

What Saith the Scripture?

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They That Wait Upon The LORD: Part 3: Joseph

"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint"
(Isaiah 40:31).

"That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous... He that walketh with wise men shall be wise"
(Proverbs 2:20; 13:20).

by David Stewart

Preface

With the examples of Noah and Abraham as "wise men" that "renew [our] strength" in waiting upon the LORD, we now add Joseph, the son of Jacob (Israel) and Rachel, the only full brother to Benjamin. "The sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin" (Genesis 35:24).

Joseph is our example, often called a "type" of Christ, of perseverance in God's refining for service. Joseph lived a pure life of faith and trust in the face of contradiction and hate. He would not let go of God, even though most would say God had let go of him. Patiently, faithfully, Joseph clung to the LORD for his very existence. And though the way looked impossible, Joseph honored God with his love and trust. "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes...The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe... Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD" (Psalm 118:8-9; Proverbs 29:25; Psalm 27:14).

Biased Whim

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours" (Genesis 37:3). Joseph was a good son, but Israel loved him for circumstances beyond Joseph's control. In other words, Israel was a "respector of persons". We can thank our LORD that His relationship with us is not based on some biased **whim** of His. "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respector of persons" (Acts 10:34). But because Israel loved Joseph "more than all his children", and for an unfair reason, the other sons hated Joseph.

The LORD seemingly added fuel to this fire by giving Joseph a dream. "And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more" (Genesis 37:5). This dream set Joseph in an even more precarious position.

"And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves

stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf."

"And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words."

"And he dreamed yet **another** dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me."

"And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying" (Genesis 37:6-11).

The Grief of the Prophet

To his brothers, Joseph seemed to be bragging about his favored position with their father. They despised him more than they ever had before, because now Joseph appeared to be demanding obedience and honour from them-- and for what? Of course Joseph knew these dreams were from the LORD, but they hated him because they thought he made them up. "Yea, let none that wait on Thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause" (Psalm 25:3). In their eyes, their brother was a liar, a cheat, and an obnoxious braggart. "And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words."

Yet this was only part of Joseph's grief. "His father rebuked him" for repeating what the LORD told him. "Of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh" (Luke 6:45). The very fact that Joseph was willing to speak what the LORD told him, meant he **believed** what the LORD told him. In his present day, Joseph was a "modern prophet". Perhaps he knew his dreams would not be well received. But it didn't change the fact that God said it. If Truth is spoken by the Spirit to a man's heart, then an honest man will confess it as such. "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in Heaven" (Matthew 10:32).

"Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not... We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the LORD Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2Corinthians 4:1,8-10).

And so, Joseph suffered as God's prophets have typically suffered. "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the LORD, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience" (James 5:10). "Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in Heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets" (Luke 6:23).

Betrayal

And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him; And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it. And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content. Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt" (Genesis 37:23-28).

A lesser person would curse his enemy. "Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and He shall save thee" (Proverbs 20:22). A lesser person would curse God. Joseph could have blamed God for **causing** this whole situation, especially since those "dreams" had been the catalyst of all the envy and hate that had been levied upon him. Joseph had suffered. He had been slandered, mocked, and now sold into slavery. "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Philippians 1:29). Joseph believed God, and now was suffering in a very big way. "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is **better**, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1Peter 3:14-18).

In the face of **seeming** betrayal-- not merely by his own blood brothers, but more intensely, by God-- Joseph is required to count himself "happy", to "be not afraid", and to have "a good conscience". He is to obey the very One Who could have stopped his pain. In faith, Joseph is to consider this situation "**better**" than any suffering a wicked person could suffer. Christ Jesus, our Example, suffered "**better**" than any the wicked could suffer, "that He might bring us to God". God expected Joseph to **continue** to do well, and to suffer for it. "Yea, and all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2Timothy 3:12).

Therefore, "Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, **bought him** of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither" (Genesis 39:1).

The LORD was with Joseph

By sight, it certainly looked as if Joseph had been forsaken and forgotten by his LORD. But, "the LORD was with Joseph" (Genesis 39:2). **And it took faith to know that.** "I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him" (Isaiah 8:17). So, Joseph maintained his relationship with the One Who truly loved him, and Joseph trusted the LORD. "Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters... so our eyes wait upon the

LORD our God, until that He have mercy upon us" (Psalm 123:2). "**I waited patiently for the LORD**; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry" (Psalm 40:1).

Was Joseph's test over? No. In fact, it was to continue many years. The ordeal was great-- but so was the blessing. God needed a man. This man. And Joseph had to hold on to his belief that God had not forgotten him.

Joseph served his earthly masters well while serving his Heavenly Master well.

- "And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian... And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him **overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.**"
- "But the LORD was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison **committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.** The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper" (Genesis 39:21-23).
- "And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: Thou shalt be over my house, and **according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled:** only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt... And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt" (Genesis 41:39-41,44).

Conclusion: "Walk in the Way of Good Men"

Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years" (Genesis 50:22). He was just a seventeen year old boy when his brothers betrayed him. "Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren" (Genesis 37:2). And when he found favour with Pharaoh through the LORD's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream, Joseph was thirty years old. "And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt" (Genesis 41:46). Thirteen years of slavery may seem too large of a price for God to have required of Joseph. The separation from his father and mother, the pain of slander and hate, the heavy labour of prison, the merciless injustice of wicked men-- Joseph bore it all-- in faith-- just as God required. "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith... Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Romans 1:17; Hebrews 10:38).

Joseph endured the temptation of Potiphar's wife, who tempted him everyday. "And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph **day by day**, that he hearkened **not** unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her" (Genesis 39:10). But God was faithful. He had not forsaken Joseph. "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed **day by day**" (2Corinthians 4:19).

Yes, Potiphar forsook him, but the LORD did not. If He had, Joseph would not have had God's strength to keep from sinning. "But they that wait upon the LORD shall **renew** their strength" (Isaiah 40:31). "But put ye on the LORD Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:14).

The Word of God testifies of the **many** who have borne it all in faith, "of whom the world was not worthy". The well-known Hebrews, chapter 11, is but a small part of the Whole Counsel with which God exhorts us. "For who hath stood in the Counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard His Word? who hath marked His Word, and heard it?" (Jeremiah 23:18). "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with **so great a cloud of witnesses**, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1).

But The Greatest And Best is Jesus. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1Peter 3:18). "Marvel not, My brethren, if the world hate you" (1John 3:13). "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you" (John 15:18). "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:38).

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God. **For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself**, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Hebrews 12:2-4).

More on the "Watching and Waiting" Joseph

Genesis 39

7 And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.

8 But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;

9 There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

10 And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.

11 And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within.

12 And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.

13 And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth,

14 That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice:

15 And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out.

16 And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home.

17 And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me:

18 And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.

19 And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled.

20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.

Genesis 41

14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.

15 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it.

16 And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

17 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river:

25 And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do.

39 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art:

40 Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

42 And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;

43 And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.

44 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

46 And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

47 And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls.

48 And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same.

49 And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number.

50 And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him.

51 And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

52 And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

53 And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended.

54 And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

55 And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.

56 And the famine was over all the face of the earth: and Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.

57 And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.

42:6 And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth.

45:4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

45:9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not:

47:7 And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

47:11 And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded.

Acts 7

8 Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

9 And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,

10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

11 Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance.

12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.

13 And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.

14 Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.