

J O S E P H

A Man With No Sins

Introduction; Most of us dislike perfect people...

A. We recognize that no one is really perfect...

1. However some seem to be. They always do things well. They always succeed. Or at least they seem to.
2. They upset us because what is hard for us is easy to them. Some are humble and some are proud. Some are **perfectionists**.
3. Yet they all annoy us because we make so many mistakes and we are jealous and frustrated...

B. Generally God shows His Mighty men with *feet of clay*.

1. **Abraham lied** about his wife to save his own life. He tried to help God and **did not wait on God** for a son...
2. **Jacob** was a **deceitful man** in his younger years. He **took advantage of his brother** and his **father's** weaknesses.
3. **Moses spoke rashly with his lips in anger** (Psa 106:32-33) and could not enter the promised land. He tried to lead the people without waiting on God.
4. **David committed murder and adultery**. He **lied** and tried to conceal his sin. **Samson** had a weakness for Philistine women.
5. Almost every '*hero of faith*' in scripture that we know a lot about has weaknesses and sins in their life.

C. Only Jesus Christ is truly perfect.

1. **Only Jesus is perfect**. Yet several heroes in scripture are presented without sin. **Daniel** is one. Yet we know he, and the others, had sin –Dan 9:20.
2. *1 King 8:46 "When they sin against You (for there is no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to the land of the enemy, far or near;*
3. One man though, gets a lot of attention and space in the O.T. and yet **we never see any sin** in his life. **Joseph** has more space in Genesis than Jacob and **Abraham**.
4. We know **a lot about Joseph**. He is a Mighty man of God. **Yet God does not record any sins he commits** –though some interpret some things in his life as sin.
5. Because Joseph is presented without sin he is considered by many to be a **type** of Jesus Christ. There are many parallels;
 - a. He was **loved by his father** but **hated by his brethren**; The Jews hated Jesus but His Father in heaven loved Him.
 - b. He was the **good, honest, dependable shepherd**. His brothers were not. Jesus is the Good shepherd; others are hirelings.
 - c. He was **rejected by his brethren** and **sold into slavery**; Jesus was sold by Judas.
 - d. **Prophecies** were made of **Joseph's greatness in dreams**. Prophecies were made by the prophets of the Messiah and his kingdom.
 - e. And many more...
6. While there are a lot of parallels the N.T. gives no indication of him being a type of Christ. He may or may not be...

D. It is odd who in the O.T. is also important in the New sometimes.

1. Unlike **Abraham** and **Jacob** and **Moses** and **David**, Joseph is **not important in the N.T.** These other men are important in both the Old and New Testaments.
2. Joseph is mentioned by Stephen in **Act 7** and by the Hebrew writer in **Hebrews 11**. But these are only quick **historical references**.
3. By contrast **Melchizedek** is a very minor character in the O.T. but is a major character in the book of Hebrews.
4. *Gen 14:18-20 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.*
5. *Psa 110:4 The LORD has sworn And will not relent, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek,"*
6. When David first wrote the 110th Psalm, many probably wondered who Melchizedek was. They probably also wondered why and how the Messiah would be a priest after him and not Levi?
7. Despite all this, there are good lessons to learn from Joseph –as with many other O.T. women and men.

E. We will study Joseph in this lesson.

I. Joseph in his father's home...

A. When we first really see Joseph he is about 17 years old.

1. **Gen 37:1-4**; The first things we see about Joseph is his **bad report about his brothers** and his **father's obvious favoritism**.
2. One book, '*Who's Who in the Bible*' by **Reader's Digest** says, "*he is a 17-year-old tattletale eagerly running home with an "ill report"*". This may be reading a little into the text.
3. **Jacob's father Isaac had favored his older brother, Esau. Jacob should know better than to show favoritism.** Yet we all should know better than many things we do wrong.
4. It may be **Joseph is a perfectionist**. He may see his brothers doing wrong and report it because it is wrong. This is not wrong though sometimes we do need to overlook a brother's faults.
5. Joseph and these ten brothers were all born within a **seven year period** so that are all about the same age. **Joseph is 17. Reuben is about 24.** The rest are in the middle.

B. God reveals things to Joseph in dreams.

1. **Gen 37:5-8**; The dream obviously exalts Joseph over his ten older brothers. They hate him even more. The *Reader's Digest* says he was, "*brashly revealing dreams that predicted he would reign over his brothers someday.*"
2. This is again reading into the text. **God has sent the dream for a purpose.** It will not be understood for over 20 years.
3. **Gen 27:9-11**; He has another dream that **even his parents bow down to him**. Even Jacob rebukes him this time. Yet Jacob remembers this dream and thinks about it. He does not dismiss it.
4. *Luke 2:18-19 And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.*
5. **God has obviously chosen Joseph for something.** His brothers may dismiss these dreams as **delusions of grandeur**. However these are from God and mean something, though it will take many years to fulfill.

C. The next thing we see about Joseph is being sold into slavery.

1. **Gen 37:12-17**; Jacob sends him to see how his brothers are doing and bring back word. **It seems Joseph is dependable. Jacob can count on him.**

2. **Vs 18-28;** He brothers decide to kill him. Reuben stops them. As things work out he is sold into slavery to some Ishmaelites. These would be Arabs from Abraham's concubine.
3. **Vs 29-36;** His brothers have to deal with their father. **They deceive him as he had deceived his brother and father.** We often **reap what we sow.**
4. *Gen 42:21 Then they said to one another, "We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us."*
5. We have then a 17 or 18 year old youth sold by his brothers into slavery. Many would **despair and blame God and man and wish for revenge.** Joseph does not.

D. Jesus' own did not receive Him –John 1:11. Neither did Joseph's.

II. Joseph in Potiphar's house

A. We see God is with Joseph.

1. **Gen 39:1-6;** Joseph is sold to **Potiphar**, an officer and captain of the guard of Pharaoh. This would be the **end of the story for most people.**
2. God is with him and he becomes **steward** over Potiphar's house. It reaches the point that Potiphar does not know what he has because he depends so much on Joseph.
3. **Vs 7-18;** Joseph was handsome and Potiphar's wife was attracted to him. Joseph would not consent to lie with her so she tried to force him. He was, after all, a slave and should do anything she said.
4. Joseph had to actually run away from her. We are **commanded to flee from sin.** It may not be **dignified** to run away from sin but we should do it.
5. *1 Cor 6:18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.*
6. *1 Cor 10:14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.*
7. **Vs 19-23;** Joseph is thrown into prison by Potiphar. Many wonder why he was not **killed for such a crime.** Death would be a common consequence. **Many also wonder if Potiphar really believed his wife.**
8. Once again Joseph **does not give up.** He had evidently been in Potiphar's house for several years. How he has to **start all over.**
9. Yet just as **his father depended on him and Potiphar depended on him,** so the **keeper of the prison learns to depend on Him.** It helps that God is with him.

B. Joseph is in prison for a number of year.

1. Joseph was 17 or so when sold into slavery –Gen 37:2. He will be 30 when he stands before Pharaoh –Gen 41:46. **He is then in Potiphar's house and prison for 12 or 13 years.**
2. It probably took several years to move up in Potiphar's house and in prison. While God is with Joseph, he still does his best and is well liked and trusted.
3. **Gen 40:5-15;** In prison Joseph interprets the dreams of **Pharaoh's chief butler**, acknowledging God's help. He predicts he will be raised up out of prison in three days. Joseph asks to be remembered. Joseph would like to be out of prison. **He is now 28 years old.**
4. **Vs 16-23;** Joseph tells the baker he will die in three days. Both dreams come true. The baker then **forgot Joseph for two years.**
5. **Many would be discouraged** by this. They would **blame God for forgetting them.** Yet Jehovah remembered Joseph at the right time. **We must always keep this in mind, God does not forget us.**

C. Jesus is often forgotten by men as Joseph was. Yet God does not forget.

III. Joseph in Pharaoh's house

A. God sends Pharaoh a dream.

1. God reveals His will to Pharaoh just as He will to Nebuchadnezzar and others. He does this to exalt His prophet by having him interpret the dream.
2. **Gen 41:1-9**; Pharaoh has a strange dream. He knows it is important but can not find the meaning. The butler finally remembers Joseph.
3. **Vs 14, 25-36**; Joseph tells Pharaoh what God is telling him. He also gives him advice as to how to profit from knowing the future.
4. **Vs 37-41**; **Pharaoh learns he can depend on Joseph** to be wise and do right. He exalts him to second over Egypt.
5. With every set-back Joseph does not give up. He rises higher each time. He trusts in God and looks to the future.

B. Joseph sees his brother over 20 years after they sold him.

1. **Gen 42:1-9**; After the seven years of plenty Joseph's brothers come down to Egypt to buy bread. Joseph recognizes them.
2. Joseph may treat them harshly because he is angry with them. Or more likely he wants to get information from them before revealing himself.
3. **Gen 45:1-11**; Joseph can finally take it no more. He reveals himself to his brethren. It has hurt him too much to not reveal himself. He offers to provide for them.
4. **Gen 45:25-28**; Jacob has a hard time believing Joseph is alive. Finally he accepts it. We see that no matter how sincerely we believe something, if it is a lie, we are wrong. This is especially true in religion.
5. We have seen Joseph's faith. He trusted in God despite how he was treated and what happened to him. His greatest act of faith is to come.
6. **Gen 50:22-26**; At the end of his life Joseph trusted that over 300 years from now the descendants of Jacob would go back to Canaan. He wanted to be taken back there.
7. *Exod 13:19 And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you."*
8. Joseph's request was fulfilled. His faith in what God would do was realized. His attitude was, *"If God says it, I believe it, and that settles it."* We need to have this attitude today.
9. However we must keep in mind the full truth of the matter. That is, *"If God says it, that settles it, whether I believe it or not."* I need to choose to believe it.

C. Jesus is exalted by God as Joseph was. He forgives us as Joseph forgave his brothers.

Conclusion; None of us are perfect.

A. Joseph may come close. But even he sinned.

1. He does set us a good example of **striving to do right** and even **running away from evil**, even to his own hurt. Many will compromise to keep a good job.
2. He shows us how to **not let little things nor big things make us quit and give up**. His faith in God did not allow him to blame God or quit.
3. He fully **trusted in what God said the future would bring**. He has told us of the Lord's coming, judgment and heaven. We need to make plans for that day as Joseph made plans for going to the promised land.

B. We start making plans for heaven by becoming a Christian.

1. We must **believe** in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. He died for us that we might be saved.
2. We must **repent** of our sins and turn to God. We are then baptized (immersed in water) to have

our sins washed away to become a Child of God.

3. *Mark 16:15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*
4. *Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*
5. *Gal 3:26-29 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*
6. *Titus 3:4-6 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior...*
7. See also Matt 28:18-20, Act 8:35-39, 17:30-31, 18:8, 22:16, Rom 6:3-7, 1 Pet 3:21, etc.

C. Can we help anyone serve God and become His mighty person?