in America, called **Zion**, which signifies both a place and a people. As a people "the pure in heart"; "For this is Zion, saith the Lord, the pure in heart". The place of their habitation was also to be recognized by the term "Zion", meaning, as a place, "a city of holiness and of freedom and peace". The command unto the modern saints is that they shall go forth from Babylon, which in the revelation we are following is referred to as "places of wickedness", even "spiritual Babylon". The Lord also reminds them that he has sent forth "the angel" (spoken of in *St. John* xiv:6-7), crying through the midst of heaven: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord and make his paths straight, for the hour of his coming is nigh. * * * Wherefore prepare ye for the coming of the Bridegroom: Go ye, go ye out to meet him." Also it is said he shall "utter his voice out of Zion, and he shall speak from Jerusalem, and his voice shall be heard among all people." Also it is stressed that they who are in the north country shall come to remembrance before the Lord, and their prophets shall hear his voice, and shall no longer stay themselves, but shall come in great companies from the land of the north, "and they shall bring forth their rich treasures unto the children of Ephraim, my servants", saith the Lord, and there shall they fall down and be crowned with glory even in "Zion" by the hands of the servants of the Lord, "even the children of Ephraim", and they shall be filled with songs of everlasting joy. "Behold," continues the word of the Lord, "this is the blessing of the everlasting God upon the tribes of Israel, and the richer blessing upon the head of Ephraim and his fellows."

Behold what a consistency there is in such a climax as this! Out of the confused muddle of things in respect of Joseph and his tribes in Israel, Rachel's displacement in the household of Jacob, thence through the operation of the justice of God, Joseph, Rachel's son, is given the double portion in Israel, both as having accorded to him through his sons Ephraim and Manasseh, two tribes, with Ephraim given the birthright of Reuben, the firstborn; and Benjamin given the place in Israel of Simeon, the second son, and now with the birthright of Ephraim established, and therefore the patriarchal right in Israel God has established in this period of gathering of Israel—the climaxing dispensation—the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times—and Joseph stands in his patriarchal place among his descendants in these last days, as holding the rights of that patriarchal order, and is gathered first unto the land of "Zion"—the American continents—identical with the land of Joseph, the portion given to him beyond the progenitors of Jacob, as Jacob himself tells us, and commissioned to build the temples of God, and here to receive as the patriarchal tribe the other tribes of Israel. Here in Zion, at "the hands of the servants of Ephraim", they receive their blessings in the temples of God, and "the richer blessing upon the head of Ephraim and his fellows" (*Doctrine and Covenants*, sec. cxxxiii:3).

Also we are told in this revelation which so describes the grandeur of the movements of God in the things of the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times, that "the tribe of Judah shall be sanctified in holiness before the Lord to dwell in his presence day and night forever and forever", in the kingdom of God of the Millennial time, and behold the Messiah of Israel—the Jehovah-Christ of this whole movement, shall in the days of these events stand upon the Mount of Olivet, and upon the mighty ocean, even the great deep, and upon the islands of the sea, and upon the land of Zion. And he shall utter his voice out of Zion, and he shall speak from Jerusalem, and his voice shall be heard among all people (vs. 20-21): And thus the equivalent and fulfillment of Isaiah's prediction when he de-

clared that the law should go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (*Isa. ii*).

What a mosaic here in the blending of prophecies ancient and modern, and their consistent fulfillment on leading up to and the fulfilling of the decrees of God; and the consistent fulfillment of them in placement and the complete redemption and gathering together of the Israel of God in heaven and in earth to the glory of God the Father and the establishment above all, of his name forever and forever! The bringing in of the Fullness of the Gospel, blending all the dispensations that have been given, from the days of Adam to the glorious coming of the Christ, in One Dispensation—all previous ones forming part of the great One Dispensation of the everlasting and only Gospel of Jesus Christ. The redemption of the earth from unrighteousness, and the establishment of the world-wide empire of the Christ—the very Kingdom of God!