

The history of Joseph presents one of the most flawless personalities in all the Word of God. The beautiful words of David could form an inscription to Joseph: *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace (Psalm 37:37)*. Yet, no prominent feature of character stands out in Joseph's life. He is remarkable for consistency, faithfulness, genuineness, balance, judgment, and compassion. No pride, resentment, feelings of revenge, or failure is recorded. He was prosperous in all things and in all places. The secret of the Lord, the fear of God, and the promise of the word of Jehovah were ever in his heart. Joseph was always an overcomer and wonderfully illustrates the truth stated in 1 John 5:4, *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*. Joseph overcame in the worst of circumstances: among his brethren who envied and hated him without cause; as a slave in the house of Potiphar, the chief of the executioners, when tempted by an evil woman; in an Egyptian prison wrongfully sentenced; when exalted to the second throne at Pharaoh's right hand, and finally face-to-face with the men who had so fearfully treated him, causing him unspeakable grief and suffering. Of him it can be said, in all these things he was an overcomer and more than a conqueror through Him who loved him (Romans 8:37).

The title *This Joseph* is based on Pharaoh's question, *Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is (Genesis 41:38)*? He recognized that the words and wisdom of Joseph far exceeded all the sacred scribes and wise men of Egypt, and ascribed the source of that wisdom to God. Joseph's warning of the approaching years of famine, which mercifully would be preceded by seven years of great plenty, and his advice to meet this statewide emergency by a well-ordered economy, made such a profound impression on the king that he acknowledged his approbation in remarkable language, *For as much as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art (Genesis 41:39)*. This reaction of Egypt's representative to the words of Joseph, has a perfect analogy in the confession of the people of Nazareth who wondered at the words of Christ, and of the officers of the temple guard of Jerusalem who acknowledged, *Never man spake like this man (John 7:46)*.

What sustained Joseph all through his history? It was a sense of the presence of the Lord with him. When others failed, when he was forsaken, misunderstood and wrongly accused, we read these beautiful words many times, *The Lord was with Joseph (Genesis 39:2, 3, 21, 23)*. Even many centuries later men of New Testament times knew this truth concerning him; so Stephen reminded his audience that in the midst of the hatred of his brethren, *God was with Joseph (Acts 7:9-10)*.

Joseph was a man of faith, hope and love. By faith he overcame the world. His hope in the ultimate fulfillment of his dreams was a source of his confidence in God. He was saved by hope (Romans 8:24). His love for his brethren illustrates the words, *Everyone that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him*. Joseph loved his brethren, not because of what they were, but because of whose they were. What an example for us upon whom the end of the ages has come, to emulate *This Joseph* of over three thousand years ago.

Interwoven into the fabric of the history of Joseph are the holy mysteries of God's ways, the future awakening and blessing of Israel, and the revelation of God's beloved Son. The story of Joseph represents the drama of divine providence. Joseph made this great truth known to his brethren. Concerning the overruling of God he said, *Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life...to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God (Genesis 45:5,7,8).*

Alongside these interesting thoughts of God's purpose in grace to Joseph's brethren, we would place such scriptures as John 3:16, *God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son*; John 10:10, *I am come that they might have life*; and Acts 2:23, *Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God the Father*. Here is the wonder of the cross, an expression of the worst that human hate and sin can do and at the same time of the best that God's love can do; a combination of man's free will and the divine sovereignty of God. Cruel hands crucified Christ who died, but it was by the determinate counsel of God. They fulfilled the scriptures in condemning Him (Acts 2:23, 4:28). Grace superabounds over sin. Joseph brought about a great deliverance for Jacob's family—but what a “great deliverance” was brought about by Calvary! Only eternity can measure!

The record of Joseph is also one of literary excellence, prophetic foreshadowings and devotional meditations—a veritable gem of information, inspiration and instruction. It is acknowledged as one of the best short stories in all of the world's writings. Literature is often judged on emotion, suspense, plot, intrigue, drama, characters, morals and historical background. We are sure that all these standards of excellence are found in the story of Joseph as recorded in the Bible, the supreme literary masterpiece of all. The biography of this outstanding man is rich in example of spiritual dignity in a depraved environment. It is interesting to place together the five writers who complete the work of the Holy Spirit in giving the divinely inspired account: Moses (Genesis 37–50); David (Psalm 105:17–22); John (John 4:5); Stephen (Acts 7:9–16), and Paul or the writer of the Hebrews (Hebrews 11:22).

The great Artist of all things, enamoured by the wondrous cross, filled the world with foreshadowings and anticipations of it long before it stood with outstretched hands on the little hill of Calvary. The sun which now shines, so to speak, from the other side of the cross, so as to fling its shadow forward on the canvas of the present, once shone from where we now stand and flung its shadow backward upon the canvas of the past. One of these shadows is caught and photographed for us in the sweet story of Joseph.

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The life of Joseph especially abounded to such an extent in incidents that were similar to those that took place in the life of the Lord Jesus, that the Bible student is forced to the conclusion that it was written and inspired by the Holy Spirit in order to prefigure Him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote.

This study of Joseph as sufferer, saviour, sovereign and shepherd is with this end in view: that the reader may be able to say, as Philip, *We have found Him! Come and see (John 1:45, 46)!*

“The Blessing of Joseph”

Blest of the Lord was Joseph's land
With sacred treasures of the dew and deep
Blest by the moon of nature's hour of sleep
And by the sun with Autumn's golden heap
To fill the reaper's hand.

Blest was his portion when beside
The well of Sychar sat the Holy One
Footsore and weary 'neath a shadeless sun
Opening to one who sin's career had run
Salvation's healing tide.

Yet to his records true
The man of Sychar cometh once again,
All Gerizim's rich blessings in his train,
To pour on Joseph's land the latter rain,
And Shiloh's life renew.

From *The Blessing of the Tribes* by Bendor Samuel

