Joseph: Bible Character Study

- The Meaning of Joseph – “God adds”.
- Eleventh son of Jacob and the elder of two sons of Rachel (Genesis 30:24)

Joseph’ life: I - Genesis 37: 1-4

Q. What can we learn about Joseph in the bible?

- Joseph was seventeen years old. He was a shepherd.
- He did not participate in his brothers’ misconducts. In fact, he brought reports of their mischief to his father.
- He was the favorite of Jacob. Jacob loved him more than all his brothers. Jacob made a coat of many colors for him.
- His brothers hated him for this reason and could not even talk with him well.
- Joseph was rather naive to tell his dreams to his brothers about his future supremacy and his brothers’ submission to him. That intensified their hatred towards him.
- So, when the opportunity came at Dothan, they planned to kill him. But Rueben tried to rescue him by persuading them not to kill him. His brothers sold him to the caravan of Ishmaelite going to Egypt.
- His life was changed in a moment, from being the beloved son to the slave in an unknown land, Egypt.

Joseph at the Potiphar’s House: II – Genesis 39:1-20

Q. What can we learn about Joseph from this passage?

- He was a good administrator.
- Faithful servant
- Fair and handsome (Gen 39:6)
- God was with him.
- God made him prosper and successful.
- God blessed his master through him. (Gen 39:2)
- Potiphar, his master had entrusted him with charge of all of his house affairs.

Temptation of Joseph:

- He was young and handsome. He was the head of the house. None would have known if he’d have given in to the temptation by Potiphar’s wife.
- He had a healthy fear of God. (Gen 39:9)
- His temptation period was long.
- He tried to resist her as much as he could, but when time came he had to flee from the place. (How to overcome temptation, Temptation of Jesus Christ in the Wilderness)
- Due to false accusation of Potiphar’s wife, he was cast into prison. (Gen 39:20)
- Once again, he paid the price for being righteous!


- Once again, God was with him in all his trials.
- One may argue, why did God not rescue him from his troubles? But God’s plan and purpose are higher than ours. We may see the immediate, but God sees at our future.
• Joseph continued to be faithful, he did not give up.
• The Lord again blessed him in all his work. The Jailer gave him charge of all the other prisoners.
• In prison, he helped the chief butler (cup-bearer) to restore his position in Pharaoh’s office. But the cupbearer forgot his promise to mention about Joseph’s innocence to the Pharaoh.
• After two years, when Pharaoh had two dreams, the cupbearer remembered Joseph and his skills to interpret dreams.
• So when Joseph was brought to Pharaoh, he interpreted dreams about seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine.
• He suggested the preparation for the famine by storing food during the good harvest years.

**Joseph: The Chief Minister (Governor) of Egypt: IV – Genesis 41:41-56**

• The Pharaoh liked his proposal. And he made Joseph the Head of state to implement his plans for upcoming famine.
• He was given egyptian name and was married to egyptian priest’s daughter.
• He was 30 years old. So after 13 years of suffering and struggle, God made him the most influential person in all known world at that time.
• His wisdom and planning saved lives of people from not only Egypt but many other nations.

**Joseph’s Life: The Unusual Family Reunion: V – Genesis 42-50**

• The famine brought all people from different nations to Egypt for help, including his brothers from Israel.
• They could not recognize him, but he knew them. He remembered the dream he had, when he was a young boy.
• Joseph, after testing them in different ways, made him known to them. (Gen 45:1-15)
• He forgave them and persuaded them to settle in Egypt with their father, Jacob.
• Joseph lived for 110 years. (Gen 50:26)

**Lessons learnt from Life of Joseph:**

• God’s plans and purpose are greater and better than ours!
• God’s providence and favor to the righteous
• Suffering to God’s people is not always bad!
• Self control in youth
• Patience and perseverance in the time of troubles
• Honesty, strong work ethics
• Fear of God and Faithfulness to God

**Key-verse for Life of Joseph:**

• “The Lord was with Joseph”. (Gen 39:2, 39:21)
• “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” (Gen 50:20)

**Joseph as Type of Christ:**

Old Testament often represents metaphors, symbols or characters which points to Jesus Christ and God’s plan of Salvation, these are called ‘Type of Christ”. (Check out Moses as Type of Christ) Life of Joseph in many ways resembles to the life of Christ. Here are some of the type of Christ in Joseph’s life.
- He was loved by his father.
- Rejected by his brothers
- Turned to gentiles
- Unjustly tried
- Suffered
- Was exalted with honor and glory
- Married a gentile bride
- Returned to his family and was accepted
- Delivered his people from death