

**The Testament of Joseph, son of Jacob and Rachel
from The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha
Apocalyptic Literature & Testaments, volume 2**

A copy of the testament of Joseph. When he was about to die, he called his sons and his brothers and said to them:

My brothers and my children, Listen to Joseph, the one beloved of Israel. Give ear to the words of my mouth. In my life I have seen envy and death. But I have not gone astray: I continued in the truth of the Lord.

These, my brothers, hated me but the Lord loved me. They wanted to kill me, but the God of my fathers preserved me. They lowered me into a cistern; the Most High raised me up. They sold me into slavery; the Lord of all set me free. I was taken into captivity; the strength of His hand came to my aid. I was overtaken by hunger; the Lord himself fed me generously.

I was alone and God came to help me. I was in weakness; the Lord showed His concern for me. I was in prison; the Savior acted graciously in my behalf. I was in bonds; He loosed me. Falsely accused; He testified in my behalf. Assaulted by bitter words of the Egyptians; He rescued me. A slave; He exalted me.

Chapter 2

And this chief officer of Pharaoh entrusted to me his household.

I struggled with a shameless woman who kept prodding me to transgress with her, but the God of my father rescued me from the burning flame. I was jailed, I was whipped, I was sneered at, but the Lord granted me mercy in the sight of the prison-keeper. For the Lord does not abandon those who reverence Him, neither in darkness, nor chains, nor tribulation nor direst need.

For God does not disappoint as does man, nor is He timorous like a son of man nor like an earthborn is He weak or frightened away. In all these matters He takes his stand, and in various ways He offers assistance, even though for a brief time He may stand aside in order to test the disposition of the soul.

In ten testings He showed that I was approved and in all of them I persevered, because perseverance is a powerful medicine and endurance provides many good things.

Chapter 3

How often the Egyptian woman threatened me with death! How often, after turning me over to the tormentors she would call me back and threaten me! But since I was unwilling to have intercourse with her, she kept saying to me, 'You will be master over me and all my household if you will only give yourself over to me; then you will be our ruler.'

But I recalled my father's words, went weeping into my quarters, and prayed to the Lord. For those seven years I fasted, and yet seemed to the Egyptians like someone who was living luxuriously, for those who fast for the sake of God receive graciousness of countenance.

If my master was absent, I drank no wine; for three-day periods I would take no food but give it to the poor and the ill. I would awaken early and pray to the Lord, weeping over the Egyptian woman of Memphis because she annoyed me exceedingly and relentlessly.

In the night she would come in to me, pretending a mere visit. Because she had no male child, she pretended to consider me as a son. For a time she would embrace me as a son, but then I realized later that she was trying to lure me into a sexual relationship.

When I became aware of this I lamented to the point of death. After she had gone out, I came to myself and mourned in her behalf for many days, because I had recognized her deceit and her deviousness. I spoke to her the words of the Most High, hoping He might divert her from evil desire.

Chapter 4

How often, then, did she flatter me with words as a holy man, deceitfully praising my self-control through her words in the presence of her husband, but when we were alone she sought to seduce me. Publicly she honored me for my self-control, while privately she said to me, 'Have no fear of my husband, for he is convinced of your chastity so that even if someone were to tell him about you, he would not believe it.'

During all these affairs I stretched out on the ground praying God to rescue

me from her treachery. When she achieved nothing by means of it, she began to approach me for instruction, so that she might learn the Word of God. And she kept saying to me, 'If you want me to abandon the idols, have intercourse with me and I will persuade my husband to put away the idols, and we shall live in the presence of your Lord.'

But I kept telling her that the Lord did not want worshipers who come by means of uncleanness, nor would He be pleased with adulterers, but with those who were pure in heart and undefiled in speech. She was consumed with jealousy, wanting to fulfill her desire. But I devoted myself the more to fasting and prayer that the Lord might rescue me from her.

Chapter 5

Again on another occasion she said to me, 'If you don't want to commit adultery, I will kill my husband by a drug and take you as my husband'. When I heard this, I tore my clothing and said to her, 'Woman, show reverence to God; do not commit this wicked deed, lest you be utterly destroyed. For you should know that I shall make it known to all that this is your scheme.'

Filled with fear, she ordered me not to disclose her plan. Then she withdrew, but kept trying to entice me with gifts and every manner of pleasurable things.

Chapter 6

Later she sent me food mixed with enchantments. When the eunuch who was carrying it arrived, I looked up and saw a frightening man who offered me a sword along with the bowl. So I perceived it was a trick to lead me astray. When he departed, I wept; I tasted neither one item nor the other of the food he brought.

A day later she came to me and said, when she recognized the food, 'Why didn't you eat the food?' And I said to her: 'Because you filled it with a deadly enchantment. How can you say, 'I don't go near idols, but only to the Lord'?

Now then understand that the God of my father revealed to me through an angel, your wickedness, but I have kept it for this reason: to shame you if somehow by seeing it you might repent. In order for you to learn that the evil of the irreligious will not triumph over those who exercise self-control in their worship of God, I will take this and eat it in your presence'. When I had said

that, I prayed aloud, 'May the God of my fathers and the angel of Abraham be with me.'

And I ate. When she saw this, she fell upon her face at my feet weeping. I raised her up and warned her, and she agreed with me that she should no longer commit this impiety.

Chapter 7

But her heart was still inclined to evil and she turned over in her mind how she might entrap me. Shortly she was groaning and depressed, even though she was not sick. When her husband saw her, he said to her, 'Why are you so downcast?' She responded to him, 'I am suffering from a pain in my heart and groans of my spirit have taken hold of me.'

He tried to cure her with words. Then she seized the occasion and came running in to me, while her husband was still outside, and said to me, 'I shall hang myself, or hurl myself over the precipice if you do not have intercourse with me.' Since I perceived that the spirit of Beliar was troubling her, I prayed to the Lord, but I said to her:

'Why, wretched female, are you troubled and disturbed, blinded by sin? Remember that if you kill yourself, Astetha, your husband's concubine, who is filled with envy of you, will beat your children; thus you will destroy your memory from the earth.'

And she said, 'See, then, you do love me. That is enough. Only keep contending for my life and that of my children and I shall cling to my expectation of gaining my desire'. She didn't understand that I spoke in this way for the Lord's sake and not for hers. For if anyone is subjected to the passion of desire and is enslaved by it, as she was, even when he hears something good bearing on that passion, he receives it as aiding his wicked desire.

Chapter 8

I tell you, my children, it was about the sixth hour when she left me. Bending my knees before the Lord, I prayed a whole day and a whole night. Toward dawn I arose, crying and begging deliverance from her. Finally, she grasped my clothing, determined to force me into having intercourse with her.

When I saw, therefore, that in her madness she had seized my garment, I

shook loose and left it and fled naked. She held on to it, and brought false accusation against me. Her husband came and threw me in prison in his own house; then the next day he whipped me and sent me to the Pharaoh's prison.

When I was in fetters, the Egyptian woman was overtaken with grief. She came and heard the report how I gave thanks to the Lord and sang praise in the house of darkness, and how I rejoiced with cheerful voice, glorifying my God, because through her trumped-up charge I was set free from this Egyptian woman.

Chapter 9

Many times she sent messages to me saying, 'Acquiesce in fulfilling my desire, and I will release you from the fetters and liberate you from the darkness.' Not even in my mind did I yield to her, for God loves more the one who is faithful in self-control in a dark cistern than the one who in royal chambers feasts on delicacies with excess.

If a man strives for self-control and at the same time desires glory - and the Most High knows that it is appropriate for him - He brings it about for him, even as he did for me. How often, as though she were ill, she came down at odd hours and listened to my voice as I prayed! When I was aware of her groaning, I fell silent. For when I had been with her in her house, she would bare her arms and thighs so that I might lie with her. For she was wholly beautiful and splendidly decked out to entice me, but the Lord protected me from her manipulations.

Chapter 10

So you see, my children, how great are the things that patience and prayer with fasting accomplish. You also, if you pursue self-control and purity with patience and prayer with fasting in humility of heart, the Lord will swell among you, because He loves self-control. And where the Most High dwells, even if envy befall someone, or slavery or false accusation, the Lord who dwells with him on account of his self-control will not only rescue him from these evils, but will exalt him and glorify him as He did for me.

For these problems beset all mankind either in deed or word or thought. For my brothers know how much my father loved me, yet I was not puffed up in my thoughts. Even while I was a child I had the reverence of God in my heart, for I understood that all things pass away. I did not arouse myself with

evil design, but honored my brothers, and out of regard for them even when they sold me I was silent rather than tell the Ishmaelites that I was the son of Jacob, a great and righteous man.

Chapter 11

You, therefore, my children, in every act keep the reverence of God before your eyes and honor your brothers. For everyone who does the Law of the Lord will be loved by Him.

As I was going with the Ishmaelites, they kept asking me, Are you a slave? And I replied, 'I am a slave out of a household', so as not to disgrace my brothers. The greatest of them said to me, 'You are not a slave; even your appearance discloses that'. But I told them that I was a slave.

As we were reaching Egypt they began to squabble over me as to which of them would put up the money and take me. Accordingly it seemed good to all of them that I should be left in Egypt with a trader handling their trading post until they returned bringing their merchandise.

The Lord granted me favor in the eyes of the trader and he entrusted me with his household. And God blessed him by my hand, and he prospered in gold and silver and in business. And I was with him three months.

Chapter 12

At that time the Memphian woman, Pentephris' wife, came down in a palanquin with great splendor, because she had heard about me from one of her eunuchs. She said to her husband that through a certain young Hebrew the trader had become rich; 'they say that he surely stole him out of the land of Canaan. Now, then, work justice concerning him; take the young man to your household, and the God of the Hebrews will bless you, because grace from heaven is with him.'

Chapter 13

Pentephris believed her words, ordered the trader to come, and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you, that you steal persons from the land of Canaan and sell them as slaves?'

The trader fell at his feet and besought him saying, 'I pray you, my lord, I don't know what you're saying'. Pentephris said to him, 'Where is this Hebrew from, then?' And he said, 'The Ishmaelites left him with me until they

return.’ But he didn’t believe the trader and ordered that he be stripped and beaten.

But since he persisted in his statements, Pentephris said, ‘Bring in the young man’. When I entered I prostrated myself before Pentephris, for he was third in rank among Pharaoh’s officers. And taking me aside from the trader he asked me, ‘Are you a slave or a freeman?’

I said to him, ‘A slave’. He said, ‘Of whom?’ I replied, ‘Of the Ishmaelites’. He said, ‘How did you become a slave?’ And I said, ‘They bought me out of the land of Canaan’. But he said to me, ‘You are really lying,’ and immediately he ordered that I also be stripped and whipped.

Chapter 14

The Memphian woman was watching through the doors as they beat me, for her residence was nearby. So she sent a message to him. Your sentence is unjust, because you have punished as a wrongdoer someone who, though a freeman, was stolen.

But since I did not change my statement while they were beating me, he ordered me to be imprisoned until, he said, the masters of the servant boy arrive. But the woman said to her husband, ‘Why do you detain in bonds this young man who, though a captive, is well-born?’ Rather he should be set free and attended to by my servants. She wanted to see me by reason of her sinful passion, but I was ignorant of all these things.

He said to her, ‘It is not proper for Egyptians to take away what belongs to others before the evidence has been presented’. He said this concerning the trader, but the young man he kept incarcerated.

Chapter 15

Twenty-four days later the Ishmaelites came; they had heard that Jacob, my father, was mourning greatly over me so they came and told me. ‘Why did you tell us that you were a slave? Look, we now know that you are the son of a great man in the land of Canaan, and that your father is mourning for you in sackcloth and ashes.’ When I heard this my inner being was dissolved and my heart melted and I wanted to weep very much, but I restrained myself so as not to bring disgrace on my brothers. So I said to them, ‘I know nothing; I am a slave.’

Then they conferred about selling me so that I might not be discovered in bondage to them, for they feared my father that he might come and avenge himself powerfully against them. They had heard that he was a great person in the sight of God and men.

Then the trader said to them, 'Release me from Pentephris' judgment'. So they came and requested of me, 'Say that you were purchased by us with money, and then he will release us from responsibility.'

Chapter 16

The Memphian woman said to her husband, 'Buy the young man, for I hear it said that they are selling him'. Immediately she sent a eunuch to the Ishmaelites, requesting them to sell me. But the eunuch was not willing to buy me and came away after testing them out. He told his mistress that they were asking a great deal of money for the boy.

She sent the eunuch back again and told him, 'Even if they are asking two minas; offer it. Do not be sparing of the gold; just buy the boy and bring him to me'. The eunuch went and gave them eighty pieces of gold and took me away, but he told the Egyptian woman he had paid a hundred. Although I knew the facts, I kept quiet in order not to bring the eunuch under disgrace.

Chapter 17

So you see, my children, how many things I endured in order not to bring my brothers into disgrace. You, therefore, love one another and in patient endurance conceal one another's shortcomings. God is delighted by harmony among brothers and by the intention of a kind heart that takes pleasure in goodness.

When my brothers came to Egypt they learned that I had returned their money to them, that I did not scorn them, and that I sought to console them. After the death of Jacob, my father, I loved them beyond measure, and everything he had wanted for them I did abundantly in their behalf.

I did not permit them to be troubled by the slightest matter and everything I had under my control I gave to them. Their sons were mine, and mine were as their servants; their life was as my life, and every pain of theirs was my pain; every ailment of theirs was my sickness; their wish was my wish.

I did not exalt myself above them arrogantly because of my worldly position

of glory, but I was among them as one of the least. (Matt 23:11)

Chapter 18

If you live in accord with the Lord's commands, God will exalt you with good things forever. And if anyone wishes to do you harm, you should pray for him, along with doing good and you will be rescued by the Lord from every evil.

Indeed you can see that on account of my humility and patient endurance I took to myself a wife, the daughter of the priest of Heliopolis; a hundred talents of gold were given to me along with her and my Lord caused them to be my servants. And He also gave me mature beauty, more than those of mature beauty in Israel; He preserved me until old age with strength and beauty. In every way I was like Jacob.

Chapter 19

Listen, my children, concerning the dream that I saw:

Twelve stags/harts were grazing at a certain place; nine were scattered over the whole earth, and likewise also the three.

Aramaic:

And as I looked, the three stags became three lambs; they cried out to the Lord, and the Lord led them into a fertile, well-watered place. He led them out of darkness into the light. And there they cried out to the Lord until the nine stags were gathered to him, and they all became like twelve sheep. After a short time they multiplied and became many herds.

Later as I was looking, twelve bulls were nursing from one cow, who furnished a sea of milk.

The twelve herds and the innumerable herds drank from it. And the horns of the fourth bull ascended to heaven and became as a rampart for the herds. And from between the two horns there sprouted forth yet another horn.

And I saw a heifer which surrounded them twelve times and which became to perfection an aide to the bulls. And I saw in the midst of the horns a certain virgin wearing a multicolored stole; from her came forth a lamb. Rushing from the left were all sorts of wild animals and reptiles, and the lamb conquered them. Because of him the bull rejoiced and the cow and the

stags were also glad with them.

These things must take place in their appropriate time.

And you, my children, honor Levi and Judah, because from them shall arise the salvation of Israel. For my kingdom shall have an end among you, like an orchard guard who disappears after the summer.

Chapter 20

For I know that after my death the Egyptians will oppress you, but God will work vengeance on your behalf, and will lead you into the promises made to your fathers.

You shall carry my bones along with you, for when you are taking my bones up there, the Lord will be with you in the light, while Beliar will be with the Egyptians in the dark.

Take Aseneth, your mother, and bury her by the hippodrome, near Rachel, your grandmother. And when he had said this he stretched out his feet and fell into a beautiful sleep. And all Israel and all Egypt mourned with great lamentation.

And at the departure of the sons of Israel from Egypt, they took along Joseph's bones and buried him in Hebron with his fathers. The years of his life were one hundred ten.

from Genesis, Chapter 50:15-26

...And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did to him. And they sent a messenger to Joseph, saying, Your father did command before he died, saying:

'So shall you say to Joseph, Forgive, I pray you now, the trespass of your brethren and their sin; for they did evil unto you: and now, we ask you, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father'. And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, 'Behold, we are your servants.'

And Joseph said to them, 'Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for

you, you thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore, fear not: I will nourish you, and your little ones'. And he comforted them, and spoke kindly to them.

And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years.

And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees. And Joseph said to his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.

And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, 'God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here'. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

from Exodus, Chapter 1:

Now these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt; every man and his household came with Jacob. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt already.

And Joseph died, and all his brethren and all that generation. And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and became exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which didn't know Joseph. And he said to his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there fall out any war, they join also unto our enemies and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.

Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. And the Egyptians made

the children of Israel to serve with rigor:

And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve was with rigor. And the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives... And he said, When you do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women and see them upon the birthing-stools; if it is a son, then you shall kill him: but if it's a daughter, then she shall live...

from 1 Chronicles, Chapter 5

Now the sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren and of him comes the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's.)

from Genesis, Chapter 48

And Jacob said to Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, blessed me and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people; and will give this land to your seed after you for an everlasting possession. And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto you in the land of Egypt before I came to you into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine...

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 to his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put your right hand upon his head. 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 you shall Israel bless, saying, God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh. And Israel said to Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

from Jeremiah, Chapter 50

In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, coming and weeping: they shall come and seek the LORD their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces toward there, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.

My people have been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace. All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers.

from Matthew, Chapter 15

Jesus answered and said, 'I am not sent but unto the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel.'

Chapter 10

These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, 'Don't go into the way of the Gentiles... But go rather to the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand'.

from the Book of Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 26

And I (Paul) said, Who are you, Lord? And he said, 'I am Jesus whom you persecute. But rise, and stand upon your feet: for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of these things which you have seen and of those things in the which I will reveal to you. Delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom I now send you; To open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith/trust that is in me.'

I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision... But showed first to them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the tribes, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. For these causes the Pharisees caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come...

from The Lost Chapter of Acts of The Apostles, Verse 1-3

And Paul, full of the blessings of Christ and abounding in the spirit, departed out of Rome, determining to go into Spain, for he had a long time proposed to journey toward there and was minded also to go from there to Britain. For he had heard in Phoenicia that certain of the children of Israel, about the time of the Assyrian captivity, had escaped by sea to "The Isles afar off" as spoken by the Prophet [Esdra], and called by the Romans — Britain. And the Lord commanded the gospel to be preached far hence to the Gentiles and to the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel.

from 2 Kings, Chapter 17

In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria...

For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared/reverenced other gods and walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel.

And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the LORD their God... And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree: And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and worked wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger: For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said to them, 'You shall not do this thing.'

Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways and keep My

Commandments and My statutes, according to all the Law which I commanded your fathers and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.

Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.