

IT IS SETTLED!

"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13b)

By Howell Lasseter

Joseph

Last week, we asked a question: "who was Jacob's twelfth son and Rachel's second son?" The answer, as you know, is Benjamin.

At the age of 17, Joseph had two dreams. These dreams made his brothers more angry with him; and even caused his father Jacob to question him concerning their meaning. After this, 10 of his brothers left Jacob's location, and were tending the flocks. Jacob was concerned with their well-being, and sent Joseph to check on them. When the brothers saw Joseph coming, they conspired to kill him; the exception was Reuben, who wanted no harm to come to Joseph and wanted to take Joseph home to Jacob. While Reuben was away, Judah suggested they sell Joseph to some Ishmaelites who were passing by. The brothers received 20 pieces of silver for Joseph. When Reuben returned, he saw the pit was empty - Joseph was gone. The brothers took Joseph's coat - a coat of many colors, made for him by Jacob - killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the goat's blood, to make Jacob think an animal had killed Joseph. These 10 brothers of Joseph caused their father to be convinced that the son he loved so dearly, the firstborn of his beloved Rachel, was dead. Was he? No. Just because Jacob concluded from the actions of his sons that Joseph was dead, did not make it so. We have similar situations today. One person will claim to be a man "of the cloth," as it is sometimes called. Another will make the same claim about himself; yet they tell two different stories about what God has told them to say to their followers. Friends, it is settled. You and I can understand the word of God alike. Can we not understand alike this deception by Jacob's sons? We can know Joseph is not dead; yet does not our heart ache because of the grief of this father? Jacob believed that by sending Joseph out to check on the brothers, he put Joseph in the way of this "evil beast," which has killed him, no doubt, even devoured his very body.

An exceptional young man was Joseph. Many of us are parents. We have children whom we love; we are concerned about their well-being; and are anxious when they are away from us. So was Jacob, and he was devastated when he thought his son was dead. Read Genesis 37. In verse 38 of this chapter, we see the great anguish in Jacob's heart. The brothers could not relieve his pain. Yet, Jacob made a statement, not knowing God's plan for the future, that did not come to pass. Jacob did not go down into the grave mourning for his son. We will notice next week the meaning of Joseph's dreams, and what he suffered because of his determination to obey his God. He knew God's will; he knew what sin was; and he refused to yield to sin. Yes, it is settled! As did Joseph, so must we fear God, and keep His commandments.