

Genesis 37: Joseph the Just

- I. Typology
- A. Perhaps among all the images of Christ we have seen thus far, Joseph portrays Christ.
 - B. Rather than go through all the details now, let us examine them as we proceed through the chapters. Yet a quick overview of the broad outlines is helpful.
 - 1. He is a beloved son
 - 2. Whose own brothers turn on him and sell him for silver
 - 3. Yet this very fact of his suffering becomes their salvation for Joseph goes on ahead to Egypt to save both his own family and the Gentiles.
 - 4. A suffering son and servant becomes, through his suffering the savior of all people and has a place at the king's right hand.
 - 5. Sound familiar?
 - C. Though some modern Bible scholars are dismissive of typology the Bible itself indicates that the Old Testament must be read in light of the New Testament and that the O.T. points to Christ. Hence we are right in seeing Christ in the O.T. according to an interpretive principle laid down in the Bible itself. In the O.T. Jesus is enfolded, in the New Testament he is unfolded. In the O.T. Jesus is concealed, in the N.T. he is revealed. It is a mistake to think the O.T. is merely about Jews and the N.T. about Jesus. It's all about Jesus.
 - 1. 1 Cor 10:11 *These things happened to them as examples¹ and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.*
 - 2. John 5:39 *You diligently study the Scriptures² because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me,*
 - 3. Luke 24:27 *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*
 - D. Let's now proceed with the story of Joseph

¹Literally the Greek "tupos" is translated as: a die, a stamp, a shape, i.e. a statue, style or resemblance; spec. a sampler ("type"), i.e. a model (for imitation) or instance (for warning):--en-(ex-) ample, fashion, figure, form, manner, pattern, print.

²In this case scripture refers to the O.T. since the N.T. Had not yet been written when Jesus spoke these words.

II. THE SON WHO IS DEAR -

A. Name - **37:1 *Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan. 2 This is the history of the family of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers;***

1. Joseph = one who adds to, multiplier, one who brings a blessing.
2. Jesus too is God's great plus sign. He adds to life
 - a. John 10:10 *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*
 - b. Eph 3:19 *I wish you to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.*
 - c. 2 Peter 1:10 *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*
 - d. John 1:16 *From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another.*

B. Nature - ***he was a lad with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought an ill report of them to their father.***

1. The brothers referred to here are: Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher.
2. Joseph by nature had a hatred of evil. He was opposed to evil.
3. He was not a tale bearer but a truth teller
4. Jesus too spoke the truth when he said in John 7:7 *The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify of it that its works are evil.*
5. Just like Jesus, Joseph testifies to the evil of his time

C. Nurture - **3 *Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children,***

1. Joseph was the first child of Rachel. Jacob had a special love for Rachel, thus a special love for Joseph.
2. From the human point of view this is problematic, as we shall discuss.
3. Yet theologically this too points to Christ who the father loves.
 - a. Mat 3:17 *and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased...Listen to him"*
 - b. John 3:35 *the Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand. He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him.*
 - c. John 5:20 *For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all that he himself is doing; and greater works than these will he show him, that you may marvel.*

- D. Nobility - ***because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a long robe with sleeves.***
1. His coat indicates his special status and that his father loved him.
 2. This too points to Christ in several ways.
 - a. His power -
 - (1) Mat 9:20 *And behold, a woman who had suffered from a hemorrhage for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment; for she said to herself, "If I only touch his garment, I shall be made well."*
 - (2) Rev 1:12 *Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden girdle round his breast; his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters;*
 - b. His passion -
 - (1) Mark 15:17 *And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on him. And they began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!"...20 And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him.*
 - (2) John 19:23 *When the soldiers had crucified Jesus they took his garments and made four parts, one for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was without seam, woven from top to bottom; so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfil the scripture, "They parted my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots."*
 - c. His prominence - Rev 19:16 *On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, King of kings and Lord of lords.*

III. THE SON WHO IS DESPISED -

- A. ***4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.***
- B. It is an interesting problem in human psychology that we often blame the wrong person. Joseph is hated for a sin and shortcoming of his father. But they hate Joseph and treat him badly. It is Jacob who is in error.
- C. The scribes and pharisees were like this to Jesus. They hated his giftedness and wouldn't even entertain the possibility of his being messiah.
- D. We will see more of this hatred in a few verses ahead.

IV. THE SON WHO DREAMS -

- A. *5 Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they only hated him the more. 6 He said to them, "Hear this dream which I have dreamed: 7 behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose and stood upright; and behold, your sheaves gathered round it, and bowed down to my sheaf." 8 His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to have dominion over us?" So they hated him yet more for his dreams and for his words. 9 Then he dreamed another dream, and told it to his brothers, and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream; and behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." 10 But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him, and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?" 11 And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.*
- B. The sheaves and the grain represented all the earth's resources that were to be under Joseph's control.
- C. The sun the moon and the stars represent all the earth's rulers
- D. Thus the earth's resources and its rulers would bow down to Joseph and be under them.
- E. Here too Jesus is pictured:
1. *Mat 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*
 2. *Phil 2:7 but Jesus emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

V. THE SON WHO "DIES"

- A. *The Sending -12 Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. 13 And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." And he said to him, "Here I am." 14 So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers, and with the flock; and bring me word again." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.*
1. Shechem was the scene of their crime when they slew their neighbors.
 2. The Sending -
 - a. *Psalm 40:7 sacrifice and offering you do not want; but ears open to obedience you gave me. Holocausts and sin-offerings you do not*

require; so I said, "**Here I am**; your commands for me are written in the scroll. To do your will is my delight; my God, your law is in my heart!"

- b. Mat 10:40 *"He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me.*
- c. John 4:34 *"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.*
- d. John 5:36 *"I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent.*
- e. John 6:38 *For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.*
- f. John 8:29 *The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."*
- g. Dozens of other passages...

3. Jesus came to the place of our crime to see us, suffer for us, and save us

B. The Seeking - **15 And a man found him wandering in the fields; and the man asked him, "What are you seeking?" 16 "I am seeking my brothers," he said, "tell me, I pray you, where they are pasturing the flock." 17 And the man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan.**

- 1. Joseph seeks his brothers. It is not just that they are hard to find, they are far away. Thus too for Jesus, he knows where we are, but we are far away and thus "hard" to find.
- 2. Jesus seeks us.
 - a. Luke 19:10 *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."*
 - b. John 1:11 *He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.*
 - c. Mat 4:18 *As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."*
- 3. He sought them but they had gone far away
- 4. We too have gone far away:
 - a. Is 53:6 *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

- C. **The sin - 18 *They saw him afar off, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. 19 They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. 20 Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild beast has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams."***
1. His proposed death was the result of a conspiracy
 2. So too with Jesus
 - a. Mat 12:14 *But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.*
 - b. Mat 21:37 *Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said. 'But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.*
 - c. Mat 26:3 *Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and took counsel together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him.*
- D. **The Stand down - 21 *But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." 22 And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; cast him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand upon him" -- that he might rescue him out of their hand, to restore him to his father.***
1. Reuben was the eldest and tries to stop the crime. But ultimately his fear has him remain silent later. He does not report the matter to Jacob.
 2. He is similar to Pilate who sought to set Jesus free but ultimately yields to fear and hands him over. He had been warned by his wife not to go against Jesus:
 - a. Mat 27:19 *Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much over him today in a dream."*
- E. **The Stripping - 23 *So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; 24 and they took him and cast him into a pit. The pit was empty, there was no water in it.***
1. They stripped him of the garment that represented all we saw above. They rejected the beloved son and so also sin against Jacob.
 2. Jesus too was stripped of his garments
 - a. Mark 15:20 *And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him.*

- F. The selling - **25** *Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. 26 Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? 27 Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers heeded him. 28 Then Midianite traders passed by; and they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver; and they took Joseph to Egypt.*
1. Joseph is sold by Judah
 2. Jesus too was sold by Judas
 - a. Mat 26:14 *Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What will you give me if I deliver him to you?" And they paid him thirty pieces of silver.*
- G. The Setback - **29** *When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he rent his clothes 30 and returned to his brothers, and said, "The lad is gone; and I, where shall I go?"*
1. For some reason Reuben was absent at the point of the crime. This makes little sense since he knew he needed to rescue his brother. Why absent himself even for a moment from his brothers who intend murder and have shown in the past they are capable of horrendous acts (*cf* chapter 35 and the Schechem incident)
 2. Again, note, at this point Reuben goes silent. There is no evidence that he ever reported the incident to his father. Thus while we can applaud his attempt to save his brother, we cannot applaud his weakness in joining the conspiracy once the deed is done.
- H. The Sham - **31** *Then they took Joseph's robe, and killed a goat, and dipped the robe in the blood; 32 and they sent the long robe with sleeves and brought it to their father, and said, "This we have found; see now whether it is your son's robe or not." 33 And he recognized it, and said, "It is my son's robe; a wild beast has devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces." 34 Then Jacob rent his garments, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. 35 All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him.*
1. The words of an old song come to mind: "Your story's touching but it sounds like a lie."
 2. The brother's evil is murder and lies.
 3. It is this wicked family that God chooses!
- I. The Sovereignty of God **36** *Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.*
1. Getting Joseph well placed in Egypt is all part of God's plan.
 2. God can make a way out of no way.
 3. He can hit a home run of any curve ball
 4. He can write straight with crooked lines
 5. He can even use our sin to save us as we shall see.