

Lesson 12

Joseph, Prince of Egypt

Sabbath Afternoon, June 11

The part which Joseph acted in connection with the scenes of the gloomy prison, was that which raised him finally to prosperity and honor. God designed that he should obtain an experience by temptations, adversity, and hardships, to prepare him to fill an exalted position.

Joseph carried his religion everywhere, and this was the secret of his unwavering fidelity.

He who receives Christ by living faith has a living connection with God, and is a vessel unto honor. He carries with him the atmosphere of heaven, which is the grace of God, a treasure that the world cannot buy. He who is in living connection with God may be in humble stations, yet his moral worth is as precious as was that of Joseph and Daniel, who were recognized by heathen kings as men with whom was the Spirit of God.

—**Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 1097, 1098.**

[Joseph's brothers] sold Joseph as a slave, and they were fearful that God designed to punish them by suffering them to become slaves.

—***Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 156.**

[Joseph's brothers] humbly confessed their wrongs which they had committed against Joseph, and entreated his forgiveness, and [were] greatly rejoiced to find that he was alive; for they had suffered remorse, and great distress of mind, since their cruelty toward him. And now as they knew that they were not guilty of his blood, their troubled minds were relieved.

—***Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 167.**

The evidences of a genuine work of grace on the heart are to be found not in feeling, but in the life. "By their fruits," Christ declared, "ye shall know them." . . .

The work of grace upon the heart is not an instantaneous work. It is effected by continuous, daily watching and believing the promises of God. The repentant, believing one, who cherishes faith and earnestly desires the renewing grace of Christ, God will not turn away empty. He will give him grace. And ministering angels will aid him as he perseveres in his efforts to advance.

—***Evangelism*, p. 287.**

When the heart yields to the influence of the Spirit of God, the conscience will be quickened, and the sinner will discern something of the depth and sacredness of God's holy law, the foundation of His government in heaven and on earth. The "Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," illumines the secret chambers of the soul, and the hidden things of darkness are made manifest. John 1:9. Conviction takes hold upon the mind and heart. The sinner has a sense of the righteousness of Jehovah and feels the terror of appearing, in his own guilt and uncleanness, before the Searcher of hearts. He sees the love of God, the beauty of holiness, the joy of purity; he longs to be cleansed and to be restored to communion with Heaven.

—***Steps to Christ*, p. 24.**

Sunday, June 12: Joseph's Rise to Power

Joseph traveled throughout all the land of Egypt, giving command to build immense store-houses, and using his clear head and excellent judgment to aid in the preparations to secure food, necessary for the long years of famine. At length the seven years of plenteousness in the land of Egypt ended. "And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said, and the dearth was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. And Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you do. And the famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the store-houses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt."

—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 152, 153.

Joseph was faithful to God, and his fidelity was a constant testimony to the true faith. It was to quench this light that Satan worked through the envy of Joseph's brothers to cause him to be sold as a slave in a heathen land. God overruled events, however, so that the knowledge of Himself should be given to the people of Egypt. Both in the house of Potiphar and in the prison Joseph received an education and training that, with the fear of God, prepared him for his high position as prime minister of the nation. From the palace of the Pharaohs his influence was felt throughout the land, and the knowledge of God spread far and wide. The Israelites in Egypt also became prosperous and wealthy, and such as were true to God exerted a widespread influence.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 332.

To the people of Egypt and of all the nations connected with that powerful kingdom, God manifested Himself through Joseph. Why did the Lord choose to exalt Joseph so highly among the Egyptians? He might have provided some other way for the accomplishment of His purposes toward the children of Jacob; but He desired to make Joseph a light, and He placed him in the palace of the king, that the heavenly illumination might extend far and near. By his wisdom and justice, by the purity and benevolence of his daily life, by his devotion to the interests of the people—and that people a nation of idolaters—Joseph was a representative of Christ. In their benefactor, to whom all Egypt turned with gratitude and praise, that heathen people were to behold the love of their Creator and Redeemer. So in Moses also God placed a light beside the throne of the earth's greatest kingdom, that all who would, might learn of the true and living God. And all this light was given to the Egyptians before the hand of God was stretched out over them in judgments.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 368, 369.

Monday, June 13: Joseph Confronts His Brothers

Jacob's sons came with the crowd of buyers to purchase corn of Joseph, and they "bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth." And Joseph knew his brethren, but he appeared not to know them, and spake roughly unto them. "And he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan, to buy food. And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies. To see the nakedness of the land ye are come."

They assured Joseph that their only errand into Egypt was to buy food. Joseph again charges them with being spies. He wished to learn if they possessed the same haughty spirit they had when he was with them, and he was anxious to draw from them some information in regard to his father and Benjamin. . . .

The three days of confinement were days of bitter sorrow with Jacob's sons. They reflected upon their past wrong course, especially their cruelty to Joseph. They knew if they were convicted of being spies, and they could not bring evidence to clear themselves, they would all have to die, or become slaves. They doubted whether any effort any one of them might make would cause their father to consent to have Benjamin go from him, after the cruel death, as he thought, Joseph had suffered. They sold Joseph as a slave, and they were fearful that God designed to punish them by suffering them to become slaves. Joseph considers that his father and the families of his brethren, may be suffering for food, and he is convinced that his brethren have repented of their cruel treatment of him, and that they would in no case treat Benjamin as they had treated him.

—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 154–156.

Being justified by Christ, the receiver of truth is constrained to make an entire surrender to God, and is admitted into the school of Christ, that he may learn of Him who is meek and lowly of heart. A knowledge of the love of God is shed abroad in his heart. He exclaims, Oh, what love! What condescension! Grasping the rich promises by faith, he becomes a partaker of the divine nature. His heart being emptied of self, the waters of life flow in; the glory of the Lord shines forth. Perpetually looking unto Jesus, the human is assimilated by the divine. The believer is changed into His likeness. . . . The human character is changed into the divine.

Christ looks upon His people in their purity and perfection as the reward of all His sufferings, His humiliation, and His love, and the supplement of His glory—Christ the great center, from whom radiates all glory.

—*Our High Calling*, p. 203.

Tuesday, June 14: Joseph and Benjamin

As [Jacob's] sons were about to leave him to go on their doubtful journey, their aged father arose, and, while standing in their midst, raised his hands to heaven, and entreated the Lord to go with them, and pronounced upon them a gracious benediction. "And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

"And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin, and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph." And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he could scarcely restrain his brotherly feelings of love. He gave direction to make preparation for his brethren to dine with him. When they were taken into Joseph's house they were afraid that it was for the purpose of calling them to account, because of the money found in their sacks. And they thought that it might have been intentionally placed there for the purpose of finding occasion against them to make them slaves, and that they were brought into the ruler's house to better accomplish this object.

—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 159, 160.

The Bible has little to say in praise of men. Little space is given to recounting the virtues of even the best men who have ever lived. This silence is not without purpose; it is not without a lesson. All the good qualities that men possess are the gift of God; their good deeds are performed by the grace of God through Christ. Since they owe all to God the glory of whatever they are or do belongs to Him alone; they are but instruments in His hands. More than this—as all the lessons of Bible history teach—it is a perilous thing to praise or exalt men; for if one comes to lose sight of his entire dependence on God, and to trust to his own strength, he is sure to fall. Man is contending with foes who are stronger than he. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places." Ephesians 6:12, margin. It is impossible for us in our own strength to maintain the conflict; and whatever diverts the mind from God, whatever leads to self-exaltation or to self-dependence, is surely preparing the way for our overthrow. The tenor of the Bible is to inculcate distrust of human power and to encourage trust in divine power.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 717.

Now that you have given yourself to Jesus, do not draw back, do not take yourself away from Him, but day by day say, "I am Christ's; I have given myself to Him;" and ask Him to give you His Spirit and keep you by His grace. As it is by giving yourself to God, and believing Him, that you become His child, so you are to live in Him. The apostle says, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." Colossians 2:6.

—*Steps to Christ*, p. 52.

Wednesday, June 15: The Divination Cup

Judah had pledged himself to be surety for Benjamin. “And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph’s house; for he was yet there, and they fell before him on the ground. And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?” Joseph asked this question to draw forth from his brethren an acknowledgment of their past wrong course, that their true feelings might be more fully revealed. He did not claim any power of divination, but was willing his brethren should believe that he could read the secret acts of their lives. “And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants. Behold, we are my lord’s servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found.” Judah told his brethren that God had found out their iniquity for selling their brother in Egypt, and was now returning upon them their transgressions, by permitting them to become slaves also.

—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 163, 164.

As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour. Christ knew that He would have to suffer, yet He became man’s substitute. As soon as Adam sinned, the Son of God presented Himself as surety for the human race. . . .

. . . “I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.” The palms of His hands bear the marks of the wounds that He received. If we are wounded and bruised, if we meet with difficulties that are hard to manage, let us remember how much Christ suffered for us. . . .

Satan declared that human beings could not live without sin. Christ passed over the ground where Adam stumbled and fell, and by a sinless life placed the human race on vantage ground, that every one might stand before the Father, accepted in the Beloved.

—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 13.

Laborers in the cause of truth should present the righteousness of Christ, not as new light, but as precious light that has for a time been lost sight of by the people. We are to accept of Christ as our personal Saviour, and He imputes unto us the righteousness of God in Christ. Let us repeat and make prominent the truth that John has portrayed, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

In the love of God has been opened the most marvelous vein of precious truth, and the treasures of the grace of Christ are laid open before the church and the world. . . . What love is this, what marvelous, unfathomable love that would lead Christ to die for us while we were yet sinners. What a loss it is to the soul who understands the strong claims of the law, and who yet fails to understand the grace of Christ which doth much more abound.

—*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 155, 156.

Thursday, June 16: “ ‘I Am Joseph Your Brother’ ”

Joseph was satisfied. He had proved his brethren, and had seen in them the fruits of true repentance for their sins, and he was so deeply affected that he could not longer conceal his feelings, and requested to be left alone with his brethren. He then gave vent to his long-suppressed feelings and wept aloud. . . .

His brethren could not answer him for astonishment. They could not really believe that the ruler of Egypt was their brother Joseph whom they had envied, and would have murdered, but finally were satisfied to sell as a slave. All their ill treatment of their brother painfully passed before them, and especially his dreams, which they had despised, and had labored to prevent their fulfillment. . . .

As Joseph saw the confusion of his brethren, he said to them, “Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.” He nobly sought to make this occasion as easy for his brethren as possible. He had no desire to increase their embarrassment by censuring them. He felt that they had suffered enough for their cruelty to him, and he endeavored to comfort them. He said to them, “Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life. . . . So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God; and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and Lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 165.

Study the history of Joseph and of Daniel. The Lord did not prevent the plottings of men who sought to do them harm; but He caused all these devices to work for good to His servants who amidst trial and conflict preserved their faith and loyalty.

So long as we are in the world, we shall meet with adverse influences. There will be provocations to test the temper; and it is by meeting these in a right spirit that the Christian graces are developed. If Christ dwells in us, we shall be patient, kind, and forbearing, cheerful amid frets and irritations. Day by day and year by year we shall conquer self, and grow into a noble heroism. This is our allotted task; but it cannot be accomplished without help from Jesus, resolute decision, unwavering purpose, continual watchfulness, and unceasing prayer. Each one has a personal battle to fight. Not even God can make our characters noble or our lives useful, unless we become coworkers with Him. Those who decline the struggle lose the strength and joy of victory.

—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 487.

We are brought into sympathy with Christ through the fellowship of His sufferings. Every act of self-sacrifice for the good of others strengthens the spirit of beneficence in the giver’s heart, allying him more closely to the Redeemer of the world. . . .

If you will go to work as Christ designs that His disciples shall, and win souls for Him, you will feel the need of a deeper experience and a greater knowledge in divine things, and will hunger and thirst after righteousness. You will plead with God, and your faith will be strengthened, and your soul will drink deeper drafts at the well of salvation. Encountering opposition and trials will drive you to the Bible and prayer. You will grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ, and will develop a rich experience.

—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 79, 80.

Friday, June 17: For Further Reading

Lift Him Up, “The Hope of the Ages,” p. 27;

The Faith I Live By, “He Died for Us,” p. 50.