



St Peter's Yateley Home Groups

Autumn Term 2023 – The Big Picture – Part I - The Old Testament
Week 4 – Beginning 24th September

Joseph

The Aim of the Session

To explore the life of Joseph, 11th son of Jacob, grandson of Isaac and great-grandson of Abraham (the subject of last week's study). A dreamer of strange dreams, an interpreter of dreams, a man who rose and fell more often than Reginald Perrin and who inspired a West End musical block buster – what can we learn from him?

- **Welcome**

Sibling rivalry – what stories can you share? Perhaps your own experiences or at second hand?

- **Worship**

Read Romans 8:28. Reflect together – would you be prepared to follow the Lord and his teaching even if it brings you into conflict with the powerful? Do you/ can you believe that all things work together for good? And is that promise made to all people or to a specific group? If so, who? How does this fit with your experience?

Praise God for his protection and his promises. Pray for a strengthened faith maybe?

- **Word**

The story of Joseph runs from Genesis 37 and 39 – 50. It would be great to read it in advance – it is an easy and exciting read. It's not practical to read it all at a house group meeting though.

Read Genesis 37:1-14, 18-36 (or the whole chapter if you prefer)

- What reasons did Joseph give his brothers to dislike him?
- How close did Joseph come to dying at age 17? What factors saved his life?
- Where was God in these events?

Read Genesis 39:1-3; 6b-12; 16-20

- Trace Joseph's rise from slave and his fall to prisoner. What did he do to bring about his downfall?
- Was he a downright fool? Read Matt 10:28 for Jesus' view on right behaviour.

Read Genesis 39:21-23

Ch 40 tells the story of two fellow prisoners, who have dreams – and Joseph successfully interprets them. Since it is unlikely there will be enough time to read it all, read Gen 40:8 & 23

- Joseph has a responsible role even in prison. You can't keep a good man down ... is it that simple? What was God's role in his rise?

- Joseph may have thought the Butler would have got him out of prison, but he was forgotten (for two years). Have you had similar deferred / dashed expectations?

Ch 41 tells how, unlikely as it was, Joseph ends up interpreting Pharaoh's dreams – and at age 30, gets appointed as the second-in-command to the most powerful person on the planet (probably – and certainly in his known world). Read 41:39-41

- What did Joseph do and what did God do to bring about this meteoric rise?
- How does the promise of Romans 8:28 look now?

Ch 42-45 tells the story of how Joseph's brothers come to Egypt in desperate need – and the dream of the 17 year-old Joseph does come to pass. Long story short, after some testing, Joseph sees that his brothers are now (much) better people and reveals his identity

- How would you expect Joseph to react, now they are at his mercy?
- How do you expect the brothers to react? (see Gen 45:3)
- How does Joseph react? Why? (see Gen 45:5, 7-8, Gen 50:20)
- Again, how does the promise of Romans 8:28 look now?

Links into the New Testament

- A person despised by his people, attacked and nearly destroyed, yet who is forgiving to those who attacked him, and by whom a remnant are saved – does that make you think of a major NT figure – is it valid to see Joseph as a faint echo of the Messiah?
- Hebrew 11 includes Joseph in the list of major figures of faith (Heb 11:22); the trust that Joseph had was in the big promise of God – especially in returning to the promised land, from which Joseph had drawn his family.

• Works

So where do we go from here?

- ❖ Can Christians expect their lives to be always happy? Or joyful? Or victorious? What does God promise?
- ❖ How do we deal with the high stages of life (see Joseph as the favourite son/ the overseer at Potiphar's house/ the de-facto chief jailer/ the chief minister of Egypt)
- ❖ How do we deal with the lows – Joseph was enslaved, and then falsely accused of attempted rape as revenge for his integrity.
- ❖ How do we follow Joseph's example and act to please God, even if it means losing everything (rejecting Potiphar's wife's tempting offer)? (see e.g. 1 Peter 2:19-21, Matt 5:11-12; you may have other references)

Next session ...

Week 5 - Beginning 1st October – Moses' Obscure Roots