

The Story of Joseph

The Last Laugh

Part 32 – November 11, 2012

Pharaoh opened up to Joseph, sharing his fears and frustrations. And Joseph seized the moment to promote the Lord instead of himself.



From the tomb of Maiherpri

He offers truth, hope, and a plan of action: to expand the granaries, increase the grain revenues, and appoint an official, endowed with emergency powers, to carry it out.

The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. [Which likely includes the magicians and wise men who had just failed Pharaoh (never a good thing with a demigod!), an are now off the hook!] – Genesis 41:37 NIV

Some of you have wondered why I'm going into such depth and detail with *Joseph*. Well, Jesus only studied the Old Testament, and Joseph is the single greatest foreshadow of Christ in it!

[Solomon later says] It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings. – Proverbs 25:2 NIV



I love to try to picture young Jesus, the *King of Kings* who *emptied himself*, (Rev 19:16; Phil 2:7) growing in wisdom and favor with God, (Luke 2:52) led by the Spirit to search out scripture for the concealed matters of His *own* identity, as God's Son and our Savior. Like hidden 'Easter eggs' in DVDs and video games, special insights and surprising revelations wait to reward those determined to search 'em out!

[Jesus said to the Jews] You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me ... – John 5:39-40a NIV



Imagine *Jesus* as He discovered each of the hidden mysteries that He *enthusiastically shared* with the two men on the Road to Emmaus!

And beginning with Moses [who was inspired to write the book of Genesis – the story of Joseph and his dysfunctional family] ... he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. – Luke 24:27 NIV

Let's hunt down some hidden 'Easter eggs'! Just before the story of Joseph begins, the last event depicted is the death and burial of his grandpa Isaac, Jacob's dad (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph). And it's oddly out of context *and* chronological order. The last time Grandpa Isaac is mentioned is seven chapters back, when he's blind and on his deathbed, and his son, Jacob deceives him, and steals his twin brother Esau's blessing.



So, how long do you think *old* Isaac ‘clung to life’ after that? Try *45 years!* Just like with us, God had an *appointed time* for Isaac to die ... and *that wasn’t it!* *This was ...*



Isaac lived a hundred and eighty years. [Most biogerontologists (medical authorities in longevity) agree that the human body is easily capable of this, if not for DNA damage, degenerative diseases, genetic mutations, cellular defects, cumulative hereditary disorders, and a myriad of other destructive forces (perhaps not as prevalent in Isaac’s day)] Then he breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people, old and full of years. [This takes place well after Joseph is taken to Egypt] And his [Grandpa Isaac’s] sons Esau and Jacob buried him. [After years of hostility and suspicion, the feuding brothers unite and bury the hatchet along with their father] – Genesis 35:28-29 NIV

Why’s *this* his appointed time? Why 180? Why’s it out of context? At the time of Grandpa Isaac’s death, Joseph’s dad, Jacob, had been grieving his son, Joseph’s, “death” for over a decade. And now *his* dad is dead ... along with God’s promises ... *he thinks*.



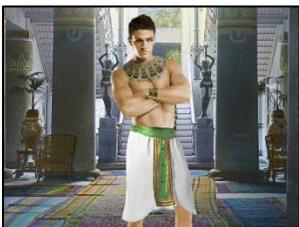
Grandpa Isaac is best known as the child of promise (miraculously born of old Sarah’s barren womb), and the beloved son who became a willing sacrifice when God tested his father, Abraham. At the last moment, God intervened and revealed a substitute ram with its horns in the thorns.

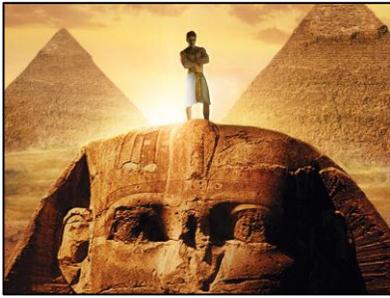


But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.” [This ‘angel’ equates itself with God ... because it’s the Christ! Imagine when Jesus found that one!] – Genesis 22:11-12 NIV

There are two great foreshadows of Christ in young Jesus’ Bible, that went unrecognized until after His resurrection, when He explained ‘em to the two men on the Road to Emmaus. Isaac is one.

Isaac, along with the ram that took his place on the altar, is the great foreshadow of Jesus’ sacrificial death for our sin, right down to the crown of thorns! And Joseph is the great foreshadow of *everything else!*





He's sent by his father, out of concern for his children, the sons of Israel; they reject him, abuse him, betray him, and try to cover their sin with goat's blood to offer to the father. He's sold for silver, stripped of glory, and made a servant. Mistreated, tempted, falsely accused, and sentenced to endless imprisonment for sins he didn't commit. But, the 'divine' king raises him, restores him, and exalts him on high, so he can offer salvation and life to a starving world.

Not to mention the fact that the sons of Israel don't recognize him ... until the second coming. Or that he prepares a place for his people and sends a helper to guide them along their way!



So, if Jacob's dad, Isaac, represents the sacrifice of Jesus. And Jacob's son, Joseph, represents the suffering, resurrection, and salvation of Jesus. *Who* does *Jacob* represent? Hmm ... Jacob's been kind of a *loser*. Deceiver. Swindler. Manipulator. Physically damaged. Emotionally distressed. Morally bankrupt. Spineless, selfish, vacillating, cowardly, compromised, condemning, weak-willed ... he's *us!* He's a sinful, broken man who needs the father *and* the son, *in whom* the Holy Spirit dwells!

So Pharaoh [Remember him?] asked them, "Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?" [What could his magicians and religious counselors say? Who's their alternative? Who has his wisdom and authority? He singlehandedly, and without a dream decoder, spoke prophetically, specifically, and obviously on behalf of God] Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, [which means that Potiphar now works for Joseph!] and all my people are to submit to your orders. [Right here, Joseph is given authority to begin to fulfill God's promise to Abraham] – Genesis 41:37-40a NIV

[The Christ-Angel reiterates it at Isaac's 'sacrifice'] ... "through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me." – Genesis 22:18 NIV

Does it seem weird that the name of the great foreshadow of Jesus' sacrificial death, means *laughter*? Isaac is the *only patriarch* whose name God *doesn't* change. Why is that?

[Abraham laughed with joy when God told him his promised son was coming] Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? – Genesis 17:17a NIV

[But, 90-year-old Sarah, laughed with scorn at the news] So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?" Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too hard for the Lord?" ... Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I did not laugh." But he said, "Yes, you did laugh." – Genesis 18:12-15 NIV

So, the promised child, the beloved son, the greatest foreshadow of the Savior's sacrificial death for sin, is named *Laughter*. Why? Well, just like Joseph, Jesus gets the last laugh!

[And like Abraham and Sarah, it's a triumph of joy *and* scorn] Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. – *Hebrews 12:2 NIV*

[Now look at what Pharaoh declares to Joseph] “Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.” [This makes Joseph the *Vizier* of Egypt; and it's only the *Vizier* who welcomes foreign delegations into the land] – *Genesis 41:40b NIV*

This means that his brothers will have to go through the one they rejected; because no one comes to the king, except through the glorified, Spirit-filled, son of Israel, and savior of nations!

[Jesus, the glorified Son of God said] To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. – *Revelation 3:21 NIV*

We're so close to our 'Easter egg'! Why would God keep Isaac around till he's 180? Why's *this* his appointed time? And why did God want Isaac's funeral at the beginning of Joseph's story? Maybe to draw the attention of those searching out His Son.

Isaac was **sixty** years old when Rebekah gave birth to [Jacob and Esau]. [Making them 60 years younger than Isaac; so when he dies at 180, Jacob and Esau are 120] – *Genesis 25:26 NIV*

Joseph was **thirty** years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh ... – *Genesis 41:46a NIV*

The **seven years** of abundance in Egypt came to an end ... [making Joseph 37] – *Genesis 41:53 NIV*

[And when he reveals himself, he says] For **two years** now there has been famine in the land ... [making Joseph 39] – *Genesis 45:6 NIV*

We'll **add a year**, give or take a few months, for preparations, (45:23) the return home, (45:25) telling Jacob, packing up the farm, (46:5-6) sacrificing in Beersheba, (46:1) and traveling to Goshen. (46:29)

Then Joseph [at the age of 40, give or take a few months] brought his father Jacob in and presented him before Pharaoh. ... Pharaoh asked him, “How old are you?” And Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The years of my pilgrimage are **a hundred and thirty.**” [Making him 90 years older than Joseph. So, if he's 90 years older than Joseph, and he was 120 when he buried his father, Isaac, how old was *Joseph* when Isaac died?] – *Genesis 47:7-9a NIV*

Joseph was **thirty** years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. – *Genesis 41:46a NIV*

Just as Isaac, the great foreshadow of Christ's sacrificial death, died and was buried, Joseph rose from pit to palace, to foreshadow Christ's resurrection, authority, and salvation!

I love to search the scriptures for Jesus, because in so doing, I also find myself, my calling, my security, my future. There's no room for halfhearted believers on Jesus' throne; that right is reserved for those who overcome! And *that* requires both willingly laying down your life *and* rising to the occasion. Do *that*, and it's *you* who'll have the *last laugh!*

And this is where we have to close God's story for today.