

Joseph A type of Christ 1

1 The longed For Son

The Bible is all about the Messiah, The Lord Jesus Christ. From Genesis to Revelation, He is its main subject. In the Old Testament, there were many prophecies. His birth, His life and ministry, how He would die and even His Resurrection and Ascension back to Heaven.

When Cleopas and his companion were joined by Jesus on the road to Emmaus after the resurrection, Jesus gave them a Bible lesson:

"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27).

So "all" of the prophets, and "all" of the Scriptures were prophetic of Jesus Christ. Many pictures of Jesus are scattered throughout the Old Testament. They have been give the name "Types" or shadows. One of the most interesting is seen in the story of Joseph.

Joseph used to be a fairly well known Bible story to children but I'm not certain now just what children are taught from the Bible these days. Most remember Joseph as the boy who had the coat of many colours "The technicolour dreamcoate" bought for him by his father Jacob. He was the son who was hated by his brothers because Joseph was their father's favourite. He was the first and longed for son of his wife Rachel.

Laying Some Foundations

Joseph's father Jacob was a scheming individual. In his younger days he had tricked his brother Esau into parting with the right to the inheritance of their father Isaac. He ran

away from home and ended up living at the home of his uncle Laban who was also a scheming individual.

Laban had two daughters, Rachel and Leah. Leah was the elder daughter and had weak eyes but Rachel was beautiful and Jacob grew to love Rachel and asked Laban if he could marry her. In exchange for his daughter's hand in marriage, Laban required Jacob to work seven years for him, which he did and time passed quickly.

The wedding day came and the bride came in with her veil totally covering her features. Jacob took his bride and the after taking her to bed found that Laban had done a switch and married him to Leah instead of Rachel. Jacob was not well pleased. When he confronted Laban, Laban offered some weak excuse about it not being right to marry off the younger before the elder. He should have made that clear early on but Laban was a schemer and probably thought it was the only way of marrying off the weak-eyed older daughter. After a week, Jacob was permitted to have Rachel but only if he worked for Laban another seven years which he did.

Desperation

That saw the beginning of a marriage where feelings between the sisters ran high. Rachel was not able to have children whereas Leah had many and taunted Rachel about being childless. Rachel was the favoured woman as far as Jacob was concerned and was special to him in every way but that itself didn't take away her aching to have a child. Finally, in desperation.....

....When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I'll die!" (NIV)

That is **desperation**. In her desperation she tried a surrogate motherhood route using her maid to carry a child for her. That wasn't the first time in scripture it had happened. It wasn't the best thing before and it wasn't for Rachel either but when people are desperate it's surprising what they will do.

People will go to great lengths to get something they long for. They will pay large sums of money, even selling things to raise it, travel long distances, work long hours, study hard, go into training, take exams, fail and take them again, never take no as an answer and never give up following their vision. In fact nearly everything worthwhile that has been accomplished has been the result of **one person** going to great lengths to fulfil a vision and not giving up.

There is sometimes no quick way of getting your heart's desire and if there is a quick way it probably means a lot of debt which can take the joy out of the whole thing in the end. However, if Rachel had just hung on a little longer she would have found herself pregnant **but isn't that just the way God works sometimes?** The Lord often comes just at the eleventh hour.

Saul and sacrifice.

1 Sam 10:8

8 "Go down ahead of me to Gilgal. I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, but you must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do."

(NIV)

Saul got an army together to fight the Philistine who turned out in great numbers. Saul waited for Samuel to come and make offerings and this is what we read.

1 Sam 13:8-10

8 Saul waited for seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul's men began to scatter.

9 So he said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings." And Saul offered up the burnt offering.

10 Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him. (NIV)

That was the beginning of Saul's downfall. It was an early example of the Lord working at the 11th hour.

Another example is Jesus asleep in a boat in a storm.

Jesus asleep in the boat**Matt 8:24-26**

24 Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping.

25 The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!"

26 He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

(NIV)

The Lord a way of doing things right at the last minute and it can sometimes be a bit of a trial. This is what James says about trials.

James 1:2-4

- 2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,
3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.
4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.
(NIV)

It seems to be one way that the Lord uses to mature us. He wants us to learn to be patient and wait for him even if the boat seems to be about to sink.

We find it hard to cope with that without getting in the way of God working. It's as if He says **“Good morning, this is The Lord speaking. Today I have all your problems completely in hand. I don't need your help. Thank you.”**

Going back to Joseph, Rachel finally conceived and gave birth to Joseph, her desperately longed for son.

In this we see a picture in the Old Testament of the Lord Jesus Christ who was a longed for Son

2 Jesus the Longed for Son Of God

Jesus said this:-

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)

The prophets looked to the time of the coming Messiah as a time when the hopes of the world would be fulfilled, and when the righteous would be happy. "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." John 8:56.

I wonder what Isaiah felt when he prophesied about the death of the one who was despised and rejected of men and what he felt about the one who would be conceived of a virgin. Isaiah never lived to see the fulfilment but must have longed to see it.

Not only was Jesus a longed for Son but he was also the child of a woman favoured by God. Mary.

Luke 1:28

28 The angel went to [Mary] and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."

(NIV)

Interestingly, the names of Mary's fiancée was Joseph and his father was Jacob. Also, 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)

3 The Longed For Sons of God

Just as Jesus himself was the **long awaited Son of God**, so God himself has longed for those in the world that He loves to be born again into His family and who will become His sons and daughters. We see the longing of the Father's heart for sons and daughters in the waiting Father in the story of the prodigal son and in the rejoicing of the shepherd

who longs to find the sheep that was lost and who rejoices when he has found it. Jesus said “I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent”.

You need to know that on the day you became a child of God Heaven rejoiced over you because you were longed for sons and daughters. **He knows that it is through family members that He receives praise, worship and respect and He loves you as He loves all His family members.**

But just as:

Joseph was a longed for son,

Jesus was the longed for son and

You were a longed for son or daughter of God,

so God has planted in the hearts of his family to have offspring of our own.

Interestingly, the name Joseph means “**Increaser**” and God has planted a longing in our hearts to see the kingdom of God **increase**.

4 Our longed for offspring

Examples of how the apostle Paul saw this can be seen in a number of places.

1 Cor 4:15

15 Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus **I became your father** through the gospel.

(NIV)

1 Cor 4:17

17 For this reason I am sending to you **Timothy, my son** whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church. (NIV)

Titus 1:4

4 To **Titus, my true son** in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour. (NIV)

Philemon 1:10

10 I appeal to you for **my son Onesimus**, who became my son while I was in chains. (NIV)

Paul regarded those who came to Christ as a result of his ministry as being his sons and I believe God puts in the hearts of His children the longing to be fruitful and multiply to see the kingdom increase.

We know that the kingdom of God grows in different ways but mostly by one telling another. If there's a time where the Kingdom of God needs to grow it is now but conditions are such that a big move of God's Holy Spirit is what is needed in this country to make an impact on what seems to be a rapidly deteriorating society.

Revival

One way that God has impacted society as a whole in the past is by what is called "**revival**" where the presence of the Holy Spirit is so intense that people even walking past a church where a revival meeting is taking place just fall to their knees and repent of their sins. Such revivals have taken place a number of times in the last 150 years, notably in Los Angeles, in Wales, in the Hebrides and, more recently in Brownsville Pensacola Florida. There have been others too.

Every significant outpouring of the Spirit in revivals seem to have been preceded by earnest longing for such a move of God's spirit and agonizing intercession accompanied by brokenness and humility before God.

A man called Frank Bartleman of the Los Angeles revival which took place in a tumble down place with a dirt floor in Azusa Street Los Angeles was so desperate for revival that he missed so much sleep and so many meals in order to pray that his family thought he would die. **His response was "I would rather die than not see revival" Rachel said "Give me children or I die".**

It seems that the days before revival breaks are days of intense longing and prayer with no breakthrough, effort with no results and intercession with no answers but when the longed for revival is born then comes the joy just like when a longed for baby has been born.

If it's true that prayers pounding heaven on behalf of the lost and the condition of the church preceded every revival then we have to ask a question.....

Was it the prayers that brought forth the revival or was it the impending revival that caused the prayers for it to break? Put it another way, do the labour pains bring the baby to birth or is it the baby coming to birth that brings on the labour pains. Obviously it's the baby but it can't be born without the labour.

God speaks to His people through circumstances. When the wickedness of the world grieves and humbles Christians and the church is held in contempt that's a time when a revival may be expected and when Christians can be expected to be driven to prayer to plead for "the long awaited" moving of the Holy Spirit to bring change.

Just before the Welsh revival, Wales was football crazy and cockfighting, gambling, prostitution and alcohol captured the working class people of Wales until revival broke. Once that happened, the star football players got converted and the stadiums emptied, bars emptied, crime fell, thousands were converted to Christ and they agonized over their sin with tears until the peace of God filled them and they were certain of forgiveness. Even the donkeys in the mines had to be re-educated to learn new commands. They were only accustomed to being sworn at and once miners got converted the swearing stopped and they couldn't understand what they were being told.

And the key people who God used were nobodies and were nearly all young people in their teens and early twenties.

We can make laws to curb the lawless but only a change of heart that Christ can bring will bring the change that society needs.

Graham in our church has had a vision. It's of people standing around this place being healed as they hear praise and worship.

If that vision really is of God and God wants that to happen it's a signal to move heaven with prayer to bring it into being. If we don't shake heaven with prayer for that we should no be surprised if it never happens. That very thing could spark such a hunger for the kingdom of God in the surrounding area that we wouldn't get near this room within a few weeks of it happening. That sort of think doesn't happen in history without desperate people with vision pounding heaven with prayer, fasting and repentance until it breaks. It's no good just waiting for it. History shows that it never works that way. **It's no good saying God is sovereign; we don't need to pray for revival, He'll send one we need it. It has simply never worked like that**

Rachel the favoured wife had a long awaited son after much pain and longing. The prophets of the old Testament longed to see the Messiah and prophesied of His coming and long awaited Son of God came through a favoured woman. The Father longs for children to be born again into His kingdom and in those children, us, has been planted the longing to see our offspring too, those who through our ministry enter the kingdom of God.

The extent of our longing will determine what we do to see our offspring brought into being.