

32. Disciple Life as Revealed Through Joseph

We've seen our Master prophetically revealed throughout Genesis. We've seen His revelation embedded within the life of Joseph. But there's much more treasure to dig out of the Genesis section of God's Torah '*gold mine*.' Our meditations have only begun to scratch the surface of all that still has not yet been brought to the surface for your examination. Layer upon layer of revelation still remains concealed within Genesis. And it will take all of the rest of the Bible to bring it to the surface so we can finally see and benefit from what God wants us to keep digging for and searching out.

One such layer of revelation contained in Genesis is the pattern for authentic disciple life. Disciple life is the '*image and likeness of God*' life, which was destroyed and lost by the fall into Sin of our first parents. And as we've already seen, God sent His Word to restore His image and likeness. So He looked for Adam and Eve to bring restoration to them. And He has been carrying that restoration forward, from generation to generation throughout human history for all the rest of us.

This bringing forward process can be seen in the life of Joseph. God entrusted this redemptive, restoring salvation gift He has for the whole world, to the care of Abraham's Family. He entrusted it to them so that they would receive and live it out and demonstrate and share it with all the other families of the earth.

"You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for Salvation is from the Jews."
(John 4:22)

Because our Master is prophetically revealed in Joseph's life, and we disciples are called to be the Master's image and likeness, it follows that the pattern for our disciple lifestyle is also contained in Joseph's life.

Joseph had a personal, intimate, interactive relationship with God's living Word as you can see from the enormous Fruit the Word was able to produce in and through him. The Word was first revealed to Joseph when he was a young boy, when he would sit with his siblings and elders around Jacob's campfire. Jacob introduced the Word to Joseph, just as Jacob's father, Isaac, had once introduced it to him. And Isaac had learned the same way...by watching and hearing his father, Abraham. Abraham's Family received the revelation of God's living Word from parents to children...it was transmitted on a '*watch me...now you*', basis. This is the essence of disciple life. This is how disciples are created, formed and developed. And because the living Word of God was treasured and obeyed in Joseph's heart, the Word was able to lead Joseph into Egypt, so that He could restore to him his true, God-given identity, purpose and destiny. So we see, from the example provided by God's Israelite people that His Salvation and Restoration legacy was, and still is, intended to be passed on in the family homes...from fathers and mothers...to their children.

You can imagine the trauma Joseph underwent when his brothers turned on him and stripped him of every tangible thing he held dear. They disowned their own flesh and blood and violently uprooted him and sold him to nomadic slave traders who dragged him into a totally alien world. Suddenly Joseph was marooned amid the ghastly brutalities of a totally pagan world. Without warning, his former life was destroyed and he found himself isolated, deprived, enslaved, miserable, and totally without hope. It was the very same Exodus trip that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob before him had been required to make. And that is an essential aspect of true disciple life:

“Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in Heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in Heaven. Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; and A MAN’S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD.

“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.” (Matthew 10:32-39)

Relationship – the Foundation

But Joseph, despite having his original life crucified and stripped away, did have the one utterly essential Treasure left to which he could cling; and no one was able to take it from him. It was ...the living Word of His Covenant God. The Word that abided in Joseph’s faithful, obedient heart could not be taken from him. God’s living Word was not Sin-corrupted. He is infinitely pure, holy and righteous! So the Word is never under demonic domination! The Serpent has no hold whatever on God’s Word. The Word is the Serpent’s Creator, Sustainer and Lord, just as He is for all the rest of Creation! And so as long as Joseph believed and embraced and abided with the Word and identified with the spiritual Reality and Covenant Blessings given by the Word, Joseph belonged to God. The Covenant of Abraham continued to be his protection and provision. Thanks to that Covenant, Joseph belonged to God and God belonged to Joseph. They were one. And so Joseph remained in position to receive, on a continual basis, the fulfillment of God’s Covenant promises. So God was always with Joseph...because Joseph was always with God, by the gift of Covenant faith. So thanks to this one Treasure to which Joseph continued to cling, the decapitated pagan people around him that remained enslaved and gripped by the coils of the Serpent, were not able to take God’s living Word away from Joseph. The Word was continually revealing Himself to Joseph and through his obedient faith...the Word was able to work on behalf of everyone else, from within Joseph’s enslaved flesh.

“The LORD was with Joseph, so he became a successful man...” (Genesis 39:2a)

The same Word that once appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, was now present to Joseph, continually abiding within his heart and soul. Thanks to the work of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God was alive and real and present to Joseph, in Joseph, and through Joseph. God remained

Joseph's faithful Covenant Friend...to the death...for Abraham's sake. And Joseph remained a true disciple of God's living Word...at all times and in all things.

Joseph had embraced and bonded with God's Word of revelation long before this disaster befell him. So he was fully prepared for anything that might happen to him from day to day. God's living Word accompanied and was leading him as he was taken into Egypt. And Joseph served as a permanent abode for God's Word who worked from within Joseph's inner core at all times. Through Joseph's obedient faithfulness, God's Word had a loyal Covenant friend in Egypt that willingly served as His '*point of entry*' and '*base of operations*' in that land of demonic Darkness. And because God's Word was able to rule and reign over Joseph, He was also able to manifest His presence and rule over everything Joseph touched and to which he was connected. The King of the Kingdom of Heaven was able to obey the Father that sent Him...among the Egyptians...through His beloved Covenant friend and disciple, Joseph. Through this willing instrument, our Master was able to fulfill His Father's plan and purpose for that time and place. He was able to bring God's Salvation forward and continue to establish it within Joseph's generation and beyond...thereby making sure that the Israelite matrix from which His Father later intended to reveal Him to the world, as Messiah Yeshua, would survive and remained protected and established in its proper place for when the time of His Incarnation would finally arrive.

So the Ishmaelite slave traders that purchased Joseph and dragged him off to the Egyptian slave market were not at all in charge of Joseph's fate. The Word of God was also the Creator and Sustainer of the Ishmaelites...and of every Egyptian! He sustained and cared for them all, just as He does for every creature and aspect of the universe. So Joseph was never alone. The Lord was in Joseph and all around Joseph at all times. And because Joseph continually embraced, believed and obeyed Him, God was able to protect and sustain him and open the way, by His infinite wisdom, timing and strategy, for the fulfillment of Joseph's real identity, purpose and destiny.

So through Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abram, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph we can see a vitally important, prime aspect of what disciples do. By their utter, child-like faith and trust in the revelation given to them by God's Word, and their '*in uniform,*' '*under orders,*' always '*on duty*' attitude of heart and will, Joseph served God's living Word and allowed Him to carry out Father's plan and purpose through Joseph's yielded life. That is what disciples are called to do, regardless of the era and generation in which they are placed. It's not about any agenda they may devise and execute in their own strength. It's about their death to such things...and being emptied of that radically independent residue...so that God can be free to execute His Agenda...through the yielded past, present and future of His Word's true disciples.

Joseph and his family had no Scriptures available to them. Even if he had been blessed with a set of sacred scrolls, the Ishmaelites would have taken them from him. So Joseph did not have '*The Menu*' in his possession. But he always had '*The Real Feast,*' the real, living Word of God that the scrolls proclaim, to feed upon. The living Word fed and sustained him and served as his Life throughout his days on Earth. Through Abraham's Covenant, God was eternally committed to Joseph, to see him through anything and everything...for Abraham's sake. And through that same Covenant, Joseph gave himself to God's Word in return. So despite his apparent misery, bankruptcy and helplessness, Joseph entered Egypt endowed with everything anyone could ever

hope for. He had the Word of the living God...the real, in living color, Truth and Reality of God's sustaining Love. Joseph had what Moses and the future prophets and apostles of Israel would write about in the future. He had the living Word, living and interacting with him, at all times. The same Word that we know as 'Yeshua' was the one that sustained and cared for Joseph.

So our Master and His disciple Joseph were on duty together, in God's service in Egypt. And that's what our Master is here to teach us to be and do with Him as well. So the promises that the Bible announces and proclaims concerning God's living Word can actually be fulfilled in the life and circumstances of every disciple that is truly worthy of that title.

The living Word was in Egypt with Joseph, abiding with him and working in him and revealing Himself through him. The Word watered the God-less pagan desert that was all around Joseph, with His life-giving Wisdom, Love and Mercy. For Abraham's sake, the Word was like a protective Shield and Storehouse for his great grandson! And Joseph cooperated with His Lord as He continued to bring Salvation and Restoration forward to the Sin-corrupted, demon oppressed descendants of Adam that inhabited Egypt and beyond.

When the sacred scrolls began to be written long after Joseph's life was over, Genesis, the very first of those scrolls, immortalized Joseph. Of course in his day, Joseph had no way of knowing that. Nevertheless, the Torah reveals and explains to us in human words, what the living Word of God was to Joseph in real life...in a real way...amidst the gut-wrenching experiences and challenges of the trials he had to endure as a slave in an alien, pagan land!

That is why Joseph is a prime example of what it means to be a disciple of God's Word. The 'Follow Me' pattern God wants to teach to us leads those who will follow it through the transformational changes that will restore them to God's original image and likeness level of humanity as revealed in the Garden of Eden before the fall of Adam. And what God's Word was able to do through Joseph, He wants to do through us, in our day, as well. Joseph kept his heart focused on the authority and credibility of God's living Word. And the written Word unfolds and explains the issues that every disciple will have to wrestle with:

"They say, 'How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?' Behold, these are the wicked; and always at ease, they have increased in wealth. Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and washed my hands in innocence; for I have been stricken all day long and chastened every morning.

"If I had said, 'I will speak thus,' behold, I would have betrayed the generation of Your children. When I pondered to understand this, it was troublesome in my sight UNTIL I came into the sanctuary of God; THEN I perceived their end..." (Psalm 73:11-17 Emphasis added.)

What is More Important, the Menu, or the Meal?

The Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe was with Joseph, to be his constant Companion and Provider. Joseph enthroned and treasured Him in his innermost being. In that sense, Joseph, like all true disciples, was never left alone; he was never forsaken. Instead, he was like a living,

moving human, *'Bible'* or a holy *'Temple'* before any created Bible or Israelite Temple ever came to be. Joseph lived in and interacted with the living Reality of God's Word...before anything was written to tell us about God's living Word. So through the life of Joseph and those who went before him, the written Word serves the function of a menu...not drawing us to itself...but pointing us to the living Word, the eternal Word, the Word that later became flesh and died and rose from the dead...and who now is able to live in and abide with each one of us!

Genesis shows us that long before there was a physical, created Bible or *'Tent of Meeting'* or *'Temple of Solomon'*, the living Word that those created things reveal to us, was already here, living and working within and through His Covenant friends. The created things recorded in the Bible that serve to reveal Him, represent and explain the meaning and purpose of what a truly 'circumcised' God-filled, redeemed human heart is to be. And they are meant to show us what the real, living Word of God is here to restore to the fallen world in each generation. And the living Word's chosen disciples are honored and privileged to be included in the revelation and application of God's Eternal Reconciliation, Redemption and Restoration. They serve to usher in the risen Lamb of God, the Lord of Glory that the Scriptures talk about. The King of the Kingdom of God is here to redeem and restore all mankind and lead them into His eternal Kingdom. Disciples believe that and so they respond to and interact with His living indwelling Presence. And His Presence 'shows' itself to the world, through the living testimony that disciples are trained and developed to be.

God's living Word, the 'living Torah', was written on Joseph's circumcised Covenant heart. That transformed Joseph into a living human, image and likeness manifestation of God's living, abiding Word. The Lord of all lords, the Creator of the universe, to whom all Authority in Heaven and on Earth had been given by His eternal Heavenly Father, was revealing Himself through Joseph. Through Joseph, the Word of God revealed Himself to the world around Joseph...through Joseph's obedient faith. So Joseph was like a 'Bible' encased in human skin...before the written Bible ever came to be.

Joseph followed His Master wholeheartedly, out of the Covenant Love that the Spirit of the Word kept transmitting into him. All of this happened before the eyes of the clueless, unsuspecting Egyptian pagans, and before Joseph's clueless, unsuspecting family. It was not Joseph the downtrodden forsaken slave that was in their midst; it was Joseph the disciple of God's living Word that they were seeing. He was commissioned to usher in Yeshua (Salvation) into the midst of their impending desperate need as a result of the coming famine.

"Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there. The LORD was with Joseph, SO he became a successful man..." (Genesis 39:1-2a Emphasis added.)

Joseph didn't have a highly structured, precisely crafted, theological library of 'head knowledge' about God. His relationship with God was not based on theory or theology or the ritualistic traditions of men. His knowledge of the Word was much, much deeper and much more alive and personal than that. Many have an intellectual relationship with *the Bible of the Lord*. But Joseph had something much more real...a relationship with *The Lord of the Bible Himself*, long before the Bible even existed! The relationship he had with the Word was mostly of the heart and the

will, and very little of it had to do with Joseph's intellect. His knowledge of the Word was living and love-sharing and intensely, intimately, personally interactive! The very Lord who was with Joseph and abided with him throughout his life, as revealed in Genesis...many centuries later, became flesh and lived on the Earth, as *Rabbi Yeshua of Nazareth*, the Messiah of Israel. But Joseph and the other fathers of the chosen people had known Him well, many centuries before His Incarnation took place.

The same, one and only Lord, revealed throughout the centuries

So Joseph had the same Lord we have...Yeshua. He knew our Master long before He was born as a Jewish infant and was officially given the name 'Yeshua' in time and space by His Father. The living Word had made Covenant with Abraham long ago, as The Son of God. But now, after coming to be with us in the flesh, He was circumcised into Abraham's Covenant as 'The Son of Man' (Luke 2:21-24). It was same living Word that created the universe and all of its vast galaxies, the one that created Adam out of dust and made a mate for him, the Word that contained all the Fullness of His Father's Original Blessing, and who came to cover the shameful, Sin-blasted, Head-less nakedness of the human race, that Word was with Joseph, leading him and providing for him...the very same living Word that now lives and operates from within us!

Joseph followed his Master as He led him forward...step by step, moment by agonizing moment. And because Joseph knew the Covenant promises, he knew His Covenant Friend would never disappoint or forsake him. Today of course, we have the added help and advantage of the Bible (The Menu), the written revelation of Yeshua, to accompany and explain our Master's living Presence as He abides within us at all times. So we too can know what Joseph knew and live as he lived. We too are called. God wants to include us too in the glorious unfolding of His Eternal Blood Covenant Family Restoration and the Salvation of all Creation. Everything the written Word reveals and expresses about the living Word is actually abiding in and interacting with each one of His disciples today. We have both...the written Word...AND the Living Word! We have, *'The Menu'*...and we actually have the Actual Living Feast that The Menu proclaims. God Himself is living and working within us so that, like Joseph, we can feast on Him and draw whatever we need from Him, anytime we wish!

So Joseph was an early *pre-Bible* disciple. Although he didn't have a Bible, he had what the Bible is meant to lead the rest of us into. That's why, when Scripture finally arrived, Genesis, its first book, devoted its largest section to him to show us how our Master revealed Himself in and through the lives of each disciple...from Adam and Eve through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...to Joseph. All of this was about interaction with God's living Word, before the written Word even existed.

This is vitally important for us to know. Many decapitated humans have the Bible. And some even become very knowledgeable in it in soulish, intellectual ways. But what good will it do us if all we have is the menu...but not the Real Food? The menu can do nothing to give us real Eternal Life nourishment. Without the living Word serving as our true Head, we remain decapitated, we remain among the living dead...trapped within the Serpent's coils! The uncircumcised hearts of countless numbers of Head-less people over the centuries have committed unspeakable crimes and abominations *'in the name of God!'* They did those things

based on what their selfish, self-centered, predatory minds thought they saw in the Bible! But because they were Head-less, their radically independent hearts remained ‘uncircumcised.’ So like Cain, they acted against the true Spirit and living Word of God and the only fruit they were able to bear was more of the Serpent’s Sin, death, destruction and devastation.

“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have Life!” (John 5:39-40)

*“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; **DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS (TORAH-LESSNESS).**” (Matthew 7:21-23)*

The Living Word is more than enough

The Torah of Moses immortalizes Joseph because he knew, served and obeyed God’s living Word. This is basic, foundational revelation for every generation of the human race! God was able to pierce, penetrate and impregnate Joseph with His Word’s awesome, supernatural Fruit. This is crystal clear revelation of what is important and essential and Life-giving precisely because it took place before Scripture and the man-made institutions and traditions of organized religion – Judaism, Christendom and the rest of mankind’s current maddening sectarian ‘gangs’ ever existed. None of that came into the Genesis picture to cloud and befog and confuse our minds. In the beginning, it was just Adam, Eve, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob...and Joseph...believing, embracing, following and obeying God’s living Word whom God had sent to be their Blessing and Sin-Covering and life-long Blood Covenant Friend and Representative. At a later time, His Father would name Him Yeshua. But even before then, Yeshua was bringing and being Salvation to people recorded in the Genesis portion of Scripture. God was showing us the true essence of what ‘disciple life’ really is. That is what God wants to restore to us.

Joseph received and obeyed the ‘Follow Me’ call. So he too had to follow the Exodus pattern, ‘dropping everything’ and leaving it behind...to be free to obey, follow and serve His Master and transform into His image and likeness. He did it with all of his heart and soul and might. What better ‘template’ could we have for following the Exodus Pattern God sets before all of us, regardless of which era, generation or set of circumstances into which we find ourselves? Genesis makes it clear. We are not to give ourselves to a ‘what’...to created man-made things. We are to give ourselves to a Person...to the living Word of the Living God...Yeshua...who became flesh to be our living perfect, eternal Covenant Bond with Almighty God, the one and only God...the living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob!

Joseph persevered and overcame because God’s living Word was free to live and work from within Him. The Word overwhelmed the tremendous external pressure the people and circumstances around Joseph continually exerted against him. By natural standards, Joseph had no resources, rights, freedom or personal allies. Apparently, he was completely alone. No one, not even Joseph, could have suspected what was going to happen. And since Scripture did not

yet exist, Joseph didn't have the advantage of reading about himself in the first book of the Torah. But he did have God's living Word and Holy Spirit speaking to him and protecting, supplying, teaching and guiding him from deep within his heart. And that is exactly what God intends to do in the era of New Covenant fulfillment:

*"I will put My Spirit within you and **cause** you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances." (Ezekiel 36:27 Emphasis added.)*

"...I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." (John 16:7)

God's living Word did not abide with Joseph in the human form that He would later assume in the first century. Joseph knew God's living Word, but he did not know Him in the flesh, as Rabbi Yeshua, the Messiah of Israel. And now that our Master has risen from the dead and ascended bodily into Heaven, we too are not able to abide with His human form. But He is with us now, just as He was with Joseph...in the Holy Spirit. And like Joseph, we too can embrace Him and allow Him to circumcise our hearts so that we can become one with Him through the spiritual gift God gives to His own. He can equip us to abide under the 'Head-ship' of His living Word through the Holy Spirit-empowered, 'obedience of faith.'

God's Word continued to work in Joseph, for Joseph and through Joseph. In His love for all the other humans involved, God sent His Word (Son) from the Heavenly eternal spiritual realms into our time and space physical realm, to bring life, healing, protection, freedom and eternal salvation. His activity was invisible to natural eyes, but His Fruit proved to be far more real and substantial than anything the pharaoh or any of the other Egyptians could have done. Because of God's Covenant faithfulness, Joseph enjoyed His continuous company, love and loyalty. The Creator and Sustainer of the universe continually looked after him and his interests, according to the Covenant promises He made to Abraham, His friend. For Abraham's sake, God fulfilled His part of the Covenant for Isaac, Jacob and for Abraham's great grandson, Joseph...and beyond. That same faithfulness will be with and for each one of us. Anyone who is grafted into God's Eternal Covenant and who embraces and honors and keeps it as Joseph did, will know the same joy, peace, rest and triumph. It will be so until the end of time...and beyond.

God sent His Word to accompany Joseph, although to Joseph, from his perspective, much of his life was filled with agonizing days of tribulation and desolation. But the Lord made sure that His Father's will was done and His plans for the future, fulfilled, and that Joseph and his household were blessed...through his faithful obedient, long-suffering patience. God empowered Joseph to do what the Covenant required. Joseph had no idea of what was ahead. But God had destined him for something truly awesome. Through Joseph, God protected all of Abraham's present and future Family. He ensured their survival during the coming famine. He saw to it that as long as they were in Egypt they grew tremendously in number and developed their unique, enduring identity and world-blessing commission that continues to this day. God made sure, through Joseph, that His Son's Covenant Matrix on Earth would survive and eventually become 'the womb' out of which He Himself would emerge as The Son of Man, bringing God's Reconciliation, Redemption and Salvation forward, to each succeeding generation.

Joseph's life took on an eternal significance and richness that went far beyond anything he could have achieved by mere, natural human means. He entered into 'partnership' with God and His Word and Holy Spirit. And this union and close working relationship with God is the template for all other disciples to follow. Joseph followed his fathers into and through 'Abraham's Portal or Gateway' that leads into God's Eternal Kingdom and endless '*Shabbat Shalom*' (Sabbath Peace):

"He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.

"I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime; moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor—it is the gift of God. I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so worked that men should fear Him. That which is has been already, and that which will be has already been, for God seeks what has passed by."

(Ecclesiastes 3:11-15 Emphasis added.)

"Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done." (Genesis 2:1-2 Emphases added.)

We too must believe and accept God's living Word in all of His Perfection, just as the written Word reveals Him. We too must be brought into God's perfect, all-sufficient Eternal Covenant. It is our privilege and honor to allow God's Word to fulfill Abraham's Covenant through His New Covenant disciples. We must allow the Holy Spirit to write God's living Word on our hearts. That is, the Spirit must be free to transmit the life, love and obedience of God's Son into our heart, soul, will and affections. When God can actually BE GOD within us, and through us, He will make new creations of us. We'll be 'reborn' into God's Eternal Covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the rest of the Family. Even if we begin as outsiders and pagan idolaters, if we allow our Master to do with us, what He did with Joseph, we too will share in the Covenant love, protection, provision and destiny Joseph and his entire Family of true disciples will enjoy for all of eternity!