



December 2, 2022

A Hero of the Bible, Joseph continued...

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

Last week we talked about one of the heroes mentioned in the pages of the Bible, "Joseph".

This morning I watched some news to "catch up" on what is going on in our nation. We live in challenging times where lawlessness and improper behavior continues to increase.

The apostle Paul spoke of conditions at the end of the age. *"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves . . . slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good . . ."* (2 Tim 3:1-2) This seems to be describing much of today's headlines.

On the contrary, the Psalmist David describes a righteous man. *"Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day."* (Ps 119:97)

When one lives by God's laws and commandments, there is peace of mind and freedom from guilt and remorse. The Psalmist continues in this chapter, *"Great peace have those who love Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble."* (v.165) David also wrote in Psalm 5, *"The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity. You shall destroy those who speak falsehood; The Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man."* (vv.5-6) Unfortunately, we know David fell short several times - committing adultery with Bathsheba, having Uriah murdered, numbering Israel, etc. He had to be confronted and even punished by

the Lord, being brought to repentance. There seems at times to be an element of impulsiveness in some of these sins, but David had to take responsibility.

David's overall intent was to be faithful to the Lord and His commandments. He did not seek to do evil and make a practice of lawlessness. He wanted to have a positive relationship with the Lord and generally he did. He did not go around justifying wrong behavior and trying to blame others for his mistakes.

We can take comfort in God's mercy and patience with David. You and I are all a work in progress and we are all in the process of overcoming and going on to perfection even though we are still very imperfect. We have to be honest in our need for God's forgiveness and mercy and our need to have His commandments written in our hearts and minds to be faithful to the New Covenant we have entered into.

Let's briefly note one more Psalm. "*For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; with favor You will surround him as with a shield.*" (Ps 5:12) In context of these promises, I want to continue for a bit with the examination of the life of Joseph.

Last time, we left him in prison after being falsely accused by the adulterous wife of the Egyptian official. Let's return to the account in Genesis 39. "*But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing. The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the Lord was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper.*" (vv.21-23)

Even though Joseph was in prison, God was watching over him and granting him favor. He obviously had more freedom than most of the other prisoners. It appears he made the most of the situation and did not whine about his plight. All too often you and I whine and complain about our situation, rather than doing

the best we can and asking God to give us the strength to both endure, and learn from what we are going through.

Genesis 40 describes the imprisonment of the Pharaoh's chief butler and chief baker. They were put under Joseph's charge by the captain of the guard. Each of these former servants of the king of Egypt had a dream. They were troubled, and Joseph also perceived they were saddened. They said it was because there was no one they were aware of who could interpret their dreams. Joseph realized that his special dreams came from God and that only God could give the interpretation. (This speaks again of the character of Joseph and the humility to not claim he was somehow some great or gifted person). Joseph had each one tell his dream and then Joseph gave the interpretation. The dream of the chief butler had a positive interpretation that he would be restored to his former position. Joseph asked the butler to remember him and put in a good word about him and "*make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house.*" (vv.13-14)

However, the dream of the chief baker had an interpretation that forebode very bad news. Just as Joseph predicted, the butler was restored to his previous position, while the baker was executed by hanging. (You can't get much worse news than that!).

Genesis 41 describes how the butler forgot all about Joseph and mentioning his plight to Pharaoh. Again, it appears that Joseph did not hold it against him, and of course he would have no way of knowing if the butler mentioned him to Pharaoh.

After two years following the butler's restoration Pharaoh himself had a vivid dream. None of the magicians and wise men of Egypt could figure out what the dream meant. Then the butler suddenly remembered Joseph and his gift (from God) of interpreting dreams. The butler told Pharaoh about Joseph and his ability to interpret dreams. Joseph was quickly brought from prison, spruced up, and appeared before Pharaoh. Joseph told Pharaoh that the meaning of his two part dream had one interpretation.

He told Pharaoh that the whole land of Egypt would have seven years of plenty and good harvests followed by seven years of famine likely brought on by drought.

Joseph devised a plan to prepare for the famine, and Pharaoh agreed to the plan appointing Joseph to be the administrator over the whole nation, just below Pharaoh himself. *"Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, "Bow the knee!" So he set him over all the land of Egypt."* (Gen 41:42-43)

Talk about an amazing turn of events! God had not forgotten Joseph, but was working out a grand plan to fulfill the previous dreams of Joseph and pave the way for fulfilling the revelations made to Abram in Genesis 15. Joseph maintained self-control, patience, and his actions were respected and honored. Similar to Romans 8:28 the promises of God remain constant, even when situations seem differently from our human perspective...definitely a promise to reflect on and be thankful for!

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



Scott Hoefker
Pastor, CGM

Church of God Ministries (CGM)
(*Ministerios de la Iglesia de Dios*)
tshoefker@cogministries.org
www.cogministries.org

P.O. Box 983 Daphne, AL, 36526-0983 / 251-930-1797 Office