

LEWES FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Lord's Day Evening

Date 21<sup>st</sup> November 2021 Hymns 84, 91, 370 Read: Genesis 37:1-2 Text Genesis 37:1-2 Series: Joseph (1) Title: Joseph's Birth

I want to begin a series in the life of Joseph. The reason being, the life of Joseph speaks to every believer at some point in our lives.

His life has a timeless challenge, and comfort to all believers at any stage of life and in their Christian walk.

When we are introduced to Joseph in **Genesis 37** we read in **verse 2** “**Joseph being seventeen years old...**” However, this is not the first time scripture mentions Joseph's age.

In **Gen 41:46** “**Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh King of Egypt.**” **Gen 50:26** “**Joseph died being an hundred and ten years old...**”

Furthermore, **Genesis 37** is not the first time Joseph is mentioned in Scripture, for we read of his birth in **Genesis 30:22-24**.

So from Genesis 30 through to Genesis 50, but especially from **ch 37-50** the Holy Spirit gives details about Joseph's birth, early years, teenager years, adulthood, later years, and then his death.

It is evident how in every part of Joseph's we can identify with this man.

Joseph's life covers all that we experience in life, He knew what it was to be loved, despised rejected, hated, favoured, falsely accused and betrayed. He served God, he proclaimed the message of the Lord, and was persecuted. He was tempted and triumphant, he experienced humiliation before exaltation.

But in it all and through his life, Joseph kept his eyes on the Lord. He presents how a Christian lives in an ungodly world.

Therefore, in these studies as we consider the life of Joseph, may our eyes look beyond Joseph and see a greater than Joseph, a heavenly Joseph, an exalted Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Scripture reveals Christ's Birth, in the temple at age 12, then age 30 until His death.

The Lord Jesus said Himself to His disciples in **Luke 24:27** ***And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*** The first 5 books of the Bible, is ***And beginning at Moses*** therefore the Book of Genesis where we find Joseph, is included.

God used the life of Joseph to preserve the nation, and in particular the seed line in which the promised Redeemer the Lord Jesus Christ would come into the world.

There is much in Joseph's life to lead us to life and ministry of Christ.

And may that be our aim through this study, as born again believers, just as Christ was seen through Joseph's life, may Christ be seen in our lives, may my life be a witness for Christ as exhorted by **Acts 1:8**, for the purpose of seeing sinners saved for whom Christ died.

Therefore, since Genesis 37 confirms that Joseph is 17 years old, then any details recorded, before Genesis 37 concerning Joseph covers the first 16 years of his life, as leading into his seventeenth year,

And as we consider some points in Joseph's early years, we have all come from different backgrounds, family situations we will see ourselves in Joseph's life or else in listening to the record of his early years, the Holy Spirit will impress the need to pray

that God will give grace and help is raising our family for the glory of God.

There are 4 occasions that Joseph is mentioned before 37, however there are two in particular that deal directly with Joseph himself which is birth and mothers death.

### I want to focus today on Joseph's Birth

#### I FIRST, JOSEPH'S BIRTH INVOLVED DELIGHT

The first time Joseph is mentioned in scripture is in **Genesis 30:24** concerning his birth. The birth of Joseph was a delight to his mother Rachel and father Jacob.

Why is that so, because for many years Rachel was barren, that means she was not able to have children. Rachel's womb was closed, **Genesis 30:1** states **she bare Jacob no children.**

During this time Jacob had 10 children, with other woman, two handmaids named **Bilhah, and Zilpah**, and then **Leah**, who was Rachel's sister.

As the other woman were fruitful in child bearing Rachel remained barren.

In fact, Rachel describes her barrenness in **Genesis 30:23** as a **reproach**. Rachel felt the burden and distress of not bearing children.

However, we read in **verse 22** ***“And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.***

**1 there was delight in Joseph's birth because of the Promise of God.**

Whenever we read such words as **verse 22** ***“And God remembered Rachel and harkened unto her...”*** they are covenantal language, it is God upholding, keeping, honouring His

word. It means the set or appointed time has arrived for God to carry out what He said.

But such a word is often spoken when there seems to be no hope or help. When all seems lost.

Rachel said to Jacob in **Gen 30:1** “**give me children or else I die.**” She feels the reproach, and burden of barrenness, but **God remembered Rachel...**”

Remember in **1 Samuel** when Hannah was barren, yet she desired a man child, a son. Hannah prayed in **1 Samuel 1:11** “**give unto thine handmaid a man child....**” **Verses 19** “**Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her.**”

**To the change the illustration, from the burden of barrenness with child,** think of the children of Israel in bondage under the hard burdens of the Egyptians, as slaves, serving a hard task master, but God remembered them.

**Exodus 6:23-25** “...**the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. <sup>24</sup> And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. <sup>25</sup> And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.**”

The covenant of promise centred upon God’s everlasting covenant with His people in Christ, that He would be their God and they would be His people.

He delivered His people from Egyptian bondage by faith in the blood of the lamb.

All who dwelt under the house covered by the blood of the lamb over the door posts, the Lord in wrath would pass over them, because they were covered by the blood of the lamb which picture all who are in Christ are as **Roman 5:9** declared “..**being**

***now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.***” All who were not covered in the blood faced the judgment of sin which was death.

God remembered His people, His promise to save. God remember Rachel, because God gave Joseph to be a blessing and preserve the nation through which Christ would come.

Therefore, lift your mind heavenward and see Christ who was given by promise of God. He is the gift of God.

Christ covenanted to save lost sinners, and defeat the devil, as recorded in **Gen 3:15**, ***And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*** Here is the promise of the only Saviour and Redeemer of God’s elect.

Just as Joseph’s birth brought joy, The birth of Christ is joy to the world, hope, for the Saviour has come to seek and save that which was lost, in forgiving all the sins of all who believe in Him.

**2 there was delight in Joseph’s birth because of the Plan of God.**

One truth that is often forgotten, Job said the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, but in both views the Lord is still to be blessed.

In His Divine plan for families or in thinking about an individual life, God in His sovereignty gives or withholds.

Now His withholding does not always mean never, but it does mean God works out His plan and purposes in His own time.

This is what we learn with the timing of Joseph’s birth, God planned Joseph to be born at this time, when Jacob was in the land.

One lesson we will learn time and time again in Joseph’s life, God is in control, all He does, including the timing of events is all under His control.

Rachel said to Jacob in **Gen 30:1** “**give me children or else I die.**” But notice what Jacob answered in **verse 2** “**Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?**” Jacob knew it is God who gives or withholds.

That is a lesson we must learn, Rachel was not the only woman in Scripture to be Barren and then the Lord opened the womb to give birth. **Gen 11:31 Abram's wife, Sarai was barren; she had no child.** As in **Gen 25:21** Isaac's wife Rebekah, or **1 Samuel 1**, Hannah. **Judges 13:2 Manoah; and his wife was barren,**

Even Ruth was barren, but in every case as in **Ruth 4:13** “**the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son.**”

The same with Rachel **God... opened her womb.** **Psalms 127:3** “**...children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.**”

Therefore, fathers and mothers (or those soon to be, learn that in knowing you are with child, and to the delivery of the child, in every part of the journey, bless the Lord give thanks unto the Lord for He is sovereign in all His plans and ways.)

He has given you the responsibility to give your children unto Him, as Hannah did with Samuel. To pray for your children upon blood of Christ and Job did with his children.

Whether they need cleansing from sin, protected, or forgiven by the blood, guidance, pray for them.

Oh, to instruct children, youth, as Solomon said in **Proverbs 22:6** “**train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.**”

By nature children are as David said of himself in **Psalms 51:5** **I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me**” But praise the Lord, there is hope in Christ, remember the



question the Philippian jailor asked Paul and Silas, in **Acts 16:30** “...sirs **what must I do to be saved?** <sup>31</sup> **And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.**

Therefore the time Christ was given in His Birth and death, was according to the plan of God **Gal 4:4** “**But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman.**” **Romans 5:6** **In due time Christ died for the ungodly** So will His return, are you ready, as **James 5:8** teaches **the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.**

**3 there was delight in Joseph's birth because of the Power of God.**

**Notice again the words in verse 22** “**And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.**” Here is the power of God, it is the Lord who opened the womb. Joseph was born by the power of God.

**The point is Jacob could not give Rachel a child no matter how much she desired one.**

**But God intervened by His almighty power. Only God would touch and open Rachel's womb.**

**On this occasion, Jacob came unto Rachel verse 23** “**she conceived, and bare a son;**

Doesn't this lead us to the birth of Christ, who was conceived by the power of Holy Ghost. When the Angel told the virgin Mary she would be with child, Mary answered in **Luke 1:34** “**Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?**” in **verse 35** “**And the angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.**”

The words **holy thing** means **holy one**. That Holy one. This means The Holy Spirit **overshadow** or **came upon Mary to sanctify her**, and take of the substance of her womb and perform the great miracle of the conception of the sinless humanity of Christ.

The angel said this would be done by **the power of the Highest**. The word '**power**' in **verse 35** is the word **dunamis**; it is the same word as forms the basic stem of the word **impossible** as spoken by the angel in **v37**, **For with God nothing shall be impossible**.

And so if you put Mary's question and the Angel's answer together notice, **verse 34** "**how can this**," **v37** "**for with God nothing shall be impossible**." Or "**with God nothing shall be without power**."

**Christ was born by the power of God. The incarnation, the birth of Christ, would never be done by man, only divine intervention, that is why the virgin birth of Christ is called the miracle of all miracles, because only God could do it.**

**Of course Christ was born by the power of the God, without the seed of man, in order to have a sinless humanity, otherwise He could not be the Saviour of sinners.**

**Just as only God's power can open the womb to create life, so it is only the power of God that can open the sinners heart to give new life.**

**The disciples asked Christ in Matthew 19:25 who can be saved? He answered in verse 26 " with men this is impossible but with God all things are possible.**

**4 there was delight in Joseph's birth because of the Prophecy from God.**



Joseph was now the firstborn of Rachel but also the 11<sup>th</sup> Son to Jacob. In Scripture, names are important and carry great meaning, as they describe the person's character, birth, and life.

Rachel named her son Joseph, and the meaning of the name **Joseph** is given in the same verse. **Verse 24** "**and she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son.**" The name **Joseph** means **to add or Jehovah shall add**. This was a direct prophecy, that the Lord would add unto Rachel another child.

That prophecy was fulfilled in **Genesis 35:18** with the birth of **Benjamin** which means **the son of thy right hand**.

Once again, Rachel's two sons and the meaning of their names point to Christ, if you connect the meaning of Joseph and Benjamin's name, ***The LORD shall add to me another son, the son of thy right hand, these words, find their ultimate fulfilment in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is a greater than Joseph and Benjamin, the son at God's right hand.***

The name **Jesus** means **Saviour**, **Matthew 1:21** "...***thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.***

Having paid the price for our sin Paul said, **Hebrews 10:12** ***But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;***

On earth Joseph was the provider and preservation of His people.

But Christ in earth and heaven, is perfect provider, and preserver of His people, and **Romans 8:34** ***It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*** The Saviour continually prays for all His believing people.

What delight in Joseph birth and life, for God saved the nation, what a greater delight in Saviour's Birth and life, He is our hope of eternal salvation, is the only for Londoners, this country of ours and Britain.