

CHRIST: Rejected By His Brothers [Revelation 12.1-6]

Read Genesis 37-41 & Acts 7.9-18; 13.17; Revelation 12.1-6

‘CHRIST IN GENESIS’: MAKING THE CONNECTIONS & SETTING THE CONTEXT

1/ We will conclude this current course of survey/summary of CHRIST IN GENESIS with these next two lessons. Both of them will feature Joseph as the main character. Joseph was the favorite son of Jacob/Israel as the text explicitly states [**ch 37.4**]. Joseph is also the Divinely-appointed and chosen ‘preserver’ and ‘savior’ of the covenant family and nation while they were in the land of Egypt [**chs 45.5, 7, 8 & 50.20**]. So before we get into the contents of the text chapters we will study in this lesson, we would do well to rehearse the significance of this Egypt-sojourn that will begin with Joseph’s being sold and taken there...

- The sojourn in Egypt was foretold to Abraham three generations before [**ch 15.12-14**].
- Yahweh knew Israel did not have the moral convictions and covenant commitment to remain a distinct and separate nation to Him had they remained in Canaan [as they would prove centuries later when they were delivered from Egyptian bondage and brought back to inhabit the Promised Land] [**see chs 34 & 38**]. Yahweh knew they would have to be separated and isolated from voluntary coexistence with the Canaanites if they were to grow as a nation, remaining distinct from them and consecrated to Him. So He sent them to Egypt and placed them under bondage to give them time and opportunity to grow and multiply as a separate and distinct covenant nation. In fact, when the story of Joseph is re-told in the New Testament book of Acts, two separate times we are told: “...**the people increased and multiplied in Egypt...**” [Acts 7.17], and “**The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt...**” [Acts 13.17]. As Joseph explains in the **chs 45 & 50** references above: “**God sent me here...**” to set that covenant plan in motion.

2 / There is one more observation we need to make here before we get into Joseph’s story about the CHRIST-markers we have been highlighting and emphasizing during this entire course: **How does Joseph point to CHRIST?** We have repeatedly emphasized that the Book of Genesis is establishing the CHRIST-markers and pinning all the CHRIST-threads that will be woven all throughout the Scriptures and the history of the *historical-redemptive progression* of the CHRIST-covenant. **How does Joseph portray CHRIST?** Ever since there have been Scripture interpreters and commentators, they have debated whether Joseph is a *type* of CHRIST, or are there just intentional similarities in their experiences and parallels between their roles in God’s Eternal Covenant fulfillment? In the technical sense, in order for an Old Testament character or event to be a true *type*, it must have an explicit New Testament reference relating the two: for example, **1 Peter 3.21; 1 Corinthians 5.7; Romans 5.14; Galatians 4.21-31** – just a few that spring to mind. We have already noted many such *types* here in Genesis. **But what about Joseph?** I would argue that Joseph is, in truth, a true *type* of CHRIST – that is, an intentional pre-figure and pre-enactment of CHRIST. And if there is only one evidence of this *typing* of CHRIST in Joseph, I would refer you to **Revelation 12.1-6**. John receives the vision of the CHRIST being born into the world. “**And a great sign appeared in Heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth.**” As I say, this vision is that of the nation-‘mother’ of the CHRIST who was ‘carrying’ Him all throughout the Old Testament, and now, in the ‘fullness of time,’ was preparing to give birth to Him. Notice the imagery by which she is identified ... and if you will refer now back to our lesson text in **Genesis 37.9-10**, you’ll see this is the very dream that Yahweh gave to Joseph to describe his role of ‘keeping alive’ the twelve tribes of Israel in Egypt under his protective administration. So with that, there is an explicit link and connection between Joseph and his role as the immediate, historical ‘executor’ of the covenant plan and the CHRIST who would be born from Joseph’s brothers, the nation of Israel. *This is a clear and explicit CHRIST-marker that was given and assigned to Joseph to ‘pre-enact’ and fulfill in his role as the ‘ruler’ and ‘savior,’ not only of Israel, but of the other nations in the then-world.*

3/ So, with that, let’s continue with the story of Jacob as it is told in the person of Joseph...

I / ch 37 | Joseph and his God-given dreams of lordship and salvation

1/ **Ch 37.1** could also be attached to the end of **ch 36** to describe the different locations where these two brothers' families continued their residence and habitation. **Connect and contrast with ch 36.6-8.**

2/ Also, **ch 37.2** is the tenth and last *toledot* [Hb.] in the book of Genesis. See [Lesson 2](#) for the definition of what a *toledot* is and a listing of them. But basically, a *toledot* is a short story of the descendants of the subject of the *toledot*. Just as in **ch 36.9** the descendants ['**generations of**'] of Esau are recorded, so now the descendants of Jacob and '*what became of*' them are chronicled in the story of Joseph ... because what happened to Joseph is '*what became of*' the descendants of Jacob/Israel as Jacob's representative.

3/ So the history of Israel for the next 400 years will be told here, beginning with the story of Joseph and how they came to be in Egypt to begin with. It all starts with the introduction to Joseph, a testimony to his character [which will be continued all throughout his story], and emphasizing the dreams Yahweh gave him to prepare him for his roles he would play and assignments he would fulfill in the succeeding chapters. Joseph was the next to youngest of his brothers who had been born in Paddan-aram [**ch 29.31-30.24**]. Benjamin would be born later. Joseph was always Jacob's favorite and most-beloved son for at least two reasons: [1] he was the first and only son of Jacob's beloved wife, Rachel, and [2] Joseph also portrayed a more righteous and faithful character than his older brothers. For that reason, Jacob had "**made him a robe of many colors [or 'long sleeves' or 'embroidered']**." The exact meaning of that word is uncertain, but whatever it was, it set him apart, distinguished him, and 'made him special' among his brothers. And it was obvious also by the favoritism with which Jacob treated Joseph. And his other brothers **hated him** for it. There was always a deep-seated bitterness and simmering resentment toward Joseph from them.

4/ To top even that, **Yahweh gave Joseph two different dreams** – make note of these dreams, because Yahweh is going to give several more dreams in the coming narratives. And his brothers will '**hate him even more**' and give him the disparaging nickname '**the dreamer**' v 19 because of them. Here are the two dreams – and they will be fulfilled to the least detail in the coming chapters, experiences, and events:

- **vv 5-8:** In this dream, Joseph and his brothers are all out harvesting grain in the field, binding their stalks into sheaves. Joseph's sheaf stands upright, tall and straight over the sheaves of his brothers, and their sheaves come and bow down to his to serve him, recognizing his lordship, sovereignty, and authority over them. **See how this came to pass in ch 42.6 and following...**
- **vv 9-11:** In this second dream, "**Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.**" The sun and moon represented even his father and mother, and the eleven stars represented the other brothers. **This, too, would come to pass when the whole family migrates to Egypt to be saved from the famine in Canaan by Joseph, who had been elevated to be the master supplier of food.**

5/ Of course, as we have said, the brothers hated Joseph all the more for what they perceived to be his 'self-assumed' presumption and arrogance. They did not know [yet] that Yahweh was giving Joseph dreams of His future assignment for him ... and them. So in the course of time, Jacob asked Joseph if he would check on his brothers who were pasturing Jacob's flocks in distant fields and replenish their supplies of foods. Joseph willingly obeyed his father and set off to find them. That's when they saw their opportunity to kill their pesky little brother and be rid of him and his precocious dreams. They plotted to kill him, bury him out in the distant landscape, tell Jacob that they had 'discovered' him devoured by a wild predator, "**and we will see what will become of his dreams [v 20]**". The oldest son, Reuben [note his name also for future references], intercedes and tries to save Joseph's life. He tells them just to throw Joseph into a nearby dry well – thinking he would come later and send him high-tailing it back home. So, they did just that – and then sat down to eat some of the foods Joseph had just 'door-dashed' for them.

6/ In the meantime, while Reuben was off and away in another field, they saw an approaching caravan of Ishmaelite merchants [also called Midianites] on their way to Egypt. So brother Judah has a bright idea: '*Hey, let's not kill him when we can get rid of him and make some pocket money to boot! Let's sell him to the Midianites – we can make some money and be 'innocent' of killing him. After all, **he is our brother, our own flesh!***' How big-hearted! Also make a note of Judah's name for several more future references.

7/ Reuben returns to find Joseph sold off and on his way to Egypt. Since he is the firstborn and oldest son, he is responsible to give account to father Jacob for Joseph. **“The boy is gone, and I, where shall I go?” [v 30].** That’s when they came up with the ‘cover-up’ ruse of slaughtering the goat, soaking Joseph’s special tunic in its blood, and then taking it to Jacob with the concocted lie of the story that they had ‘discovered’ it out in a field, and **“This we have found; please identify whether it is your son’s robe or not” [v 32].** Of course, Jacob is devastated with bereavement – but the brothers had no conscience either for Joseph or Jacob. **Ch 37** ends by saying: **“Thus his father wept for him. Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.”** Jacob is grieving; and Joseph arrives in Egypt where he will carry out Yahweh’s predestined roles for him, both in Egypt and in Yahweh’s developing purposes in the CHRIST Covenant for the following 400+ years...

II / ch 38 | Judah’s immoral conduct back in Canaan

1/ **Ch 38** might seem like a screeching halt and disorienting interruption in the narrative. But it isn’t really. What this chapter serves to illustrate is the wisdom, foresight, and foreknowledge of Yahweh in sending Joseph ahead of them into Egypt. What Judah [yes, this is the patriarch and ‘father’ of the royal tribe from which King David and CHRIST will come] illustrates is that, if Yahweh had not sent Joseph into Egypt with the intention of the rest of the family following him there – as He had foretold to Abraham – then the nation would have degenerated into the same kind of immoral practices and assimilated themselves into the contra-Covenant lifestyles of the Canaanites around them in Canaan. **[See also ch 34.1 ff.].**

2/ The short of the story is: Judah makes a business alliance with another Canaanite, sees a woman there, marries her, and has a family of three sons with her. In the course of time, he married the oldest of the three sons, Er, to another Canaanite woman, Tamar. The two older sons, Er and Onan, were slain by Yahweh for their wickedness. Judah was unwilling to give the third and youngest son, Shelah, to this Tamar to carry on his oldest brother’s family and legacy. Tamar sought revenge [and got it] when she disguised herself as a prostitute and solicited her father-in-law, Judah, to have sex with her – which he was looking for, and did [v 15]. She became pregnant from this incestuous tryst, and Judah was shamed when he was identified as the father. There are a whole lot more details to this sordid story – but they serve the purpose of adding this explanation of Yahweh’s having sent Joseph to Egypt...getting Israel out of Canaan.

III / ch 39 | Joseph rises to favor in Egypt...then plummets again into prison

God can, will, and does assign to you the service He wants you to fulfill for His purposes, and the measure of success He wants you to have in it – and He will also sovereignly work out the circumstances His way and in His time for you to achieve it ... just serve Him faithfully in it!

1/ Now...back to Joseph. **Connect v 1 with ch 37.36.** This is the well-known story of Joseph and Potiphar’s wife. Joseph is now a slave to Potiphar, but **“The LORD was with Joseph”** just as He had promised Joseph’s father, Jacob: **“Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you” [ch 28.15 & 50.24-25].** This is the language of Yahweh’s covenant promise and faithfulness. We have to believe that Jacob had often told his sons, and especially Joseph, about this promise from Yahweh in his own God-given dream. And Potiphar saw the blessing of Yahweh upon Joseph and entrusted everything he had to this Hebrew slave’s care. He knew Joseph was a man of character and faithfulness [vv 2-6].

2/ Potiphar’s wife had more sinister and seductive designs for this attractive Hebrew slave. She wanted to have sex with him. Joseph resisted her solicitations on two grounds: [1] he would prove to be unfaithful to his master’s trust and confidence in him, and [2] he would sin against his God [vv 7-9]. She persisted in her abuse of her position and authority over Joseph; and on this day when they were alone in the house, she tried to coerce him by physically pulling him by his garment. Rather than consent to her insistence to sin with her, he escaped by shedding out his garment, leaving it empty in her hand, and running from her out of the house. *Notice how the narrator repeats the use of ‘fled’ four times to emphasize the truth of this story. Also, this Joseph story is a stark contrast of righteous character with the immoral Judah story in ch 38. Make note of that purpose also in the narrator’s juxtaposition of these two stories.*

3/ Potiphar's wife not only committed the sin of attempted sexual relations with Joseph, but she also concocted this lie of a charge against him: **"See, he [Potiphar] has brought among us a Hebrew to laugh at us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. And as soon as he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me and fled and got out of the house"** [v 14]. She would repeat this lie both to the household servants when they came back into the house and to Potiphar when he returned home. This false, unjust lie and slanderous narrative would be the grounds for Joseph's loss of favor with Potiphar and being sent to the political prison over which Potiphar had charge. ***But regardless of the unfaithfulness of others, God will be faithful to you!*** **"But The LORD was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison,"** as He had done before with Potiphar [compare vv 21-23 with vv 2-6].

IV / ch 40 | Yahweh continues to give dreams...and 'the dreamer' continues interpreting them

1/ This narrative of Yahweh giving predictive and prophetic dreams will be carried out through these next two chapters. *We must keep in mind throughout all these narratives that Joseph still remembers the dreams Yahweh had given him when he was only seventeen years old back in ch 37. We know he had not forgotten them. Did he ever wonder whatever had become of them? Did he ever question the faithfulness of Yahweh to fulfill them? Joseph was only human – and young, at that – but there is no evidence at least in the text of any distrust he entertained toward the faithfulness of Yahweh ... he just continued to serve faithfully in the assignments he was given in the moment and entrust the outcomes to God.*

2/ Yahweh gave these dreams respectively to two of Pharaoh's trusted officers: his chief cupbearer and chief baker. Both had fallen into disfavor with the Pharaoh and were sent to the same political prison where Joseph was incarcerated. Joseph faithfully served them under the charge of the captain of the guard [v 4]. When they had their dreams, Joseph was sensitive to their change of mood and demeanor. They confided in Joseph what they had dreamed. Joseph offered to interpret their dreams, giving all the credit to the same God who had sovereignly given him his own dreams: **"Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me"** [v 8] – **much as Daniel would do also in a later captivity in Babylon.** He interpreted their dreams and they came to pass as he said [vv 9-23]: the chief cupbearer was restored to his former position and the chief baker was executed. *Joseph did respectfully request that the chief cupbearer would tell Pharaoh about his own unjust imprisonment – but he forgot...for two whole years!*

V / ch 41 | Yahweh elevates Joseph again to position and authority for His covenant purposes

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you" [1 Peter 5.6-7].

1/ Now it is time for Yahweh to fulfill His sovereign covenant promises for Israel's preservation and perpetuity in Egypt as He had foretold Abraham! But His servant Joseph would need to be in a position to carry it out. Yahweh purposed the events and circumstances, gave Pharaoh the prophetic dreams, and elevated Joseph again to the position of prominence and authority to execute and make it work!

2/ Yahweh gives these two dreams to Pharaoh, and both of them have two contrasting scenes: [1] seven plump and well-fed cows being eaten by seven ugly, famine-starved cows and [2] seven plump and plentiful ears of grain being swallowed up by seven thin and blighted ears of grain. Both dreams foretell Yahweh's future plans for Egypt and the surrounding environs. Seven years of plentiful harvests will be followed by seven years of severe drought. Pharaoh is disturbed by his dreams, but no one can interpret them [compare Daniel 2-3]. His personal attendant, the cupbearer, remembers Joseph interpreting his dream from two years before. He confesses his negligent forgetfulness and tells Pharaoh about Joseph; Pharaoh calls for Joseph; Joseph is brought before Pharaoh and interprets his dreams [vv 9-57].

3/ Pharaoh believes Joseph and is impressed with his wisdom and character. Joseph tells the Pharaoh what he must do to prepare for the coming famine by storing up provisions during the plentiful years. Pharaoh puts Joseph in charge of this management and administration. *This is now thirteen years after Joseph's rejection and betrayal by his brothers and being brought to Egypt [compare chs 37.2 and 41.46].*

Yahweh's 400-year covenant plan for Israel is set in motion...