

A Character Study: Joseph [Gen. 37]

Your study should be...

Scriptural [Survey]. More than 10 different Josephs. *Three* other major NT passages:

- **Psa. 105.** Feet shackled. Neck in iron collar. Divine providence. "He sent a man before them, even Joseph".
- **Acts 7.** "And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him". Despised prophet. Suffered at hands of his brethren. Jews had history of mistreatment culminating with Messiah.
- **Heb. 11.** "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones." Divine promise. Faith in God's word to Abraham. Lived in enjoyment.

Structural. 1. Son in Father's House [37, John]. 2. *Servant* [Steward] in Potiphar's House [39, Mark]. 3. *Sufferer* in the Prison House [40, Luke]. 4. *Sovereign* [Supervisor] in Pharaoh's House [41-50, Matthew].

Biographical. Clan. Mother Rachel. Aunt Leah. Uncle Esau. Grandad Laban. *Carnal Reuben*, "unstable as water". Could not control his passions. Neither can you. *Curious Dinah*, "went out to see the daughters of the land" [34.1].

- Calling. *LORD shall add to me another son* [addition or increase]. *Saviour* of the World; *Sustainer* [Prince] of Life [upholds all things by the word of His power]; *Revealer* of Secrets [only begotten Son, He hath declared Him].
- Character. *Consistent. Faithful. Honest. Compassionate. Humble. Gracious. Kind. Discerning*. Gen. 49: "fruitful bough". Fruit = character [likeness to Christ]. Produced by Spirit. What I am "in the dark".

Topical [Themes]. x7 Joseph is *weeping*. Privately *and* publicly. For joy *and* sorrow. Mostly caused by his brethren.

- Abraham [faith]. Isaac [love]. Jacob [hope]. *All* found in Joseph. In *parent's* house [faith, in God's promises]. In *pit* and *prison* [hope, God would deliver]. In *palace* [love, blessed/forgave his brethren whilst on throne].
- Garments. **1.** Distinction [colours, public expression of delight]. **2.** Devotion [left in hand of Potiphar's wife]. **3.** Disdain or *derision* [prison]. **4.** Dignity [vestures of fine linen].

Typical. Types = *imprints* [pictures] that point *forward*. Look for Christ [comparison or contrast]. Over **100**.

- **Delight** of his Father [37.1-4]. "Brought unto his father their evil report" = bad report *about* them. 'With' them but separate *from* them. Behaviour *dishonoured* Jacob's name. Joseph was *zealous* for the *honour* of his father.
- **Destined** to reign [37.5-11]. 1. Dominion *earthly* sphere [sheaves]. 2. *Heavenly* [sun, moon, stars bowed, v.9].
- **Despised** by His Brethren [37.12-24]. Sent from *Hebron* [fellowship, union] to *Shechem* [shoulder, burden of service upon Him] to *Dothan* [law, bondage]. Saw him afar off... *Matt. 21: Last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when they saw the son... This is the heir; come, let us kill him.*
- v.23: *Stripped* Joseph out of his coat. Cast into a pit [v.24]. Empty [My God, My God]. No water [I thirst].

Dispensational. Having been *rejected* of his brethren, he is highly *exalted* in Egypt. Called Saviour. Bride to share his honour. After 7 years of plenty [day of grace], 7 years of poverty [tribulation]. "Go to Joseph!"

- Pain of "hour of trial" drive men to Christ. And his brethren. *Seven* interviews, steps to restoration [repentance].
- Climax: "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold" [45.4]. "At the *second* time Joseph made known to brethren". *First* time, his own [people] received Him not. *Second* time, "the LORD is my God". Goshen. "Glory of all lands."

Practical. Joseph the **teenager** [17]. Huge *potential*. Esau's sons "dukes" [chiefs]. Eminence in world. But God's purpose rests with a teenager in father's tent. Choices [and behaviour] impact later usefulness of his life. Time of great *potential* [and *pitfalls*]. Be careful. Your life for God will make or break in 20s.

- *Pressures*. Bereavement. Lost mother very young. Sorrow didn't deflect his purpose. Every trial used in Divine training programme to form character. Acted with *dignity, duty* ['here am I'], *Divine* revelation [dreams].
- *Problems* [with his brethren]. Envious [jealous] when they saw special gift [bitter]. Set yourself to please God and some will resent your devotion. Bad example of carnally minded brethren.
- *Purity*. Potiphar's wife [39]. Temptation in workplace. Very *forward* – "Lie with me". Immorality is brazen. It was *frequent* – every day. Reduced to "lie by me" or "be with me". Became *forceful* – "caught him".
- Away from home. Retained purity in permissive society. *How... do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* Considered impact on *master* [Potiphar], and guilt before *God*. Left his *tunic* but retained his *testimony*. Price.
- First book in OT ends with Joseph in a coffin. Contrast first book in NT ends with a **risen man** in the power of resurrection life, "I am with you always". Even type of Joseph falls far short of the reality!