

Joseph a Type of Christ 3

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

Last time we looked at the way in which Joseph was **righteous**, and the way in which his father's **favouritism** caused him to be **envied** by his brothers.

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

- 1 loved righteousness and hated wickedness Heb 1:8-9
- 2 was envied by the Jewish leadership of His time.

This week I want to continue by picking up at Genesis 37 v 12.

His Mission

Shechem was afar off, about 50 miles from home. That seems a long way to go to find grazing pasture but the vale of Shechem was rich and nutritious, and so must have been well worth a journey. Some of Joseph's brothers had slaughtered the men of Shechem some time before and the atmosphere between Jacob and the Shechemites was not one of love and understanding. In Jacob's own word, he was a stench to the people living in the land and it's understandable both why Jacob was concerned about how his sons were and also why the brothers decided to move on to Dothan, taking them even further from their father.

Jacob called Joseph and said he was going to send him to Shechem. Joseph knew the dangers of going there, he also knew he was going to men who didn't like him but he was an obedient son and went to find the far off brothers.

In the same way we see the Lord Jesus, the obedient Son of God said:

“I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.”

John 6:38 (NIV)

And we know that Jesus made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!

Phil 2:6-8 (NIV)

Also, we read:

Eph 2:13-17

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. (NIV)

Jesus came the world to reach people who had wandered far away from God because God loved them and longed for them.

When Joseph got to Shechem he was found wandering in the fields. He couldn't find his brothers. He could easily have called it a day. He could have gone home and said "Well, I went to Shechem like you said but the brothers weren't there and so I came home". He loved his father and he just couldn't go back home with the job half done even though he knew he was going to people who hated him and, in fact, was going to what could have been his death.

There was great temptation that the Lord Jesus encountered on His way to the cross, particularly in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Matt 26:39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, **"My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."** (NIV)

And yet Jesus would not go back to the Father until his mission was finished and He set his face like a flint to see it through.

Isa 50:7 (NIV)

7 Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame.

His Arrival

Jesus told a parable about a man who owned a vineyard and he rented it out to tenants who killed those sent to collect the fruit for the owner. The parable continues :

Matt 21:37-39 (NIV)

37 Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said.

38 "But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.'

39 So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

The brothers saw Joseph afar off, the dream expert, and as they saw him they thought, This is the heir, let's kill him and when he came to his own brothers they rejected him.

In John 1:11 (NIV) we read of Jesus that

He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. And they didn't, except for a few.

The experience of Joseph foreshadows the experience of Jesus.

The Sale and Handing Over

The shadow of Jesus can also be seen from the fact that his brothers decided to sell Joseph and hand him over to men of a foreign nation who were passing through the land.

The sale

Matt 26:14-16

14 Then one of the Twelve-- the one called Judas Iscariot-- went to the chief priests

15 and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I hand [Jesus] him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty silver coins.

16 From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

(NIV)

Back in Genesis we read:

Gen 37:27-28

27 Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood." His brothers agreed.

28 So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt. (NIV)

Why the difference in the number of silver pieces? I believe it's this:- God would not permit the value put on Joseph, the type of Christ, to equal that put on Jesus Himself.

To his brothers, Joseph was worth twenty pieces of silver. To Judas, Jesus was worth thirty pieces of silver (possibly a couple of hundred pounds?) **but in 1 Peter we read "to you who believe, He is precious"**

The Handing Over

Matt 27:1-2

1 Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people [that had rejected Jesus] came to the decision to put Jesus to death. (NIV).

2 They bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor. [Pilate was put in that position for 10 years by the Roman Emperor. Due to cruelties that Pilate carried out against the Samaritans, complaints reached the ears of the emperor and Pilate was eventually exiled to Vienna where he died two years later.]

31 Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." **"But we have no right to execute anyone,"** the Jews objected.

Well that's a surprise! They were certainly willing to stone to death the woman taken in adultery and they were quick to stone Stephen and to stone Paul at Lystra. The thing here was that Jesus was popular with the people and it was probably safer to have the Romans kill Jesus than for them to do it. Others say that the right to implement capital punishment was taken away from them except for certain crimes. Whatever the position, the Jewish authorities at least preferred to have someone else kill the Lord Jesus rather than do it themselves.

Looking again at Joseph we see that the brothers decided that he should die. They must have really hated him.

Gen 37:18-22

18 But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him.

19 "Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each other.

20 "Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams."

The shadow of Jesus then begins to form again when we see that one brother says "Let's not take his life," he said. "Don't shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the desert, but don't lay a hand on him."

So we see that they didn't kill him but instead handed him over to a foreign nation for them to do whatever they wanted with him.

The Midianites disappeared and the jingling of the camel train died away leaving just the silence of the breeze as the brothers no doubt shared the proceeds of the deal, 20 divided

by 10 makes 2 pieces each. Two pieces of silver to rub together. Probably not much more than £10 each if that and the jingling of the camel train is now replaced with the jingling of pocket money as they wonder what to do next. As yet they don't fully realise that for £10 each they have now bought for themselves years unhappiness, lying and deceit with the worry that the chicken that disappeared in the direction of Egypt will one day come home to roost.

In the same way, Judas went away from the chief priests place on a high with 30 silver pieces jingling in his money bag, soon to be replaced in his life by acute depression, the jingling of money thrown down on the floor and silence at the end of a rope.

The Slaughter

Joseph's brothers then hatch a plan not knowing that what they are about to do will go down in history for ever as a shadow of the Messiah. Joseph is now represented by his coat. They take a goat's kid, an acceptable Passover sacrifice and a picture of Jesus Christ the Lamb of God, they kill the kid and they dip the coat in its blood. Joseph is alive and the kid dies instead. There we have a picture of Christ dying so we could have eternal life. What a messy business. If the goat's blood splashed on them it was certainly a shadow of the statement that the Jews made in front of Pilate:-

Matt 27:24-25

When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!" 25

All the people answered, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!" and one wonders if that has had anything to do with the suffering of the Jewish nation since that time.

Presenting the Blood to the Father

Finally, the brothers present the shed blood on the coat to their father who accepts that his son has died. [Modern methods of analysis would have shown that it was not human blood.]

In the Old Testament, God gave Moses a building pattern for a portable church called the tabernacle. We can't go into detail today. In part of that tabernacle was an area divided off by a veil called the most holy place and it contained a gold covered box called the Ark of the Covenant where what was called the Shekinah Glory of God appeared. Once a year the high priest would enter the most holy place carrying the blood of a slain goat and he had to sprinkle it on the top of the ark before God as a sacrifice for the sin of Israel. The high priest did it every year on the day of Atonement to atone for the sins of Israel.

Now listen to this.

Heb 9:11-12

11 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation.

12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.

(NIV)

Heb 9:24-26

24 For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.

25 Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own.

26 Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

(NIV)

So just as the coat of Joseph carrying the blood of a slain goat was presented to Joseph's father, and just as the high priest carrying the blood of a slain goat presented that blood before God in the tabernacle, so Jesus, the lamb of God who was slain entered heaven and presented his own blood before the Father thereby fulfilling all the Old Testament shadows of him.

Someone might say "OK we now know about that but how does it help me with the problems I've got to face tomorrow?"

Well, it helps because it shows just what a wonderful book the Bible is and how the whole work has such a lovely sense of balance throughout, pointing time and time again to the Lord Jesus Christ even in the finer details of accounts like the history of Joseph who lived a long time before the first Christmas. Knowing helps us to appreciate that it is God inspired and knowing that helps us to have faith in what God says in the Bible and in particular what God says about you and me and that can help us with the problems we face day by day.

We'll pick up more on the Joseph story again next time.