

THE LIFE OF JOSEPH

TOPIC: THE CHILDHOOD OF JOSEPH

SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 30:22-24; 33:1-7; 37:1-3

MEMORY VERSE: GENESIS 30:24

Lesson 1

The Childhood of Joseph

INTRODUCTION: One of the most interesting characters to study in the entire Bible is a man by the name of Joseph. There are at least fifteen men in the Bible named JOSEPH:

- 1) JOSEPH, THE FATHER OF IGAL who was one of the twelve spies sent by Moses to spy out the land of Canaan. (Numbers 13:7)
- 2) JOSEPH, ONE OF THE SONS OF ASAPH who led the musicians at the tabernacle. (I Chronicles 25:2)
- 3) JOSEPH, A JEWISH MAN WHO MARRIED A GENTILE WIFE after the Jews returned to Israel from the Babylonian captivity. (Ezra 10:42)
- 4) JOSEPH, THE SON OF SHEBANIAH and one of the chief priests in Israel after the Jews returned to Israel from the Babylonian captivity. (Nehemiah 12:14)
- 5) JOSEPH, THE HUSBAND OF MARY (Luke 2:4-5)
- 6) JOSEPH, THE SON OF MATTHATHIAS one of the virgin Mary's ancestors. (Luke 3:24)
- 7) JOSEPH, THE SON OF JUDA one of the virgin Mary's ancestors. (Luke 3:26)
- 8) JOSEPH ("Jose") THE SON OF ELIEZER one of the virgin Mary's ancestors. (Luke 3:29)
- 9) JOSEPH, THE SON OF JONAN one of the virgin Mary's ancestors (Luke 3:30)
- 10) JOSEPH ("Joses") ONE OF THE SONS OF MARY AND JOSEPH and half brother to Jesus. (Matthew 13:55)
- 11) JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA a secret disciple of Christ. (John 19:38)
- 12) JOSEPH ("Joses") THE YOUNGER BROTHER OF James the less and Thaddaeus. (Mark 15:40)
- 13) JOSEPH CALLED BARSABAS a disciple in the church at Jerusalem. (Acts 1:23)
- 14) JOSEPH ("Joses") CALLED BARSABAS a disciple sent with the Apostle Paul as a missionary. (Acts 4:36)
- 15) JOSEPH, THE FIRST SON OF JACOB AND RACHEL. (Genesis 30:24)
Joseph, the son of Jacob and Rachel is the first man in the Bible to bear the name of *Joseph*, and is the man which will be studied in this lesson.

Joseph is a very important character to examine in studying the Bible. His name is mentioned at least 198 times in the Word of God. One quarter of the book of Genesis is devoted to telling the story of the life of this great man. (Genesis 37-50) He is among the famous HEROES OF THE FAITH listed in the book of Hebrews. (Hebrews 11:22) He is a wonderful example to every Christian of character, moral purity and trustworthiness. Joseph seems to have had many of the great virtues of his ancestors but without as many of their faults: he had the faith of Abraham, but was more consistent; he had the quietness of Isaac, but was more intelligent; he had the abilities of Jacob, but lacked the deceitfulness. Concerning Joseph, not one statement of wrong-doing is ever recorded in the Bible. In fact, in the entire Bible, there is not a man whose life more clearly pictures Jesus Christ than this man named Joseph.

In order to understand the life of Joseph, it is necessary to understand THE CHILD HOOD OF JOSEPH.

I THE PLACE OF JOSEPH'S BIRTH

Genesis 30:22-24 (v 24) - ". . .*And she called his name Joseph. . .*"

- A. The family into which Joseph was born
- 1) Joseph's father was a man by the name of Jacob which means "*heelcatcher; rascal.*" Jacob was the son of Isaac, and the grandson of faithful Abraham, the Father of the Jewish nation. Jacob had grown up in Canaan land, but had fled from Canaan after he had cheated his twin brother, Esau, out of being blessed by their father. (Genesis 27:1-45) Following his mother, Rebekah's, advice, he, for safety, fled to his Uncle Laban's house in Haran where he would live for the next twenty years of his life. (Genesis 31:41) At Haran, Jacob would meet and fall in love with the beautiful girl who would eventually become Joseph's mother.
 - 2) Joseph's mother was a woman named Rachel which means "*ewe*". Rachel was the younger of the two daughters of Jacob's Uncle Laban which means that Rachel was actually Jacob's first cousin. (Genesis 29:9-14) Jacob fell in love with Rachel, and agreed to work for Uncle Laban for seven years in order to marry Rachel. (Genesis 29:15-20) At the end of the seven years, Uncle Laban tricked Jacob into marrying Rachel's older sister, Leah. However, Uncle Laban agreed to allow Jacob to marry Rachel also, if he would first give Leah a week-long honeymoon Jacob agreed, and after a week with Leah, he and Rachel were married. (Genesis 29:21-30) Without meaning to, Jacob had married both sisters, and had two wives which was the source of constant conflict in his family. To make matters worse, Leah proudly bore Jacob six sons and a daughter, while Rachel was barren, and bore no children at all for at least the

- first ten years of their marriage. (Genesis 29:31-30:1)
- 3) Joseph had ten older half-brothers and one older half-sister. He also had one younger full brother.
- a) Joseph's half brothers born to his father Jacob and his step-mother Leah were: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; and his half sister was Dinah. (Genesis 29:31-35)
 - b) Joseph's half brothers born to his father Jacob and his mother Rachel's maid, Bilhah, were: Dan and Naphtali (Genesis 30:3-8)
 - c) Joseph's half-brothers born to his father Jacob and his step-mother Leah's maid Zilpah were: Gad and Asher (Genesis 30:9-13)
 - d) Joseph's younger brother born to his father Jacob and his mother Rachel was: Benjamin (Genesis 35:16-18)

B. The town into which Joseph was born
Joseph was born in the town of Haran which was outside the border of the land of Canaan in the country in modern times called Turkey. The year was about 1831 B.C. His mother named him Joseph which means "*adding or may Jehovah add.*" (Genesis 30:22-24)

II THE DEATH OF JOSEPH'S MOTHER

Genesis 35:16-20 (v 19) - ". . .*And Rachel died, and was buried. . .*"

- A. The time when Joseph's mother died
- 1) Joseph was about two years old when his father and mother left Haran to flee from Laban to the land of Canaan. (Genesis 31:17-42)
 - 2) Joseph was still about two years old when he and his mother were introduced to his Uncle Esau in the land of Canaan. (Genesis 33:1-7)
 - 3) Joseph was about ten years old when he moved with his father and mother to the town of Bethel in the land of Canaan. (Genesis 35:1-15)
 - 4) Joseph was still about ten years old when his father suddenly decided to move their family away from Bethel. Joseph's mother Rachel was expecting a baby at the time, and went into "*hard labour*" near the town of Bethlehem. (Genesis 36:16-17) She delivered Joseph's little brother and named him Benoni which means "*son of my sorrow*", but his father changed the name to Benjamin which means "*son of my right hand.*" (Genesis 35:18) Joseph was only about ten years old when his mother Rachel died giving birth to his little brother. (Genesis 35:19-20)

- B. The place where Joseph's mother died
Genesis 35:19-20 - "*And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.*"
Imagine how hard it must have been to be the second to the youngest in the family, be picked on by all your ten older half-brothers, and lose in death the one who defended and protected you – your mother. Such was the case in the life of Joseph.

III THE LOVE OF JOSEPH'S FATHER

Genesis 37:1-4 (v 3) - "*Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children. . .*"

- A. Joseph was the firstborn son of Jacob's true-love Rachel
Jacob never intended to marry Leah in the first place. Rachel was the one he truly loved. (Genesis 29:20, 30) As a result, it was only natural for him to love Joseph more than his other children.

NOTE: Joseph is a type of Christ for just as Joseph was the well-beloved of his father, even so Jesus is the Well-beloved of God the Father.
(Matthew 3:17; 17:5)

- B. Joseph was the son of Jacob's old age
Genesis 37:3 - "*. . .because he was the son of his old age. . .*"
Jacob was about 58 years old when Joseph was born. He had seen Rachel's grief for about ten years over being barren. It was only natural for him to love Joseph as the favorite of all his children.
(Psalm 17:8)

TEACHERS' TIP: Do more than exist - live!
Do more than touch - feel!
Do more than look - see!
Do more than hear - listen!
Do more than talk - say something!

NEXT MEMORY VERSE: John 7:7

Lesson 1 Study Sheet

Fill in the blanks:

1. There are at least _____ men in the Bible named Joseph.
2. The Joseph we will be studying in this series of lessons is the son of _____ and _____.
3. Joseph's name is mentioned at least _____ times in the Bible.
4. There is not a man in the Bible whose life more clearly pictures _____ than Joseph.
5. Joseph's mom and dad were actually related as _____ as well as husband and wife.
6. Joseph's dad, Jacob, never intended to marry Joseph's step-mother, _____, but was tricked by his Uncle Laban.
7. Jacob worked a total of _____ years for Laban before he was allowed to marry Jacob's mother, Rachel.
8. Joseph had a total of _____ step-brothers, _____ step-sister and _____ full brother.
9. Joseph's younger brother's name was _____.
10. At the age of ten years old, Joseph's _____ died.