

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

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PART 25: JOSEPH'S STRUGGLE

The next man we encounter in the hall of faith is Joseph, the son of Jacob.
Hebrews 11:22

Up to this time in history, Abraham and his decedents had been nomad cattle barons, but Joseph was educated by God to become a powerful political leader with a keen business mind.

THE FAMILY CURSE

Joseph was born into a dysfunctional family consisting of four mothers and one father. There was a strong rivalry between the mothers that passed on to their children. Since Jacob preferred Rachel above the other three mothers, her offspring was hated, and the hate became worse when Jacob showed great partiality and loved Joseph more than his other children. **Genesis 37:1-4**

JOSEPH'S VISIONS

God knew the hardship that Joseph would face from age of 17 to the age of 30 would be unbearable, unless Joseph had a promise to hang on to. Thus God gave him two visions that are recorded in the Bible. Even though he was badly treated, Joseph still loved his siblings and wanted to share with them what God had shown him, but that made them hate him even more. **verses 5-11**

THE MURDER PLOT

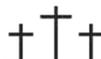
Jacob sent Joseph to check on his brothers but this made them even angrier because they thought he would bring an evil report back to their father. As soon as they saw him coming, the conspired to murder him in order to make sure that his prophetic dreams would not come true. **verses 12-20**

God softened the heart of the oldest brother, Reuben, who was used by the Lord to protect Joseph from death. **verses 21-22**

It must have been a shock for Joseph when his brother attacked him, stripped him of his colored coat of authority and threw him into a pit. The Bible does not record the emotions he experienced. **verses 23-24**

BECOMING A SLAVE

The nine brothers were emotionless schemers who didn't feel bad over the treatment of their brother. While he was without food in the pit, they sat down to eat a meal and enjoy themselves. When a caravan of traders came nearby, they decided sell to Joseph as a slave instead of killing him to get some extra money. **verses 25-28**



SOLD AT A SLAVE AUCTION

Joseph must have been in a state of shock, disbelief and grief as the Midianites shackled him and forced him to walk from his brothers into a land of which he knew nothing. Once in Egypt, the once pampered son of Jacob was put on the auction block and sold to the highest bidder. **verse 36**

REFUSING DEFEAT

Joseph had a choice to become a victim of his circumstances or become victorious and his circumstances would change. It is likely that he knew nothing of the language or customs of Egypt and had to adjust to a civilization that operated on a higher level than that of Canaan. Joseph decided to learn the language and adapt to the higher standard of living and education.

We are not told about his spiritual life, but he must have had a close walk with God since he was blessed mightily. **Genesis 39:1-6**

THE DEVIL WAS UNHAPPY

When a person is blessed by God we know it bothers the Devil, who is determined to destroy what he can. **Revelation 12:7-17**

There is no doubt that Potiphar's wife was attractive and this was magnified by evil spirits who made her burn in lust after Joseph. Instead of catering to this woman's desire, Joseph resisted her and lost his high position when she lied to Potiphar and was subsequently thrown in prison. **verses 18-20**

LOCKED UP IN PRISON

I am sure that the demons taunted Joseph for not giving in to sin and trying to live a moral life. How could he not feel abandoned by God? It seemed like there was no hope and his future was behind him. What was left for him but to rot in prison and die?

Joseph did not let circumstances rule his life and God blessed him again. He was not removed from prison, but God removed the prison from inside Joseph, and once again he floated to the top. **verses 21-23**

SUMMARY

God was in control of Joseph's life and had two plans for Joseph: first, that in time he would become the prime minister of Egypt, and secondly, that he would be able to bring in his family to Egypt, where they would be kept for 430 years to grow and develop into a nation. **Genesis 45:1-8**

God is continually grooming people for the new creation. This is a truth that is not understood by most Christians. Yes, we have a purpose on this earth, but the greatest purpose is to be groomed for life after death. On earth we can live a maximum of 120 years whereas there will be no end to our lives in eternity. I believe that Joseph will hold a high position in eternity.

The earth is God's training field of future citizens for the new creation. **Matthew 13:24-30**

God knew from the beginning that some people would not obey Him but He also knew who will submit to His authority and be groomed on earth for positions in eternity. **Romans 9:10-23**

If you have received Christ, you are not a vessel fitted for destruction. If you are not saved, but you have a longing in your heart for God, you are also not a vessel fitted for destruction. The faster you surrender and ask God to save you, the faster your new life in Christ can begin. **Romans 8:28-31**

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?