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Studies in Genesis

(Leaflet 27)

JOSEPH—A TYPE OF CHRIST

BELOVED BY HIS FATHER—REJECTED BY HIS BRETHREN

Genesis 37:1-36

In a later study we shall return to the life of Jacob, considering his sojourn in Egypt and his death. Of all the days of his pilgrimage, those closing years were the most sublime, the most obedient to the will of God. But beginning today, the major portion of our study to the end of Genesis concerns the life of Joseph, with reference to Jacob mainly as his story is interwoven with that of his beloved son.

We have made a character study of the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because God made the covenant with them which held the promise of blessing for the world. On the basis of that covenant, Christ came, as Israel's Messiah and a Source of blessing for "all families of the earth." On the basis of that covenant, Christ will come again in glory, as Israel's promised King; then the fulness of blessing will be known throughout the whole world. We studied the lives of these three patriarchs to see "the manifold grace of God," in that He took sinning, erring men, and made them the fathers of a great nation, through which the Saviour and the Word of God were to come. That is why the Scriptures speak often of the "God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

But with the life of Joseph we begin a different kind of study. We do not read of the "God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob—and the God of Joseph." The covenant was not confirmed to Joseph; there was no need for that. We study Joseph's life for a different purpose, to see in him a beautiful type of the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as to see Jehovah's tender care and bountiful provision for the house of Jacob.

Now we know that Joseph was a sinner needing a Saviour. We know that he put his faith in the promised Redeemer of Israel. But the Holy Spirit has not written anything about him other than something beautiful, both as to his character and as to his work. There is no recorded sin in all the long story of his life. Beloved of his father; hated, rejected, and made to suffer at the hands of his brethren; exalted above them, he became a blessing to them, as well as to the Gentiles. Thus Joseph is perhaps the most perfect type of our Saviour in all the Word of God. The analogy is unmistakable.

More than once the Lord Jesus told the Jews, as well as His disciples, to "search the scriptures," which testify of Him. (See John 5:39, 46; Luke 24:27, 44.) When He uttered words like these, the New Testament was not yet written; He referred to the Old Testament, which was complete four-hundred years before He was born in Bethlehem. And one of the most significant foreshadowings of His Person and work is found in the typical teaching concerning the life of Joseph. In his sufferings and in his exaltation, this son of Jacob is a picture of Him of whom Peter wrote, saying that the Holy Spirit "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (I Peter 1:11).

In our study today we see Joseph beloved by his father and rejected by his brethren. In the lessons which follow we shall see him falsely accused and imprisoned, later to be exalted, and to be a channel of blessing and peace to Gentiles, as well as to Israel. Let us turn now to the thirty-seventh chapter of Genesis for the story of his father's love and his brothers' envy and hatred and rejection.

JOSEPH'S INHERITANCE OF THE BIRTHRIGHT

"And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph . . ." (verses 1, 2).

"The generations of Jacob"—Joseph! What an unusual record! To the oldest son went the birthright; yet here we read that to Joseph this honored place was given, although he was the eleventh son of Jacob. The explanation of this text is given in I Chron. 5:1, 2, where Reuben's unspeakable

sin is mentioned as the reason for his having forfeited his birthright. He was Jacob's oldest son. Judah, the fourth son of Jacob, was the one through whom Christ came, "according to the flesh." This we shall see in Jacob's very important prophecy, uttered in his blessing upon the twelve tribes shortly before his death (Gen. 49:1-28). But in bestowing the birthright, Jacob passed by Reuben, Judah, all ten of Joseph's older brothers. This special honor went to the beloved son of his father, the older of the two sons of his favorite wife.

In our last lesson we saw what that vile sin of Reuben was, which later cost him his birthright (Gen. 35:22). It was to this evil deed that the Holy Spirit referred in I Chron. 5:1, 2, saying:

"Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's)."

JOSEPH'S TWO NAMES

It has been suggested that Joseph's two names foreshadow the Lord Jesus: "Joseph" means "adding"; "Zaphnath-paaneah," the name given to him by Pharaoh (Gen. 41:45), means "revealer of secrets," if we accept the Hebrew derivation.

The Saviour said, foretelling His vicarious death on the cross,

"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24).

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die" (John 12:32, 33).

Again, we read that, following the Day of Pentecost and the birthday of the church, the Holy Spirit wrote through Luke, saying,

"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47).

Only God can add a soul to the church, which is the bride of Christ; no human being can convert the sinful soul. That is the work of the Holy Spirit, who presents the things of Christ as recorded in the written Word of God. "Joseph" means "adding," and Christ adds to the heavenly multitude, born again by faith in the blood of His cross.

Joseph in Egypt was called "the revealer of secrets" because he interpreted dreams. Our Lord Jesus came to reveal His Father's love, even as He said,

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared (or 'revealed') him" (John 1:18).

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

In revealing the Father to a lost world, the sinless Son of God revealed also the sinful hearts of men. To the unbelieving Jews of His day He said plainly:

"Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. . . . Ye are of your father the devil . . ." (John 8:23, 24, 44).

Such passages as these might be multiplied manifold. Just as Isaiah, having caught a vision of the Lord in His holiness, saw himself "a man of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5), so also every sinner who sees by faith the sinless Saviour can only cry out from a penitent heart, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:7).

Once again, we see throughout the Scriptures the inspired prophecies concerning "the revelation of Jesus Christ . . . when his glory shall be revealed" (I Peter 1:13; 4:13; Rev. 1:1). Then the great "Revealer of Secrets" will make known His power and glory and peace and righteousness to a sin-sick, war-weary, heart-broken world. Then we shall "be glad also with exceeding joy" (I Peter 4:13).

If the name, "Zaphnath-paaneah," which Pharaoh gave to Joseph, is derived from the Egyptian language, it means "bread of life." If it was taken from the Coptic, it signifies "saviour of the world." Joseph could provide only the physical bread in time of famine; our Lord Himself is "the bread of life . . . which came down from heaven" (John 6:35, 41, 51). Joseph was a saviour of the world only in a human and temporal sense, preserving the physical life of thousands. Our Lord Jesus is the only Saviour of the world, in that He Himself died on the cross "that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17).

JOSEPH—A SHEPHERD

"Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock . . ." (Gen. 37:2).

Thus we see in his character and in his occupation how Joseph foreshadowed the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ—the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd of the sheep. To take care of his father's flock in faithful service Joseph had to be patient, tender, loving, kind. He had to protect the lambs from thieves and wild beasts, disciplining the sheep that went astray.

No figure is more familiar to us or more loved by the child of God than that of Christ, the Shepherd. As the Good Shepherd, He gave His life for the sheep; as the Great Shepherd, "brought again from the dead," He guards and guides His own, making them to lie down in green pastures, leading them beside the still waters. As the Chief Shepherd, He will one day come again in all His beauty, to give to the faithful steward "a crown of glory that fadeth not away." (See John 10:11; Heb. 13:20, 21; I Peter 5:4; cf. Psalms 22, 23, 24.) The sainted man of God, the late Reverend F. B. Meyer, D.D., expressed it like this: The shepherd-work of Christ portrays Him as our Prophet, Priest, and King; holding before us the cross, the crook, and the crown. Surely we look to Him with hearts of thankfulness, even as we pray in the words of the little child's petition:

*"Jesus, Saviour, Son of God,
Wash me in Thy precious blood;*

*I Thy little lamb would be;
Gentle Shepherd, carry me."*

JOSEPH'S OPPOSITION TO EVIL

"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 father their evil report" (Gen. 37:2).

These sons of Jacob's two concubines—Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher—were grown men; Joseph was but a lad of seventeen. They had spent their youth in Haran, hearing the quarrelling, witnessing the scheming and strife of Jacob's household and of Laban and his sons. Evidently Joseph, who had gone with the family to Canaan when he was about five or six years of age, had known less of the scheming Jacob and more of the trusting Israel. He had been shielded from many of the temptations and sins of his older brothers. In any case, as "a faithful steward," he "brought unto his father their evil report." Their lives doubtless dishonored God and brought reproach upon His name among the heathen people of the land. Perhaps they had not been faithful in caring for their father's flocks and herds. Joseph was not, then, a vindictive tale-bearer; he was in the path of duty, as he watched over his father's flock. "Evidently he was the chief shepherd" of this part of his father's sheep, "either because he was the son of a principal wife, or because of his own superior qualities of character." He met the responsibility faithfully, courageously, even at the cost of the ill-will of these half-brothers, sons of his father's concubines.

In this opposition to evil, Joseph was but a faint picture of the holy Son of God, of whom the Father said long before He was born in Bethlehem,

"Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity . . ." (Heb. 1:9; cf. Psalm 45:7).

And just as Joseph's brethren hated him because he did not condone their sins, so also wicked men of all ages have "loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil"

(John 3:19). Thus they have rebelled against the only One who can cleanse their hearts of all defilement and sin, because He told them of their wickedness. Nor would they listen to Him when He told them that He had come not "to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17).

BELOVED BY HIS FATHER

"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 colours" (Gen. 37:3).

Two thoughts have been suggested in reference to the words, "the son of his old age." One is that the literal translation, "the son of old age to him," is a Hebrew phrase for "a wise son." The other interpretation is that Joseph was beloved by his father because he was the son of Jacob's old age.

Surely the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom Joseph was but a type, was ever the all-wise God. And He is the eternal Son of the eternal Father—the Child of the "Ancient of days" (Dan. 7:9, 13). His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. . . . In the beginning was the Word. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. . . . In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily . . . God . . . manifest in the flesh" (Micah 5:2; John 1:1, 14; Col. 2:9; I Tim. 3:16).

This One who was "Immanuel . . . God with us" (Matt. 1:23; cf. Isaiah 7:14) was, from all eternity, the well beloved Son of His Father. When He was baptized in the River Jordan, the Father's voice spoke from heaven to let the world know that Jesus of Nazareth was His "beloved Son," in whom He was "well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). And again, on the mount of transfiguration, He spoke to Peter, James, and John, saying,

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5).

That is why the Lord Jesus could say to the unbelieving Jews, "I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29). There was unbroken fellowship between God the Father and God the Son from all eternity.

“Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children.” And in this blessing of his father’s special love, Joseph foreshadowed the coming of the One beloved by His Father in heaven, whose love He came to reveal.

As a token of his love for this “son of his old age,” Israel “made him a coat of many colours.” It was a garment of distinction and honor, not a coarse, rough coat worn by shepherds. No wonder his brothers were jealous! And Jacob was unwise, humanly speaking, in showing favoritism among his children. But God was guiding, too; and doubtless Jacob, unconscious of divine leading, was thus helping to complete the picture that makes of Joseph a beautiful type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Two Old Testament references to the garment of “divers colours” speak to us of the honor and distinction that were bestowed upon the one who wore it. The first is found in Judges 5:30, where we read that Sisera’s mother attributed this honor to her son, believing that he would return from the battle against Israel with “a prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil.” The second reference is found in II Sam. 13:18, and tells us that “the king’s daughters that were virgins” were “apparelled” with garments “of divers colours.” Joseph’s “coat of many colours” set him apart as the favored son, the one whom his father delighted to honor.

In countless ways God the Father honored His only begotten Son, our Saviour. Centuries before He came to Bethlehem’s manger, He was announced as the One whose name is “Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). Hundreds of prophecies foretold His virgin birth, His sinless life, His profound teaching, His mighty works, His vicarious death, His bodily resurrection, His miraculous ascension into heaven, His intercessory prayer at the right hand of the Father, His glorious second coming, and His righteous kingdom among men. Angels, shepherds, and wise men attended His birth. The Father’s voice spoke from heaven twice, honoring the well beloved Son. At His cross the heavens were overcast with supernatural darkness; the dead arose; the

earthquake tore the rocks asunder; the veil of the temple was rent in twain. At His resurrection and at His ascension into heaven angels appeared to those who loved Him. And these were just some of the many tokens of the Father's bestowal of honor and dignity upon His "only begotten Son." The Word of God is filled with such proofs of the love of "The everlasting Father" for His eternal Son, our Saviour.

HATED BY HIS BRETHREN

"And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all their brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. . . . And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. . . . And his brethren envied him" (Gen. 37:4, 5, 8, 11).

Three times in this chapter it is written that the brothers of Joseph hated him. They hated him because he was beloved by his father, because of Joseph's dreams, and "for his words." They "could not speak peaceably unto him," giving him the "salaam," or "peace be to thee," that custom required of common courtesy.

Because the Lord Jesus was the Object of His Father's great love, because of His own superior claims to deity and sovereignty, and "for his words," the Jews of His day hated Him with a bitter hatred. Pilate "knew that for envy they had delivered him" unto the Roman government for crucifixion (Matt. 27:18). He knew and others knew that Jesus was "hated without a cause" (John 15:25; cf. Psalm 69:4).

Patiently, repeatedly, authoritatively, the Lord told the Jews that He was God, and that He came to save them from their sins. His holy life gave authority to His matchless words, at the same time rebuking them of their guilt, stirring up their wrath because they would not go to Him, that they might have eternal life. Often they tried to kill Him before His "hour had fully come"; and only His divine power, the power of the Triune God, delivered Him out of their hands. They could not touch Him until He was ready to offer up Himself, as a voluntary sacrifice upon the altar that was Calvary's Cross. On one occasion they "were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led

him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way" (Luke 4:28-30).

They hated Him "without a cause." He was willing to suffer, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (I Peter 3:18). God's holy law required a holy sacrifice for sin; and there was none other without sin. He alone was "altogether lovely" (Song of Sol. 5:16). He was the "Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). He wept over Jerusalem, because His own people received Him not.

"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

"Hated without a cause," yet He loved us with "an everlasting love."

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself . . . For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:19, 21).

JOSEPH'S DREAMS—A CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY

Joseph's two dreams pictured an earthly scene and a heavenly scene, foreshadowing our Lord's earthly kingdom and His heavenly rule over all His universe. And the "repetition under different emblems signified certain fulfillment," not only concerning Joseph, but also concerning the One greater than Joseph, even our sovereign Lord and King. In other words, Joseph's dreams were symbolic and prophetic of that day when he would become ruler in Egypt, his own brethren bowing down to him whom they had grievously wronged; and these dreams pointed on to that far more glorious day when the rightful King of all the universe will yet rule "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Psalm 72:8). Then His own brethren, who grievously wronged Him "without a cause," will bow the knee before Him, and confess Him Lord of all.

"And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf" (Gen. 37:5-7).

In Christ's parables of the sower and of the wheat and the tares, He told His disciples that "the field is the world" (Matt. 13:38). The whole scene is suggestive of Christ's earthly kingdom, over which He will rule when He comes again in glory.

Joseph's brethren knew what the dream signified, that it meant his future sovereignty over them. That is why they said unto him,

"Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words" (Gen. 37:8).

It was because the Jews knew that Jesus of Nazareth had every legal right to the throne of His father, David, that they sent Him to the cross. Otherwise, they would have ignored Him as an imposter, believing that His claims would come to naught. Moreover, they knew that Jesus had every moral right to the throne because, although they watched Him, "seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him" (Luke 11:54), yet they could find no fault in Him. They had to bring in false witnesses when, in their wickedness, they led Him to judgment at the Roman court. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heaven" (Heb. 7:26).

Joseph's second dream pictured a heavenly scene, and he told it unto his brethren, and said,

"Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down our-

selves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him;
but his father observed the saying" (Gen. 37:9-11).

The fact that Joseph's mother, Rachel, had been dead for some time prior to this, seems to make the whole scene point on to Christ, who in His resurrection, is Ruler over all His heavenly kingdom. Long before He was born into the world, the prophet wrote, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, saying, "The government shall be upon his shoulder" (Isaiah 9:6). Hundreds of prophecies of the Old Testament tell of His glorious kingdom that shall continue for all the endless ages.

Joseph's brethren "envied him; but his father observed the saying." The old father must have wondered what it all could signify. But the brothers "hated him yet the more for his dreams." They hated him for his superior claims.

The analogy is very evident. The Jews sought to kill Jesus because He said that "God was his Father, making himself equal with God" (John 5:18). Read the book of John, noting the repeated claims of our Lord to deity, and the repeated expressions of enmity and hatred on the part of the Jews because of those claims. Once, after Christ had told them that He "proceeded forth and came from God"; after He had told them that, before Abraham was, He was the great "I AM"; they "took up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." (See John 8:42, 58, 59.)

The climax of their hatred and of their denial of His claims to eternal sovereignty was reached when Caiaphas, the high priest, demanded that Christ tell him whether He were "the Christ, the Son of God." In reply, our Lord spoke those marvelous words that point on to His second coming, saying,

"Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the
right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of
heaven."

Instead of falling at His feet in worship and praise, the high priest "rent his clothes" and called the holy Son of God a blasphemer.

"Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands."
(See Matt. 26:63-67.)

"For envy" they delivered Him to be crucified between two thieves! For envy Joseph's brothers betrayed him. But the day came when Joseph's dreams were strangely and wonderfully fulfilled. How much more certain and sure are all the promises of God concerning His Son, our Saviour, and His righteous rule over all the earth!

SENT BY HIS FATHER TO HIS BRETHREN

The first thing we note about Joseph's mission, when he was sent by his father to seek his brethren, is that he was "sent out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem" (Gen. 37:14). "Hebron" means "fellowship." Shechem was the scene of the unspeakable cruelty and crime of Simeon and Levi, of which we read in our last lesson. Joseph's brothers were away from their father, and he left the place of fellowship to seek and to find his brothers, some fifty miles distant.

The Lord Jesus Christ came "out of the ivory palaces," having been sent by His Heavenly Father into a world of sin and shame and sorrow, "to seek and to save that which was lost." (See Psalm 45:8; Luke 19:10.) His brethren "according to the flesh" were far away from His Father, as were also the Gentiles! His was a mission of love; "for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son . . ." (John 3:16). He knew that hatred and death awaited Him; yet He came because He loved lost men.

Obediently, willingly Joseph said to his father, "Here am I" (Gen. 37:13). He knew that his brethren hated him; yet he went to see whether it were "well with them . . . and well with the flocks." He went seeking their good; and he went on a journey of some twenty hour's travelling, in obedience to his father's will.

Long before Christ was born in Bethlehem, the prophet wrote the words He said to His Father from all eternity, words which are quoted and applied to Him in the New Testament:

"Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Psalm 40:7, 8; Heb. 10:7).

Gladly, willingly, obediently He came, not only in response to His Father's will, but also of His own accord, because He Himself was God. As the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8), He planned to die for sinners before He created all things. Having come into the place of sin and shame, having suffered the enmity and hatred of His brethren, with His face steadfastly set toward Jerusalem and the cross, He prayed in Gethsemane's Garden; and praying, He said,

"O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39).

Joseph did not find his brethren at Shechem. Perhaps they had been compelled to go on from that place to escape the consequences of their earlier crime. But Joseph, still seeking them, was found by a man as he wandered in "a field," and was told that his brothers had gone on to Dothan. "And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan" (Gen. 37:14-17). He might have returned home when he did not find them at Shechem, but then he would not have been a type of our seeking Saviour. When He was upon earth, He was a wanderer in the "field," which is the world; He had no earthly home, no pillow for His head. Yet on and on He went, day after day, seeking the lost, healing the sick, binding up the wounds of the broken-hearted. He went on, even to the shameful cross, bearing our sins away, nailing them to the accursed tree. Then only did He speak in triumphant victory over sin and shame and wickedness, "It is finished!" (John 19:30). The work which His Father had sent Him to do was forever a finished work. You can not add to it, my friend; only believe it, if you want everlasting life.

Sent by His Father in heaven—sent "out of the ivory palaces"—sent to those who hated Him—sent to "a world of woe"—sent on a mission of mercy and grace and love, our blessed Lord came gladly, willingly, to die for us! "Behold, what manner of love . . . !" (I John 3:1).

THE BROTHERS' CONSPIRACY AGAINST JOSEPH

"And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him . . ."
(Gen. 37:18-20).

Thus Joseph was marked for death even before he reached his brethren. Christ came to die! He knew He faced the cross; that is why He came. Joseph's brothers "conspired against him to slay him," adding these significant words,

". . . and let us . . . cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams" (Gen. 37:20).

Not only did they sarcastically sneer as he approached them, saying, "Behold, this dreamer cometh"; but they also doubted his words concerning his dreams—"We shall see what will become of his dreams."

The wicked Jews, likewise, said, in the words of our Lord's parable, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him" (Matt. 21:38); and they also denied and doubted His infallible Word. They did not believe His teachings about Himself. They denied His power to save from sin. They scoffed at His prophecy concerning His sovereign rule over a purified earth. Joseph's brothers called him "a pretender"; Jesus' brethren "according to the flesh" called Him a blasphemer. Even at the cross they continued their bitter sneers, saying, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross . . ." (Matt. 27:39-44). When He lay in Joseph's new tomb, they called Him "that deceiver" (Matt. 27:63). From Bethlehem's manger to the empty tomb; from Herod's wicked plot at Jesus' birth to the resurrection of the Lord; His enemies denied and doubted and sought to bring to naught His infallible words. But they were only fulfilling all the prophecies that had been spoken by the Holy Spirit throughout the centuries concerning the coming of the suffering Saviour.

One of Joseph's brothers, Reuben, the firstborn, sought, in a half-hearted, cowardly way, to save his younger brother's life. And yet was he afraid they would overpower him and

slay the lad if he interfered openly with their cruel conspiracy? Is that why he sought by craft to deliver him out of their hands? We would not be too hard on him; at least he did intend to return to the pit and "deliver him to his father again" (Gen. 37:21, 22). To his request the other brothers agreed; that is, not to slay Joseph, but to cast him into a "pit in the wilderness." Reuben must have been at some distance from the others when later they sold their brother into Egypt. Possibly he was away with the sheep. At any rate, he did not want to see Joseph killed; that much is to his credit.

STRIPPED OF HIS COAT OF MANY COLORS

"And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him" (Gen. 37:23).

Cruel, rough hands took from their younger brother the emblem of his honor and dignity, the token of his father's special love. And cruel, rough hands put upon the Lord Jesus the purple robe to mock Him, later to rob Him of His garments, leaving Him to hang upon the accursed tree in shame and dishonor. Before He had left His Father's house, He Himself had willingly laid aside His robes of glory—not His deity! He had come in the likeness of man, a faithful Servant. But at the cross He was treated with indignity and insult and cruel mocking.

CAST INTO THE PIT—LATER TO BE DRAWN OUT

"And they took" Joseph "and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it . . . and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit" (Gen. 37:24, 28).

What a picture of the tomb of our Lord, and of His bodily resurrection! "To all intents and purposes" Joseph was slain. Here the type falls short of the fulfillment, as is ever the case. But the empty pit was a place of death. There the brothers expected him to die. But they changed their minds, and later drew him out bodily, alive! It was many centuries afterwards that our Lord did go into the very place of death; but He arose, bodily, "alive forevermore!" (Rev. 1:18) And He has "the keys of Hades and of death!" Be-

cause He lives, we, too, shall live, if we put our faith in His precious blood as an atonement for our sins.

JOSEPH'S BRETHREN "SAW THE ANGUISH OF HIS SOUL"

Having committed their wicked crime against their brother, "they sat down to eat bread" (Gen. 37:25). What cold cruelty! How could they eat bread while they "saw the anguish" of their brother's "soul," even as they had to admit in after years? (See Gen. 42:21.) They heard his cries for mercy; yet they sat down to eat bread!

When they crucified the Lord, "sitting down they watched him there" (Matt. 27:36). Their cup of iniquity was full! How could they bear to gaze at any sufferer, much less the sinless Son of God? They listened to His agonizing cry, as He said to His Father those words which they could not understand, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And all their cold cruelty He suffered for you—for me, my friend. How can we help but love Him?

Doubtless the brothers taunted Joseph about his father's love, about his dreams, about his coat of many colors. We know our Lord endured the mocking and the scourging—all; "yet he opened not his mouth." He was "brought as a lamb to the slaughter," the meek and lowly Saviour (Isaiah 53:7).

DELIVERED UP TO GENTILES

"And they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt" (Gen. 37:25).

These Ishmaelites, called also "Midianites merchantmen" (verse 28), lived in Arabia, and were doubtless a "travelling caravan of a mixed association of Arabs." Their business was the traffic in spices from Arabia and India. They also bought and sold slaves, for whom there was "a ready market in the cities of the Nile." On this occasion they had "spicery," "a species of resinous gum called storak"; "balm of Gilead"; and myrrh, "an Arabic gum of a strong fragrant smell . . . for which there was an enormous demand in Egypt" for use in embalming the dead.

Evidently Joseph's brothers thought they were forever rid of their father's favorite son. Little did they think that

one day his dreams would actually come to pass! That they would bow down to him, or be dependent upon him for their very existence!

Evidently our Lord's brethren, the Jews, thought they were forever rid of the well beloved Son of God. Little did they think He would arise from the tomb! Little did they think that He would one day come again to bring to pass His every claim to divine sovereignty! The sad part is that those who died, still in unbelief, will meet Him, not as their Saviour, but as their righteous Judge. Knowing that it was unlawful for them to put Him to death, they delivered Him to the Gentiles, to the Roman government, to mock and scourge and crucify; but one day "every eye shall see him." "Every knee shall bow" and "every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Rev. 1:7; Phil. 2:10, 11).

SOLD FOR TWENTY PIECES OF SILVER!

"And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content. . . . And they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver" (Gen. 37:26-28).

They could not have cared much for the money, for they sold their brother for "two-thirds the price of an average adult slave." (See Exodus 21:32.) It was Judah, from whose tribe the Messiah was to come, who suggested that they sell their brother. It was Judas (the Greek name for "Judah") who sold the Lord for the price of a slave, for thirty pieces of silver! Someone has estimated that Joseph was sold for something like fifteen dollars. Think of the paltry sum, for which Judas sold the Lord! It could not have been that he wanted the money; he wanted more to betray Jesus! But again, Jesus knew that He would be betrayed into the hands of sinners, even as the prophet wrote, centuries before He came to die, saying,

"So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter . . ." (Zech. 11:12, 13).

The Psalmist also had written that Jesus' "own familiar friend" would lift up his heel against Him, and that another would take his apostleship. (See Psalm 41:9; 69:25; cf. John 13:18; Acts 1:20.)

THE BLOOD-STAINED COAT PRESENTED UNTO HIS FATHER

Our sympathy for Reuben's grief upon finding Joseph gone, when he returned to the pit, is lessened by his consent to enter into the deceitful thing the brothers did to conceal their crime. Joseph was on his way to Egypt, a slave; and to cover up their guilt, so they thought, they "took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood . . ." (Gen. 37:31). Thus Jacob, who in earlier years had deceived his father, Isaac, by putting the skins of two "kids of the goats" upon his hands and neck, was deceived by his own wicked sons, led to believe that the blood of the kid of the goat was that of his beloved Joseph.

"And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no" (Gen. 37:32).

The blood-stained coat was presented, in this manner, to the bereaved father.

Nearly two thousand years ago God's well beloved Son "entered in once into the holy place," even heaven itself, there to present to His Father the blood of the new covenant, which was shed for the remission of sins—once for all! (See Heb. 9:12; Matt. 26:28.)

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands (i. e., the Jewish tabernacle or temple), which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24).

"And without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

The analogy here falls far short of perfection; it is only suggestive. But what a blessed thought, that we are redeemed, not with silver or gold, but with "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"! (See I Peter 1:18, 19.) And in Him we are eternally secure!

"JACOB . . . REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED"

"And he (Jacob) knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces. And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him. And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard" (Gen. 37:33-36).

Why did Jacob refuse to be comforted? Was it only because Joseph was "the son of his old age," the firstborn of his beloved Rachel? Surely that was reason enough for his grief. But let us remember that to Joseph went the birthright, forfeited by Reuben in his folly and sin. Therefore, the blessing derived from the birthright belonged to Joseph. And Jacob could not be comforted until Joseph was found, brought back. Only then did he bless the tribes in that wonderful prophecy, which we shall read in the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis. Only then was Jacob comforted. Then he bestowed the blessing of the birthright upon the son who was the deliverer of his people.

Once more our thoughts turn to the nation which came from Jacob. There is no comfort, no joy in Israel; for the Greater than Joseph is away. The beloved Son of the Father was rejected by His brethren, betrayed into the hands of the Gentiles, sold, crucified. But one day He will return to deliver His ancient people, Israel. Then the blessing which He will bestow will endure forever. Then there will be joy in Israel; and through Israel He will deliver the world.

My friend, do you "love his appearing"? (See II Tim. 4:8.) Are you washed in His precious blood, unafraid to meet Him, eager to look upon His face? If not, "kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way" (Psalm 2:12). He loves you; He died for you. Receive Him into your heart, and the meaning of Calvary will flood your soul with light and life and the love that He alone can bestow.

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17).

