

Joseph a Type of Christ 4

We are continuing with our look at the way in which Joseph in the book of Genesis is a shadow or a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, the life of Joseph embodies parallels with the life of the Lord Jesus Christ and is an example of the way in which the scriptures are primarily concerned with Jesus

So far we have seen that:-

1 Joseph was a longed for son in the same way that Jesus was the longed for son of God

Matt 13:17

17 For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men **longed to see** what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

(NIV)

2 Joseph was born to be a saviour of his people so Jesus was born to be the saviour of the world and especially of those who would believe (I Tim 4:10)

3 Joseph was **righteous**, he was his **father's favourite son** and that favouritism caused him to be **envied** by his brothers.

In the same way we saw that the Lord Jesus was a person who:

a loved righteousness and hated wickedness Heb 1:8-9

b was God the Father's Beloved Son and

c was envied by the Jewish leadership of His time.

4 Joseph was sold for silver to a foreign nation. The coat of Joseph carrying the blood of a slain goat was presented to Joseph's father Jacob just as the high priest carried the blood of a slain goat and presented that blood before God in the OT tabernacle. In the same way, Jesus was sold for silver, entered heaven and presented

his own blood before the Father. Jesus came to bear the sin of the world by the sacrifice of himself.

Now we continue.

1 The brothers back home

Joseph was sold to some merchants who were travelling to Egypt. The last that Joseph's brothers heard of Joseph would have been his voice crying to them to take him back – but his cries were drowned out by the jingling of money as the brothers divided up 20 silver coins between them.

Afterwards, they had allowed their father Jacob to believe that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. During that time, they would have been looking over their shoulder, wondering if any day now Joseph would come stomping down the hill and would come bursting into the family home saying:-

“Well, I'm back! I suppose you think that was funny!”

Some of the brother's might well have hoped, at least secretly, that Joseph would suddenly come bursting into the family home - but he never did. Little did they realize that one day the one on whom they had no mercy would be in a position of great authority and they would need mercy from him. One day they would all bow down to him and one day, with just one word from him, they could all be put to death.

I think those in this life who reject the love of God and who do not have any respect for the Lord Jesus Christ and his sacrifice, fail to realise that God has raised Jesus to a place of great authority. One day every knee will bow to him and every tongue

confess that Jesus is Lord. It will be a fearful thing for those who have no respect for Jesus to fall into the hands of the living God.

2 Joseph in Egypt Genesis 39:1

At this point, the comparison between Joseph and the Lord Jesus Christ divides into two different pictures.

The first shows the way in which both Joseph and Jesus came up against rejection and powerful temptations in their lives on earth and we will too.

The second is a shadow of what the Lord Jesus was doing when his body lay in the tomb after his death on the cross.

We'll take each of those in turn but we'll get to look only at the first of them today.

3 Joseph in the House of Potiphar

Joseph was sold by the merchants to an Egyptian official called Potiphar. He was a married man, he lived in a house which seemed to have a prison attached to it where the king's prisoner's were kept (Gen 37:36, Gen 39. 20, Gen 40:3) and he was captain of the king's guard or king's executioners.

Joseph had been rejected to some extent at home over his dreams, had been very badly treated out in the fields by his brothers and now had been sold as a slave in a foreign land. But despite all of that, he ends up as the next most important person to the king of Egypt. Now that sort of thing doesn't happen to moaning and complaining individuals who are dripping with self pity and oozing with resentment.

Joseph had been treated rotten and no one could deny it. He knew it too but he was not prepared to let what had happened in the past spoil what he could achieve in the future and whatever he could put his hand to he determined to do well.

Like Joseph, the Lord Jesus too was rejected. There was no room at the inn for a start. The very first time after starting his ministry on earth, Jesus stands up in a synagogue to speak, what he says generates serious opposition and before He knows it an angry crowd take him to the brow of a hill with the intention of throwing Jesus down. He had a narrow escape. He was rejected by the authorities of His day and even by one of his closest disciples. Isaiah prophesied that Jesus would be despised and rejected of men. Jesus himself said that he would suffer many things and be rejected by the generation of that time. (Luke 17:22-25). Not everyone He healed was grateful and yet Jesus would not allow rejection to stop him living his life to please His Father in Heaven. Jesus rose above it and God exalted Him.

We have to do that folks. Rejection is hard to deal with and it can crush us if we let it. Joseph and Jesus show it is possible to rise above it and God clearly honours those of His children that will.

4 The Lord Prospers Joseph

The Lord was with Joseph in the house of Potiphar his master, Joseph found favour in God's eyes and the Lord blessed the house of Potiphar for Joseph's sake.

Joseph recognized and respected Potiphar as his master. It was a master and servant situation. It was like Joseph respected his employer even though Joseph was a slave. That is a good attitude and one that God encourages whether the employer is good or not.

I also believe that God will bless a place for the sake of Christians who are there and that makes it good for everyone. You make a difference by your presence when you carry God into your school or workplace. Nevertheless, even though your presence can make a difference and even though God blesses a place for your sake, you may still be treated unfairly and have bad days there. In fact, be prepared for hard times when you try to live for the Lord Jesus in any place.

4 Temptation

Now if Joseph had been ugly, with a constant long face and smelling of a pig pen, the ladies would not have given him a second look. Actually, Joseph wasn't like that. In fact in Genesis 39:6 we read that **Joseph was well-built and handsome**.

According to history sources, the beauty of Joseph was celebrated all over the east and he was said to perfect in beauty. In chapter 12 of the Koran verse 31 we read that Potiphar's wife invited guests to a feast, gave them knives and called Yusef to come forth. When the guests saw Joseph they said **this is not a mortal; this is but a noble angel** and they all cut themselves in amazement. Josephus says that Potiphar's wife was fallen in love with Joseph both on account of his beauty and his dexterous management of affairs.

Whatever history books say, if the Bible says Joseph was well built and handsome you can be certain he was well built and handsome.

Potiphar's wife could not resist the temptation to make a conquest of Joseph. Apparently she had nothing to occupy her mind and no principles to help her in the hour of temptation. For Joseph, who lived close to God, to sin with the woman was utterly out of the question. As far as Joseph was concerned it would have been a sin against God, and unfair to Potiphar who trusted him so implicitly.

I'm not sure of Joseph's age but he was 17 when he had his dreams and so I guess he was in his twenty's by now. For many men, the opportunity to go to bed with a woman when invited to do so would not be easy to resist. Here he was away from home, no-one was around, not committed to a wife already. Also, she was in charge of him. As a slave he had to be obedient. For a slave to disobey could mean the death penalty. On the face of it, to say yes was a safe way out for him. So much seemed to say "It's ok, go ahead". The law of Moses had not been written but the law of God as far as adultery was concerned was written on his heart. He knew the answer had to be "No".

The temptation was persistent though. She wouldn't take "No" for an answer. She was a real temptress.

Gen 39:10

10 And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even to be with her.

(NIV)

It looks like she might have said, "**Alright, don't go to bed with me but just spend some time with me**". He even saw through that and managed to refuse.

There were other temptations that Joseph could have struggled with. The temptation to steal Potiphar's money, the temptation to steal goods and sell them. After all he was a slave and some money would be welcome I bet. The temptation to panic and the temptation to worry. We don't read that he had problems with those kind of temptations but some people would. For some people, it would be no problem to refuse someone like Potiphar's wife but the temptation to steal or panic would be just too much to handle. It's all dependent on the person.

5 Testing Times Will Come

I believe that God allows all kinds temptations to come our way. This is what Moses said to the Israelites many years later about their time in the Wilderness.

Deut 8:2

2 Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.

(NIV)

Peter in his writings says that Christians will face all kinds of trials. Temptations come under the general heading of trials and God uses them to prove just how genuine our faith is. It's not difficult to be a Christian when there are no problems. Also Paul says that the temptations that Christians get are just like the ones anyone gets. They're all common. However, the Christian has the advantage that God won't allow Christians to be tempted beyond what they can bear and will always provide a way out. In other words, Christians shouldn't be quick to say "I couldn't help it" if they have given in to temptation because God will have provided a way out and the encouragement to take it. Of course, what we choose to do will be our decision ultimately.

Also, Jesus himself knows what it was like to be tempted and how hard it can be to fight it and He will help Christians when they are battling temptation. For a start he sympathizes and that's a good start.

6 No Condemnation

I don't think God is quick to jump in to condemn us when we fall either. Satan does and you can condemn yourself dreadfully too. However, God has other ways of

dealing with our failures in temptation. **It's been said that Christians don't fail God's tests; they just keep on taking them until they pass.**

Unfortunately, you can't say "I've decided from this point on that I won't be tempted any more". If only it was that easy! Temptations will come, we can expect them to come, we will give in at times and then we may have to handle the feeling of condemnation which follows even though it is not from God. After that we have to be prepared to face a similar temptation again and, eventually, we will find ourselves getting better at handling it. It may take time before some temptations, such as the temptation to worry, cease to be a problem but however long it takes, God will mature us through our handling of temptation.

7 Being Alone Can be a Problem When Temptation Comes

Going back to Joseph, most of the times when Potiphar's wife was pressing him others were around but the day came when they weren't there and then it got very difficult. Being alone can be a problem when temptation comes. Josephus says it was a festival day and she made some excuse about being unwell and wanting to stay at home. She knew that Joseph would be there. In a desperate attempt to get him to bed, she held on to his coat and he slipped out of it as he ran out of the house.

In 2 Samuel 13 we have a reverse situation where a brother tried to entice his half sister into bed with him but he was strong enough to overcome her and she couldn't get away. That was preceded by the brother ordering everyone out of the house they were in leaving him and his sister alone. The rape of his half sister eventually cost him his life. 2 Samuel 13 is not the most pleasant of reading.

Some temptations can be more difficult to overcome when the person being tempted is alone. Sometimes, the way out God provides is to get into the company of a friend quickly.

Back in Potiphar's house, Joseph leaves his coat behind. She screams. Servants come running. "He tried to get me into bed, I screamed, he ran away and I grabbed his coat!"

That was the second time in Joseph's life that a coat had got him into trouble.

And all he was doing in Potiphar's house was being honest and upright, wanting to live a life that would please Potiphar and God.

Those who want to live a Godly lifestyle will face all manner of difficulties as a result. In fact Paul said to Timothy:-

[12 In fact,] **everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,** 2 Tim 3:12

8 The Temptation of Jesus

Like Joseph, Jesus too was tempted. We can read about it in the first three Gospels. Jesus was tempted:-

to turn stones to bread,

to throw himself down from the temple and

to bow down and worship Satan.

Jesus overcame those temptations. He was full of the Holy Spirit, he had a very intimate relationship with His heavenly Father and a very good knowledge of God's word. Those are essential tools in the battle against temptations which are intended to trip us up and make us feel unworthy.

9 Could Jesus Have Sinned?

Some argue that it must have been easier for Jesus than it is for us because, although he was a man, he was also sinless. Also Jesus was God and as God can't be tempted

with evil then it would not have been possible for Jesus to sin. Therefore, the temptations that Jesus faced were not as real as the ones we might face. It sounds plausible enough.

Of course, Adam was sinless when he was created and he did sin through giving in to temptation. Therefore, being born sinless doesn't mean a person can't sin. Of course, the argument doesn't fully apply to Jesus because Adam wasn't God whereas Jesus is.

One day, the Lord Jesus said to his disciples,

12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

(NIV) John 14:12-13

It would be strange for Jesus to suggest that we will be able to do the things He did and even greater things **if you needed to be God to do them**. That includes being able to stand firm when being tempted because that is one of the things Jesus did. So, even though Jesus was God as well as a human being, I think it's doubtful that He used the divine side of His nature to overcome temptation, heal the sick, perform miracles or cast out demons. As a human being, the Lord Jesus drew his power from the Holy Spirit – to whom we have equal access – and from His Heavenly Father – to whom we have equal access. In addition,

18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

(NIV) Heb 2:18

So we have all three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit out to help us in our temptations where Jesus had two. We don't need to face them alone.

And even if it were not possible for Jesus to sin on earth because of his divine nature, my guess is that he didn't use that as the tool to overcome temptation. However, even if He did, we too as born again believers can use that tool. Listen to what Peter says:-

2 Pet 1:3-4

3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

God has planted his divine nature within us and in varying degrees that will show itself in our lives.

For Joseph, taking the righteous option when faced with temptation brought him wrongful imprisonment. It says in Ps 105:17-18 that Joseph was sold as a slave:-

18 They bruised his feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons,

(NIV)

At the start of his imprisonment at least, Joseph was badly treated and all because he wanted to honour God.

Standing for righteousness may make us unpopular. The world says "come to bed with us – everybody does it, what's so good about being a virgin" It will not always go down well to stand against that. But as we shall see in Joseph's case, God honours those who honour Him and when God honours us, that is honor worth having.