

appears that the Joseph story belongs to the latter, in that Joseph himself is represented as understanding the meaning of his own story in two crucial passages, Gen 45:4-7, and 50:20. In the former passage is emphasized the severity of the famine and God's sending Joseph to Egypt as a means of saving alive Jacob's clan and other peoples. It is admitted in the same passage that the brothers might well be distressed and angry with themselves for having sold Joseph, but Joseph tries to encourage them by putting it all into proper perspective. The latter verse, Gen 50:20, recognizes that the brothers meant to do Joseph harm but God meant it for good.

Putting these verses together in a rather straightforward way we deduce that the Joseph story is a story of *divine providence*, i.e., *The brothers intended to harm Joseph by selling him as a slave into Egypt, but God made this part of his plan to save Jacob's clan and others from death by famine*. Reducing this macrostructure to component parts we obtain: (1) The *intent* of the brothers to harm Joseph; (2) The *perpetrating* of this crime, i.e., the selling of Joseph; (3) God's *plan* to make Joseph a savior from starvation -- along with whatever providential expedients were necessary to work the plan out, (4) The *actual deliverance* and how it was brought about; (5) The *severity of the famine*.

The Joseph story is, however, part of the *toledôt ya'aqob*, "the life and times of Jacob." Thus, while the bulk of Gen 37-50 is concerned with the Joseph story, other parts of Jacob's family come in for attention in given places. Genesis 38, concerning Judah and Tamar. e.g., is not part of the Joseph story, which it rather interrupts. Furthermore, apparently the blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh in chap. 48 is the last episode of "Joseph" proper, so that chaps. 49 and 50 belong to the larger concerns. Consequently, we may well ask: Since the story of Joseph is part of the *toledôt ya'aqob*, is there a macrostructure of the whole section which may, in turn, help us to understand better some features of "Joseph" itself?

I believe if we take chap. 49 as crucial and culminative, we find in this section (the blessing/testament of Jacob) the material for deducing the broader macrostructure. The pronouncements regarding the futures of the twelve clans are found in 49:3-27, i.e., in 24 verses. Of these 24 verses, five refer to Judah, and five to Joseph -- a total of 10 out of 24 verses, something over 41%. By comparison other clans are mentioned only briefly (Reuben in 3 verses: Simeon and Levi together in a passage of 3 verses: Zebulun, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, and Benjamin in one verse each; Issachar in two versus, Dan in three). Of Reuben, the firstborn, it is prophesied "you will not excel." Simeon and Levi, the next in line, are dismissed as violent and cruel. Judah emerges as the future ruler, but Joseph comes in for explicit and lengthy blessing as well. What then? From the standpoint of the testament of Jacob, Judah and Joseph are to be the especially favored ones.

But does this not shed light on this whole *toledôt* section and even on the story of Joseph which is contained within it? The Joseph story is fundamentally a story of three J's: Joseph, Jacob, and Judah. Reuben, the firstborn is represented as giving inconclusive leadership in times of crisis (e.g., chap. 37) and given to ineffectual emotional outbursts (Gen 27: 30,