

Thoughts on Joseph

Part 1

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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:00] I'd like to look at some of the details in the life of Joseph tonight. We only have time to look at some of these things, but if perhaps we could begin by looking at the beginning of the account of Joseph in chapter 37 of Genesis. Genesis chapter 37, And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger in the land of Canaan. These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought unto his [00:01:03] father their evil report. 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 colors. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him and could not speak peaceably unto him. I shall read for the time being. Perhaps those of us with experience of younger brothers will look upon this incident in Joseph's life as tale-bearing. But if we remember that Joseph is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his life bears testimony to the life of the Lord Jesus, then we'll see it in a different light. And indeed, right at the outset of the story of Joseph, we get him presented as one who was separate from his brethren, one who was different in [00:02:01] character from his brethren. He brought his father their evil report. They were engaged together in some kind of mischief. He would have no part in it. He was separate from them. The Lord Jesus, we read, was separate from sinners. He was of a totally different moral order than the men around him. He was from heaven. He was light shining in the darkness. And because of that, those who would continue in sin, they were condemned by him. And therefore they hated him, just as Joseph's brethren hated him. But his father loved him. And as it were, as a sign of his love for his son, he made him a coat of many colors. This was the way that Jacob expressed [00:03:02] something of the esteem he had for his son, something of the value he placed upon his son. He would give him this coat of many colors, and it would remind us of the love which the father has for his son, hated by the world, but loved by his God and his father. And that coat of many colors would present to us the glories of Christ, many glories, each one known fully and esteemed by his God and father. And perhaps we could just look at some of those glories tonight, just briefly. The first glory of the Lord, perhaps we could speak of, would be his dominical glory. And in Psalm 102, the Lord Jesus, this one who is the Lord of heaven and the Lord of earth, the father [00:04:03] would say of him, in verse 25, of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. He could attest to the greatness of his son in this way, for the creation sets forth his power, sets forth his dominion. And in Hebrews, we read, unto the sun he saith, thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. Yes, his eternal dominion, unto the sun, in contrast with the angels, he could say of them, he maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. They were great beings, but they were messengers. Yes, they were spirits, far above man, but angels, or messengers, [00:05:08] as that word means, all the same, they were flaming fire, they executed the judgment of God, such was their greatness, but they were ministers, they were servants. But in turning to the sun, he could say, thy

throne, O God, is forever and ever. Yes, to the sun there was eternal dominion, how much greater than the angels. And the father would testify to this greatness. Do you remember how the crowd would come to the Lord Jesus when he was in the garden? And they would come to him with a view to binding him and taking him away. And the Lord Jesus would say, whom seekest thou? And they would say, art thou Jesus of Nazareth? And he would say, I am he. And they would go [00:06:03] backwards and fall to the ground, because the father would, as it were, put a distance between these men and his son, and he would make them bow before that one that despised Jesus of Nazareth. But they must bow all the same, because he is God's son, and they must give him obeisance. And the time is coming, we read, when every tongue shall confess, every knee shall bow, to the glory of God the Father. Yes, but if it is to the glory of God the Father, then it must also be to the glory of the Son, because they are one. We could also look at the Lord's moral glory, and how beautifully that's put forward in his baptism, if we turn to the account of it in Matthew. Sorry, I think it's Matthew.

[00:07:19] Yes, thank you. I'm looking for a particular account. Ah, sorry, it's in Mark, chapter 1, verse 10. We get an account of the Lord's baptism. The Lord Jesus was placed in those waters of baptism, those waters which spoke of death, condemnation of the old man. But the Lord Jesus, it could say in Mark's Gospel, straightway he cometh out of the water. There was nothing in him which was worthy of death, [00:08:02] and so he would, as it were, come himself straightway, immediately, out of those waters. There was nothing there in him which could be condemned. And the Spirit of God would descend upon him, abide upon him, in the form of a dove. And if we go back to Genesis, we see something of that nature of the dove. It had no place, we read, in a condemned earth, an earth flooded over with water.

There was no place for that dove to rest the sole of her feet. With the Lord Jesus, we read of him, there was no place for him to rest his head in an earth under judgment, where there was sin, where there was the curse, setting forth his moral glory, his perfection, as he walked before his God and his Father. And then the Father would bear testimony, this is my Son, in whom I am well pleased.

[00:09:09] Because the glories of the Lord Jesus, they are his, because of who he is. Every time his glory would come before us, we are reminded that he is God's Son, just as Joseph had that coat, because he was Joseph. So the Lord Jesus has his glories, because, and only because, he is God's Son. And the Father would testify to this in taking account of his moral glory. Thou art my Son, he would say in another account, in thee I am well pleased. And then if we look at it, the glory of his majesty. Isaiah would use that expression, wouldn't he, in chapter 2 of Isaiah. The glory of his majesty. And the Father, in a coming day, we read in Psalm 2, [00:10:14] a day that is yet future.

Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree the Lord has said unto me. Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. This is a day to come, isn't it, when the Lord Jesus will be set upon that holy hill of Zion, his majesty will be seen by the whole earth then. But that majesty, the glory of his majesty was seen, even while he was upon earth, by his disciples. Peter, John, James. Peter could say, we were eyewitnesses of his majesty on that holy mount. [00:11:06] They saw it. They got a glimpse of that glory then, when his countenance shone as the sun, and his garments were glistening as the light. When again the Father would speak from heaven, and he would say, this is my Son, hear him. No one could share that glory. Moses, neither Elias. The Father would not allow the glory of his majesty to be shared with any. He would say, no, this glory belongs to this one, because he is my Son, hear him.

Joseph too, he had the mind of God. God revealed his mind to Joseph through dreams, and Joseph

was at the centre of all God's counsels.

[00:12:09] Joseph was at the centre of it, and Joseph would testify to his brethren of these dreams, and his brethren would hate him all the more because of it. And we're reminded, aren't we, of the Lord Jesus. He could say, the Father loveth the Son. He hath shown him all things, even as he himself doeth. I haven't quoted that right. It's in John chapter 5. Verse 20, for the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth.

And the Lord Jesus could say to his enemies, we speak that which we know, and testify of that which we have seen, but ye receive not our witness. [00:13:07] He could speak as one on an equality with the Father, and possibly also, when he says we, he would include the Holy Spirit. He would speak as one in the Godhead. We speak of that which we know, and testify of that which we have seen. But like Joseph's brothers, they would not receive his testimony. And then the time would come when Jacob would send Joseph to his brethren. This, the story of Joseph, cannot be looked upon always chronologically.

And here we get the sending of Joseph, just as the Father sent the Son.

In Isaiah, chapter 6 and verse 8, we get those words, don't we?

[00:14:04] Whom shall I send? Who shall go for us? Then the reply, here am I, send me.

Those words, send me, according to Darby's notes, in his margin of the Bible, in his translation, the emphasis is on the word send, so it is uttered as a demand.

Here am I, send me. The Lord Jesus taking the place of a servant, yes, but one who was equal with God, and he could demand to be sent. And so he came into this world. He came with a view to seeking the welfare of his brethren, seeking deliverance for the house of Israel.

[00:15:05] But where did he find his brethren? Not at the place where he wanted to. No, they had moved off. They had gone to Dothan. And according to Jackson's book of Bible names, and I feel I ought to name where I got these things from, because there's some difference of opinion over the meanings of names, but according to Jackson in his book of Bible names, with Dothan, one of the meanings he gives in this chapter is double sickness. And perhaps there is an allusion here to the state of Israel when the Lord Jesus came amongst his people. In Isaiah chapter 1 and verse 5, Why should you be stricken any more? You were revoked more and more. The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. [00:16:04] From the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it. This was the state of Israel, completely and utterly sick. His brethren had voluntarily gone to Dothan. Let us go to Dothan. That is the place they wanted to go. This is the place where Israel would willingly go.

And it's not just a matter of the heart of the Israelite. It is the human heart. And here we get graphically painted before us the state of the human race as it were, especially Israel when the Lord Jesus walked here upon earth.

And in verse 18, when they saw him afar off, Even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. [00:17:05] What a contrast we get here to Luke chapter 10.

When we get the heart of God in regard to the repentant sinner.

While he was a great way off, he ran to him, fell on his neck and kissed him.

Such is the heart of God. But here we get portrayed the heart of man. When they saw him, they said, come, let us slay him. Here is the heir, come, let us kill him, that the inheritance might be ours.

They took Joseph and they stripped him of that coat of many colours. They took it off him and they put him into a pit.

[00:18:03] We read in Isaiah chapter 53 that the Lord Jesus was led as a lamb to the slaughter. As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. They would as it were, shear the Lord Jesus of his glory. They would strip him of that glory that was his. They could not take it from him because, as we have said, it was his because of who he was. But in their hearts, they would rob him of that glory. They would not bow to him. They would not own him as their Lord. They would not own him as their king. They would not submit to the claims of his glory. They would mock him. They would buffet him. They would spit upon him.

And lastly, they would crucify him. They would take that coat as it were and dip it in blood. [00:19:04] And we get something in this pit of the reproach, the reproach of Calvary, how Joseph must have felt. He had come to his brethren, his heart full of love for them. He wanted to seek their welfare. He came to them in that way and how they treated him. They took him and cast him into the pit. We read later on in Genesis chapter 42 and verse 21.

Later on, his brethren would reflect upon what they had done. And they said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us and we would not hear.

[00:20:05] Instead, we read, they sat down and they ate their bread. Joseph crying out to them from that pit. And they would cruelly and callously sit down and they would eat their dinner. They would eat their lunch. And round the cross, we read of those who sitting down, they would watch him there. What cruelty in the heart of man. And the Lord Jesus felt that reproach so deeply. In lamentations, he could say, is it nothing to you, all you that pass by? Behold, see if there be any other sorrow like unto my sorrow wherein the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger. The heart of the Lord Jesus was so burdened with grief that those whom he loved could have no response to his sufferings. [00:21:03] There was nothing in their hearts.

We read there was no water in that pit. There was nothing to refresh the soul of Joseph. Upon that cross, when all was finished, he could cry, I thirst.

And that thirst, no doubt, was not merely physical thirst. It was a desire, a thirst for a response to his love.

A thirst for the souls of men.

A thirst which he even expressed as he walked through this earth and he could say to that woman at the well, give me to drink. He wanted something from her. He had a thirst.

But we read, for my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink. There was nothing in man, nothing in the heart of man that could respond to that thirst. And how heavily the reproach bore upon the Lord Jesus. [00:22:02] The reproach, he could say, has broken my heart.

We read too, they sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver. Twenty pieces of silver. They sold the Lord Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. But even in this, there is a meaning.

We read in Exodus chapter 21, verse 32, that if a slave had been gored and was useless to his master, then the compensation was twenty pieces of silver. And this was the value which they would place upon Joseph. And this is the value they would place upon Christ. A slave, a servant of no use.

The father could speak of him as my servant in whom my soul delighted. [00:23:01] But for man, they had no use for him. He was as a gored slave.

And then at the end of this chapter, we get the sorrow in the heart of Jacob as he mourns for his son and he would not be comforted. I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning.

Thus his father wept for him. In other words, in this way his father wept for him. The Holy Spirit will bring before us that deep grief in the heart of Jacob and surely that would remind us of the sorrow in the heart of God the Father as he took account there of the sufferings of his own son. What sorrow was there?

In Genesis 22, when we read of Abraham, how the Spirit would dwell upon those words, Take thou thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him up as a burnt offering.

[00:24:09] And then we read at the end of that chapter, at the end of the account of Isaac, Abraham reached for the knife.

And in Young's translation of the scriptures, there is a pause there and it says to slaughter his son as if to say, think upon this, the grief in the heart of Abraham was nothing compared to the grief, the sorrow in the heart of God as he would, as it were, reach for that knife, a Waco sword against my shepherd, against the man who is my fellow. Well if we could go on to chapter 39 where we get Joseph in the prison and this would bring before us another aspect of these sufferings of the Lord Jesus.

[00:25:11] We firstly find Joseph in the place of a servant and how faithful he is in everything he does.

God was with him. Everything he set his hand to, it prospered. He was faithful in everything. His master could leave everything, commit everything into his hand because he knew that he could fully trust Joseph.

And is this not a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ?

We read in John 33 once again, the father loveth the son and hath committed all things into his hand.

Everything could be committed into the hands of the Lord Jesus by his father. [00:26:03] He walked before him as a servant, a perfect servant. He walked before him devoted and faithful in everything to

his God.

How it must have filled the father's heart with pleasure as he could look down, as it and take account of his son walking there in manhood, in complete perfection. Everything had been committed to Adam and he had failed in everything. Adam would be put to one side but the father now in this man would commit everything to him and he would keep everything perfectly in complete obedience, faithfulness, nothing would be lost.

And the time came when Joseph was brought into testing and Potiphar's wife, she would [00:27:08] seek to turn him aside from his faithfulness.

Joseph, he would say, everything that belongs to your husband has been committed to me.

Can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?

Joseph did not have Potiphar before him, he had his God before him and that was why his walk was how it was and the Lord Jesus Christ, as he walked here upon earth, he had his God and his father before him. We read in that psalm, I have set the Lord always before me because he left his garment with me and fled out.

[00:28:03] The Lord Jesus also was falsely accused by his own brethren.

They would set up false witnesses against him but none of those witnesses would agree. There was no accusation that they could bring before him that could be held up. It all fell to the ground as false witness. Indeed, even Pilate had to testify of his innocence.

Even his judge had to say, I find no fault with this man. He was completely sinless.

He could say, if any accuse me, he could say during his life, if there is any that accuse me of sin, there was none that could accuse him. There was none that could lift the finger against him. He walked in perfection.

[00:29:02] But he was cast into the prison and how Joseph must have felt in that prison. He had walked so perfectly.

He had been faithful in everything and yet now he was in the prison. And the Lord Jesus, how keenly he felt that particular reproach.

We read in Daniel, Messiah shall be cut off and he shall have nothing. Joseph, in the prison he had nothing.

The Lord Jesus, upon that cross, the rich one, for our sakes, he became poor. He had nothing at all. We read in Isaiah, he could say, I have laboured in vain. I have spent my strength for naught.

The Lord Jesus had gone about expending all his energy in the service of his God and Father. [00:30:06] When strength is spent, it means that it's all gone.

There's nothing held back in reserve.

And so it was with the Lord Jesus Christ. He laboured from dawn until dusk.

His strength was spent. He had nothing left and yet he was cut off without anything.

But even then he had the glory of God before him. He could say, Father, he could say, what shall I say?

Father, save me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.

Yes, even in death he sought the glory of his God and his Father. [00:31:06] Even when he was forsaken there upon that cross and he would cry out, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? What man could ask that question? What mere man could ask that question? Nobody could. There was good reason for every man to be saken of God, for all men have sinned, but this one, he could ask, why hast thou forsaken me? But there was no bitterness towards his God and his Father. No, he could rather say, he could rather justify, for thou art holy.

He was there as the sin offering. He was there as the bearer of sin. And he would justify his God in forsaking him, thou art holy. [00:32:01] He would say, I'm a worm and no man. He honoured God even in this, even in death, even in that terrible forsaking in those three hours he glorified his God and his Father.

Well we know the story, don't we? Joseph was taken out from that prison and he was set by Pharaoh in the highest place in the land, second only to Pharaoh, and all things were given to him. All things, we might say, were put under his feet and it was a time of great plenty. The storehouses were full of grain.

There was food for all, blessing for all, seven years of plenty.

And in those seven years, Joseph takes to himself a wife, a Gentile wife.

[00:33:05] Chapter 41.

And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paneer, verse 45. And he gave him to wife Asenath, the daughter of Potiphar, a priest of On. And then in verse 50, and unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath, the daughter of Potiphar, a priest of On, bear unto him. 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. And the name of the second called he Ephraim, for God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

I don't think we'll be pushing the type too far to see in this Gentile bride the assembly, [00:34:02] the church.

And Asenath, she bore Joseph two children, Manasseh and Ephraim.

And Manasseh was called Manasseh, Joseph could say, for God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil and all my father's house.

There was something, as it were, which Joseph had, which was, which as it were, satisfied his heart

in regard to his sufferings, in regard to his reproach.

The Lord Jesus, in his assembly, he has that which fully satisfies his heart, that which [00:35:07] he can take account of, and that which he could say that he despised the shame for the joy that was set before him, the joy of this blessed companion, this assembly which he died for, which he loved. There was an answer given to him for all those sufferings.

I don't think we can ever say the Lord actually ever could forget those sufferings. In Lamentations we read, remember thou mine affliction, the wormwood and the gall, my soul doth have them constantly in remembrance, but there was that which fully satisfied his soul in regard to them, his assembly. And he could say also, thou hast made me to forget all my father's house. [00:36:06] And now, in this present dispensation, Israel has been, as regards God's dealings, been set to one side, and now he has his bride, his assembly.

Not that he could ever have been said to have forgotten Israel, because we read, hath God cast aside his ancient people, far be the thought, though he has scattered them, the day will come, as we shall see, he will gather them again. But in this present time, he has that in which he is comforted, he has been rejected by his people, but God has given him fruit for the travel of his soul, and he is satisfied, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth [00:37:01] forth much fruit.

And Ephraim would speak of fruitfulness, that fruitfulness, Joseph indeed, means he will add, and God indeed has made his son fruitful.

There is much fruit now that the Lord Jesus has, and he took this wife to himself before the time of famine, and that may well be, that gives us a little picture of this present dispensation, a time before the famine comes, a time before the day of tribulation, when Israel will pass through that day that's called Jacob's travel, the time of Jacob's testing of trial and judgement.

Before that time comes, the Lord Jesus has his assembly, his church, in the time of plenty.

[00:38:08] So if we can go on to when Joseph's brethren are restored to him, in chapter 45, Joseph's brethren have been brought through great testing, and their hearts have been sifted, and we can see from the way they speak to one another, that their consciences are not good in regards to what they did to their brother. There is a change of heart, and the time comes when Joseph can no longer refrain himself, in verse 45, then Joseph, in chapter 45, then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him, and he cried, cause every man to go out from me, and there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren, and he wept aloud, [00:39:05] and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard, and Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph, doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence. 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, now therefore be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life.

For these two years hath the famine been in the land, and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest, and God sent me before you to preserve your posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God, and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, a lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the

land of Egypt. [00:40:07] A day is coming when Israel will be gathered again.

We read, don't we, of the dry bones in Ezekiel, they're gathered, brought into that valley, and then after they're gathered, they're breathed upon. Flesh is added to them, they're breathed upon, and they're quickened. And so it will be with Israel. Even now perhaps Israel is being gathered, but dry bones, no life, no belief. The day will come, after that three and a half years of tribulation, of great tribulation, they will be breathed upon, and Israel will then be born again, born in a day.

[00:41:09] And then there will be great mourning in the house of Israel, and we read about that in Zechariah chapter 12 and verse 10.

And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, that the mourning of Hadrimon in the valley of Megiddon, and the land shall mourn every family apart.

[00:42:07] They shall look upon me whom they have pierced. What a wonderful prophecy here.

This is God, this is Jehovah speaking, they shall look upon me whom they have pierced. It is the Lord Jesus Christ speaking here, and then the narrative changes, and they shall mourn for him.

They shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. Israel, in that day, their judgment, their self-judgment will be such that they will see what they have done in its true light. They will see then that when the Lord Jesus suffered there for their sins upon that cross, [00:43:06] when he went through that dread suffering, they shall, as it were, take in that they shall have in their own hearts some measure of the sorrow of God his Father. They shall mourn for him as a man mourns for his only begotten.

Their repentance will be complete, it doesn't say they shall mourn for him as a nation mourns for its rejected Messiah, no, they shall mourn for him as one mourns for his only begotten, they shall, his only son shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

And then the Lord Jesus, as it were, will like Joseph will say, come near unto me. How wonderful, there is no condemnation.

[00:44:01] You know the Lord Jesus would have the right then to say, to cast them out of his presence forever, but no, the spirit of grace, the spirit of supplication, come near unto me my brethren.

And then Joseph, he has then that which he desired at the very outset, the welfare of his brethren, to have his brethren, to have fellowship with his brethren, and the Lord Jesus Christ will in that day have that which his heart longed for. When he could mourn over Jerusalem, how I would have gathered you as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, but ye would not.

I don't suppose he was only referring to the yearning of his heart for them as he walked through this earth, no, he would be going back even to the very beginning when Israel [00:45:03] was first formed, how I would have gathered you, he could say, but it will only be then in that future day that Israel will be gathered to him, and he will have that which his heart yearned for, and Israel will be blessed. But if

the gathering of Israel is such, if the casting of Israel has brought blessing to the Gentiles, read in Romans, what will its quickening be, I think Romans says, it will be great blessing, won't it, for the Gentile. If that fruitful bough that goeth even over the wall, there's not sufficient, Israel is not sufficient to contain all that blessing, no, it must go out to the Gentiles, and the whole world will be blessed, the whole world will share in that blessing in that day, the [00:46:04] curse will be removed from this earth, a king will reign in righteousness, and his reign will be characterized by justice, peace, truth, and the whole world will share in that blessing.

But you know, well we know, don't we, because we have received that blessing, our Joseph, that fruitful, the Lord Jesus, that fruitful bough, well yes indeed, his branches have gone over the wall, that middle wall of partition has gone forever, and now we enjoy that blessing which is peculiar to our day, being called to him, drawing near to him, being united to him by the Holy Spirit on with him, what glorious blessing is ours, far exceeding even [00:47:01] that of Israel, what a joyful position is ours, what fellowship we now can enjoy with the Lord Jesus, united to him forever.

Well there's been scattered thoughts I know, but I hope that they've been some blessing to you.