

Genesis Chapter 37 Commentary

1 And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

Stranger is from the Hebrew word maguwr (pronounced; maw-goor') and means; *a temporary abode; pilgrimage, be a stranger*. This simply means that Jacob's father Isaac, was not living in this land with prominence. He was not known, to be of the mindset of the current inhabitants, and did not believe as those around him did. He was an inhabitant of the land, but a stranger in the land because it is not yet known nationality as the kingdom of Israel. This would happen about four to five hundred years later.

This definition of stranger gives us the meaning of a temporary place of residence. Applied today to our lives, we are pilgrims and strangers living in the world. Our nation is not a natural kingdom of the earth. Our nation is the kingdom of God, which is identified as the church, whose king is in the eternal heaven. The kingdom of God will exist eternally when all of God's saved people are gathered into that eternal land of promise. Our permanent home is the place that Christ has gone to prepare for us.

2 These are the generations of Jacob. 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.

'*Generations*' here uses the meaning: *history*, rather than the definition: *genealogy*. This chapter is the beginning of the history of the life of Joseph. Joseph's lineage does not lead us to Christ, so why all this scripture about Joseph? Joseph is a type and foreshadow of Christ Jesus, and the preservation that God has made for his people through Christ. The life of Joseph will give us a picture of the suffering, and the triumph, of Christ, who wrought salvation for all those that God the Father gave him to save.

"*and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.*" Bilhah and Zilpah were the handmaids that Laban gave to Rachel and Leah when they were married to Jacob. In their conquest, to win Jacob's special love, they gave their handmaids to Jacob as wives to bring forth children. Bilhah's children were Dan, and Naphtali. Zilpah's children were Gad and Asher. Though we are not told what the evil report was, we know it must have been bad for Joseph to tell on his brethren. Our heavenly Father has already received the report on all of mankind, (us included) seen in:

- **Ps 14:3 "They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."** Well, that's Old Testament some will say. Here's New Testament scripture.
- **Ro 3:9-18; 9 "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes."**

Thus, we see, there is only one kind of people inhabiting the earth, (past, present, or future) which is the sinner. Praise the Lord that he chose to save some from this deplorable condition. They are known still as sinners, but they are sinners saved by the grace of God.

Now would be a good time to point out; scripture does not record any sin or error in the life of Joseph, which is emblematic of the sinless life of Jesus incarnate. We know that Joseph was a sinner but there is just no recorded sin action from his life in scripture.

Our life lesson from this would be: We should live, like Joseph and like Christ; godly and sinless lives that bring glory and honor to our Saviour and Lord.

3 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.

"Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children" Why did Israel love Joseph more than the rest of his children? The birth of Joseph was miraculous; by virtue of being born to Jacob in his old age, and being the firstborn of Rachel, who was heretofore barren. The miraculous birth of Joseph reminds us of the miraculous birth of Jesus: who was born of a virgin by the miraculous working of God. This is a picture of God the Father's love for God the Son, and we have this testimony from God the Father in:

Mt 3:17 "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Why was God pleased with Jesus? Here are some obvious of reasons:

- He was the only begotten, in human flesh, Son, of God the Father.
- He was the only, totally obedient man in the flesh.
- He lived a pure and sinless life.
- He fulfilled the sacrificial law service to perfection, giving his life for the redemption of the sins of all God's chosen people, and the completed work, of eternal salvation by Christ, was an accepted work by God the Father.
- Jesus established the church of salvation by grace; that not only the Jews, but the Gentiles also might be saved, seen in: **Mt 12:18 "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles."** Christ made a way for the Gentiles to be grafted into the family of God, which will provide them a means of sustenance from the great drought of the sinful habitation of the earth.

We see the great extent of the preferential love of God, in; **Joh 3:16-21; 16 "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. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. 21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."** As we consider this text we see, not a preferential love, in the sense that we see Israel's love for Joseph, but rather, God the Father's special love, which love was willing to sacrifice his only begotten Son, for the life of the whole family.

"A coat of many colours" Israel openly displayed his special, preferential, love for Joseph by this coat of many colors. This preferential treatment, of Joseph by Israel, will add to the source of hatred for Joseph by his brethren.

The coat of many colors demonstrated the preferential treatment of Joseph; and that Israel was giving the rights of the first-born to Joseph; which blessing of the first-born was justly taken from Reuben. We find in scripture that the firstborn birthright blessing was Joseph's by God given right, and this is proved by scripture in: ***1Ch 5:1-2; 1 "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. 2 For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's:)"*** Do you understand why the birthright was Joseph's? Jacob's one true love, and one true wife was Rachel, Joseph's mother, and Joseph was the first-born son from her. Jacob had other children by his other wife, Leah, and the handmaidens, but his one true wife was Rachel. Although, he was married to Leah first, that marriage was done by the deceitfulness of Laban, and though we, like scripture does, recognize that Leah was Jacob's wife: however, Rachel was his true love and true marriage.

There are many and varied opinions of the significance of the colors of this robe. When I think of them, my first thoughts go to the rainbow and its significance to us. When we see a rainbow, we are reminded of God's promise to not destroy the whole earth with a flood of water again. We are also reminded; God saved those who found grace in his sight, from the flood of destruction.

Now, think of the coat of many colors, and think of all the offices, which Christ fulfilled as he lived on earth in human form. He is identified in scripture by many different titles, such as: Prophet, Priest, High Priest, King, Redeemer, Saviour, Messiah, Beloved Son of God, the sacrificial Lamb, etc. Consider; Joseph is the saviour of his family, as we shall see as we continue our study of the life of Joseph. When he calls his family to come to him for life sustenance; Joseph gave his family the best possession of property in Egypt. Christ is our Saviour, and he is calling us to come into the church, which is the best possession on the earth. Jesus has gone to prepare us a permanent home, in heaven, in the presence of God. Aren't you glad that God the Father had a beloved Son? One preferred above all others.

4 And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

I think we can see several reasons why Joseph's brethren hated him so much:

- He received preferential treatment from his father.
- He was living a righteous life, which made theirs even more obviously sinful.
- He reported the ungodliness of his brethren to their father Jacob.
- They were jealous that Jacob had conferred to Joseph the right of firstborn. Joseph was the 11th of 12 children born to Israel. The right of firstborn, conferred to Joseph, meant to them, that in time to come, they would have to submit to his headship. Jesus was "the firstborn of many brethren" and his family, the law church, would not yield to his headship.

Now let's look at the comparative picture of hatred of Joseph and Christ. Was ever a man more hated of his brethren than Jesus? Why? Because he was the beloved Son. Because God gave him power to heal, to forgive sins on earth, to raise the dead, miracle working wonders, and divine love,

which both brought glory to God, and which drew people to follow him. Because Jesus kept telling the Scribes and Pharisees how they were wrong, in their thinking, and actions, of interpreting the law commandments. Jesus pointed out; the Scribes and Pharisees were hypocrites because they interpreted the law commandments one way and walked in another. This caused the jealousy of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were his brethren by association of the children of Israel.

"they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him." We have plenty of evidence of this in the New Testament scripture. Just look at how many times the Scribes and Pharisees spoke to Jesus, not to learn of him, but to tempt him to break the ceremonial law, so they could have occasion to discredit him. The more he demonstrated their hypocrisy, the more they hated him. Do you believe they spoke peaceably to him when they had Jesus on trial? Not only did the Scribes and Pharisees ill treat Jesus, but they also incited the multitudes (both Jew and Gentile) to castigate, and to rale upon him.

What life lesson can we draw from this? As parents, we should not show favoritism among our children if we wish to have peace in the family. We should teach our family that the gift of special preferential love, of being saved by grace, is to be directed to our Saviour and our God. We should demonstrate to them, that as a family; we have a special preferential love that we share equally with one another. We should teach them the differences of this special love and the common love for mankind in general.

We can apply these same principles to our spiritual lives and our walk in Christ in the church.

- First, we should have the greatest preferential love for our Saviour and Lord, as commanded by scripture, see in: ***Mt 22:37-38; 37 "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment."***
- Second, we should have preferential love for our brothers and sisters in Christ as seen in: ***1Jo 4:21 "And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.*** Here, "***love his brother***" is a different love than the common love of mankind, as demonstrated in: ***1Jo 3:14 "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.***" This is the preferential love of the church.
- We are to love our church family without partiality as demonstrated in scripture in: ***1Ti 5:21 "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality."*** And further seen in: ***Jas 3:17 "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."*** This text shows us: if we don't truly love our brethren; we are not born-again children of God but hypocrites.
- We are to love our fellow man, seen in: ***Mt 22:39-40; 39 "And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."*** "***love thy neighbour as thyself***" demonstrates the common love of mankind, not the preferential love that we have for our brethren.

We find further in scripture some more foundational scripture for preferential love, seen in: ***Eph 3:19 "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*** Being born-again; we are filled with this preferential love of Christ.

- Aren't you glad that God the Father has a preferential love for God the Son?
- Aren't you glad to have the knowledge of how the special, preferential, love is to be used in living our Christian lives?
- Aren't you glad that God the Father has demonstrated that special, preferential, love to you?

Our life lesson for this portion of Genesis chapter 37 is: Having had this preferential love of Christ revealed to you: What are you going to do with it? Are you going to hide it under a bushel, or bury it in the earth? What you should do is put on Christ, by making that public profession of faith in him, by joining the church and walking in the ordinance of baptism. If you have already done these two things: then you should do what Jesus taught us in: ***Joh 13:34 "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*** Oh! the depths of the riches of this commandment! May God help us to touch the hem of his garment, and thereby demonstrate this great preferential love of Christ to one another!

Praise to God the Father, for his preferred love of Jesus, and for all God's chosen people, that our salvation and eternal life might be founded in him! Hallelujah!

5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. 6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: 7 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. 8 And his brethren said to 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.

Remember, we demonstrated that Joseph, though he was next to youngest of the children of Israel, was the actual firstborn of Israel? As scripture gives this right to Joseph, this right obligates the rest of Joseph's brethren to bow before his headship, when his father dies or relinquishes his headship. Thus, we see the source of their hatred.

We point out here: this dream is prophetic of what will be fulfilled many years from now, when the famine is sore in Canaan, and Joseph is made the 2nd in power in Egypt, they shall come to buy corn and bow before Joseph, not even knowing who he is.

Did you notice that in the dream they were binding sheaves? Did you know that these sheaves were the gathering of their grain? Grain from which they had bread and sustenance of life. Why did they come to Joseph in Egypt? To buy corn (corn is grain of any kind) that they might make bread and have sustenance of life. Joseph, though unknown to them at first, will be the saviour of the family, by supplying the bread of life to them. Thus, we see that when we are born-again, we answer the call of Jesus to come to him. We come to Jesus seeking the bread of life that we may have sustenance of life.

9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it 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. 10 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 ourselves to thee to the earth? 11 And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

This dream is also prophetic, foretelling a time to come; when Joseph will send and call his family to come to him, for sustenance from the great drought on the earth. When they arrive: all the family of Israel will bow to Joseph, who is now the 2nd in command ruler over Egypt.

This dream is emblematic of how every child of grace, who, being born-again, has come to see the greatness of the drought on earth, and the need for a life of salvation. As Joseph's family answered his call to come unto him; God's people will answer the call of Jesus to come to him, and they will bow before their sovereign ruler, and receive the sustaining bread of eternal life, as seen in: **Mt 11:27-30; 27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. 28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.** We shall see: Joseph's family was indeed laboring and heavy laden with the thought of death through starvation, therefore, when the call comes, they will come willing and with gladness.

This dream is a prophetic picture, in the eternal perspective, of how all the family of God's children will bow with preferential love for the preferred Christ, the King eternal, at the end of time. **Ro 14:11 "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.**" God's people will bow in reverence and awe. The lost will bow in submission, realizing at last, when it is too late, that Christ is indeed real, and they have no choice but to suffer God's wrath for their disobedience and rejection, knowing their doom is sure and eternal.

"And his brethren envied him" Why? They understand; the dreams are prophesying of a time to come when Joseph shall take the position, of firstborn ruler of the family. Remember in verse 8; they interpreted the dream correctly that Joseph would one day rule over them. They understand that they will have to bow in submission to his authority, and ruling power over them, as the firstborn of their father. This sovereign right is a power and authority to which they are required to yield.

Their envy is representative of the fleshly nature of mankind. Unsaved mankind desires to be big in the eyes of men, and desires to do it my way. This is picturesque of the warfare of the saved sinner, between the inherit sin nature and the born-again new nature. It is a daily struggle to keep the flesh in subjection to the power and authority of Christ. Just as his brethren, filled with envy and hatred instead of love, could not bear the thought of their younger brother ruling over them. The Scribes and Pharisees envied Jesus so much that they sought to kill him.

"but his father observed the saying." Observed is from the Hebrew word shamar (pronounced; shaw-mar') and means; *to hedge about, guard; to protect, attend to, be aware, be circumspect, take heed, mark, observe, preserve, regard, reserve.* We understand from the definition; Israel kept that dream in his heart and mind. Israel had learned to not dismiss the workings of God, because Israel had experienced that God would perform what he promised, by what God did in his own life. Israel had visitation from God in a dream in: **Ge 28:12-15; 12 "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on**

the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. 13 And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; 14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Israel understood; dreams were a way that God used to communicate with his servants. Israel understands that God is working in Joseph's life.

What life lesson can we learn from this? In nature, we may have those who are younger in years than we are, yet they are placed in the position of authority, and we must yield to their leadership. In the spiritual realm, We see; it is the Son of God who is put into the position of authority and power. God the Son is the head of the church, and we all must yield our obedience to him, seen in:

- *Eph 1:22 "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,"*
- *Eph 5:23 "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body."*
- *Col 1:18 "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."*

We have no record of sin in Joseph's life in scripture. Joseph will eventually become the saviour and head of his family in Egypt. Comparatively, we have as the head of the church, the Son of God, who is without sin. Jesus is the Saviour of the family of God, as seen in *Eph 5:23*, above referenced. Praise to God our Father, who gave us the headship of the church, the Saviour, to bring us to the church with humbled hearts and minds, willing to bow in sweet submission to this authority. Hallelujah! Praise ye the Lord!

12 And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.

We remember that Jacob had a purchased possession in Shechem, and that was where the rape of Dinah took place, and where Jacob's sons slew and overthrew the city in retaliation by wicked and deceitful means. Shechem was a place that God told Israel to leave, and Jacob should not have even stopped there in the first place. We remember that the children learned bad things there (and gained great riches by ungodly deeds) and it seems that they don't want to turn it loose yet.

We see this happen in our lives today as we are walking the Christian life. We just can't seem to let go of worldliness so many times. In one way, living the Christian life is the easiest thing to do. When our hearts and minds are centered upon Christ, our head, it is very easy to do that which is right. On the other hand, living the Christian life can be very hard, when Christ is not the full focus of our hearts and minds; then, living the Christian life is very hard. Why? Because, when we are not focused on Christ, our head, we are putting worldliness into first position and that is where the struggle begins. We see this struggle demonstrated in scripture in: *Ro 7:14-25; 14 "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me*

(that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." As Paul demonstrates here: we are in a continual warfare between our sin nature and our born-again nature.

13 And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I.

Israel knows where the children are gone with the flocks. Israel was concerned they may be in danger, because of the heinous deeds committed by his children when they lived there. Therefore, Israel, the father, sends Joseph, the beloved son, to see how his brethren fare.

"Here am I" Did you notice; Joseph is a willing son? Joseph, who knew the hatred of his brethren, was willing to go and do the Father's will. Joseph knew; he would be going to the place where his own brethren had done their unrighteous and violent crimes.

Jesus, the beloved Son, was willing to be sent into the world incarnate, knowing that it would be a very hostile and violent place for him. Jesus left the security and glory of the Father's house, knowing he would have to die, in incarnation on the cross, to secure the salvation of all those that God the Father had given unto him to save.

Joseph was about thirty years old when he came to the position of power as 2nd ruler in Egypt. In this position of power, Joseph called for his family to come to him for sustenance of life. Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his public ministry on earth and called for his family to come to him for their sustenance. Jesus is still calling the Father's children unto him, and Jesus will continue to do so, until the last heir of promise is secured.

Our life lesson from this is: As Joseph and Jesus were both willing to go into these ungodly environments; when we are born again; we should be willing to obey our heavenly Father. We should be willing to take up our cross and follow the call of the Shepherd of our souls. Understanding, we have been called to be soldiers of Christ. Knowing that the world around us, in which we must live, is hostile towards us in every way, and even our own flesh is at war with us. Remember the scripture in: **Joh 15:17-21; 17 "These things I command you, that ye love one another. 18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. 21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."** We should also remember; there is safety and sustenance in the place we have been called to come to eat the bread of life, and to drink from the well of the water of life. Both are found in the church established by Jesus Christ.

14 And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

- Hebron is from the Hebrew word Chebrown (pronounced; kheb-rone') and means; *seat of association; a society or company*. Hebron is a prophetic picture of heaven, from which Jesus was sent, and is emblematic of where God dwells in a Land of Promise with his people. It demonstrates that as the seat of association we are to be gathered around Jesus Christ who is the center of our worship, and to whom all of God's people must come.
- Shechem is from the Hebrew word Sh@kem (pronounced; shek-em') and means; *ridge, the neck (between the shoulders) as the place of burdens; shoulder*. This definition gives us the picture of an ox who is hooked to a burden by the yoke. The yoke rest upon the neck between the shoulders. Shechem is a picture of the earth, where Christ was sent to bear alone the burden of our sins, by giving his life for us on the cross.

Thinking of the definitions, of the names of these places, we see a picture: Joseph comes to Shechem, the place of burdens, and here is where his troubles begin. His brethren are not where they are supposed to be. They have moved to another place. When Jesus came to earth and began his public ministry, he found that the ones, who were supposed to be fairly and equitably administrating the law service, had left the true use of this service, and moved on to a place that better suited their own wishes. We know this because Jesus often points out the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were the religious leaders of the day.

"and bring me word again." Joseph will not return and give his father a report, until he has come to his position of power and authority in Egypt. Joseph will not see his father or his brethren again; until they come to him in Egypt seeking bread for sustenance of life. Joseph will send his brethren home to call his family to come and live in the place he has chosen and prepared for them, which is the very best of the land of Egypt. This will be like a resurrection in the life of Joseph; as he is shown and known to be alive, who was thought to be dead.

Jesus will not bring word again to his Father until the completion of his incarnation, and he has shown himself to be the Messiah. When Jesus ascended back to heaven, he brought word to God the Father, I have suffered all the things, that we knew were coming to me when I left my home, and report: I have established the church of salvation by grace, the best of the land of Egypt, and I have sent forth thy sons to call the whole family, both Jew and Gentile, to come to the church for sustenance of their lives in the world.

With Jesus's resurrection and ascension, Jesus brings to God the Father the news: all my brethren, whom you sent me to find, thy sons, have many trials and tribulation to live through before they come into their eternal land of promise; but I have accomplished all that you sent me to do. Thy children are secure in the eternal salvation that I wrought for them on the cross. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

15 And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? 16 And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks. 17 And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

Dothan is from the Hebrew word *do'-than* for which I found two different meanings: the first meaning found is: *two wells, double feast*, and the second is: *law, custom*.

From the first definition: I see a picture of the establishment of the church by Jesus, which is a well of the water of life to both the Jew and the Gentile. Both are drinking from the fountain of living waters, and both are feasting on the bread of life, and all of God's people are living in the abundance of salvation by grace.

We can easily see from the second definition: when Jesus came incarnate, he found God's people under the demands of the sacrificial law, which required the blood sacrifices for the atonement of sin. Jesus fulfilled this demand by giving his pure holy blood as the true sacrifice for sin and thereby took away the sacrificial law service. Jesus certainly found the Jews living by custom instead of the true law when Christ came. How do we know this? Because Jesus repeatedly pointed out the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees.

On a side note: Dothan is a place situated about 10 to 15 miles north of Shechem. It is the site of future happenings, which are very prophetic. My study bible gives a reference for this verse: **2Ki 6:11-18; 11 "Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel? 12 And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber. 13 And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan. 14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. 15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? 16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. 17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. 18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha."** We see in this reference: Elisha was in this same city of Dothan where Joseph found his brethren. We see the comparison; Elisha was surrounded by his enemies who were serving their king, who sought to kill Elisha. Dothan being surrounded by enemies is picturesque of what happened in the life of Jesus. The king of Syria and his armies are representative of the devil and his followers, who sought diligently to destroy the testimony of Jesus.

We have, from this reference scripture in 2Kings, the prophetic picture: Dothan was the home city of Elisha. The church is the home city for God's people on earth, of whom Christ is the central figure of headship. Dothan was surrounded by the enemy, which sought to overthrow Dothan and take Elisha captive and slay him. The church is surrounded by the satanic evil and temptation of this world. The devil desires to overthrow the church, take the church body captive, and slay its headship.

The servant of Elisha had his eyes opened, which allowed him to see that God was greater than the host of enemies that surrounded Dothan. Jesus, our master, must pray for us for our eyes to be opened, which happens when we are born again. Being enabled to see, we understand we are

surrounded by our fleshly nature, which is at enmity with our new life in Christ. However, our spiritual eyes are now able to see our eternal salvation, and the supreme power of God. Eyes that see help us better understand the meaning of the scripture in: **1Jo 4:4 "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."**

There is another aspect that we can see from this reference also. Elisha did not slay the Syrians who had come to kill him. He mercifully spared their life by smiting them with blindness and sent them back to their king, which is exactly what Christ did for us. Christ did not slay those who fought against him. He simply left them to their own king, the devil. However, Elisha did save the inhabitants of Dothan, just as Jesus saved the inhabitants of the church.

One lesson we can draw from our Genesis study, in combination with the 2Kings reference, is: Though we may not be where we should be, Christ will always find us. When he finds us, we will be living under the law and the penalty of death. When he opens our eyes and causes us to see our sins, which would take us and hold us captive and even bring us to death: we, like the servant of Elisha, see that Jesus Christ is our personal Saviour and our salvation. We will see that we have come under his divine protection, and see our eternal salvation is sure and steadfast.

Praise the Lord! for eyes that see, ears that hear, and hearts that understand, and a Saviour who wrought salvation and eternal life for us. Hallelujah!

18 And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.

Isn't this exactly what the Scribes and Pharisees did with Jesus, after he began his public ministry on earth? As the followers of Jesus grew in number, and the focal point of attention was taken away from the Scribes and Pharisees; they showed themselves to be far off from the Lord. Jesus did come near to them and revealed their hypocrisy, which drove them to conspire to kill Jesus.

Let's look at a scripture reference for this verse: ***Ps 31:11-24; 11 "I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me. 12 I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel. 13 For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life. 14 But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my God. 15 My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me. 16 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake. 17 Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave. 18 Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous. 19 Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! 20 Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues. 21 Blessed be the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city. 22 For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou hearest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee. 23 O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. 24 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.***" This was an

actuality in the life of King David, Which tells the same story of the life of Joseph. This story prophetically demonstrates the life of Jesus incarnate. It also gives us a picture of what our lives as Christians will be like.

We see in this chapter, and the Psalms' text above, the depiction of our own lives in this world. How? When we are born again; we are seen afar off by the world around us, just as Joseph's brethren saw him afar off. The unsaved of the world, and the devil, see us and they despise us, because they despise our Saviour and Lord. They immediately begin to plot, how they may infiltrate our defenses, and bring us back into captivity and death.

19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. 20 Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and 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.

Joseph's brethren were intent upon making the dreams of Joseph, God's voice, and word of truth, come to naught. We notice; their scheming includes having to make up lies to make them look innocent to their father. What Joseph's brethren don't understand is; their actions, which are evil and malicious, God will use to preserve the whole family of Israel alive in the future. This will be manifested by, what to Joseph's brethren will be his resurrection from the dead, and revelation to them that he is alive and rules in Egypt.

Isn't this what the Scribes, the Pharisees, and the rulers of Israel, who were Jesus' brethren, did in the life of Jesus? They believed that killing the body would put an end to the ministry of Jesus Christ, which they despised because it took away their power, and glory of their flesh, to rule and reign in the lives of the Israelites. What they didn't understand was their actions were only fulfilling the will and purpose of God. They did not understand that the pit, the grave, could not contain him. We have the testimony, of the word of God, that the Jesus' resurrection from the grave, the revealing of the resurrected body of Christ, which was revealed to a host large enough to make it indisputable, and the ascension of Jesus into heaven in clouds of power and glory, would only cause the gospel of Jesus Christ to flourish upon the earth. Every born-again sinner realizes that Jesus is alive and the ruler over all things whether in heaven or upon the earth.

Joseph had told of the dreams God gave him, which taught that he would ultimately be ruler over all his family, and his brethren hated him for them. Jesus foretold of his death, his burial, and his resurrection, and his eternal kingdom, and his brethren, the rulers of Israel, hated him.

21 And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him. 22 And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

Reuben attempted to save Joseph, from death by his brethren, but failed in his attempt to restore Joseph to his father, that the purpose of God might be made manifest. There were those who attempted to deliver Jesus from death:

- Some were sent to take Jesus and bring him before the council, but they could not do it. As the Scribes and Pharisees railed upon them, Nicodemus spoke up on behalf of Christ, seen in: **Joh 7:50-53; 50 "Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)**

51 Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? 52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. 53 And every man went unto his own house."

- Just as the efforts of Reuben to save Joseph from death were frustrated, so were the efforts of Pilate to release Jesus and spare him from death.

However, these attempts to save the lives of Joseph and Jesus failed, that the purpose of God might be made manifest.

23 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; 24 And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it. 25 And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. 26 And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?

"they stript Joseph out of his coat" A picture of what they did to Jesus at his crucifixion in: *Joh 19:23-24; 23 "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. 24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did."*

"his coat of many colours that was on him" Jesus yielded up his many offices, represented by the many colors of the coat, and reduced himself to mortal man, that he might die the death of the sacrificial Lamb death prescribed to him by God.

"And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it"

They placed Joseph in a pit to die, which had no life sustenance in it. Joseph, by the will of God, was resurrected from this pit to life. They put the body of Jesus into a pit, the tomb, and we notice that it is stated that there was no water in the pit. This pit had no sustenance of life in it. Jesus was resurrected from the grave to life eternal. Had Jesus remained in the tomb, and not risen from the dead, there would be no sustenance of life, nor fountain of living waters, for God's people today.

"And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?"

Judah tells his brethren; we don't gain anything by killing our brother, however, we might sell him as a slave to these travelers. This will accomplish the goal of ridding ourselves of our brother, and we will get paid for selling him.

John Wesley's Commentary points out: The idea of selling Joseph for twenty pieces of silver came from Judah. It was Judas that sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. The names Judah and Judas are sometimes interchanged in use.

27 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. 28 Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

Comparatively in scripture we find: **Mt 26:14-15; 14 "Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, 15 And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver."** Joseph being sold for silver, wordly gain, is picturesque of Christ being sold for 30 pieces of silver. Some will object; this is not a good comparison, since Joseph was sold into slavery and Jesus was sold to his death. Let me ask you this: When his brethren sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites, was not Joseph dead to them? When Joseph's brethren come before Joseph in Egypt to buy corn; they confess that Joseph is dead: **Ge 42:13 "And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not."** When Joseph reveals himself to his brethren is a picture of the resurrection from the dead.

"**and let not our hand be upon him;**" and "**sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites**" We point out; The priesthood of the law service could not sentence Jesus to death, seen in: **Joh 18:31 "Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:**" Why? They could not find a fault, or a sin in him, which would condemn him to death under the law. They only could accuse him with false accusations. Therefore, they sent him to the Romans to be sentenced to death under the act of treason, declaring he was proclaimed a king over the Jews, and thereby in insurrection against the throne of natural government.

29 And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes. 30 And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go? 31 And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood; 32 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. 33 And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces. 34 And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. 35 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.

We see that the plan of deceit is an ongoing, and continuously self-reproducing more sin. It requires of Joseph's brethren a constant act of believing that Joseph is dead, all the while knowing that he was alive at their last sight of him. We understand from scripture that many of the Jews continued in the ceremonial and sacrificial law service after the death and resurrection of Jesus. With the death and resurrection of Jesus, which brought to fruition the age of salvation by grace, it requires a constant act of not believing that Jesus is the Christ, and that he has not resurrected and fulfilled the sacrificial law requirement forever.

"**And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him**" I point out here; though they may not be named in scripture, Jacob had not only sons, but he also had daughters, plural form.

"**but he refused to be comforted**" Jacob was not comforted by the efforts of his children for the loss of his beloved son Joseph. Neither can the lies of satan bring comfort and peace to the heart of one who is born again, who desires to see the beloved Son of God face to face.

"For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him." Jacob does not know that this is not a true statement, because he has forgotten the dreams of Joseph, which tell him that he shall see his beloved son again, and that he and the whole family will bow in reverence to him. Likewise, we may go mourning in this life journey, but, if we be children of God, we will not go to the grave without being called to come, to Jesus by the power of the Holy Ghost, and to behold the Beloved Son of God. Jesus will always reveal himself to God's elect and make known to them they have been saved before they go to the grave. After all, salvation does not come in the grave, but it happens in life, as demonstrated by scripture in: **1Co 15:19 "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."** You see, we are born again in life and being born again we go to the grave with the hope of the resurrection of the body unto eternal life.

36 And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard.

In summary of this chapter: Joseph's continual suffering and bondage is moving, as required by God, to attain the ultimate purpose of salvation for Israel and his whole family. We shall see; the faithfulness of Joseph in God as we continue our study. This faithfulness is to be a source of strength and encouragement to us today. Joseph believed God would do what he had showed him in his dreams. We know this from his steadfastness of faith in God, which will be demonstrated by his life from henceforth.

Joseph's life, from henceforth, will be filled with trials and tribulations, which will ultimately end with Joseph rising to the position of 2nd in command of Egypt, seen in: **Ge 41:39-43; 39 "And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: 40 Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. 41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. 42 And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; 43 And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt."**

Jesus has acknowledged only one superior to him, and that is God the Father, seen in:

- **Joh 10:29 "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."**
- **Joh 14:28 "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I."**

Jesus has risen from incarnation to heaven, and God the Father has given all things into his hands. Jesus, in a manner of speaking is 2nd in command over all things in heaven and earth, as seen in:

- **Mt 28:18 "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."**
- **Joh 17:1-3; 1 "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: 2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. 3 And**

this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

We trust, you have seen, in this chapter, that Joseph's life is a portrait of the incarnate life of Jesus. We trust, you have seen and understand that Joseph, in all the terrible circumstances he endured in his life, will be the saviour of his family. Likewise, Jesus suffered more terrible circumstances on earth than any person could even begin to imagine, that he might be the Saviour of all of God's people. Rejoice, I say rejoice, our eternal salvation is secure in Jesus Christ, Lord and Saviour. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!