

Lesson 13 23rd July, 2017

Joseph, a Type of Christ

Lesson Scope: [Genesis 37 to 50](#)

References in brackets refer to Genesis chapters 37 to 50 unless otherwise noted

Lesson Focus

Although the word type is not found in the Bible, the Greek word tupos ("shape" or "type") was used numerous times in the original New Testament writings. This word is translated print (John 20:25), figure (Romans 5:14), ensamples (1 Corinthians 10:11), and pattern (Hebrews 8:5).

God wove certain details into Old Testament sacrifices, feasts, and priests that point ahead to specific New Testament truths. These we call ritual types. In historical types (as in Israel's deliverance from Egypt) and character types (such as Joseph), God also sovereignly wove details that foreshadowed future realities. These types are fulfilled by the antitypes in the New Testament. "The New is in the Old contained; the Old is in the New explained."

The record of Joseph has been discussed in earlier lessons. To keep this class inspirational, rather than focusing too much on what was already studied emphasize the much wider span between the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, than that which Joseph experienced.

The life of Joseph beautifully typifies the life of our precious Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Christ, however, far supersedes any human type.

Lesson Aim: To deepen our love for Jesus Christ, who is greater than Joseph.

Theme Verses: [Philippians 2:8-9](#). And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.

Lesson Text

The Beloved Son

[Genesis 37:3-4](#) Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of *many* col-

ours.

⁴ And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

Genesis 37:13-14 And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed *the flock* in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here *am I*.

¹⁴ And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

The Suffering Servant

Genesis 37:23 And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, *his coat of many colours that was on him*;

Genesis 37:28 Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty *pieces* of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

Genesis 39:1-2 And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmaelites, which had brought him down thither.

² And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

Genesis 39:20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners *were* bound: and he was there in the prison.

The Exalted Sovereign

Genesis 41:14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved *himself*, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.

Genesis 41:39-40 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, *there is* none so discreet and wise as thou *art*:

⁴⁰ Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

Genesis 41:45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over *all* the land of Egypt.

The Universal Saviour

Genesis 41:49 And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for *it was* without number.

Genesis 41:56-57 And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.

⁵⁷ And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy *corn*; because that the famine was *so* sore in all lands.

Genesis 42:3 And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt.

Genesis 45:1 Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

Genesis 45:15 Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

Genesis 47:12 And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to *their* families.

Questions for Study

The Beloved Son

1. Compare Jacob's love for Joseph with God's love for His Son.
2. How can we account for the resentment that Joseph's brothers had toward him and that many people had toward Jesus?
3. In what ways was Joseph a type of Christ as the Father's faithful Son?

The Suffering Servant

4. How do the sufferings of Joseph and Jesus compare? How do they differ?
5. How should we respond to the picture of Christ that we see in this part of Joseph's life?

The Exalted Sovereign

6. Compare the exaltation of Joseph and Jesus.
7. What attitudes did the Egyptians have toward Joseph that we should have toward Christ?

The Universal Saviour

8. How do Joseph and Jesus compare in providing for various needs?
9. What is typified in the record of how Joseph and his brothers were reconciled?

Analyzing the Passage

Joseph's antitype, Jesus Christ, is vividly pictured in Philippians 2:1-11. Christ, although God, submitted to "even the death of the cross" and is highly exalted and "given ... a name which is above every name"—extremes to which Joseph did not reach. Still, many of Joseph's experiences typify those of Christ.

The "coat of many colours" (37:3) showed Jacob's love for Joseph, possibly even his intention for him to have the birthright. This coat obviously carried significance because of the response of Joseph's brothers. Although it stirred up family jealousy and strife, the Bible does not criticize what Jacob did. Jesus also had been made "heir of all things" (Hebrews 1:2).

Joseph needed to travel about forty miles to Shechem to carry out his father's commission; but not finding his brothers there, he needed to travel approximately fifteen miles farther.

The Midianites (Ishmaelites—Genesis 37:28) were likely descendants of Ishmael, the son of Abraham according to the flesh.

Although Joseph was human, the Scriptures record no sin in his life. This richly typifies our sinless Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Principles and Applications

The Beloved Son

1. Joseph was the beloved son of his father; Christ is the beloved Son of God (37:3). At Jesus' baptism, a voice called from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). At Christ's I transfiguration a similar voice was heard (Matthew 17:5). Christ testified of His love in John 3:35 and 5:20 when He said, "The Father loveth the Son."

2. Joseph was hated by his brethren; Christ was "despised and rejected of men" (37:4). (Compare Isaiah 53:3.) "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11). Many devout Jews rejected His claim -is the Son of God (Mark 14:61-64; John 10:30-33). They refused to accept His authority to forgive sins (Mark 2:5-7) and to do and command contrary to their laws (Matthew 12:10-14; 15:7-12).

3. Joseph willingly obeyed his father's command; Jesus always did the will of His Father (37:13). Our Lord's testimony was, "I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29). His words in Gethsemane, "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42), clearly show His surrender to His Father's will.

4. Joseph left his father to serve his brethren; Christ left His Father's house to save the world (37:14). Christ left the glory and comfort of His home in

heaven with the Father to come to this sin-cursed earth. He knew He would face rejection and even death at the hands of cruel men.

The Suffering Servant

5. Joseph was insulted and shamed; Jesus endured the worst of human treatment (37:23). (Compare Isaiah 53:3-7.) Christ's enemies put much effort into discrediting His Deity and ability. They tried to accuse and condemn Him, and finally insisted before Pilate that He be crucified, the most shameful death.

6. Joseph was sold by his brethren for silver; Jesus was sold by a fellow Jew for silver (37:28). Selling Christ, the perfect Lord of the universe, to His own creation for mere silver rates as the most unjust business transaction in history! As Joseph was delivered into the hands of Gentiles, so the Jews delivered our Lord into the hands of Gentiles who treated Him very cruelly.

7. Joseph suffered and was imprisoned unjustly; Christ suffered, the just for the unjust (39:20). In Gethsemane and at Calvary, "Christ also bath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). As Joseph was falsely accused, so our Lord was also accused by false witnesses (39:14-19; Matthew 26:59, 60).

The Exalted Sovereign

8. Joseph was brought out of prison; Jesus was resurrected from the prison of death (41:14). Peter said concerning the resurrection of Jesus that "God hath raised [Him] up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24). Both Joseph and Jesus were innocent and the power of God brought them from "prison."

9. Joseph was exalted to a king's position; Christ was exalted to a position at the Father's right hand (41:39, 40). As Joseph had the wisdom and power of God, which led to his exaltation, so Christ possesses "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3). Our Lord was "crowned with glory and honour" (Hebrews 2:9) and God has "put all things under his feet" (Ephesians 1:22). Let us daily praise our exalted Lord.

10. Joseph was given a new name; Jesus was given a name above every name (41:45). "Wherefore God also hath ... given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Philippians 2:9, 10).

The Universal Saviour

11. Joseph provided natural sustenance for all; Jesus is the Bread of Life for whosoever will (41:49, 56, 57). Both put great effort into providing for those in need. Christ's provision is unsearchable, abundant, satisfying, and

obtainable. It is available to all who acknowledge their need. It is needed by all, even God's own people. Are we utilizing these resources the way God would have us to?

12. Joseph wept with and forgave his brothers; Jesus is touched by the infirmities of mankind and forgives their sin (45:1, 2, 15). Christ is ready, waiting to forgive those who will come to Him in repentance. "He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2:11).

Important Teachings

1. Joseph was the beloved son of his father; Christ is the beloved Son of God (37:3).

2. Joseph was hated by his brethren; Christ was "despised and rejected of men" (37:4).

3. Joseph willingly obeyed his father's command; Jesus always did the will of His Father (37:13).

4. Joseph left his father to serve his brethren; Christ left His Father's house to save the world (37:14).

5. Joseph was insulted and shamed; Jesus endured the worst of human treatment (37:23).

6. Joseph was sold by his brethren for silver; Jesus was sold by a fellow Jew for silver (37:28).

7. Joseph suffered and was imprisoned unjustly; Christ suffered, the just for the unjust (39:20).

8. Joseph was brought out of prison; Jesus was resurrected from the prison of death (41:14).

9. Joseph was exalted to a king's position; Christ was exalted to a position at the Father's right hand (41:39-40).

10. Joseph was given a new name; Jesus was given a name above every name (41:45).

11. Joseph provided natural sustenance for all; Jesus is the Bread of Life for whosoever will (41:49, 56, 57).

12. Joseph wept with and forgave his brothers; Jesus is touched by the infirmities of mankind and forgives their sin (45:1, 2, 15).

Answers to Questions

1. Compare Jacob's love for Joseph with God's love for His Son.

Joseph was Jacob's most loved son; Christ is the beloved Son of God. Joseph's faithfulness and truthfulness heightened this love relationship; so Christ's willingness to do His part in providing salvation for mankind add-

ed a dimension to His relationship with His Father. Joseph's special coat may have signified authority and special inheritance. Christ has all authority and is heir of all things.

2. How can we account for the resentment that Joseph's brothers had toward him and that many people had toward Jesus?

Joseph wore his "coat of many colours," the symbol of special favor. He brought the evil report of his brethren to his father and set a contrasting example himself. Joseph's dreams seemed to signify that they would bow to him some day. Christ was and made known that He was the Son of God, which many rejected. Christ authoritatively condemned hypocrisy and sin and taught truth that sometimes contrasted sharply with man's practices. Carnal men responded to this rebuke and example with hatred toward Jesus rather than hatred for their sin.

3. In what ways was Joseph a type of Christ as the Father's faithful Son?

Both willingly left their father's presence to carry out their father's desires, even though it meant likely mistreatment for Joseph, and certain mistreatment for Jesus. When his brothers were not at Shechem, Joseph continued on to Dothan to carry out his father's instructions (37:17). Christ faithfully submitted to the Father's will until His work was complete.

4. How do the sufferings of Joseph and Jesus compare? How do they differ?

They were rejected by their brethren. Joseph was belittled for his dreams. Christ was accused of blasphemy when He acknowledged that He was the Son of God (Matthew 26:63-65). Both were sold for money and falsely accused (39:17, 18; Matthew 26:59-62). Joseph, although innocent, suffered in prison. Christ, although perfect, suffered much worse, even death. Both suffered because of the sins of others.

Joseph could not change his circumstances. Jesus had power to overcome His enemies. Joseph did not carry the weight of the sin of the world as Christ did.

5. How should we respond to the picture of Christ that we see in this part of Joseph's life?

We should take time to consider the sufferings of Christ rather than just His birth and resurrection, as many do today. We should allow His sufferings to fill our hearts with gratitude for what He has done for us. Our gratitude should spill over in praise and unconditional obedience, and we should give our all to our Lord, who gave His all for us. Rather than rejecting Christ, we should give Him the place He deserves in our hearts and lives.

6. Compare the exaltation of Joseph and Jesus.

Joseph was exalted from a prisoner to second to the king after he, by God's wisdom, had interpreted Pharaoh's dream. God's wisdom being evident in Joseph, Pharaoh chose him to be the one to gather food and provide for the seven years of famine. Pharaoh made Joseph ruler over all Egypt and gave him his ring of authority. He was given royal clothes, a royal chariot, a new name, and a priestly wife. "They cried before him, Bow the knee" (41:43).

Jesus ascended to the Father's right hand after He had provided a way for the salvation of mankind. There He continues His work, interceding for mankind. He holds full authority over the whole world, shares in glory with the Father, has a new name above every name, and eagerly awaits His marriage to His spotless bride, the church. Sometime, every soul will acknowledge Christ's authority and bow before Him.

7. What attitudes did the Egyptians have toward Joseph that we should have toward Christ?

They bowed before him and did his bidding. After the famine, they recognized that Joseph had saved their lives and were willing to be Pharaoh's servants (47:25). We ought to keep fresh on our minds our dependence on Christ's provision. This should motivate us to closely follow Christ's bidding in good times as well as in times of need.

8. How do Joseph and Jesus compare in providing for various needs?

Both put great effort into their provision. It seems Joseph's provision met and exceeded the need of the people. Christ's provision is limitless. The famine brought "all countries" (41:57) to Joseph for food. Christ can meet the need of every sincere person everywhere. Joseph provided corn for physical bread; Christ is the "bread of life."

9. What is typified in the record of how Joseph and his brothers were reconciled?

Joseph freely forgave his repentant brothers and claimed them as his brethren. Jesus freely forgives repentant men and makes them part of God's family. As Joseph was not ashamed to be identified with his brethren, so Christ openly identifies with those who identify with Him. As Joseph's brothers were totally dependent on Joseph's forgiveness, so we can do nothing to save ourselves.

Summarizing the Lesson

Joseph suffered ridicule and rejection at the hand of his brothers but readily forgave and provided food for his father's house and many others. Jesus Christ, though blameless, suffered unparalleled injustice at the hand of His creation, but has provided full salvation for all who believe. It is but our "reasonable service" to give our whole life to His service, and point others to the "bread of life."

Research Guide

1. Philippians 2:1-11 gives a vivid picture of Christ.
2. Read one or more of the Gospel accounts of Christ's suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension.