

## **Joseph a Type of Christ 2**

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. The OT looks forward to the cross, the NT looks back at the cross and the cross stands like a pivot between the two.

### **The longed for Son**

Last time we looked at the way in which Joseph was the longed for son of Rachel, the favoured wife of Jacob.

In the same way we saw that the Lord Jesus was:

1     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     The son of a favoured woman – Mary and that

3     Just as 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)

### **Joseph the Righteous**

Genesis 37 begins the account of Joseph as most of us know it. It begins with

Joseph bringing an evil report about his brothers. This was foundational to the life of Joseph. He was righteous – his brothers were not. This is one of the facets of the character of Jesus that is emphasised in the New Testament.

**Heb 1:8-9**

**But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the sceptre of your kingdom.**

**9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy."**

**(NIV)**

The Lord Jesus himself said

**John 8:46**

**46 Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? (NIV)**

Where someone who is righteous mixes with those who are not, rejection or persecution will follow. If Joseph had been like his brothers, there would have been no problem. If Joseph had stayed at home with his father, his brothers might still not have liked him but the problem would have been less acute. The fact is, Joseph could not be both popular with his brothers **and** pleasing to his father at the same time and that was just the same with Jesus.

In the book of James (4:4) we read:-

**Don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred towards God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.**

Popularity with non-Christians and living for Jesus doesn't go hand-in-hand. Non-Christians might respect us for what we believe but they would prefer to knock it out of us. The Gospel message of the need to repent of sin, and to repent of trusting in our own merits to make us right with God is not a popular message and Jesus said some interesting things about popularity.

**John 15:17-21**

**17 This is my command: Love each other.**

**18 "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.**

**19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.**

**20 Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.**

**21 They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me.**

**(NIV)**

You don't have to testify many times to know that when you state that faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the only way to eternal life it gets under people's skin. When Jesus said that his followers were the salt of the earth, He knew full well that salt can smart if it gets in the right place. That's what the message of Jesus can do and the world at large is not happy with it. Even a father, while unconverted to Christ, may well oppose a child who becomes a Christian.

The spirit of Christ will simply have no union with the spirit of the world. The object of the Gospel is not to set people against each other. However, as people become Christians, they will sometimes find that the closest of friends won't tolerate this new

found faith. Even members of the same family may turn against the one who has just come to faith in Jesus. Interestingly, according to Jesus, the rejection will come from the non-Christian and not the other way around.

### **Favouritism**

When you have just one child, that child cannot be any other than the favourite! When you have more than one, favouritism may well lead to trouble.

As a shadow of the Lord Jesus Christ, Joseph was the son on whom all his father's favour rested. When we read Hebrews 1 we find that is just how God the Father regarded Jesus. The difference here was that Jesus was God's **only** begotten Son whereas Joseph was one of many.

The favouritism shown by Jacob to Joseph was there for all to see because Jacob gave Joseph that special robe, the coat of many colours and the brothers were envious of Joseph's treatment. It looked to them as if they had been passed over and the next to youngest was in line for the birthright. That meant that Joseph, the younger brother would inherit a double portion of what his father had to leave. This probably mean't that he would have had a double share of whatever property, lands, flocks and money as could be divided. It also meant that Joseph would become head of the family and would have authority over the rest. The thought of that made the brother's envious and they would not speak a kind word to Joseph. **The atmosphere in the family home must have been electric.**

Jacob knew the problems that birthright issues could raise as he has swindled his own brother out of his birthright years before and that caused big trouble. They say those who don't learn from the mistakes of history are doomed to repeat them and this was an example of that. He was breeding one big unhappy family. We have to watch favouritism in the church too. You can read about it in the book of James.

## **Dreams**

Then Joseph had dreams about harvesting and the sun moon and stars. The rest of the family took dreams seriously and they knew what kind of interpretation to put on these. These dreams meant on thing and one thing only. At some point in time, Joseph was going to get some position in life above the rest of them and they were incensed to hear from his very lips that they would one day bow down to him. The brothers were angry and very envious and all of that added to their rejection of Joseph. Even Mum and dad told him off!

## **Envy**

Just as Joseph was envied by his brothers, so Jesus was envied by the Jewish leadership of His time.

It wasn't that Jesus had more money than they had or lived in a mansion in Jerusalem. It wasn't that he had lots of influential friends or a string of letters after His name. They could speak in public just as Jesus could. It's just that He was more popular than they were. He could draw the crowds where they couldn't and He could do things that they couldn't.

### **John 12:17-19**

**17** Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word.

**18** Many people, because they had heard that he had given this miraculous sign, went out to meet him.

**19** So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!"

(NIV)

**Matt 27:17-18**

**17 So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?"**

**18 For he knew it was out of envy that they had handed Jesus over to him.**  
(NIV)

Envy is a kind of pain or annoyance felt at the happiness, success or good fortune of someone else. It's that feeling of hurt you get when someone you once felt equal with has just overtaken you in some way. It's the secret gloating feeling that arose when you found out that it went wrong and they're back to square one again.

**Some sins bring certain joys.**

I'm sure that a covetous person enjoys running their fingers through their money from time to time and proud people enjoy putting on airs and graces but envy brings no joy. Despite that, we so easily fall for it. It can be a lifelong problem for some people.

Envy is not usually directed at those who far exceed us in talents or wealth but usually to those in our circle of acquaintances, our peer group. The actress in the village drama group who's normally been regarded as being the star player overhears people saying that such and such who is new in the group came over better than she did in the latest play and is possibly the better actress of the two. How nice it would be to hear that she's not being chosen for a leading role next time.

Or it's when someone in your circle gets a bit of praise for something but nothing was said about your contribution. Like when they thanked Miss Brown at the end of the

meeting for arranging the flowers but didn't thank dear old Herbert for polishing the floor.

Like when a child gets a new bike for Christmas and rides off all excited to show his friend. In twenty minutes he's back looking a bit down. "What's wrong" say's mum. "James had a new bike too" says the child. "It's better than mine, it's got back wheel suspension" Envy stopped him enjoying his own bike. You can excuse kids, I guess, but how strange that adults can go through life begrudging people other people their successes while losing their own joy while they do it – yet it happens all the time.

**No wonder the scriptures speak out against envy.**

**Prov 14:30**

**30 A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.**

**(NIV)**

**1 Pet 2:1**

**1 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.**

**(NIV)**

**1 Cor 13:4**

**4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.**

**(NIV)**

The envy burning up in the hearts of Joseph's brothers boiled over eventually and we'll look at that the next time. As far as envy is concerned we need to rid ourselves of it. The

scriptures say we must do it and, therefore, it must be possible. The Lord Jesus is our model here. In Him was the complete absence of envy.

The circumstances he was in would drive many to be envious. Jesus could have envied those who had a home of their own, who weren't hunted for their lives, who could get a fair trial, who weren't repeatedly being tricked into saying the wrong thing. But he wasn't envious.

He can make us like that too. He is able to deal with envy in our lives but we have to face it and admitting envy is humiliating. "What, me jealous of him !?."

The problem is if we think of ourselves as better as or more able than others we don't fall prey to envy but pride takes hold. If we keep putting ourselves down and others up there somewhere, we fall into the trap of inferiority and so the key seems to be not to compare ourselves to others but that's not easy either because we so easily do it.

So as we so easily fall into the pattern of making comparisons between ourselves and someone else, we need to be careful who that someone else is.

**In John 21 we read this:-**

**Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?")**

**21 When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?"**

**22 Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me."**

In other words, I have plans for you, I have plans for him and the two are not the same. Accept that and just follow me. As we are so good at making comparisons, then what we need to do is make the Lord Jesus the model. Comparisons with other Christians are not good because God has a set of plans for them different from the set of plans he has for you.

While we honour God in our lives, spend time with him and feed on the Word of God we shall begin to reflect the glory of God in our lives as Moses did when he came down the mountain after spending time in God's presence face to face with Him. Gradually that glory faded.

The Christian has the privilege of meeting with God in an intimate way and we all know that we become moulded by people we spend time with. If we are of a mind to allow it, our sentiments become like theirs, their opinions become like ours and their friends become our friends. We gradually change to become more like them. So it is with Christians who spend time meeting with God in prayer and in the scriptures and who make other Christians their friends. We become more and more like God himself and it gives God the opportunity to shine from us in a way which gradually increases. That's called in scripture changing from one degree of glory to another but it comes about only by our increasing focus on Jesus and spending time in his presence. The glory of Moses faded as he left God's presence ours increases as we enter God's presence.

As that spiritual gaze on the Lord Jesus increases, the need to compare ourselves with others reduces. In that way, the problem of envy gradually fades and our desire gets consumed with becoming more like Him whatever His plan for us might be. Bearing in mind that envy was not a facet of the character of Jesus, it will become a less prominent facet of our own as we become more like Him.

**I think that's an essential key to seeing the back of envy and the problems it can bring.**

Envy brought about considerable misery in the life of Jacob's family until God turned things around for them but just as it led to the suffering of Joseph then, so it led to the suffering of Jesus later. Both suffered as a result of envy.

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