

From PRISON to Palace

A Study of the Life of Joseph

Class 1 • Joseph Rejected • Genesis 39-40

- Introduction
- The life of Joseph maintains a timeless appeal
- It speaks of real life
- It speaks of unstable life, of imprisonment and privilege
- It speaks of moral life, of passion and purity
- It speaks of human life, of guilt and grace
- It speaks of family life, of wrangling and reconciliation
- It speaks of national life, of disaster and deliverance
- Joseph, is the Grandson of Isaac and Great-Grandson of Abraham
- He is the final leading character in Genesis
- More space is devoted to Joseph than to any one else
- A contrast between Jacob and his son Joseph:
 - Jacob reveals how God deals with internal problems, specially his corrupt and devious heart (Gen. 25:27-34; 27:1-45)
 - Joseph reveals how God deals with external problems, especially unjust accusation and imprisonment (39:20; 40:23; 42:21)
- It's interesting how the 14 chapters of the story of Joseph is actually introduced as a sub-plot of the life of Jacob - Verse 1-2
- Verse 3 - Joseph, as a teenager of 17, was his father's favorite and such favoritism is especially bound to bring strife into a family of ungodly children.
- He brings a bad report of his Brethren - We don't know what, but we can imagine
- Joseph was endowed with a significant coat by Jacob, the KJV translates, "a coat of many colors," the NIV, "a richly ornamented robe," - The emphasis is not so much that of color as complexity since it was made of many pieces, and thus was costly

- Archaeology suggests, concerning tribal life during the age of the patriarchs, that a Semitic chief would wear such a coat as an insignia of his rulership. Hence, Jacob may well have marked Joseph out for chieftainship of the tribes of Israel at his death.
- The evident animosity of the brethren suggests that more than concern over a fashionable item was at stake.
- His brothers “could not speak a kind word to him” - Verse 4 - Imagine that life
- No doubt Joseph was a sinner , yet there is no sin credited to him in the biblical record of his life. He perfectly portrays the righteous Son of God confronted with the iniquity of mankind.

APPLICATION

- Read John 16:1-4: What lesson from Joseph’s Family Life does Jesus apply to us?
- **Just as Jesus Christ and Joseph were scorned, so will be the child of God.**
- The believer is to expect being misunderstood for doing good, even to the point of being regarded as a someone worthy of mistreatment
- How is it that we see this play out in our lives?
- Generally, dreams are a product of what we have been doing with our lives. What we dream about reflects, in a distorted way, our involvement in a prior activity.
- Think about how weird it would have been for Joseph to dream about things that he would have had no connection to.
- Joseph’s First Dream
 - It’s not that hard to figure out... The meaning of the dream may have been clear to Joseph so that one wonders what promoted him to enquire about it with his brothers who had already been aggravated at the display of the "Coat of Many Colors”
 - Most likely the brethren considered the dream to be a reflection of Joseph drooling for the power which the princely coat represented.
 - Further, according to their seniority, the prospect of their humiliation and Joseph’s exaltation seemed absurd - He was way down in the birth order
- Joseph’s Second Dream
 - In this dream the Brothers would have understood the intimation of their father and Rachel also bowing before their offspring.

- Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin - Genesis 35:16-19 - How is it that Joseph sees her bowing down to him in this dream?
- His father rebukes him, but “kept the saying in mind”
- At this point, shouldn't his Brothers have cause to pause... Sure, you hate this guy, but he keeps having dreams that he attributes to visions from God...
- But envy gives way to simmering anger, not submission to the will of God.
- Notice how willing Joseph is to obey his father - Verse 13 - even though he knows how unwelcome he will be.
- Jacob sent Joseph to check on his Brethren to see how they were doing
- God sent Christ to check on his Brethren to see how they were doing
- The Brethren plot to kill him - It wasn't a sinful reaction - it was a plot

APPLICATION

- Read Romans 8:28: What lesson about this verse do we learn from Joseph's Life?
- Joseph is certainly one of “the called according to His purpose.” The divine consequences of Joseph's rejection and humiliation is that of a wider salvation
- How do we apply this verse to our lives?
- The final insult is a veiled threat to God's sovereign working, even outright defiance “Then we shall see what will become of his dreams”
- As the firstborn, being most responsible, Reuben yet takes a more righteous stand that is nevertheless colored with an obvious streak of weakness.
- “Don't shed his blood; let him starve to death in a dry water cistern.”
- Although this plan was a disguise for a secret rescue, yet when Joseph could not be found, this statement of Reuben's could easily be used against him by his brethren and force him to keep quiet before his father.
- A strong leader would have placed Joseph behind him and challenged any aggressor with having to deal with him first.
- There is a cost, however, to be paid for moral weakness - verse 29
- Reuben's great sin was that although he sided with Joseph, yet he kept silence before his father for twenty two years, and thus grievously sinned against him.
- Genesis 42:21 NIV

21) They said to one another, "Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that's why this distress has come upon us."

- Could not the brethren understand that to murder the beloved son was in fact to assault the father?
- How utterly callous; the brethren ate while Joseph cried out!
- Was Judah feeling guilty when he proposes a compromise? Or did he want the money?
- Apparently everyone is not involved in the selling of Joseph
- Clearly, Reuben wasn't - Verse 29
- Verse 30 - He goes back to his Brethren, and they hatch a cover-up plan
- Just as Jacob deceived Isaac his father with a goat skin to get the blessing, so Jacob is now deceived by goat's blood
- His grief was quenchless; his many days of mourning were to extend for over twenty years!
- Joseph was not only Rachel's first-born, but also a son of Godly quality.
- For over twenty years the Brothers were haunted by their father's mourning face.

APPLICATION

- Read 1st Peter 1:10-12: How are these verses exemplified in the Life of Joseph?
- The principle of "the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow" is exemplified in the life of Joseph, and thus represents the pilgrim journeying of the Christian as he follows "in Christ's steps"
- How does this help us endure what we must face?