

Lenten Devotional March 8, 2018

Scripture

Genesis 46:1-7, 28-34

¹When Israel set out on his journey with all that he had and came to Beer-sheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. ²God spoke to Israel in visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am." ³Then he said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. ⁴I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again; and Joseph's own hand shall close your eyes." ⁵Then Jacob set out from Beer-sheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him. ⁶They also took their livestock and the goods that they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and they came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him, ⁷his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters; all his offspring he brought with him into Egypt. . . .²⁸Israel sent Judah ahead to Joseph to lead the way before him into Goshen. When they came to the land of Goshen, ²⁹Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to meet his father Israel in Goshen. He presented himself to him, fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. ³⁰Israel said to Joseph, "I can die now, having seen for myself that you are still alive." ³¹Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and will say to him, 'My brothers and my father's household, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me. ³²The men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.' ³³When Pharaoh calls you, and says, 'What is your occupation?' ³⁴you shall say, 'Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, both we and our ancestors'—in order that you may settle in the land of Goshen, because all shepherds are abhorrent to the Egyptians."

Devotional

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Joseph is a type of Christ. As the second-youngest of 12 brothers, Joseph finds that his grandiose dreams and visions cause his brothers to hate him. Their hate is so severe that it ultimately leads them to sell Joseph into slavery and to grieve their father, Jacob, by telling him that Joseph has been killed.

Of course, Joseph is not dead, but like Christ he is betrayed by his own, sold for a sum of silver, and ends up "saving the world." Joseph's revealing of himself to his brothers in Egypt is, for them, a sort of "resurrection" of their brother, thus making Joseph a type of Christ.

Their father Jacob's journeying to Egypt to see Joseph before this son's "own hand shall close [Jacob's] eyes" makes a further parallel between the stories of Joseph and Jesus: The "righteous and devout" Simeon, after seeing the baby Jesus in the Temple, says "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." Both Jacob and Simeon can die in peace after seeing in the flesh God's timely provision for salvation.

The goodness of God is evident in his dealings with Jacob, with Joseph and his brothers, and with us this Lenten season as we experience Christ's giving himself up for the life of the world.

Prayer

My Lord Jesus Christ, give me the eyes to see your salvation that you have so wonderfully accomplished for me on the tree of the cross. Let me gaze at it as the children of Israel gazed upon the bronze serpent in the wilderness when they were stung with sin. Amen.