



## Lesson 12

## “Fruitful in the Land of My Affliction”

### Genesis 40-45

**Purpose: To help class members understand that if we are faithful and obedient, God will consecrate our afflictions for our good.**

Most members of the church are all too familiar with this principle. It seems if there is one concept that is well appreciated it is this one—that the trials and tribulations of mortality serve God’s purpose because they become the refining fire which purifies the soul and gives us experience. Some of the better quotes on this subject are included, “Therefore, he giveth this promise unto you, with an immutable covenant that they shall be fulfilled; and all things wherewith you have been afflicted shall work together for your good, and to my name’s glory, saith the Lord (DC 98:3).

Joseph Smith had suffered in Liberty Jail for months before he came to his wits end. He received two great revelations about the process of affliction:

If thou art called to pass through tribulation...if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good. (DC 122:5-7)

My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes. (DC 121:7-8)

Joseph Smith

“I am like a huge, rough stone rolling down from a high mountain; and the only polishing I get is when some corner gets rubbed off by coming in contact with something else, striking with accelerated force against religious bigotry, priest-craft, lawyer-craft, doctor-craft, lying editors, suborned judges and jurors, and the authority of perjured executives, backed by mobs, blasphemers, licentious and corrupt men and women—all hell knocking off a corner here and a corner there. Thus I will become a smooth and polished shaft in the quiver of the Almighty, who will give me dominion over all and every one of them, when their refuge of lies shall fail, and their hiding place shall be destroyed, while these smooth-polished stones with which I come in contact become marred.” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 304)

Elaine Cannon

“Adversity in our own lives can bring life's purpose to mind. Bad times have certain scientific value, according to Emerson. In his "Conduct of Life" essays he says that the trying times are occasions a good learner would not miss. One can learn a great deal. Can it be, then, that if one doesn't kick against the pricks, increased understanding comes—the nature of God, the importance of the adventure of life?” (Elaine Cannon, Adversity, p. 4)

Marion G. Romney

“If we can bear our afflictions with the understanding, faith, and courage,...we shall be strengthened and comforted in many ways. We shall be spared the torment which accompanies the mistaken idea that all suffering comes as chastisement for transgression...

“...I have seen the remorse and despair in the lives of men who, in the hour of trial, have cursed God and died spiritually. And I have seen people rise to great heights from what seemed to be unbearable burdens.” (Conference Report, Oct. 1969, pp. 59-60 as taken from the Book of Mormon Student Manual, 1981 ed., p. 69)

## **The Book of Genesis**

See Supplement Lesson 6.

### **Commentary:**

#### **Genesis 40**

1 And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt.

*The butler--not only the cup-bearer, but overseer of the royal vineyards, as well as the cellars; having, probably, some hundreds of people under him. Baker--or cook, had the superintendence of every thing relating to the providing and preparing of meats for the royal table. Both officers, especially the former, were, in ancient Egypt, always persons of great rank and importance; and from the confidential nature of their employment, as well as their access to the royal presence, they were generally the highest nobles or princes of the blood.*

2 And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers.

3 And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound.

*Whatever was their crime, they were committed, until their case could be investigated, to the custody of the captain of the guard, that is, Potiphar, in an outer part of whose house the royal prison was situated.*

4 And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward.

*The captain of the guard charged Joseph with them--not the keeper, though he was most favorably disposed; but Potiphar himself, who, it would seem, was by this time satisfied of the perfect innocence of the young Hebreu; though, probably, to prevent the exposure of his family, he deemed it prudent to detain him in confinement (see Psalms 37:5 ).*

5 And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison.

6 And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad.

7 And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to day?

8 And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you.

*Joseph, influenced by the spirit of God, could feel for others ( Ecclesiastes 4:1 , Romans 12:15 , Philippians 2:4 ). Observing them one day extremely depressed, he inquired the cause of their melancholy; and being informed it was owing to a dream they had respectively dreamed during the previous night, after piously directing them to God ( Daniel 2:30 , Isaiah 26:10 ), he volunteered to aid them, through the divine help, in discovering the import of their vision. The influence of the Holy Ghost must be seen in the remarkable fact of both officers dreaming such dreams in one night.*

9 And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me;  
10 And in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes:  
11 And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.

*The visionary scene described seems to represent the king as taking exercise and attended by his butler, who gave him a cooling drink. On all occasions, the kings of ancient Egypt were required to practice temperance in the use of wine; but in this scene, it is a prepared beverage he is drinking, without time to ferment. Everything was done in the king's presence--the cup was washed, the juice of the grapes pressed into it; and it was then handed to him--not grasped; but lightly resting on the tips of the fingers.*

12 And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days:  
13 Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler.  
14 But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house:  
15 For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon.

*Speaking as an inspired interpreter, he told the butler that within three days he would be restored to all the honors and privileges of his office; and while making that joyful announcement, he earnestly bespoke the officer's influence for his own liberation. Nothing has hitherto met us in the record indicative of Joseph's feelings; but this earnest appeal reveals a sadness and impatient longing for release, which not all his piety and faith in God could dispel.*

16 When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head:  
17 And in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head.

*The circumstances mentioned exactly describe his duties, which, notwithstanding numerous assistants, he performed with his own hands. white--literally, "full of holes"; that is, wicker baskets. The meats were carried to table upon the head in three baskets, one piled upon the other; and in the uppermost, the bakemeats. And in crossing the open courts, from the kitchen to the dining rooms, the removal of the viands by a vulture, eagle, ibis, or other rapacious bird, was a frequent occurrence in the palaces of Egypt, as it is an everyday incident in the hot countries of the East still. The risk from these carnivorous birds was the greater in the cities of Egypt, where being held sacred, it was unlawful to destroy them; and they swarmed in such numbers as to be a great annoyance to the people.*

18 And Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation thereof: The three baskets are three days:  
19 Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.

*The thought was that in three days his execution should be ordered. The language of Joseph describes minutely one form of capital punishment that prevailed in Egypt; namely, that the criminal was decapitated and then his headless body gibbeted on a tree by the highway till it was gradually devoured by the ravenous birds.*

20 And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants.

21 And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand:

22 But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them.

23 Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.

*Though Joseph may have felt saddened by the butler not remembering him, it was important that Joseph's freedom was obtained from God and not the butler's intervention.*

## **Genesis 41**

1 And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river.

*Joseph was in prison for two years after he interpreted the dreams of the chief butler and baker (see Genesis 41:1). He was sold into slavery when he was about seventeen (see Genesis 37:2), and he was thirty years of age when he became vice-regent to the pharaoh (see Genesis 41:46). Altogether he served thirteen years with Potiphar and in prison. The record does not tell how long he served Potiphar before his imprisonment, but that he worked his way up to be the overseer of the prison implies some period of time before the butler and baker joined him. So it is likely that Joseph was in prison at least three years and possibly much longer.*

8 And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.

*Many assume that the dreams of pharaoh were beyond the scope of Egypt's wise men and yet, in some ways, it is remarkable that these magicians could not have come up with some kind of logical explanation using their own well-known symbolism.*

*"Being troubled about this double dream, Pharaoh sent the next morning for all the scribes and wise men of Egypt, to have it interpreted. ... [The magicians were] men of the priestly caste, who occupied themselves with the sacred arts and sciences of the Egyptians, the hieroglyphic writings, astrology, the interpretation of dreams, the foretelling of events, magic, and conjuring, and who were regarded as the possessors of secret arts ... and the wise men of the nation. But not one of these could interpret it, although the clue to the interpretation was to be found in the religious symbols of Egypt. For the cow was the symbol of Isis, the goddess of the all-sustaining earth, and in the hieroglyphics it represented the earth, agriculture, and food; and the Nile, by its overflowing, was the source of the fertility of the land. But however simple the explanation of the fat and lean cows ascending out of the Nile appears to be, it is 'the fate of the wisdom of this world, that where it suffices it is compelled to be silent. For it belongs to the government of God to close the lips of the eloquent, and take away the understanding of the aged (Job xii. 20).'" (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary, 1:1:349.)*

9 Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day:

10 Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker:

11 And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream.

12 And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret.

13 And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged.

*This public acknowledgment of the merits of the young Hebrew would, tardy though it was, have reflected credit on the butler had it not been obviously made to ingratiate himself with his royal master. The butler was not so much impressed with a sense of the fault he had committed against Joseph; he never thought of God, to whose goodness he was indebted for the prophetic announcement of his release, and in acknowledging his former fault against the king, he was practising the courtly art of pleasing his master.*

38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?

*Patient service for two more years in prison was yet required of Joseph, however, until the butler whom he had helped finally mentioned him to Pharaoh (Gen. 40:14). Pharaoh's own troublesome dreams provided the opportunity.*

*Joseph shaved and groomed himself before appearing before Pharaoh. He immediately corrected Pharaoh's impression that Joseph of himself could "understand a dream to interpret it." Fulfilling a part of the responsibility of Abraham's seed, Joseph bore testimony of the Lord's name "in a strange land" (Abr. 2:6). He said that it was not he but God who could give an interpretation of the dreams. After giving the interpretation, Joseph explained that God had indeed shown what He was about to do in Egypt. Thus Pharaoh should understand that the idols of Egypt were bringing neither the plenty nor the dearth.*

*In recommending that Pharaoh select and appoint "a man discreet and wise" (Gen. 41:33) to collect one-fifth of the crops in the seven plenteous years to store up food against the famine years, Joseph did not suggest that he wanted the job for himself; it was Pharaoh who was impressed that they could not find another "such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is" (Gen. 41:38).*

45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

*Pharaoh believed that the Spirit of the God Joseph served had shown Joseph truths that made him more "discreet and wise" than anyone else; therefore Joseph was made chief minister, appropriately attired, decorated, acclaimed, and given a new name, Zaphnath-paaneah—usually interpreted to mean "he who reveals that which is hidden" (BD, "Zaphnath-paaneah").*

*In view of the emphasis placed on proper marriage in previous generations of the seed of Abraham, it is likely that Joseph's wife also was chosen for him through the Lord's influence. It may be assumed that the priests were of the same lineage as the kings of the dynasty; thus, Asenath, daughter of the priest of On, who was given to Joseph as a wife, could have been Semitic (see commentary on Gen. 39:1-6; cf. Gen. 24:1-5; 28:1-5; D&C 86:8). Joseph and Asenath became the parents of Manasseh and Ephraim*

49 And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number.

*Joseph's wise implementation of his prophetic advice caused food to be stored throughout the land of Egypt during the seven good harvest years. The food was stored in cities in the farming areas (Gen. 41:48) and not all in one great central storage area for the whole country, as has sometimes been assumed.*

*"Corn" (Gen. 41:49) in King James English means "grain," not the American "maize" (BD, "Corn").*

52 And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

*Joseph's work, his position of trust with Pharaoh, his marriage, and his children must have been a comfort, a joy, and a blessing to Joseph after all his years of lacking family love and appreciation. The name of his first child, Manasseh, may mean "causing to forget," as Joseph's comment suggests. Ephraim is from the Hebrew word for "fruit," with a dual suffix, suggesting double fruitfulness.*

57 And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.

*Note that Joseph retained control of distribution. Had he not sold the corn and merely gave it away, his brothers would have not come to Egypt to buy it.*

## **Genesis 42**

8 And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.

*It had been twenty-two years since the sons of Jacob had last seen Joseph—thirteen years of slavery and prison for Joseph, seven years of plenty, and two years of famine (see Genesis 45:11)—before Jacob’s family was forced to go to Egypt for grain. Joseph was a teenager when his family had last seen him. Now he was a mature, middle-aged man. And, even if Joseph still looked very much as he did when he was younger, who would believe that a brother who was sold as a slave to a caravan of Arabians would have become the second most powerful man in Egypt?*

21 And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.

*Over twenty years had passed since his brothers had sold Joseph into slavery, and yet they still felt tremendously guilty about what they had done.*

28 And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?

*The first explicit mention of God by the brothers; they saw the hand of God at work behind their frightful circumstances*

34 And bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffick in the land.

*In order not to distress their aged father further, they changed Joseph’s threat of death to a promise of economic opportunity.*

37 And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again.

*Jacob did not accept Reuben’s ill-considered proposal. Only the threat of starvation coupled with Judah’s assurances would change his mind*

38 And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

## **Genesis 43**

9 I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever:

*By demanding that Benjamin be brought back to Egypt (see Genesis 42:15), Joseph allowed his brothers to show whether or not they truly were sorry for what they had done to him so many years before. Would they now show the same lack of concern for Benjamin? It is significant that Judah, who suggested that Joseph be sold (see Genesis 37:26–27), became the one who was willing to become “the surety”*

for Benjamin. There does seem to be evidence of sincere repentance on the brothers' part, and Joseph's stratagem allowed them to demonstrate this repentance. When the pressure was on, Judah's change of heart was shown to be complete (see Genesis 44:33).

10 For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time.

*The brothers did not go back to Egypt to obtain Simeon's release until their acute need of food persuaded their father to let them go in spite of his fear of losing Benjamin in addition to Simeon and Joseph. So Judah also volunteered to be surety for Benjamin. Recall that it had been Judah's suggestion years before that Joseph be sold so that his blood would not be shed (Gen. 37:26-27).*

11 And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds:

*How in a famine could any food or spices be available in Canaan for Israel's sons to take to Egypt? Cyclical droughts that may cause crops of grain and other annuals to fail do not ordinarily kill the trees that produce figs, dates, olives, nuts, and balm; shrubs and vines ordinarily survive and bloom, so some honey also is produced. Spices such as sage, oregano, or rosemary are produced by shrubs that survive most droughts.*

28 And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.

*The phraseology in this verse is the same as that used in Genesis 37:7, 9. It had taken over two decades, but the Lord's revelations were now fulfilled. Obeisance means a movement of the body expressing deep respect or deferential courtesy, as before a superior; a bow, curtsy, or other similar gesture.*

32 And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians.

*Several Egyptian deities were represented by cattle, especially female cattle. Since the Hebrews were herdsmen who slaughtered and ate cattle, regardless of sex, this practice would have been viewed by the Egyptians as a terrible abomination. Whatever the reason, Joseph seemed to respect the custom of Egyptians and Hebrews eating separately. (See Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary, 1:1:362; Clarke, Bible Commentary, 1:245; cf. Genesis 43:34.)*

34 And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of their's. And they drank, and were merry with him.

*When the ten brothers, including Benjamin, returned to Egypt, they must have been amazed at being treated as honored guests, even having their feet washed before a noon meal and being seated according to rank in age. The money they brought back was not accepted by the steward: he said he had received it (he had indeed received it but had not kept it). Then what must they have thought of Benjamin's receiving a portion at dinner five times that of anyone else! If the brothers noticed that Joseph hurriedly left the room for a time, they could not likely have guessed he went out to weep—a second such occurrence (Gen. 43:30; 42:24). But he had one more test to perform before confessing his identity and reassuring them.*

## **Genesis 44**

5 Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.

*'To find the truth by magic.' Egyptians used to pour oil into water that was in a cup. Then they looked at the pattern of the oil. They thought that the pattern showed what was true. The \*Hebrews did not do this. Joseph probably did not do it. But he pretended to his brothers that he did it. The cup that an Egyptian used for this purpose was a very special cup. So if the brothers had stolen such a special cup, that was a very evil deed.*

12 And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

*The brothers were certain that they had not taken the cup. They proposed that anyone who had the cup should die. They proposed that all the other brothers should become slaves. If the manager agreed to that, it would be definite. The punishment that they proposed would happen. That was the custom by Egyptian law. But the manager did not agree to such a severe punishment. He pretended that the brothers had proposed a smaller punishment. The manager also found the money that was in the top of each sack. But the cup was very much more important than the money. So the manager did not mention the money.*

15 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?

*Probably Joseph did not believe that he could find the truth by magic. (See the comment on verse 5.) \*Pharaoh believed in magic. (See Genesis 41:8.) Many wise men in Egypt believed in magic. So Joseph told his brothers that he could find the truth by magic. That is what a ruler of Egypt would say. And Joseph said it in order to make his brothers more anxious.*

16 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 knew that he had not taken the cup. He was sure that his brothers had not taken it. They were too worried to do that. They wanted to take the grain that they had bought. And they wanted to return to their father in \*Canaan. They would not want the cup. And Judah knew that Benjamin had not taken the cup. He would never do that. So Judah said, 'God has shown that we are guilty.' He thought that God had put the cup in Benjamin's sack. He thought that God was punishing them. It was a punishment for what they had done to Joseph 22 years before.*

17 And he said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

*Joseph was testing his brothers. Many years before this time, they had plotted to kill Joseph. (See Genesis 37:18.) And they had plotted to sell him as a slave. They plotted to sell him to Ishmaelites, who were going to Egypt. (See Genesis 37:27.) Joseph wanted to know whether the brothers would do the same thing again. Would they let Benjamin become a slave? Would they leave Benjamin in Egypt? Or were they more honourable than they were 22 years before?*

18 Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh.

*Reuben was the oldest brother but Judah had become the leader. (See verse 14. See also Genesis 43:3, 8.) And after this time, when Jacob gave his \*blessing to his sons, he made Judah the most important. (See Genesis 49:8 and the comment.)*

*Judah's character was very different from what it had been 22 years before. Judah had suggested that the brothers should sell Joseph. (See Genesis 37:26-27.) But in these verses, he showed that he cared deeply about Benjamin. And he cared deeply about his father Jacob.*

19 My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother?



22 And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die.

*Judah called Benjamin 'the boy'. But Benjamin was more than 22 years of age. Probably Joseph remembered that the brothers used to call him, Joseph, 'the boy'. (See Genesis 37:30.)*

28 And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since:

*The brothers had already mentioned Joseph. They had said, 'One brother is dead.' (See Genesis 42:13, 32.) But in this verse, Judah said more than that. However, Judah did not confess that the brothers were responsible. They were unwilling to say that they were guilty. And Judah did not think that it would be helpful to confess.*

33 Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.

*Judah had promised to Jacob, 'I shall bring him back.' (See Genesis 43:9.) But he was not able to bring Benjamin back. So he tried to send Benjamin back. If he could do that, he would have kept his promise to his father. Judah alone offered to stay in Egypt as a slave. But, apart from that, he spoke on behalf of all the brothers. He showed that they all cared deeply about Benjamin.*

34 For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

*The evil thing that would happen to my father.' Judah thought that his father would die. His father had said that. (See Genesis 42:38.) And Judah had just told Joseph what his father had said.*

## **Genesis 45**

4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

6 For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.

7 And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8 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.

*This touching scene, in which Joseph finally revealed himself to his brothers, demonstrates the Christlike nature of his character. He forgave without bitterness, extended love when undeserved, and saw the Lord's hand in all that happened. But his similarities to Christ go much deeper. As Nephi said, all things from the beginning of the world were given to typify, or symbolize, Christ (see 2 Nephi 11:4; Moses 6:63). It has already been shown how Abraham was a type of the Father and Isaac a type of Jesus when Abraham was commanded to offer Isaac in sacrifice. This act was "a similitude of God and his Only Begotten Son" (Jacob 4:5).*

*Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught that all prophets are types of Christ: "A prophet is one who has the testimony of Jesus, who knows by the revelations of the Holy Ghost to his soul that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. In addition to this divine knowledge, many of them lived in special situations or did particular things that singled them out as types and patterns and shadows of that which was to be in the life of him who is our Lord." (The Promised Messiah, p. 448.)*

*Likewise, the life and mission of Joseph typifies the life and mission of Jesus. Consider the following:*

1. *Joseph was the favored son of his father; so was Jesus (see Genesis 37:3; Matthew 3:17).*
2. *Joseph was rejected by his brothers, the Israelites, as was Jesus (see Genesis 37:4; John 1:11; Isaiah 53:3; 1 Nephi 19:13–14).*
3. *Joseph was sold by his brothers into the hands of the Gentiles, just as Jesus was (see Genesis 37:25–27; Matthew 20:19).*
4. *Judah, the head of the tribe of Judah, proposed the sale of Joseph. Certain leaders of the Jews in Jesus' day turned Jesus over to the Romans. Judas (the Greek spelling of Judah) was the one who actually sold Jesus. (See Genesis 37:26; Matthew 27:3.)*
5. *Joseph was sold for twenty pieces of silver, the price of a slave his age. Christ was sold for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave His age. (See Genesis 37:28; Matthew 27:3; Exodus 21:32; Leviticus 27:5.)*
6. *In their very attempt to destroy Joseph, his brothers actually set up the conditions that would bring about their eventual temporal salvation—that is, Joseph, by virtue of being sold, would become their deliverer. Jesus, by His being given into the hands of the Gentiles, was crucified and completed the atoning sacrifice, becoming the Deliverer for all mankind.*
7. *Joseph began his mission of preparing salvation for Israel at age thirty, just as Jesus began His ministry of preparing salvation for the world at age thirty (see Genesis 41:46; Luke 3:23).*
8. *When Joseph was finally raised to his exalted position in Egypt, all bowed the knee to him. All will eventually bow the knee to Jesus. (See Genesis 41:43; D&C 88:104.)*
9. *Joseph provided bread for Israel and saved them from death, all without cost. Jesus, the Bread of Life, did the same for all men. (See Genesis 42:35; John 6:48–57; 2 Nephi 9:50.)*

24 So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.

*Pharaoh and his people were gracious to Joseph's family, but they had ample reason to be grateful: Joseph had not only saved the nation from the famine but had unified the whole land under a strong monarch (an achievement like that of the New Kingdom, in the Eighteenth Dynasty; but Joseph's time was much earlier than that).*

*Generously, Pharaoh urged Joseph to send for his father and all of his family and to have no concern about their goods in Canaan, "for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours" (Gen. 45:20). His generosity was shown in the goods and wagons he sent to help them move to Egypt. Pharaoh was solicitous, saying, "See that ye fall not out by the way" (Gen. 45:24).*

28 And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.

*It was understandably overwhelming to Jacob to learn that Joseph was not only alive but "governor over all the land of Egypt." Only when he heard what Joseph had said to his brothers and saw the Egyptian wagons could the aged father believe it.*

Copyright © 2013-2014 by Donovan D. Davisson, dddavisson@gmail.com. All rights reserved. Opinions are the author's and in no way endorsed by nor connected with The Church of Jesus-Christ of Latter-day Saints; the author, however, is a member of said church. No part of this text may be reproduced in any form or by any means for commercial gain without the express written consent of the author. Digital or printed copies may be freely made and distributed for personal and public noncommercial use.