

Aunt Hattie's Bible Studies

by

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Chapter 6

Joseph

JOSEPH'S BOYHOOD

"So you like the story of Joseph, do you? Don't you think he had a pretty hard time?" "Oh yes," answered Alice, "but I know how it turned out."

I believe that is the way with most of us. The story has so beautiful an ending that we forget the cruelties and hardships of the opening chapters.

Do you remember in the story of Jacob that when Joseph was born his father and mother were very happy for they had been praying for many years for a son?

It was soon after Joseph's birth that Jacob asked his father-in-law for permission to return to Canaan, his own land. We hear no more of Joseph until he is seventeen years of age, living with his father and brothers at Hebron.

Jacob had twelve sons; two, Joseph and Benjamin, were the sons of Rachel, his most loved wife, who died on the way to Bethlehem when Benjamin was born. Jacob's heart was wrapped around both of these motherless children but he especially loved Joseph. The Bible says he loved him because he was the son of his old age and then, too, we cannot help but see that Joseph took an unusual interest in his father's affairs and disliked the evil doings of his brothers, which made them hate him.

Jacob, unwisely, it seems to me, showed special favor by giving Joseph a very beautiful coat made of stripes of different colors, one of the kind worn by those of a higher class.

It really seemed that everything went against Joseph so far as his brothers' love was concerned. While he was but an innocent, sincere boy he had some dreams which he told his father and brothers. These dreams did not come from eating mince pie and doughnuts, but were dreams that God gave to him concerning his future and that of his family.

One night he dreamed he was out in the field with his brothers binding sheaves, and that his brothers' sheaves bowed down to his sheaf. Naturally, when he told it to his brothers they hated him more than ever. They asked him if he thought he was going to rule over them.

Then another time he dreamed that the sun, moon and eleven stars bowed down to him. Again he related the dream and his father scolded him, saying, “Do you think your father and mother and brothers are all going to bow down to you?” The hatred of his brothers increased every day, but something in Joseph’s words, spoken so simply, made his father think seriously.

Jacob was rich in flocks and herds, which means he had many cattle and sheep. The pasture around Hebron was scarce and sometimes the shepherds had to take the stock far away to find feed for them. His sons had gone at this time to Shechem, after fifty miles north of Hebron where grass was more plentiful.

Jacob’s sons were not very trustworthy and after a time he sent Joseph to see how things were going and to bring him a report. When he reached Shechem his brothers were not there but Joseph learned from a man whom he met that they had gone farther north to the valley of Dothan where later he found them.

But that bright, striped coat of many colors could be seen a long way off and his brothers saw him coming and knew him, and said one to the other, “**Behold, this dreamer cometh!**” Their anger toward him stirred afresh as he drew near, and they planned then and there to kill him.

Rueben, who was the oldest of the family, and held more or less of a responsibility over his younger brother, heard the plans and made up his mind to save Joseph from their hands. He said, “No, do not kill him, do not shed any blood, but let us throw him into the pit,” thinking he could later rescue him and send him home.

As soon as Joseph came up he fell into the hands of these jealous, envious brothers who tore off his beautiful coat, threw him into an old well and then sat down and ate their lunch with the pitiful cries and pleadings of Joseph ringing in their ears.

While they were eating, along came a company of Ishmaelites, also called Midianites, traders, with their camels loaded with spices, ointments and gum, on their way from Gilead to Egypt. With the coming of the caravan, Judah, one of the sons of Jacob, thought of a way to rid themselves of Joseph. He suggested that they sell him to these travelers instead of killing him. Therefore they bargained with them and sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver, which was a little more than eleven dollars in our money. Very soon Joseph was on his way to Egypt.

I am sure his greatest concern was for his father, for Joseph knew he would worry when he did not return. But Joseph knew the God of his father and had a great faith which kept him looking up and believing that even though his present circumstances were very difficult, God would yet lead him through. He also was conscious of a clean heart before God and that it was no sin of his that had led him into trouble.

While Joseph was on his long journey to Egypt we will find out what his brothers were doing. It seems that Rueben was not with the others when they sold Joseph. Perhaps he had to look after some distant flocks, and when he returned in the evening he hurried to the pit to rescue his young brother and send him home.

Of course the pit was empty and Rueben was filled with great sorrow and cried, “**The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?**” Meaning to say he was responsible for Joseph’s safety and now what should he do?

We do not know whether they explained the matter to Rueben, but we do know that they killed a little lamb and dipped Joseph’s coat in its blood and took it home to their father, saying, “See, Dad, we found this bloody coat. Do you know whether or not it is Joseph’s?”

Jacob knew at once that it belonged to his beloved son and decided a wild beast had killed him. He was broken-hearted and mourned many days and could not be comforted, but his sons carried this ugly sin in their hearts forever afterwards.

JOSEPH IN PRISON IN EGYPT

When the Ishmaelites got to Egypt they sold Joseph to an officer of Pharaoh, an Egyptian named Potiphar, who was captain of the guard. The Bible says the Lord was with Joseph and made all that he did to prosper.

As time passed, Potiphar saw the presence of God in Joseph’s life and made him to be overseer of his house. From the very day that Joseph took charge, God blessed the Egyptian’s house and all his fields for Joseph’s sake. He did so well that Potiphar placed more and more important duties upon him until the Bible says he paid no attention to his own affairs only that he had enough to eat.

Joseph was very good looking and had a fine appearance which made him very charming. Human nature seems always to have been the same, and Potiphar’s wife cast her sinful eyes upon Joseph. Over and over again she sought to lay with him.

He manfully explained to her that his master had put all his affairs into his hands, withholding only her, his wife, and surely he must and would be loyal and true.

One day when Joseph was in Potiphar’s palace, Mrs. Potiphar again tempted Joseph, and, because he refused and turned to leave she caught hold of his cloak, a loose garment worn around the shoulders, but Joseph ran out and away.

She was very angry and to get even, she kept Joseph’s cloak until her husband came home, then she lied and pretended that he had wanted to lay with her in Potiphar’s absence. Then it was her husband’s turn to be angry and he cast Joseph into prison where the king’s prisoners were kept.

It is hard to be punished when we do wrong, but to suffer for doing right is very trying, indeed. However, the Lord knew all about it and was with Joseph through all of those dark prison years.

The keeper of the prison was very pleased with this young Hebrew and after a time made him a “Trustee” and gave him charge of all of the prisoners and whatsoever he did prospered.

Several years passed by and then the king's chief butler and chief baker offended him, and he had them cast into the prison where Joseph was. One night each of these dreamed a dream and when Joseph came into their cells the next morning on his prison duties, they were both looking very sad and he asked them what was the matter. They said they had dreamed dreams and there was no one to tell the meaning of them.

Then Joseph said, "Do you not know that God, alone, can explain dreams? If you will tell me your dreams I'll ask God to give me the meaning."

The chief butler told his story first. He said he had dreamed that he saw a vine with three branches, which budded, blossomed and put forth grapes. Then he took Pharaoh's cup, pressed the grapes into it and gave it to him.

Joseph said the three branches were three days until Pharaoh should send for him and restore him to his place as chief butler. Joseph was very anxious to get out of prison and asked the butler to speak of him to the king when he should again serve him and ask him to release him, for he said, "I was stolen away out of my land and here I am in prison. I did nothing wrong at either time to receive such treatment."

The chief baker was so encouraged with the explanation of the dream of the chief butler that he told Joseph his dream. He said that he dreamed he had three white baskets on his head, and in the top basket were all manner of baked meats for Pharaoh, and the birds came and ate up all the food.

Joseph said the three baskets were three days and within that time Pharaoh would sentence him to hang from a tree and the birds would eat his flesh.

So it came to pass that the third day was Pharaoh's birthday. He had a banquet and to further celebrate the occasion, he restored the chief butler and hanged the chief baker according to Joseph's explanations of the dreams

It seems hard to forget the evil things men do to us, but I am afraid it is very easy to forget the good deeds and the chief butler forgot all about Joseph and his plea for freedom.

JOSEPH EXALTED IN EGYPT

Two years passed by and then Pharaoh had two dreams, very, very strange dreams. These dreams made such an impression on his mind that he was greatly troubled and sent for all the magicians and all the wise men of Egypt to tell him what his dreams meant, but none were able to help him in any way.

It was then that the chief butler remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh the whole story of his dream and the one of the chief baker and of Joseph's correct explanation of the dreams.

Joseph was called at once, and after making himself ready stood before the king. I wonder if being shut up several years in prison had caused the glow of health to fade from his face.

It may have, but of one thing I am sure, although modest and shy, he still had a clear eye, a firm voice and a commanding personality.

The king, eager to know the meaning of his dreams, said to Joseph, “I have dreamed a dream and none of my wise men are able to tell the meaning, and I heard of you, that you can understand dreams and explain them.”

Joseph answered, “It is not in me, God shall give Pharaoh the answer of peace.”

Then Pharaoh told how he had dreamed that he stood on the bank of the river and seven fat-fleshed, well-favored cows came up out of the water and fed in the meadows. Afterward, seven poor, bony, lean-fleshed cows, the worst he had ever seen in all Egypt, came and ate up all the seven fat cows. And when the lean cattle had eaten all of the fat cattle they looked as poor and thin as ever.

And then Pharaoh said he had dreamed a second dream. This time he saw seven good, full ears of corn growing on one stalk and again seven withered, thin, blighted ears sprung up and ate up all the seven good ears. He was sorry that none of the magicians could explain the dreams for him and he was in great agony of mind.

Joseph, who was equal to the task, because he put his trust in the Lord, said to Pharaoh, “The dreams both mean the same. God is showing you what He is about to do. The seven good cows and the seven good ears are the same and mean a period of seven years.

The seven poor, lean cows and the seven poor, blighted ears of corn are the same, a period of seven years. What God is about to do He is showing Pharaoh. Behold, there will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, and then afterwards shall come seven years of famine and the good years will be forgotten in the land of Egypt, for the years of famine will be hard. The reason Pharaoh’s dream was double was because the thing was established by God and He will shortly bring it to pass.”

How tense and silent Pharaoh and his court must have been at these words, but Joseph, under the power of the Spirit of God went right on, for he not only was able to give the explanation of the dreams but also the answer to the problem. He advised Pharaoh to find a man wise and careful, who, with a set of officers, should be placed in charge of the land of Egypt.

Joseph told him to take up, for the government, one-fifth of all the land for the seven plenteous years and let the officers gather all of the crops of those good years that were to come and lay them up under the hand of the king. “Let them store it in cities so that when the years of famine come, Egypt will not suffer.”

Pharaoh and all of his court were very much pleased with Joseph’s wise and helpful advice. The king looked over his official family and very thoughtfully said, “**Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom the spirit of God is?**”

And then, I think it was that it came to Pharaoh that Joseph was the very one, and turning to the young Hebrew he said, **“Forasmuch as God hath shewed 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 took off his signet ring and put it on Joseph’s hand, and clothed him with the garments of royalty, and put a gold chain around his neck and had Joseph ride in the chariot next behind his, and made the people bow to him. So Joseph ruled over Egypt, subject only to Pharaoh himself.

I wonder what was in Joseph’s mind that night as he lay down to rest in the royal palace, his first night out of prison. There must have been the happy realization of freedom and then I am sure the bed was soft and not much like the cold prison floor on which he had so long been sleeping. I think his mind went back over the thirteen years which had passed since he bade his father good-bye and started for Dothan to see how his brothers were getting along.

I know he had never forgotten his father and had shed many tears as he thought of his father’s love for him. He may have thought, too, of his brothers and wondered what they would think, now, to see him governor of all Egypt.

Thirteen years of trials, Oh, so hard and uncalled for. I believe he might have said to himself, “Yes, sometimes my faith was very weak and I thought God had forgotten, and then again God sent such strong proof of His presence that I was able to go on. I thought the chief butler would get me out of prison two years ago, but he forgot me. Oh, well, it is all over now and it hasn’t hurt me.”

So the darkness scattered, a new day dawned, and Joseph took up the duties of his office.

First of all Pharaoh changed his name from Joseph to Zaphnathpaaneah and gave him a bride, Asenath, daughter of Potipherah, priest of On.

Pharaoh was never for one instant disappointed in his choice of a man to govern the kingdom. The first thing Joseph did was to drive all over the land of Egypt and acquaint himself with the entire situation.

The seven plenteous years were on “and the earth brought forth by handfuls.” Joseph organized the whole nation and placed officers in every quarter to oversee the saving of the crops.

Huge store houses were built in the cities and filled with grain. The Bible says that Joseph had corn stored in quantities like the sands of the sea, until they gave up trying to count it.

During these years Joseph had two sons born, whom he named Manasseh which means forgetting, and Ephraim meaning fruitful; for he said, God has **“made me forget all my toil, and all my father’s house”** and has **“caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.”**

The seven years of plenty came to an end and the great famine began as Joseph foretold. In Egypt the people had no bread and came to Pharaoh hungry and he sent them to Joseph who opened the store houses and sold them corn. As the famine spread, all the countries round about sent to Egypt where they heard there was food.

The Bible says **“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. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.”**

At the first the Egyptians paid for the corn in money. When the money was gone Joseph had them to bring their cattle in exchange for food. The next year they gave their land and finally themselves as servants, so when the famine was over Pharaoh owned the whole kingdom, money, cattle, land and people.

JOSEPH'S FAMILY AND THE FAMINE

Now the story goes back to Joseph's family in Hebron who were beginning to be concerned about food for themselves and their cattle. One day Jacob said to his sons, **“Why do ye look one upon another?”** In other words, “what are you worrying about? Are you short of food?” Then he told them he had heard there was corn in Egypt and that they had better go down and buy a supply. Benjamin, Joseph's full brother, was not allowed to accompany his brothers on the trip for his father was afraid trouble might come to him as it had to Joseph.

What a stirring scene it must have been as they prepared for the journey. As we know, Jacob was owner of great flocks and herds even when Joseph was at home. After these years the eleven sons had grown to manhood and each had his own share of stock which must have greatly increased by this time.

To care for such large numbers took several hundred menservants, maidservants and herdsmen. Can you think then, of what it meant to bring food from Egypt, a wearisome journey of about two hundred and fifty miles, much of that way over desert sands? It has been estimated that the caravan included no less than eight hundred asses and many servants.

As they neared the city of Pharaoh they found many others going on the same mission for the famine was everywhere.

Joseph, as the king's governor, was in charge of all the grain. When his brothers came into his presence he knew them. As they bowed down to the earth before him, little did they think that this handsome man in the royal robes of Egypt and who held so much power, was the young brother whom they had so cruelly treated and sold as a slave more than twenty years before.

Yes, Joseph knew them, and as they bowed before him he remembered the dreams he had dreamed when he was a boy, how his brothers' sheaves bowed down to his sheaf, and the sun, moon and stars showed him respect. I think he also remembered how angry they were when he told them his dreams.

Not wanting them to recognize him at this time, he pretended a rough manner toward them and demanded to know where they came from. Very humbly they said they had come from Canaan to buy corn. “Oh, no,” he said, “You are spies, come down to see our poverty.”

“Oh, no, my Lord,” they earnestly replied, “We are not spies, but are come to buy corn. We are all the sons of one man and are telling you the truth.”

Joseph again pretended not to believe them and insisted they must be spies. Then they told him a little more of their family history. They said, “We are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan. The youngest is not with us, we left him at home with father, and the other is dead.”

Joseph still stood firm in his view that they were spies and said, “By the life of Pharaoh, you will not leave Egypt until your youngest brother comes. One of you may go and get him while I keep the rest of you in prison. Then I’ll see if you are telling the truth.”

Why do you think Joseph treated his brothers in this manner? Was he spiteful toward them because they had mistreated him? I believe we know Joseph well enough to know that was not so. These men were strong-willed and selfish and needed to be humbled. I believe God led Joseph in his dealings with them that they might be sorry for their sin, not only toward their brother, but before God Himself.

Joseph put them all in prison for three days, at the end of which he went in to talk to them. He suggested that they choose one to stay in prison in Egypt until the rest of them returned with grain for the family and stock, and came again to Egypt bringing their youngest brother. It must have been interesting to Joseph to hear what they said to each other, not knowing he could understand them for he spoke to them through an interpreter.

The first thing of which they thought when this trouble came was the sin to their brother so many years before. “We are guilty toward our brother,” they said one to the other. “Don’t you remember how he cried and pled with us to have mercy, but we wouldn’t listen. So now this trouble has come upon us.”

Rueben said, “Didn’t I tell you not to sin against the child? Now his blood is upon us.”

By this time Joseph had heard about all he could bear, and had to go aside and weep. Coming back, he chose Simeon as the one to stay in prison. He bound him before their eyes and took him away. I wonder if Simeon was the one who was the most determined to get rid of Joseph and the most hard-hearted of all.

Simeon, bound in prison, Joseph gave orders for the brothers’ sacks to be filled with corn, and also provided plenty of food for the return journey. Then they paid Joseph the money, but unknown to them, he gave it to his steward and told him to put each man’s money back in his sack.

The asses loaded, the journey back to Canaan was begun. I think it was a sober, thoughtful company of brothers who wended their weary way. The memory of their murderous treatment of Joseph and their father's grief was in their minds and now that Simeon was bound in prison what would their father say.

The first day out they stopped at an inn for lunch, and as one of them opened his sack to take out feed for his ass, he found the money in the sack's mouth. He hurried to tell the others and all were afraid and said one to another, "What is this that God has done to us?"

When they reached home they told Jacob their father, all that had happened; how the Lord of the land had treated them roughly and accused them of being spies and how they had told him they were twelve brothers, sons of one father, one brother was dead and the youngest stayed at home. Also they told how he had sent them home with food but had kept Simeon whose face, he said, they would not see again until they had brought Benjamin, the youngest son, with them to Egypt.

And then another surprise awaited them. When they unloaded their asses and emptied the corn each man found his money tied up in his sack. A great fear settled upon the whole family.

Jacob said, "You have taken my children away from me. Joseph is dead, Simeon is as good as dead, and now you want to take Benjamin away; all these things are against me." Jacob didn't know that instead of being against him really all these things were working for his good. Perhaps for just a little while he had forgotten the God of Bethel.

Rueben said, "Father, if anything happens to Benjamin you may slay my two sons. Put him in my care when we go down again, and I'll see that he comes back safely." But Jacob was not satisfied and said, "My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead and he is left alone. If mischief befall him by the way in which you go, then I'll die."

Some time passed by and the famine continued and food was getting scarce. The corn was about gone and Jacob told his sons they must go to Egypt for more.

This time Judah talked to Jacob, saying, "This man in Egypt said we couldn't so much as see his face unless we brought Benjamin. If you will let him go, well and good, if not there is no need for us to make the trip."

His father asked why in the world they ever told the Lord of the land that there was another brother. To this he answered that it was because he asked them about their family, if their father were yet alive and also if they had another brother. They had told him the truth, for how did they know he would ask them to bring Benjamin down.

Judah continued his pleadings with his father, "Send the lad with me, and we will start at once, so that we and our children can have food and not die. I'll stand responsible for him, and if he doesn't come back with us I'll bear the blame forever."

Finally Jacob gave in and said,

“Very well, if it must be so. Then take the man a present, some of our best fruits, a little ointment, a little honey, spices, gum, nuts and almonds. Take double money in your hands, also the money you found in your sacks when you returned before. It might have been an oversight. Take your brother, and may God Almighty give you mercy before the man that he may send away your brother, Simeon, and let Benjamin return. If my children all die, then they all die.”

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS REUNITED

Again they made the long tiresome journey, taking with them Benjamin and also the gifts. In due time they stood before Joseph, who, as soon as he saw them, gave orders for a great dinner to be served to them in his own house.

The more Joseph did for his brothers, the more they feared he was laying some trap for them. They became so troubled that they took the steward aside and confided their anxieties to him, telling him that their only purpose in coming was to buy food. Also they spoke about finding the money in the sacks when they returned from the last trip. They begged him to believe they were honest and showed him that they had brought back the money.

The steward assured them that he knew all about the money and that he was the person who had put it in their sacks and added that God was really the One who had been good to them. At this time Simeon was brought out to them.

The servants took the eleven brothers to Joseph’s house where they refreshed themselves and prepared for the banquet. I think it was a new and unusual experience for them, being shepherds, to be entertained in a royal palace.

When Joseph arrived and they were called to the great banqueting hall they brought the present from their father and gave it to Joseph and all bowed down before him in a very humble way. Joseph, through an interpreter, asked if their father was still alive. They told him he was alive and in very good health. He glanced over their faces until he saw Benjamin, and asked if this was the one who had not come before and when they said he was, Joseph said to him, “God be gracious to you, my son.”

Joseph’s heart was so touched that he had to run away into another room to weep. Then he washed his eyes and returned, bidding his servants serve the dinner. He placed his brothers at a table by themselves and he sat at a table by himself, for the Egyptians and Hebrews did not eat together in those days.

They were seated according to their ages, the oldest first and the youngest last, and Joseph ordered that Benjamin should be served five times as much as the others. My, I do not see how he could eat so much, but anyhow it showed Joseph’s deep love for his brother.

When the men were ready for the return journey, Joseph gave specific orders; first, they were to load every beast to the limit and into the sack or saddle-bag of each brother they were to put the money; second, he told them to put his silver cup into Benjamin’s sack with his money.

Knowing nothing of the money or the cup, they started out early in the morning full of happiness, for they were returning with both Simeon and Benjamin and an abundance of food. But their joy was short-lived, for lo, a black cloud loomed in the distance. Joseph's steward was chasing them.

The caravan halted and the steward said to them, "Where have you returned evil for good? Some one of you has stolen my Lord's drinking cup. You have done evil in so doing."

Of course they were all troubled beyond expression. They said they had done nothing at all dishonest and if any one of them had the silver cup then that one should die and the rest of them should be servants.

"Very well," the steward said, "be it as you say. Whoever has the cup will be my servant and the rest may go on."

What an exciting, anxious time it was as every man slipped his saddle-bag off the ass onto the ground. First Rueben opened his sack and last of all, Benjamin, in whose sack, sure enough, the cup was found. Bewildered and sore troubled, they gave way to their feelings in true oriental fashion, tearing their clothes and weeping and wailing.

There was nothing to do but pack up the asses again, return to the city and go directly to Joseph's house where again they fell before him on their faces.

Joseph asked why they had done this thing and said they should have known he would have found it out.

Judah, the spokesman, said, "**What shall we say unto my Lord? What shall we speak or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the sins of your servants** (meaning their conduct toward Joseph). **Behold! we are my Lord's servants, both we and he also with whom the cup was found.**"

Joseph replied that he did not wish to hold any of them excepting the one who had the cup, the rest could hurry home to their father. With these words piercing his very heart, Judah came forward with one of the finest pleas ever made.

He said, "**Oh, my Lord, let your servant, I pray you, speak a word in my Lord's ears, and let not anger burn against your servant, for you are as Pharaoh. You asked us about our father and we said we had a father, an old man, and another brother, who was the child of his old age, and we also had one brother who had died, but this youngest child is the only one left of his mother and his father loves him very much. You told us to bring him down so you could see him. We told you father would die if this child left him, but you insisted and said we need not come again unless we brought him. In parting, father told us again how his loved wife had two sons, that one was torn of beasts so that he never saw him again, and that if the other, his youngest one were taken away and mischief were to befall him, surely he would go down to his grave in sorrow.**"

Now, if we go back without Benjamin, father will die, and we will be held responsible. I promised father I would bear the blame forever if anything happened to the child. Now, my Lord, I pray you let me stay and be your servant in place of the lad. I'll be your servant forever if you will let him return to our father. I couldn't bear to see the sorrow in father's face when he sees Benjamin is not with us."

Joseph had kept from weeping as long as he could and now he cried to his servants to clear the room of all but these men, and Joseph stood alone before his brothers and wept so loudly that he was heard by the Egyptians and those of Pharaoh's house.

Then he spoke to his brothers: "I am Joseph. Doth my father yet live?" As he talked to them in their own language and with such words they were confused and troubled. Joseph called them to come to him and again he said, "I am Joseph, your brother whom you sold into Egypt. Don't be grieved, nor angry with yourselves that you sold me hither. God sent me down here ahead of you to save your lives. For two years the famine has been on and there are yet five years in which we will have no crops. God sent me to preserve you a family in the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So you see it wasn't you, but God had a hand in it all. He has made me Lord over Pharaoh's house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

"Hurry and go to father and tell him his son, Joseph, says that God has made him ruler over all Egypt and to hasten and come down and he and all his family can live in Goshen. Tell him to bring all the flocks and herds and I'll take care of all of you for the next five years of famine. Tell him that Benjamin recognizes that truly his brother has spoken these words."

And Joseph kissed Benjamin and wept over him and kissed also all his brothers.

The news of Joseph's brothers' visit to Egypt was told to Pharaoh who was greatly pleased to hear about it and told Joseph to load their beasts and send them back to Canaan with an invitation to Jacob and all his family to come to Egypt and to live on the best of the land.

He also commanded Joseph to send wagons up to Canaan in which the women and children could ride on the return journey to Egypt. So Joseph made great preparations. To each of his brothers he gave changes of clothing but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of clothing.

To his father he sent ten asses loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten asses loaded with corn and bread for the journey. So Joseph sent his brothers home and as they started off he said, "See that you fall not out by the way." He knew them pretty well and thought he would warn them.

When they got home they told Jacob that Joseph was alive and governor of all the land of Egypt. Jacob just about fainted and wouldn't believe them. They told him all that Joseph had said and still he wouldn't believe. Then they showed him the wagons, all loaded with good things for the journey back to Egypt, and finally he believed and said, "It is enough; Joseph, my son is yet alive; I will go to see him before I die."

Jacob's sons were not always reliable and their father knew it, but when they were able to back up their words with wagons loaded with good things, he was forced to believe.

I think every Christian carries a train with him. With what is your train loaded? When you talk of God's goodness and invite men to come to Him, will your train carry the proof of the truth of what you say?

Jacob, also called Israel, prepared to move to Egypt. What a procession it must have been. There were about seventy in Jacob's family including the grandchildren, and there must have been several hundred servants including herdsmen, menservants and maidservants. The flocks and herds we can only estimate at many thousands.

The first stop was at Beer-Sheba where Jacob offered sacrifices unto God and God came and gave him permission to go down into Egypt, saying they would become a great nation there. He said He would go with him and bring them back into the land again, and also that he would see his son, Joseph.

When they reached Egypt Jacob sent Judah ahead to ask Joseph the way to Goshen, the land set apart for them. As soon as Joseph knew they were coming he made ready his chariot and hurried out to meet his father. And what a meeting it was! Twenty-two years had passed since he last saw his father and great changes had come to them both. Jacob said now that he had seen Joseph once more he was willing to die.

Pharaoh, hearing of the arrival of his governor's family, sent them a very cordial greeting, telling them the land of Egypt was before them, and the best of it for shepherds should be theirs, even the land of Goshen.

After a time Joseph took his father, Jacob, to call upon Pharaoh and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. Pharaoh asked him how old he was and he answered, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and I have not attained unto the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." In other words he had not lived as long on the earth as his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham.

Joseph took care of his father and family in the land of Egypt. Seventeen years after coming into the land Jacob died at the age of one hundred and forty-seven years. Before he died he gave a personal word to each of his sons, the most important being to Judah through whom our Lord Jesus Christ was to come. He also blessed Joseph's sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

After their father died Joseph and his brothers took the body back to Hebron and buried it in the cave of Machpelah, beside Leah, his first wife, and with Abraham and Sarah, and Isaac and Rebekah.

Again the brothers were troubled about their past sin in selling Joseph, thinking now that their father was dead he would hate them and pay them back. But Joseph wasn't that kind of a man and assured them of his abiding love for them and although they had thought to do him harm yet it was God doing them good and saving the nation.

Is there anything in human life worse than to carry around a guilty conscience? These brothers were never free from the memory of the awful haunting crime committed against their younger brother. It followed and reproached them at every turn of life's way.

Suppose after the sale of Joseph these men had been sorry for their sin and confessed the whole terrible thing to their father, what a load would have been lifted. No, their confession would not have restored Joseph and they would always have carried a great sorrow, but the burden of unconfessed would have been lifted.

We, too, sin against our heavenly FATHER but he says, **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."**

Joseph reigned over Egypt for eighty years and died at the age of one hundred and ten; not as long as his father and grandfathers had lived, but a life full of good deeds and great works.

I am sure Joseph must have made some mistakes but there is no recorded sin in the story of his life. Before he died he made request that his body should be preserved and taken back to Canaan when the family should return to their own land, which thing they did.

In the Old Testament God made many patterns or representations to teach some great truth to be fulfilled in the New Testament. These were called types and were sometimes a person, an event, a thing, an institution or a ceremonial. The fulfillment of these types were called anti-types.

JOSEPH A TYPE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

The Bible doesn't say in so many words that Joseph was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ but we find many ways in which he was just like Him.

Let us think of the story we have just been reading and see how many we can find.

Miss Grace Saxe in her book on Genesis, among others, lists the following:

1. Both Joseph and Jesus Christ were the beloved sons of their fathers.
2. Joseph lived in Hebron with his father. Jesus Christ lives in Heaven with His FATHER.
3. Joseph was perfectly willing to go to his brethren when his father sent him. Jesus Christ was willing to come down to earth when His FATHER sent Him.
4. Joseph was not afraid to tell his father when his brothers sinned and they hated him. Jesus Christ spoke against the sins of His brothers, according to the flesh, and they hated Him.
5. Joseph's brothers plotted against him to put him to death. Jesus Christ's brothers, the Jews, did the same.

6. Judah sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver. Judas sold Jesus Christ for thirty pieces of silver.
7. Joseph was carried down into Egypt and so was Jesus Christ.
8. Both Joseph and Jesus Christ were accused wrongfully.
9. Joseph was put into prison which is the place of death. Jesus Christ was put upon the Cross.
10. Joseph was taken out of the place of death. Jesus Christ was taken out of the tomb.
11. Joseph was given all power in Egypt. Jesus Christ was given all power in Heaven.
12. All must receive bread through Joseph. All must receive spiritual bread through Jesus Christ.
13. Joseph gives all honor to the king and delivers all things into his hands. Jesus Christ gives all honor to the King (God) and delivers all things into His hands.

And thus we see how Joseph was a wonderful pattern or type of our Lord Jesus Christ.

~ end of book ~

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