

The Joseph Experience – Reunited and Restored 06

Intro: This study we're going to see why Joseph's change was important, and a prophetic reference to Jesus hidden in this story.

Homework: Last week's homework was challenging. I don't want to get personal, but does someone want to give a *quick vague* testimony? Or maybe just raise your hand and nod, how you're trying to find a friend from the 2nd grade that you accidentally stole their jump rope. **Making old wrongs right is a powerful testimony, and an easy way to share Jesus!** What better way to testify than giving back \$10 plus interest you forgot about 20 years ago?

This week we're going to read one of my favorite parts of this story; a hidden gem, a prophetic reference to Jesus right in the middle of a story about change. It's exciting, lets jump back in where we left off...

Genesis 43 NKJV

²⁶And when Joseph came home, they (the brothers) brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth.

God can cause our enemies to bow (yield in our modern day) and be at peace with us. That's what we should ultimately pursue in life, not having our mind sent on revenge. While we may want to fix things with angry words or a baseball bat, God often has others plans, better plans!

Proverbs 16:7

When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Then Joseph asks about "*their father*," if he was alive and well. The brothers answer and bow. Joseph sees Benjamin, leaves to cry, washes himself, and returns for lunch. **³³And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another.**

"According to his birthright," interesting remark. We can clearly see why Joseph jumping line for birthright was devastating to all the older brothers. We have to realize Rueben and Simeon have to be *at least* in their early 50s by this time, and they're still lining up in age order.

³⁴Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

It's possible, when they were growing up, Benjamin was also in the house with Jacob and Joseph; and not involved in selling Joseph. How he treats Benjamin seems to reflect nothing but love.

Genesis 44 NKJV

¹And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack. ²Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money." ...the brothers leave... "Get up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid evil for good? ⁵Is not this the one from which my lord drinks, and with which he indeed practices divination? You have done evil in so doing.'**"**

Let's talk about the silver cup, because there are crazy writings out there suggesting Joseph was using divination as well, even "*Godly divination!*" That's far from the truth! In ancient Egypt, gold was very plentiful. Silver was not mined in Egypt at that time but rather had to be bought from another county. The ancient Egyptians called it "*white gold*," and viewed silver as the "*most valuable of all precious metals*." In their inscriptions, silver was always above gold. It wasn't until around the time of Moses, that they started to have silver mirrors and other silver jewelry. But in the time of Joseph, it was "*very rare white gold*."

Regular yellow gold itself was believed by ancient Egyptians to possess magical powers, because they believed gold was *“the flesh of the gods.”* **No one specifically knows** what the ancient Egyptians were doing with the cup for divination that Joseph is referring to, but here are some possibilities:

- Mixing the water and adding wax or oil
- Putting a bubbly drink in the cup and reading the bubbles
- Using various reflection techniques
- Finally, flat out drinking hallucinogenic substances which they have found traces of in cups

Silver cups, or *“white gold cups,”* were highly prized by pharaoh, government officials, and other filthy rich elites. Now that we understand what silver meant to the Egyptians, we have a better understanding of what Joseph was saying and doing to his brothers.

Joseph playing along with the silver cup’s magical divination abilities **made that cup extremely important as well as it already being extremely valuable in ancient Egypt.** We can clearly see Joseph wasn’t using divination, because of what the steward of his house said to his brothers, *“Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money.”* Joseph gave the money back! The steward recognized Joseph served the real God of Heaven, wasn’t Egyptian, and didn’t serve their demon gods. That’s why he answered that way. Joseph spoke up to pharaoh and others about God, he wasn’t playing around.

Pharaoh, said to be born of the gods, was the head of Egypt. The government officials and priests were second. All people, including pharaohs, constantly consulted with diviners, magicians, and astrologers to contact the gods for direction and decisions. Now we understand **Joseph leaving the cup with the brothers was seemingly a HUGE problem.** Joseph could have probably cared less about silver and gold, because he was overly wealthy, and his eyes were on the Lord. But for the Egyptians, silver was such a rare find at the time of Joseph, even the pharaohs’ tombs didn’t contain any silver.

⁶So he overtook them, .. and the steward did as Joseph said. The brothers answered, ... ⁹With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord’s slaves.” ...he checked each of them... **and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack. ¹³Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city. ¹⁴So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph’s house, and he was still there; and they fell before him on the ground.**

Now that we understand the *magnitude* of the problem with the cup, we can better understand the tearing of the clothes, falling on the ground, and fear. Now Judah, who had the idea to sell Joseph, is going to step up, that’s why he’s named.

¹⁵And Joseph said to them, “What deed is this you have done? Did you not know that *such a man as I can certainly practice divination?*”

Still pretending to be Egyptian, and they *still* can’t see he looks like them! Yes, he changed from a teenager to a man, but can’t they see they have some of the same physical features? When we’re all in Heaven, we can ask them about this. Back to the story...

Joseph never said, *“I practice divination.”* He said, *“I can certainly practice...”* He’s right, he *“can”* if he wanted to practice divination. You can too, if you want to, but I don’t believe you will either. You *“can certainly practice”* tap dancing, running backwards, surfing, and flossing your teeth. Just because you *can* practice certain things, doesn’t mean you’re going to do them. But you really should practice flossing and brushing, your dentist will agree.

¹⁶Then Judah ... takes responsibility and presents the brothers to Joseph to honor their word to be slaves.

¹⁸Then Judah came near to him (Joseph) and said: “O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord’s hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you are even like Pharaoh. Judah goes on to recap the story and drama about their father and then claims their father will die if Benjamin doesn’t return home. Judah continues, ³³“Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. ³⁴For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?”

Judah had a complete change of heart and that's made perfectly clear right here. He was willing to lay his life down for his brother.

What Judah is saying and doing right here is very prophetic and he doesn't even know it! Blame and shame was on Benjamin, and he was about to be punished, but Judah, the tribe that Jesus would be born from, stepped up and said, ***I WILL TAKE HIS PLACE***. He was saying, I will take that punishment for him, lay it on me, and I will lay my life down for him to go free. **That's exactly what Jesus did for us!** He stepped up, said that He would take our punishment, lay the blame on him, he'll lay his life down, so that we can be free!

This is a beautiful and prophetic transformation. But wait there's more...

We can activate this prophetic picture in our lives today, even if you're not innocent! Ask for forgiveness of sin, and to be cleansed in the blood of Jesus. Now that you're innocent, **let the Lion of The Tribe of Praise (Judah means praise) take your place by PRAISING and worshipping HIM**. That's how to access God's power in a desperate situation that isn't looking too good. Let's look at some New Testament scripture, because this is a very powerful way to bring the power of God on the scene to fight for you.

Acts 16 Paul cast a demon off of a girl who was fortune telling. Her masters complain to officials, and the magistrates command Paul and Silas be beaten with rods.

²³And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. ²⁴Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. ²⁵But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.

They got their suddenly while they were praying and singing. If you need a suddenly, prayer and singing is the answer to bring the **Lion of The Tribe of Praise** on the scene to fight for you! Write this down,

"If you need a suddenly, praise will take your place."

One more scripture, because this is too exciting!

Psalm 22:3 NKJV

But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel.

Enthroned in Hebrew means to dwell in . We've been grafted in because of Christ, so this verse applies to us as well. God dwells in the praises of his people. **That's why praise brings The Lion of the Tribe of Praise on the scene for you**. Next time things feel desperate or out of control, start to praise God out loud like Paul and Silas. Don't just rely on your prayer and the prayer of as many saints as you can find; prayer and praise!

Amen! That was one of my favorite parts of the story! It's always exciting to read!!

Genesis 45 NKJV

¹Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ²And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it.

Judah messed up the first time with Joseph. Now Joseph sees that Judah wasn't going to mess up the second time with Benjamin. Joseph saw the change when Judah was willing to sacrifice himself. Which makes me wonder, *if the brothers were honest with Joseph initially, would he have revealed himself to them sooner? What if they said, "We sold our brother, and he was to be taken to Egypt. We don't know what's become of him."* Throughout this whole story we keep seeing the same theme, the choices people made paved the path for their harvest.

³Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?"

They *already told him yes multiple times before* that their father was alive, but Joseph probably didn't know if he should believe them or not. This is yet another subtle clue as to why Joseph put them in prison and gave them a difficult time; to make sure they were just as changed as he was.

³But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. ⁴And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.

The oh-no moment! They probably revisited their actions like it was yesterday.

⁵But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.

Just because Joseph said this, people believe this entire situation was actually God's perfect plan. Emphatically, no! It was a turnaround plan from God. These words are just a testament of Joseph's transformation. When we forgive and forget, we can easily recognize God's Hand in a situation, and that's what Joseph is doing. **We should *never* blame imprisonment and slavery on God.** Have you ever heard a criminal come out of jail and say, "*God had me arrested, so I could change my life.*" God never sat up in Heaven writing out that plan. The person became a criminal and perhaps God had them found so He could save them and others that they would harm. Same situation here, turnaround plan!

⁶For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. ⁷And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

Yes, and to spoil the Egyptians along with the entire non-God-fearing middle east! How exciting!!

⁸So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

Again, just because Joseph said this, doesn't mean it was God's Master Plan all along. We have **Joseph acting like a spoiled arrogant tattletale and angry murderous brothers**. Joseph paved a bad path for himself. What God really did was **rescue Joseph from being murdered** either at that moment or another day by separating him and sending him to Egypt. He may also have stopped the brothers' murders as well. ***What would have happened if Reuben's plan worked; he brought the spoiled tattletale back to his father?*** Jacob would have been furious! The resulting fight would have destroyed the entire family. Jacob may have exiled or even murdered the brothers; including Judah which was the line already chosen for Christ to be born, and Levi which was the priestly line which came Moses, Aaron, and John the Baptist. *Putting everything into perspective, we can see why God had to remove him from his father's house.* But that doesn't mean the brothers couldn't repent or go looking for him.

Back to the story... Joseph tells his brothers to hurry home, tell their father what has become of him, and then hurry back to Goshen with everything they own so he can provide for them during the last 5 years of famine. The rest of this chapter is about his brothers taking instructions and going back to tell their father.

What we can learn from this part of the Joseph story is that **when we mess up, God can make another pathway to get us back on track to His plan and His blessing**. It won't be as pretty and as smooth as the one He originally laid out, but He will get you back to the plan. God is always making a way and trying to work things out for us. Here's a funny example of someone who chose their own path...

Jonah 1:17 NKJV

Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah went his own way, which happened to be the exact opposite direction God told him to go, but God worked out a plan to get him right back on the path to blessing and honor. Wasn't as good as the original, but the new plan got him where he needed to be.

There are many people in the Bible who veered off the path!

Acts 9:1-4 NKJV

Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest² and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. ⁴Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”

And suddenly, Paul’s path was changed forever. What about Moses? If you do some studying, you’ll see he was next in line to be pharaoh of upper and lower Egypt. He veered off the path when he killed an Egyptian:

Exodus 2:15 NKJV

When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well.

He settled down with a Midianite wife and started having children, before he went to see the burning bush, and God changed his path back to where it should have been. Few more, incase you don’t realize God is constantly making a new way for us...

Elijah just had one of the most miraculous events take place where he wet an alter and a sacrifice, called down fire from Heaven that consumed everything, and then he ordered the prophets of Baal to be killed.

1 Kings 19:2-3, 9 NKJV

²Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.” ³And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, ... ⁹And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

He had an encounter with God to get him back on track. The Lord told him to anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king. He and Hazael will kill all the enemies of the Lord.

One more famous one we all know....

John 21:3 NKJV

Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We are going with you also.” They went out and immediately got into the boat,

After everything with Jesus, all the miraculous moves of God, he ran away to go fishing. He also needed another encounter with God to get him back on the path where he belonged, “*Feed my lambs... tend my sheep!*”

Jeremiah 29:11 KJV

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

This is one of many scriptures about God being a **Way Maker**. We need to remind ourselves and others, the *only way we can ensure failure is to do nothing or give up*. If you’re in a Joseph situation *be of good cheer*, **God has a way to get you back on that path**, even if you lost family over the situation. God has a plan!

The fastest way to get back on that path is to be honest with the Lord about what’s happened. Ask the Lord to show you situations through His eyes and His ears. Often times I have found, when I’ve been mistreated, I’ve been instructed to change. *Of course that made me feel angry* that He didn’t plan on raining down fire on my enemy, but The Lord had better plans for me. Don’t be surprised, even when a situation isn’t your fault, that you may be met with a change you need to make. **The change isn’t for the other person, but only so God can bring you up to a higher place in Christ and pour out a better blessing on your life**. Never resist His correction, because there is always a blessing on the other side.

You might be thinking, *“I don’t know what God’s plan is for my life.”* That’s ok. Now is a great time to start seeking Him to find out. You don’t want to show up in Heaven saying, *“I didn’t know.”* He’ll answer you with the truth, *“You asked me 3 times in 43 years and spent a total of 12 seconds doing it. I tried to tell you to study more, exactly 1,032 times, because you’re a teacher, but you said the Bible was boring and you didn’t ‘wanna’.”*

Here’s a secret: many people with teaching gifts DID think the Bible was boring at first. The passion inside you needs to be stirred up. If you know you have a teaching gift, start somewhere with something you like. If you have an evangelist gift, maybe you like sharing Jesus over the internet, start there! If you have a preaching gift, preach to your animals or the angels. I once heard a story about a young man in Bible college. He lived in a ground level apartment, and he said that he would write sermons and *“preach to the angels.”* He said he would get excited, yell, jump around, and even once threw a chair. An Asian couple living in the apartment above him ended up giving their life to Christ. When they heard him start, they’d run and get their notebooks. He found out years later when he ran into them in public, and they asked what became of him. He told them he started a church, and they confessed how much they enjoyed his sermons. **Stir yourself up!** Don’t wait for someone else or do nothing because you don’t know. Now is the time to act! Now is the time for change! Now is the time to step up and take your call seriously.

2 Timothy 1:6 NKJV

Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

Stir up the gifts of God yourself. Lay hands on yourself (**have everyone lay hands on themselves**) Say, *“Be stirred up!!”* Why lay hands on yourself? Because the gifts are inside you. You might think it’s weird. I do too! Ask Jesus and Paul when you get to Heaven! *We’re just obeying the Word.* Make this a habit at home, make this a habit of laying hands on your children for gifts. If you don’t know your gift, tell your gift to stir up anyway and tell God you’re ready for it to come out.

Thank you for joining me again this week for this study. Next week will be the last week of The Joseph Experience, but we’ll finally get to see exactly why the brothers weren’t chosen to be head of the family. Spoiler alert, it had nothing to do with Joseph.

Homework

- Seek God this week about His plan for your life, that’s your spiritual Promise Land
- If you need something restored in your life, seek God about His plan
- Lay hands on yourself this week and stir up your gifts.
- Do something this week! Write, preach, tell someone about Jesus, witness in a different country.
- Read **Genesis chapter 44 and 45**, because we skipped over parts of various verses.

(Prayer Points:

- Thank You Lord for stirring up a hunger for Your plan in our lives
- We join our faith together to believe that *everyone will have something revealed to them this week.*
- We don’t want to go back to the same old, but step into something new
- Remind us to lay hands on ourselves to stir up the gifts inside of us
- Lord, if we have to go through difficult changes this week, give us your grace to accomplish it quickly
- We thank You in advance for the testimonies of change and stirring up of gifts

In Jesus name, Amen)