

Lesson 13 – 25 July 2010

Joseph, a Type of Christ

Lesson Scope: [Genesis Chapters 37-50](#)

Lesson Focus

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

In the Bible we find character types (Joseph), historical types (Israel deliverance from Egypt, and ritual types (the priesthood). These Old Testament types foreshadowed the antitypes (fulfillments) found in the New Testament. "The New is in the Old, that contained in the Old is in the New explained.

Jesus Christ is the theme of the entire Bible. In the Old Testament much was obscure that is now clear. As Joseph lived and served faithfully, he did not know that he himself was a type of the coming Redeemer. Because of his faith in God and obedience to his father, God used him in a special way in the Old Testament to exemplify traits of the Redeemer.

The life of Joseph pointed forward to Christ. Our life will not be a type of Christ, but as we live as Christ lived, we also point men to Him. Hold up Christ not only as our Saviour, but also as the one whom we follow, the pattern for our life.

The life of Joseph beautifully typifies the life 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 Verse: [Colossians 1:19](#). For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.

Lesson Text:

The Suffering Servant

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* colours. ⁴And 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. ¹⁴And 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.

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 Ishmeelites 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 Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. ²And 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*: ⁴⁰Thou 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 Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over *all* the land of Egypt.

The Universal Savior

[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](#)

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.

[Genesis 42:3](#)

And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt.

[Genesis 45:1-2](#)

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. ²And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

[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 Suffering Servant

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

The Exalted Sovereign

4. How did Joseph's release from prison compare to Christ's resurrection

from the grave?

5. How does Pharaoh illustrate God the Father in this context'?

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

The Universal Savior

7. What does Christ's bread do that Joseph's corn in Egypt could not do?

8. What lessons can we learn from the nature of Joseph's forgiveness?

Analyzing the Passage

Philippians 2:1-11 gives a vivid picture of Joseph's antitype, Jesus Christ. Christ went far below Joseph in His humiliation and rose far above him in His exaltation.

The coat of many colours (Gen.37:3) showed Jacob's special love for his son, possibly even his intention to give him the birthright. Although Joseph's brothers became jealous, the Bible does not criticize what Jacob did.

The Midianites who bought Joseph were descendants of Ishmael, the son of Abraham according to the flesh. Joseph was bought for twenty pieces of silver and then resold into slavery. Jesus was sold for thirty pieces, which is said to have been the price of a slave.

According to some sources, Joseph's new name, Zaphnath-paaneah (Gen.41:45), could have meant "savior of the world. The "salvation" that Joseph brought was not only for his own people but also for everyone who desired it, Hebrew and Gentile alike.

Principles and Applications

The Suffering Servant

1. Joseph was the beloved son of his father. Christ is the beloved Son of God (Gen.37:3). Jacob made his love for Joseph very clear; God did the same for Christ, sometimes even with an audible voice (Matthew 3:17, 12:18, 17:5).

2. Joseph was hated by his brethren, Christ was despised and rejected of men " (Gen.37:4). (Compare Isaiah 53:3). "He came unto his own and his own received him not" (John 1:11). Joseph was hated by his brethren because he brought to his father a report of their evil deeds (Genesis 37:2). Envy had much to do with this hatred (compare Genesis 37:1-11 with Matthew 27:18). Jesus was hated not only by His fellow Jews but also by others.

3. Joseph willingly obeyed his father's command, Jesus always did the will of His Father (Gen.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) show, clearly His surrender to His Father's will.

4. Joseph left the fellowship of his father to serve his brethren: Christ left the fellowship of His to save the world (Gen.37:14). Only the Father and the Son will ever fully know the extent of that sacrifice. Jesus came even though He knew that suffering and death awaited Him. He saw beyond the cross to the joy of providing salvation (Hebrews 12:2).

5. Joseph was insulted and shamed Jesus endured the worst of human treatment (Gen.37:23). Compare Isaiah 53:3-7. In both cases the intent was to Strip the victims of their dignity and honor dignity.

6. Joseph was sold by his brethren for silver; Jesus was sold by a fellow Jew for silver. (Gen.37:28). Selling a brother for any figure is an insult and a crime. Selling Christ, the Lord of the universe for mere silver was unspeakably vile.

Without question, this rates as the worst business trans-action in history.

7. Joseph suffered and was imprisoned Christ suffered, the just for the unjust (Gen.39:20). In fact, it was Joseph's refusal to sin that sent him to prison. And it was Christ's innocence that took Him to the cross (Isaiah 53:9). He suffered "that he might bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18). False witnesses testified against both Joseph and Jesus (Genesis 39:14-19. Matthew 26:59,-60). The innocent one was taken and the guilty one freed (Genesis 39:20, Matthew 27:26).

The Exalted Sovereign

8. Joseph was brought out of prison: Jesus was brought up from the prison of death (Gen.41:14). In both cases, the change took place suddenly and decisively.

9. Joseph's wisdom excelled all others, in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Gen.41:39). When Jesus was in the temple at the age of twelve, all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers (Luke 2:41-47).

10. Joseph was exalted to a king 's position; Christ into exalted to a position at the Father's right hand (Gen.41:39-40). Both were worthy of that exaltation. All power of the kingdom was given to both Joseph and Jesus (Genesis 41:39-41, Matthew 28:18). They could now minister to

others and impart life on a far broader scope.

11. Joseph was given a new name; Jesus was given a name that is above every name (Gen.41:45). Every knee bowed to Joseph: every knee will finally bow to our Lord (Isaiah 45:23). "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved- (Acts 4: 12).

The Universal Savior

12. Joseph provided natural bread for all: Jesus provides spiritual nourishment for all. (Gen.56-57). Joseph's supply was seemingly beyond measure, and Christ's provision is definitely more than adequate for the whole world. The important question is, am I fully utilizing that provision?

13. Joseph wept with and forgave his brothers Jesus is touched by the infirmities of mankind and forgives their sin (Gen.45:1-2, 15). Joseph was deeply moved when his brothers doubted his forgiveness (Gen.50:15-17). How must the Lord feel if we doubt His promise to forgive and cleanse the repentant?

Important Teachings

1. Joseph was the beloved son of his father; Christ is the beloved Son of God (Gen.37:3).
2. Joseph was hated by his brethren; Christ was "despised and rejected of men" (Gen.37:4).
3. Joseph willingly obeyed his father's command: Jesus always did the will of His Father (Gen.37:13).
4. Joseph left the fellowship of his father to serve his brethren; Christ left the fellowship of His Father to save the world (Gen.37:14).
5. Joseph was insulted and shamed; Jesus endured the worst of human treatment (Gen.37:23).
6. Joseph was sold by his brethren for silver, Jesus was sold by a fellow Jew for silver (Gen.37:28).
7. Joseph suffered and was imprisoned unjustly; Christ suffered, the just for the unjust (Gen.39:20).
8. Joseph was brought out of prison; Jesus was brought up from the prison of death (Gen.41:14).
9. Joseph's wisdom excelled all others; in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Gen.41:39).
10. Joseph was exalted to a king's position; Christ was exalted to a position

at the Father's right hand (Gen.41:39-40).

11. Joseph was given a new name; Jesus was given a name that is above every name (Gen.41:45).

12. Joseph provided natural bread for all; Jesus provides spiritual nourishment for all (Gen.41:49, 56-57).

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

14. Both Joseph and Jesus were hated for exposing their brethren's sins (Genesis 37:2-4; John 15:18).

15. Both Joseph and Jesus had their coats taken from them (Genesis 37:23; Matthew 27:35).

16. Both Joseph and Jesus were turned over to the Gentiles (Genesis 37:28, 36; Matthew 27:2).

Answers to Questions

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

Jacob's love for Joseph was a tender attachment because he was the son of his old age. Probably Jacob spent more time with him in teaching and companionship. Joseph's character and willing obedience brought him into favor with his father. Jacob seems to have planned for Joseph to have the birthright.

God loved Jesus because He was as an "only Son" to Him. Jesus also had full and unalterable commitment to the Father's will. Because of Jesus' sacrificial obedience, God exalted Him to His right hand.

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

Evil men, beginning with Cain, have always hated the righteous. John states this principle. "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (1 John 3:12, 13). Envy also filled the hearts of those who opposed Joseph and Jesus (Genesis 37:4, 11; Matthew 27:18).

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

We should follow the example of Christ and be faithful and true to the Father even if we are persecuted for it. We should be patient and faithful under suffering and false accusation. Our hearts should overflow with love

to Christ for leaving the Father and suffering humiliation for our salvation.

4. How did Joseph's release from prison compare to Christ's resurrection from the grave?

In both cases, the change took place suddenly and decisively. Both rose to the right hand of the king with all power given unto them.

5. How does Pharaoh illustrate God the Father in this context?

The power of the kingdom was rightfully his to give to Joseph. Even though he gave all authority to Joseph, he remained as the supreme ruler. Both of these facts are also true of God and Christ.

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

They bowed the knee to Joseph. They accepted his dominion. They followed his directions. They acknowledged that they were his servants because he had saved their lives.

7. What does Christ's bread do that Joseph's corn in Egypt could not do?

Christ's bread gives us an abundant life here and eternal life hereafter as we partake of His Spirit. See John 6:25-71.

8. What lessons can we learn from the nature of Joseph's forgiveness?

We learn, from the example of Joseph, of God's heart yearning to forgive men. God wants to forgive men rather than condemn them. We learn that the vilest sinner can be forgiven. We learn that, even though the brothers sinned against Joseph, he held no personal malice against them. Our sin is totally against God Himself, yet He desires to restore us. We also learn that, after the sinner is forgiven, he is nourished from the unlimited storehouses of God's grace as Joseph nourished his brothers with food from the storehouses of Egypt.

Summarizing the Lesson

Joseph's life clearly foreshadows that of our Lord. Step by step his life illustrated the humiliation, exaltation, and compassion of Christ. And yet, Joseph was not a perfect man; therefore, he is not a perfect type. Christ went far below Joseph in His humiliation and rose far above him in His exaltation.

May we, by the grace of Christ, follow the example of Joseph and Christ that we might point men to the only Saviour of the world.