

## Joseph – A Saviour’s story

I made the assumption that you are all familiar with the story of Joseph and hence I skipped much of it as I did while reading.

The story of Joseph is one of pain, temptation and suffering but it is also one of glory and victory. A story of jealousy and hatred, rank evil conniving directed at Joseph by his brothers. But it is also a story of forgiveness.

As with many Old Testament record of events, the story of Joseph is a picture prophecy. It points to a saviour a deliverer greater than Joseph.

And just as Joseph saved Israel and Egypt from starvation and subsequent death, so does Jesus Christ save us from sin and eternal death.

So, as we consider the story of Joseph we will be drawing parallels with the story of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Joseph was born of Rachel the second wife of Jacob and daughter to Laban.

The Bible points out quite clearly that Jacob had Joseph as his favourite son. We are told that he even made him a coat of many colours.

<sup>3</sup> Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate<sup>[a]</sup> robe for him. <sup>4</sup> When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him. Hardly a saintly act favouring one sibling over the others. The inevitable result of such an act is jealousy and spite.

His troubles multiplied when God started giving him dreams and showing him that his father and brothers will one day bow before him.

Their reaction in verse 8

<sup>8</sup> His brothers said to him, “Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?” And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

This jealousy led to hatred which culminated in the desire to murder him.

We would be reminded of the story of Cain and Abel where similar sequence of events led to Cain Murdering his brother Abel. So God warning Cain told him these words,

“Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? <sup>7</sup> If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is <sup>[a]</sup>for you, but you should rule over it.”

Joseph’s suffering starts not so long later. He was thrown into a well before being sold as a slave for 20 pieces of silver to the Medianites who sold him on to Potiphar in Egypt.

But God was with him even in Egypt because we are told that God blessed him with favour from his master. 39:2

The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master.

Trouble strikes again through Joseph resisting temptation instigated by Potiphar’s wife. And so walking in righteousness lands Joseph in jail.

God continued to be with Joseph that he ends up interpreting Pharaoh’s dream and advising him on the course of action to take. 40:37

So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. <sup>38</sup> And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find *such a one* as this, a man in whom *is* the Spirit of God?”

<sup>39</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, *there is* no one as discerning and wise as you. <sup>40</sup> You shall be <sup>[a]</sup>over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.” <sup>41</sup> And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.

The next big event happens when Josephs brothers come looking for food because the famine had affected all the lands including Canaan.

And after playing cat and mouse with them he introduces himself and immediately reassures them that they have nothing to worry about. 45:8

So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt.

And again after the death of Jacob in chapter 50

But Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup> You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. <sup>21</sup> So then, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.” And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

## **He was hated by his own**

I don’t know where or when it dawned on Joseph that God in His sovereignty was working His purposes out through his suffering. It must

have been very hard for him. His own brothers conspiring to kill him, get rid of him in any way possible. Threw him in a pit, sell him even to the Medianites and concoct a story to tell their father.

If at this point you said to Joseph, well now Joseph, God means this for your Good. I'm not sure he would have taken that so kindly. You see he did not have the benefit of fore sight. But I'm sure God gave him grace to endure. Because what is interesting to note is that Joseph bore no bitterness towards his brothers. He sought no revenge. In fact later when he had power to retaliate, they came asking for forgiveness and he said to them, Am I in the place of God?

But whether he knew about God's sovereignty or not, still God was accomplishing his promises to Abraham and His greater salvation plan. For He had said that he will make him a father of many nations, but that also his descendants will be taken captive in a foreign land.

So, you can see how God is using Joseph even in his suffering to prepare the way for the preservation of his brethren and captivity. And Joseph later understood this hence his statements to his brothers....

So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. And....

<sup>20</sup> You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

So Joseph was hated by his brothers to the point of death, thrown into a pit, lifted from a pit, sold for 20 pieces of silver, suffered for righteousness sake, and in all the suffering he did not complain or seek revenge. But God elevated him to the point that he was only second to Pharaoh.

## **Joseph a Type of Christ**

This Joseph is a type of Christ. God is telling His people that there will come a Saviour who will deliver his brothers from a greater foe (sin and death).

That famous of verses John 3:16 For God so loved the that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but will have eternal life. That is what God is saying through Joseph. That He will send His Son with power to save from death.

This salvation that was first mentioned after the fall in the garden When God said, 'the seed of the woman shall crush the serpent's head', continues to be alluded to throughout the Old Testament. That now is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

If Joseph is a type of Christ where are we in the story of Joseph.

I'm glad you asked. We are those who spitefully hated him accused him falsely, persecuted him and desired to see him dead.

Jesus Said in John 15:24

<sup>24</sup> If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. <sup>25</sup> But *this happened* that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.'

But one might say we were not there we did not persecute him or hate him. Paul anticipates that answer in Colossians 1:21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled. And again in Ephesians 2 he says;

And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked according to the [a]course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, <sup>3</sup> among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

But, God is a God mercy, and in Romans 5 Paul says;

<sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup> For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son.

So we were indeed like the brothers of Joseph. And like them, we have received grace though our sins required judgement.

Our Lord did not seek revenge but willingly went to the cross for our sins.

1 Peter 2:23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. <sup>24</sup> "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed."

Jesus unlike Joseph knew the conclusion of His suffering and the glory that will be revealed. Unlike Joseph, Jesus rose from the dead and was crowned with glory and the kingdom that Jesus received is eternal.

We see here the sovereignty of God. That God has decided the end from the beginning and there is no one who can thwart His plan.

Isaiah 46 For I *am* God, and *there is* no other; I *am* God, and *there is* none like Me, <sup>10</sup> Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times *things* that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand,

And so when it comes to His salvation plan, it was planned before the foundations of the World but executed at the right time. Acts 2:23

Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you [f]have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; <sup>24</sup> whom God raised up, having [g]loosed the [h]pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

So God continues to work His salvation in all of us through sufferings and hardships and good times. But one thing is for sure, there is no one who can stand in His way.

Paul in 2Tim 1:12 For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

Second; note that this salvation is all of grace.

And just Joseph's brothers deserved death but received mercy, so do we.

The bible repeats the phrase 'by grace are you saved' Ephesians 1 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Paul to the Romans said; There is none righteous, no, not one;  
<sup>11</sup> There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.  
<sup>12</sup> They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable;  
There is none who does good, no, not one."

When Jesus came He offered salvation to those who are undeserving,  
Hence

Blessed are the poor in spirit, come to me all you that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest, I did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

And so like the brothers of Joseph, we come and offer ourselves as undeserving sinners. And the good news is that we are received with open arms, for Jesus says and the one who comes to Me I will [a]by no means cast out.