

# Christ the True and Better Joseph

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[ 0 : 00 ] Genesis chapter 50 beginning in verse 15. If you would stand with me as we honor the reading of God's word together.

They said, it may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him. So they sent a message to Joseph saying, your father gave this command before he died. Say to Joseph, please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin because they did evil to you. And now please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father. However, Joseph wept when they spoke to him. His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, behold, we are your servants.

But Joseph said to them, do not fear for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good to bring about that many people should be kept alive as they are today.

[ 1 : 23 ] So do not fear. I will provide for you and your little ones. Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[ 3 : 38 ] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

that foreshadows a person or an object in the New Testament.

And it's through typology that God reveals to us that all of the Bible, though written over a long period of time and by many different authors, is truly one story about one person, and that person's name is Jesus Christ.

[ 6 : 57 ] And today, our text reveals to us this truth, and it's the main idea for this morning's sermon. God ordains the evil intentions of sinful men to bring deliverance to his people.

God ordains the evil intentions of sinful men to bring deliverance to his people. And so we're going to cover a lot of ground today in the Bible, taking a 30,000-foot view of Joseph's life before landing in Genesis chapter 50, verses 19 through 21.

And in doing that, we'll look at five scenes of Joseph's life, which serve as a type of Christ, revealing how God ordains the evil intentions of sinful men to bring deliverance to his people.

The story of Joseph's life is both disturbing and astonishing. Evil actions of men are used by a gracious God to deliver unworthy people.

And not only does he deliver his enemies, he accepts them forever into his family. And so the first scene that we're going to look at today is brotherly betrayal in Genesis 37.

[ 8 : 20 ] Brotherly betrayal. With the funeral of their father now over, eleven grim faces stare anxiously at the floor. Before them is the most powerful men, one of the most powerful men, I should say, in the world.

Second only to Pharaoh in Egypt. And he has authority to execute him. He is Joseph, their brother, whom they betrayed.

Now let's hit the rewind button and go back about 13 to 15 years to observe the planting of the seeds that bore the fruit of this feud.

Joseph is 17 years old. He works as a shepherd with his brothers, taking care of his father's flock. In Genesis 37, 3 through 4, we read, Now Israel, that's Jacob, loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age, and he made him a robe of many colors.

But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him. I think most children with siblings believe at some point that they aren't the favorite, especially if they're the middle child.

[ 9 : 48 ] God loves you, middle children, right? Don't forget that. And, you know, maybe it was a case where at Christmas, all the other kids received just one present more than they did, even though mom and dad spent the same amount on every single kid.

But that perceived slight is enough to convince them that they are the least favorite child. Though, again, the evidence doesn't truly support their case.

But when a father of 12 sons gives one of them an expensive and extravagant gift to parade around his favored status before the rest, well, that's a totally different thing.

There was no doubt in anybody's mind that Joseph was his father's favorite. And what boy isn't jealous for his father's attention and approval?

Why did Jacob, I should say, love and favor Joseph so much? Well, the Bible tells us that Jacob, Joseph's father, had two wives who were sisters.

[ 11 : 10 ] Rachel, the younger, whom he loved, and Leah, the older sister, who he was deceived and tricked into marrying by his father-in-law. Rachel was Jacob's favorite wife, and Joseph was their firstborn son.

Joseph's ten older brothers were his half-brothers, the offspring of the undesired, the unwanted wife.

So conflict ran pretty deep in this very messed up family. And for sake of time, I won't go into all of it, but you should read it.

It's the kind of family drama and scandal that you would expect to see on an episode of Maury Povich. Not in the Bible.

Nevertheless, Joseph's brothers grow in their hatred and their hostility of their father's favorite son, who was also somewhat of a tattletale.

[ 12 : 15 ] In Genesis 37, too, we read that Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. You know, growing up, we used to say, snitches get stitches.

But Joseph's brothers had something much worse than wounds that needed stitching in store for him. Now, see it for a moment from their point of view.

Joseph knows that he's daddy's favorite. And he acts and talks as if he, the younger brother, is superior to the rest of them.

Even more offensive than that, he told them about some dreams that he'd had. And so they viewed him as a spoiled, rotten brat.

With an ego that needed to be checked. In fact, they wanted him out of the family. And their opportunity came when Joseph is sent by Jacob to check on his brothers.

[ 13 : 29 ] In verse 18, as they see Joseph in the distance, coming in their direction, dressed in his flamboyant coat of favoritism, they plot his murder.

Genesis 37, 18 through 20, it says, And those dreams, the brothers were kneeling and bowing down.

To Joseph. To Joseph. But Reuben, here, here's all this, as a part of this, the oldest, tried to save Joseph's life by offering an alternative plan.

Let's not kill him. Let's just throw him in a pit. And he was secretly planning to come back afterwards and pull him out.

But his diversion doesn't work. After discarding of Joseph, throwing him in the pit, verse 26 says, Then Judah said to his brothers, What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?

[ 14 : 55 ] Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh. And his brothers listened to him. Then Midianite traders passed by, and they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for 20 shekels of silver.

However, they took Joseph to Egypt. So Joseph goes from favored son to captive slave. He is removed from the love and security of his father's home, betrayed by his brothers for pieces of silver.

Does that sound familiar? The evil intentions of Joseph's brothers caused him to suffer. And while God does not condone this evil, he will use it and overrule it to accomplish his purpose.

But things don't get better for Joseph just yet. So let's move on now to scene number two. Scene number two, where we see Joseph resisting temptation.

Resisting temptation. So Joseph is taken to Egypt. He's sold again, this time to a man named Potiphar. And Potiphar was an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard, which was a very important position.

[16:20] And it was not coincidence that brought Joseph to Potiphar. Because a phrase that is repeated throughout the life, the account of Joseph's life, is the Lord was with him.

God was working behind the scenes in ways that were not apparent. And just as Joseph found favor with his father, it wasn't long before he found favor with Potiphar, his master.

And in Genesis 39, 4 through 6, we read, So Joseph found favor in his sight, that's Potiphar, and attended him. And he, Potiphar, made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had.

From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the Lord blessed the Egyptians' house for Joseph's sake. The blessing of the Lord was on all that he had, in house and field.

So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him, he had no concern about anything but the food he ate. Again, it's important to understand that Joseph did not arrive in Potiphar's house as a result of fortune or fate or good karma.

[17:36] God providentially placed him there. Why? Well, being so closely connected to Potiphar allowed Joseph opportunity to interact with Egyptian royalty and familiarize himself with their customs.

And in overseeing all of Potiphar's affairs, Joseph was receiving on-the-job managerial training, which equipped him for a time to come when he would oversee and manage a much greater task. However, Joseph once again became the target of the evil intentions of others. Verse 6 says that Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.

Potiphar's wife took notice of that and pursued him fervently and frequently. Despite Joseph's continued denials of her, he would not betray his earthly master's trust, and most importantly, he refused to sin against his much greater heavenly master.

Potiphar's wife was undeterred, and her impassioned pursuit of Joseph turned aggressive.

[19:03] We read about that in Genesis 39, 11 through 12. But one day, when he, Joseph, went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was there, she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me.

But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house. So now imagine being Joseph. Here we go again, right?

It's like a bad case of déjà vu. I was stripped of my garment from others with evil intentions before, and I was thrown into a pit. Now I've been stripped of a garment again by someone with evil intentions.

This can't be good for me. And so we come to scene three, where Joseph is falsely accused. Falsely accused.

And let's jump right in, Genesis 39, 13 through 23. As soon as she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled out of the house, she called to the men of her household and said to them, See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to laugh at us.

[20:14] He came into 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 out of the house. Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home.

And she told him the same story again. The Hebrew servant whom you have brought among us came into me to laugh at me. But as soon as I lifted my voice and cried, he left his garment beside me and fled out of the house.

As soon as his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, This is the way your servant treated me. His anger was kindled. And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined.

And he was there in prison. Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned. Insulted by Joseph's resistance to her temptations, Potiphar's wife seeks his death.

Adultery at this time in Egypt was punishable by death. And certainly if a servant was caught seeking to have such a relationship with his master's wife, execution would be the expected punishment that the master of the servant would pursue.

[ 21 : 42 ] But Potiphar doesn't take that route, and we can't help but wonder why. He's angry, but I think he's also aware of the kind of woman that his wife is.

And so he gives Joseph the benefit of the doubt as much as he can. But once again, Joseph is bound, and he's falsely accused and sentenced to prison for someone else's sins.

Things are bad. And they'll get even worse before Joseph, by God's doing, makes an incredible comeback.

So we move on to scene four, exalted savior. Scene four, exalted savior. Now again, maybe Joseph is thinking at this point, I obeyed my father, and my brothers threw me in a pit.

I obeyed and honored my master by resisting his wife, and he threw me in prison. I do what is right for others with evil intentions, and yet I continue to suffer.

[ 22 : 59 ] And if that was you, you would probably be thinking, how unfair. But again, God, through the evil intentions of others, which though he does not condone them, has Joseph right where he wants him.

Joseph is confined in prison where some of Pharaoh's other prisoners are kept. And once more, we are told that the Lord is with Joseph.

And once again, he finds favor, this time with the keeper of the prison who puts Joseph in charge of all of the other prisoners. Archaeological evidence from this period unsurprisingly supports what we read about in our Bibles.

Ancient documents state that the Egyptian penal system had a position called scribe of the prison. It was this person's job to keep all the prison's records and maintain detailed accounts of the prison's assets.

And given Joseph's experience, he was more than capable of the task. And once again, he excelled. And while in prison, Joseph meets Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker.

[ 24 : 19 ] They were in jail for committing an offense against Pharaoh, the king. And so we ask, well, what offense, what accusation would land the people who are responsible with supplying the king with food and drink in prison?

Think about it. Poisoning. An assassination plot was uncovered and these two men were the prime suspects.

And in prison, each of these men receives a troubling dream that they can't understand, they can't interpret. And Joseph says to them, does not interpretation belong to God?

And he asked them, please tell your dreams to me. And we've got to keep moving so I won't go into detail about those dreams, only that God gave the interpretation to Joseph.

The cupbearer would be restored. He was innocent. But the baker was the guilty party and he would be executed and that's exactly what happened.

[ 25 : 30 ] But Joseph did make one request of the cupbearer to remember him, to speak well of him to Pharaoh, to explain his situation about how he even got into Egypt, how unjust it was that he even came into his country.

And hopefully, Joseph is thinking, the cupbearer will speak well of me and I'll be pardoned and I can go back home. But as we come to the end of chapter 40, we read that the exonerated cupbearer forgets about Joseph for two whole years.

But God hasn't forgotten Joseph. Pharaoh is going to have dreams that trouble him too. Dreams that none of his spiritual advisors can interpret.

And suddenly, the cupbearer is cured of his amnesia and he says to Pharaoh, hey, I know a guy who I think can help you. And in chapter 41, verse 14, Pharaoh calls for Joseph.

He tells Joseph about his dreams. Both have similar imagery. Both depict some sort of future calamity. And Joseph, by God's doing, interprets those dreams beginning in verse 25.

[ 26 : 54 ] And here's the interpretation. Egypt is going to have seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. And Joseph, given all of his administrative and managerial experience that he has gained to this point, gives Pharaoh some advice.

He says, appoint a wise man to oversee the collection and storage of food in the plentiful years so that the land will not perish during the seven years of famine that are to follow.

Pharaoh likes this plan. In fact, Pharaoh likes this plan a lot. We read in Genesis 41, 37 through 43 that this proposal pleased Pharaoh and all of his servants.

And Pharaoh said to his servants, Can we find a man like this in whom is the Spirit of God? Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as

you are.

You shall be over my house and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you.

[ 28 : 08 ] And Pharaoh said to Joseph, See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and he put it on Joseph's hand and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck.

and he made him ride in his second chariot and they called out before him, Bow the knee. Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt.

Now, not even Patrick Mahomes could orchestrate such an incredible comeback. Amen, Chiefs fans? Michael, I see you over here.

Joseph goes literally from rags to riches, literally from prisoner to prime minister. God promotes him to a position of power where he will work to preserve food, bread that will fill the stomachs of those who would otherwise starve, life-giving bread that will deliver his own people.

Does that sound familiar? Deliver them, his family, from death. And so we come to the fifth scene, which is a family reunion.

[ 29 : 35 ] Family reunion. The seven years of plenty eventually come to an end, and Joseph has done such a good job, he not only has saved the Egyptians from mass starvation, but he has kept in reserve enough for the surrounding nations of Egypt to have food as well.

And this is what leads to a family reunion between Joseph and his brothers. They don't have food, they can't plant food because of the famine, there's no point, it won't grow, and so they come to Joseph not realizing that it's Joseph whom they are seeking, asking to buy bread from him.

It's been 13 years since they've last seen each other. They don't recognize Joseph, but Joseph, he recognizes them.

He hasn't forgotten. And after putting them through a test to see if they had changed, and seeing that they passed the test and had changed, Joseph finally reveals himself to his brothers whose evil intentions had caused him so much pain, and grief, and toil, and suffering.

In Genesis 45, 4-8, Joseph said to his brothers, come near to me, please. And they came near, and he said, I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt, and now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.

[ 31 : 24 ] For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest, and God sent me before you to preserve you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors.

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

Having said this, and informing his brothers to move the whole family, all of them, all the family, all the animals, back to Egypt, so he can continue to provide for them, the reunion ends in verses 14 through 15 with tearful embraces.

God used Joseph to preserve his family. The whole family moves in with Joseph, and they were cared for, and that was their arrangement for 400 years, and there'll be more about what changed regarding that next week, but still, lingering in the back of the mind of Joseph's brothers must have been this thought that this is just too good to be true.

We treated Joseph terribly. there's no way that he can just forgive and forget what we've done, how we've sinned against him.

[ 33 : 13 ] There's no way that our little brother can be so gracious. Maybe by now his feelings have clouded his theology and he's just been waiting for dad to die so he can seek retribution on us.

And so now we're back in Genesis 50 verses 15 through 21. The funeral is over and the brothers are anticipating the proverbial shoe to drop and they kneel before him again just as Joseph's dream accurately predicted that they would.

But this time not only are they kneeling but they are down on their faces before him repenting of their sin and pleading for his forgiveness.

And again we read what Joseph did in Genesis 50 18 through 21. His brothers came and they fell before him and said behold we are your servants there's humility but Joseph said to them do not fear for I am in the place of God meaning God has put me in this place as for you you meant evil against me but God meant it for good to bring it about that many people should be kept alive so they are today and here's grace again so do not fear I will provide for you and your little ones thus

he didn't rub their sin in their face thus he didn't say well you're really lucky that I'm not going to be mean to you or any other thing what did he do he comforted them he spoke kindly to these sinners who had caused him so much suffering you know if

Hollywood was producing this story I think the ending would be sent back for a rewrite these aren't the kinds of endings to these kinds of stories that sinful people like are they they want to see the good guy get revenge they want to see those who have acted evil be punished be killed but this story wasn't written and produced by men it was written and produced by God and we should be eternally thankful for this ending because the gracious way that Joseph deals with his repentant brothers symbolizes the way Jesus deals with repentant people who by his grace not only are forgiven but are adopted and become members of his family

[ 36 : 22 ] Jesus like Joseph was the beloved son of his father who descended from heaven to become a servant in this world and who likewise was betrayed by his friends friends whom he called brothers like Joseph he was betrayed for pieces of silver the people whom he came to save sought his death binding him in chains and hauling him off to prison where he was falsely accused for crimes he did not commit in fact he never sinned though he was tempted as we are he is faultless sinless and perfectly obedient Joseph protested his being placed in a hole in the earth but Jesus willingly died to be placed in a tomb another hole in the earth

Joseph suffered the evil intentions of others and was promoted to the right hand of Pharaoh where he supplied bread for the nations to feed their famished bodies Jesus is the bread of life whose gospel supplies the nations with spiritual truth and life by faith in him we become heirs with him reunited to God the father through him and adopted eternally as his children Jesus suffered on the cross he was punished for sins that he did not commit and he rose from the pit he rose from the tomb on the third day appearing to many reuniting himself with his disciples meeting with Peter who betrayed him many times and restoring him as his brother before ascending to heaven to the right hand of who

God the father where he continues to this day right now as we meet and as I speak to serve his people as their intercessor as their advocate continually and compassionately lavishing us with his grace and with his mercy preparing for us a place in his eternal kingdom where he will one day like Joseph did to his family bring us home like Joseph Jesus has been gracious to pardon our sins he does not change his mind regarding those whom he's chosen to be merciful to no Joseph doesn't say in one moment I'll forgive you and then later on say you know what I forgot or I changed my mind Jesus is the same way you're a sinner before he saved you you're a sinner after he saved you and guess what you can continue to come to him and plead for him for forgiveness and what will he do grant it speaking compassionately and kindly to you his brother his sister and like Pharaoh did for Joseph Jesus closed us in his righteousness in salvation and when he and that's not it and that's great and not only that when he returns he will clothe our imperishable souls with glorified imperishable bodies and capable of committing sin ever again and at that time when he comes back just as every knee bowed down to Joseph in Egypt so every knee will bow down to our coming conquering savior the king of kings and lord of lords whose name is Jesus Christ so the main point of application Jesus suffered to deliver his people and was raised in exaltation to make provision for them and this all according to the divine plan and foreknowledge of God the father when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost that'll be part of your application question he said this man whom you killed but right but it was the divine foreordained plan of God both are true and I tell you whoever you are no matter what you've done let's look a couple things first of all you the unbeliever you are here today by God's divine design to hear this news about his grace this good news about who Jesus is and what he's done no matter how much you've sinned and ultimately all of your sin is against him Jesus extends his hand to you and says be saved be clothed in my righteousness become a part of my family and I will give you the bread of life which will nourish you now and forever and he's ready to embrace you and to receive you if you repent of your sins and call upon him for salvation for those of us who have already been saved by the [ 42 : 10 ] Lord let's look at Romans 8 31 through 39 what then shall we say to these things if God is for us who can be against us and I like to scribble wherever I see that above those words it doesn't matter who is against us if God is for us he who did not spare!

his own son but gave him up for us all how will he not also with him graciously! give us all things who shall bring any charge against God's elect it is God who justifies who is to condemn Christ Jesus is the one who died more than that who was raised who is at the right hand of God who

indeed is interceding for us who shall separate us from the love of Christ shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword as it for your sake we are being killed all the day long we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered no in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us for I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all of creation!

will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord you may be in a time in a place right now where like Joseph you just wonder God what are you doing you may be suffering you may be hurting you may just be again in a place where you just don't understand the life of Joseph and ultimately the life it foreshadows in Jesus Christ and his cross is a constant reminder to all of us God knows what he's doing and if he saved you you've received his love his!

his salvation his mercy and his help and nothing and no one can ever change that the Lord is for us and he is with us what more could we want than to have a brother a savior a Lord and a master like Jesus Christ one question of application for you all to look at today or later this week I want you to read Acts 2 22 through 24 that's Peter's message at Pentecost and what he declares about Jesus and his crucifixion what does this text say about God ordaining the evil intentions of men to bring deliverance to his people and how should this truth shape your theology and perspective of life as a follower of Jesus Christ let's pray!

Lord all of us have sinned and fall woefully short of your glory Lord in this passage we are like Joseph's brothers God we've been selfish and self centered and in that Lord we have sinned against you we have denied you the worship that you are due and yet Lord Joseph is a reminder ultimately of how great a brother you are to us that you forgive us that your desire is not to seek revenge on us but to be compassionate towards us to lift us out of the pit of our sins to clothe us in your righteousness to make us part of your family to be heirs who reign alongside of you in your kingdom

[ 46 : 14 ] Lord this is an awesome and wonderful truth God I pray that it be one that shapes our theology our understanding of who you are that no matter how much we sin and how great that sin is that you are a greater savior no matter how much we suffer and endure Lord that you use it and overrule it and ultimately will accomplish your purposes which will see the return of your son who will take us through that final state of salvation when we are glorified and we live eternally in the new heaven and earth with you God I pray that like you we would be those who exercise such compassion and grace with others that we would desire to see reconciliation take place you using us as your ambassadors to declare the good news of who you are and what you've done to those who have yet to believe in the hopes Lord that you will save them we ask these things in

Jesus name Amen