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Part I.  
Hated and Harassed

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# JOSEPH.

A TYPE OF CHRIST.

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Chapter I.

## HATED AND HARASSED.

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**J**OSEPH is one of the most perfect and beautiful types of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, and I hope that we shall find our present task of tracing the various items of his remarkable life both interesting and profitable.

The first prominent mention of Joseph is in Genesis 37. 2 where he comes on the scene at seventeen years of age. Here we have a picture of what God can do with a young life which is altogether devoted to Him. Following this laconic introduction we are told that Joseph was loved by his father, and hated by his brethren (Genesis 37. 3 and 4). As a token of his great love to Joseph, Jacob made him

**a coat of many colours.**

We shall presently see what became of that valuable garment.

It would appear that the more his father loved him, the more intensely his brethren hated him. In fact their minds were so embittered against their brother that they "could not speak peaceably unto him."

Before proceeding further we cannot fail to notice here a two-fold presentation of the Lord Jesus: (1) Loved by His Father; (2) hated by His own people.

The words "the Father loveth the Son" occur twice in the fourth gospel. In the first passage the expression of that love was manifested by the Father giving all things into His hands (John 3. 35). In the second passage that love was manifested by the Father unfolding to Him all things that He Himself accomplished (John 5. 20). In both instances we see the Lord Jesus as the dependent One, whilst at the same time we perceive in both statements the sublime truth of the words "I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE."

We must not, however, overlook the other side. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." And why did they not receive Him? Because they hated Him. But why did they hate Him? **For no reason whatever.** His own words were "They hated ME WITHOUT A CAUSE"—such is the unreliability and deceitfulness of the human heart. But, as we contemplate the sad truth that their hatred was reasonless, let us remind ourselves that it was for this very **lack of cause** that God loved **us**. Just as there was nothing in the Lord Jesus to justify that intense hatred on the part of His own people, so there was nothing in us to invite that intense love which God so freely bestowed upon us.

The undeserved hatred manifested to Joseph by his brethren increased rather than decreased. "They hated him." "They hated him yet the more." "And they hated him yet the more." (Genesis 37. 4, 5 and 8).

This crescendo of hatred was largely the outcome of

### **two remarkable dreams**

which Joseph dreamed. The first of these intimated that they were all binding sheaves in the field, and his brothers' sheaves made obeisance to his sheaf. Now, it was not difficult for his brethren to

see the interpretation of that. **The inference was patent.** It meant that the time would come when, by the overruling hand of God, they would own his dominion over them. This they determined would never be, though, unfortunately for them, in their determination they had reckoned without God.

### **The second dream**

was more exasperating than the first. He dreamed that the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down before him. The interpretation of this was as transparent as the first, though, of course, it involved much more. It implied that not only his brethren, but also his father and his mother would, sooner or later, own his lordship over them.

Jacob received this information with genuine surprise, though we read that "He observed the saying"—one of the comparatively few wise things recorded of Jacob in his zig-zag life. But Joseph's brethren received the news with a hatred which was by this time fanned to a white heat, and it was not long before that hatred to their brother developed into ENVY. (See Genesis 37. 11 and Acts 7. 9).

Envy is one of the most horrible things in the world. It is a poisonous fountain, from which have sprung some of the most awful crimes which have been enacted in history. One short statement recorded in Matthew 27. 18 is sufficient to shew the appallingly disastrous effects of this terrible monster—"He (Pilate) knew that for ENVY they had delivered Him."

We shall have the pleasing task in our next chapter of shewing how Joseph's dreams were literally fulfilled, but for the present let us content ourselves with that great and glorious event which is yet to take place, of which Joseph's dreams were but a faint picture.

God has given to His beloved Son a name which surpasses every other name, and the divine decree has gone forth that at the name of Jesus **every** knee shall bow, and **every** tongue shall confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Does it not rejoice our hearts to know that Christ shall be thus honoured by every creature in His creation? Notwithstanding the fact that He is now slighted and set at nought by so many, the time **must** arrive when "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are upon the sea, and all that are in them" shall ascribe blessing, and honour, and glory, and power unto Him who, for man's redemption, was allowed to be taken, and by wicked hands crucified and slain!

It was not long after Joseph had announced his dreams that

### **his father sent him**

to ascertain how his brethren fared and here we see a delightful example of Joseph's cheerful obedience in the words "Here am I" (Genesis 37. 13). How vividly this acquiescence reminds us of the words in Isaiah 6. 8, "Then said I, Here am I, send me." When there was no eye to pity us, and no arm to save us, the Lord Jesus graciously undertook the tremendous task of our eternal salvation. In other words, when all else had failed, then said He, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10. 7 and 9). The debt of love and gratitude we owe to the Son of God for rescuing, forgiving, and blessing us in this way is immeasurable.

Now let us see

### **the sequel**

to Joseph's willingness in seeking his brethren's welfare. "And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him." How pathetic! Here was

Joseph, with an absolutely pure motive, desiring and seeking their highest good, and here were his brethren, with a motive which was absolutely **impure**, desiring and seeking his death.

In the parable of the vineyard (Luke 20), the three servants who were sent at different times to receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard, were treated with disgraceful cruelty and "sent away empty." Then the lord of the vineyard decided to send his beloved son on the bare possibility that he might be received, respected, and revered. What happened? When the husbandmen **saw him** they decided to kill him. From Bethlehem to Calvary the enemies of the Lord Jesus conspired against Him. On one occasion they attempted to cast Him down headlong over the precipitous brow of a hill. At other times they took up stones to cast at Him, though on each occasion He easily escaped out of their hands, for the simple reason that the time when He should die as the Saviour of sinners had not yet arrived.

### **Joseph found his brethren**

in Dothan, and, not many days after, two events took place, the contemplation of which fires one's soul with righteous indignation. He was first cast into a pit, after which he was sold as a slave for twenty pieces of silver. For convenience' sake we will reverse this order, considering the latter action first.

It is difficult to realise the lengths to which the wickedness of the human heart will travel. Joseph is regarded by his brethren as a piece of lucrative merchandise; and the value they place upon him is **twenty pieces of silver**. As to how their brother would be treated by the Midianitish merchantmen to whom he was sold, this apparently did not enter their minds. They cared not what became of him

so long as they could give effect to that venomous hatred which lay in the innermost recesses of their sin-stained hearts.

As one reads the story of this cruel transaction, one's mind instinctively travels to another bargain which was completed many years after Joseph had passed hence. One of the most fateful days in the world's history was when Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests and said, "What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?" **STATE YOUR PRICE**, and if it is satisfactory I will see to it that very soon He will be in your hands. The angels must have trembled as they witnessed that most dreadful bargain, emanating as it did from the lowest depths of hell.

The price fixed upon was thirty pieces of silver—equivalent to about £3 15s.—"and from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him." **This was the value (the price of a slave) which Judas Iscariot placed upon the Son of God.** And not only so, but, in fulfilment of prophecy, it was the price at which the children of Israel valued Him. (see Matthew 27. 9)—Israel being represented by the chief priests with whom the bargain was made.

"What think ye of Christ?"—what value do ye place upon Him?—is a question we might profitably put to our own hearts. Perhaps some of us only think of Him at meetings, or very occasionally when we happen to read about Him, instead of allowing Him to fill our soul's vision, and to control our every action. If only we were to give Him His right place in our lives, we should soon realise how impossible it is to think too highly of Him, or to place too great a value upon His glorious person.

We must now come back to that most barbarous deed committed by Joseph's brethren when they

cruelly stript their brother of his coat of many colours, and heartlessly cast him into **a pit** which was

### EMPTY AND WATERLESS.

If anything is needed to crown this horrible act it is supplied in the words which immediately follow:—“And they sat down to eat bread.” What incredible callousness! Joseph is left in the pit to die of starvation and thirst, while his brethren satisfy their physical hunger close by.

Here we have a graphic picture of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus when, forsaken by all, He became our substitute and surety.

The pit was **empty**. **Alone** He bore the Cross—**alone** its grief sustained. He sank into deep mire where there was no standing. It was a process of continually sinking under the righteous judgment of God in all the perfection of His holiness, and intense hatred of sin. He looked for some to take pity, but looked in vain. He looked for comforters, but there was none. Refuge failed Him; no man cared for His soul. In that dreadful hour His disciples forsook Him and fled, whilst His enemies ridiculed and reviled. Like the scapegoat, who on the great day of atonement was taken away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness, so the Lord Jesus entered that land of entire separation in order that “as far as the East is from the West” He might remove our transgressions from us.

What a mercy it is that God has given us a living interest in all this; and as we recall the indescribable sufferings of Calvary, surely our hearts are bowed with a sense of deep humiliation and gratitude for that mighty love, the high-water mark of which we see at the cross.

Then the pit was **waterless**. One of the last statements the Lord Jesus uttered on the cross was "**I thirst.**" That tongue which had spoken so many wonderful and beautiful words, clave to His jaws in death. That cup, which was filled to the brim with divine indignation and wrath against sin, He emptied completely. The outrages, insults, and cruelties He received from His creatures were as nothing compared with the judgment He received from the hands of a thrice-holy and inflexibly righteous God. Not one of us shall ever be able to fathom the depths of that piercing cry which rang out into the darkness and stillness of the atmosphere: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

No one pitied Him—but **He pitied us**. Refuge failed Him, **but He provided a refuge for us**. No man cared for His soul—but **He cared for ours**, and each one of us might well apply the searching question to himself, **HOW MUCH OWEST THOU UNTO MY LORD?**

### **COVERING UP THEIR SIN.**

Having disposed of their brother, first by casting him into the pit, and secondly by making merchandise of him, the question arose as to what explanation Joseph's brethren could give to their father. It is a sad fact that, in many instances, when a wicked deed is perpetrated, another wicked act is committed to cover it. Thus it was with Joseph's brethren. To cover their guilt, their evil minds resorted to an artifice which was altogether despicable. They killed a goat, dipped their brother's coat in its blood, and sent it back to Jacob as an evidence that Joseph had been torn to pieces by some wild beast. "God hath made man upright, but they sought out many inventions," the majority of which have been anything but upright.

Here we see another pre-figuring of the Lord Jesus. "Now the **coat** was without seam, woven from the top throughout" (John 19. 23)—a beautiful picture of His beautiful life. Not a single irregularity was to be seen in Him. That life was indeed "without seam," perfectly woven from first to last. There was never a moment when the "fine flour" of a perfectly even life was not in evidence. Solomon's words in Proverbs 17. 8: "A gift is a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it; whithersoever it turneth it prospereth," exactly express the value of that life which was so unlike all other lives. Looked at from any angle; considered from any standpoint; nothing but **absolute perfection** is discernible. At the close of that stainless life He offered Himself without spot to God in order that, in a wonderful way, we might become united to Him, and henceforth seek to reproduce that life in our daily experience.

After the Ishmeelites had purchased Joseph at such a small figure, they sold him (probably at a profit) to

### **Potiphar,**

an official of high standing under Pharaoh. For some time Joseph stayed in the house of his Egyptian master, and during this period the Lord blessed Potiphar and all that he had, not for his own sake, but "for Joseph's sake." Moreover, his master was content to leave all that he had in Joseph's hand, knowing full well that, under his control, every thing was safe.

How important it is to remember that God has blessed us beyond measure, **not for our sake**, but for Christ's sake, and if only we were to place ourselves and all that we have into His hands, how different things would be—what channels of blessing we should become both to those who belong to Christ, as well as to those who know Him not!

Proceeding a step further, we find

### **Joseph placed in prison**

“where the king’s prisoners were bound.” This was through no fault of his own, but rather because of his unswerving loyalty to God, according to his own memorable words in Genesis 40. 15. “For, 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.” Two of these king’s prisoners were Pharaoh’s butler and baker, in whose company Joseph spent the first portion of his prison life.

### **TWO MORE DREAMS.**

Each of these men had a dream, which, as so frequently happened in Old Testament times, foretold their future. Both dreams became true according to Joseph’s interpretation. The butler was restored to his butlership, and the baker was released from prison only to suffer a worse fate. It is exceedingly interesting to trace the various places in Scripture where two men are mentioned in absolute contrast as to life, character, and destiny. Thus we have Cain and Abel; Esau and Jacob; Ishmael and Isaac; the pharisee and the publican; the prodigal and his brother; the two malefactors—the last named being clearly represented by the butler and the baker, and to this analogy we should do well to make more direct reference.

We read that the Lord Jesus was “numbered with the transgressors.” This was when He occupied the centre cross, between two thieves, one on either side. Whilst the people were beholding with a stolid indifference, and the rulers were deriding, and the soldiers were mocking, a conversation took place between the two malefactors which is as interesting as it is instructive.

One of them joins in the execrations of the unruly mob by saying, "If Thou be Christ, save Thyself, and us." Far from manifesting any sign of repentance toward God, or confidence in the Sinless Sufferer suspended by his side, he repeats the contemptuous reproach of the rulers who had, only a short while before, said "**He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He be Christ, the chosen of God.**" The other thief at once takes up the opposite position, and expresses the great contrast between themselves as guilty ones deserving punishment, and the sinless Son of God.

One of the greatest tributes to the spotless character of Christ is found in the words of this repentant malefactor: "This man hath done nothing amiss." In these fateful moments he thus towers above everybody, the disciples included, in his clear-cut testimony to the Saviour of sinners—a testimony which is still fragrant, and one which will not be forgotten at the Judgment Seat of Christ. And not only did this dear man thus declare Christ's innocence, but he followed it up by manifesting a delightful confidence in Him as Saviour and Lord.

Humanly speaking there was nothing to betoken kingship or royalty of any description in Him who was then wearing a crown twisted with thorns, and whose hands and feet were fastened by the hard-hearted Roman soldiers to the cross. And yet the dying thief saw in the distance that glorious kingdom in which the Lord of glory would reign, and earnestly desired to be remembered by Him at that time.

The answer was greater than the request. **That very day** the repentant sinner would be with his Saviour—transferred from the cross to the glory—never more to be separated. Truly "**where sin abounded, grace did superabound.**"

Thus we see how Joseph,

**HATED AND HARASSED,**

wonderfully portrays the Lord Jesus in His sufferings, rejection, and vicarious sacrifice.

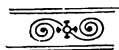
One more touch remains to be observed before we close our first chapter, namely, the familiar words of Joseph to the butler,

**“But think on me**

when it shall be well with thee and shew kindness I pray thee unto me, and make mention of me to Pharaoh.”

In like manner He who remembered us on the cross of shame, now desires us to be mindful of Him. He who has shewn such unparalleled kindness to us, now asks us to shew kindness to Him by making mention of Him as opportunity affords.

Unfortunately the butler was so occupied with his own restoration that, instead of remembering Joseph, he “forgot him.” Is it possible that **we** are so thoroughly occupied with ourselves, our circumstances, and our activities, that we think more of these than we think of Him to Whom we owe all we have and are!





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