

Week Seven

Living in the Shelter of a Sovereign God . . .

When You Need What Christ Alone Can Give

I can't think of a better way to begin this week than with the opening words from my son's Children's Bible:

Now, some people think the Bible is a book of rules, telling you what you should and shouldn't do. The Bible certainly does have some rules in it. They show you how life works best. But the Bible isn't mainly about you and what you should be doing. It's about God and what He has done.

Other people think the Bible is a book of heroes, showing you people you should copy. The Bible does have some heroes in it, but most of the people in the Bible aren't heroes at all. They make some big mistakes (sometimes on purpose). They get afraid and run away. At times they are downright mean.

No, the Bible isn't a book of rules, or a book of heroes. The Bible is most of all a Story . . . There are lots of stories in the Bible, but all the stories are telling one Big Story. The story of how God loves his children and comes to rescue them.

It takes the whole Bible to tell this story. And at the center of the story, there is a baby [who is Jesus]. ***Every story in the Bible whispers his name.*** He is like the missing piece in a puzzle – the piece that makes all the other pieces fit together, and suddenly you can see a beautiful picture. (emphasis added)¹

The purpose of your homework this week is to help you see how the story of Joseph whispers the name of Jesus. Though the New Testament never makes a direct connection between Joseph and Jesus, most scholars agree that Joseph's life presents us with many parallels that can serve as helpful illustrations of the character and work of Christ.

As much as we have learned from Joseph, as much as we admire and hope to emulate his godly character, and as much as we marvel at his faith in the sovereignty of God, we need a *whole lot more* than what his story can give. *We desperately need what can **only** be found in Christ!* With that in mind, let's go back to the very beginning as we listen oh-so-carefully to those sweet whispers of His name . . .

I have chosen not to divide this week's homework into days. Instead, it consists of a chart and a few questions. You can divide it up however you'd like.

As you complete the chart, please keep in mind that you are looking for **general parallels**. The fact is, Christ stands alone. His mission, life, suffering, salvation, and exaltation are unmatched – they unlike any other. So please do not think that I am in any way asking you to identify how Joseph and Jesus are **exactly** alike. That would be impossible! Again, you are looking for ways Joseph's story **whispers** Jesus' name. Don't try to take it too far!

	Joseph (unless otherwise noted, all from Genesis)	Jesus	Similarity
1)	37:3	Matthew 3:16-17	
2)	37:3	Revelation 1:12-14	
3)	37:2, 5, 8	John 5:18, 6:41, 8:40; Luke 4:28-29	
4)	37:6-7, 9-10 (focus on what Joseph and Jesus prophecy about themselves)	Matthew 26:64	

5)	37:12-13	John 6:38; Hebrews 10:7	
6)	37:18	Mark 12:6-7; John 1:11	
7)	37:23	Matthew 27:27, 28	
8)	37:28; 39:1	Matthew 26:14- 16	
9)	39:7-12	Luke 4:1, 2	

10)	39:13-20; 40:15b	Luke 23:2-5	
11)	39:20; Psalm 105:17, 18	Matthew 27:2; Luke 22:54, 63	
12)	40:1-19 (focus on who Joseph and Jesus were with)	Luke 23:32, 33, 39-44	
14)	41:40-45	Philippians 2:9, 10; Hebrews 2:9	
15)	41:55-57	John 6:35; 48-50	

16)	45:5-7	John 4:42; 1 John 4:14	
17)	50:15-21	Luke 23:34; Ephesians 1:7, 8; Colossians 1:13, 14	

Now for a few of questions . . .

1) For each of the following categories, explain how Jesus *exceeds* or *outdoes* Joseph.

His mission:

His obedience/submission to God's will:

His humility and suffering:

His offer of salvation:

His grace/generosity:

His exaltation:

2) According to **Hebrews 12:1**, men and women of faith throughout history (Joseph included!) form a “great cloud of witnesses” that surrounds us and cheers us on in our own walk of faith. Read **Hebrews 12:1-3** and describe how we are to respond to their example and encouragement.

3) What is the purpose of studying the lives of biblical characters like Joseph according to **Romans 15:4**?

Biblical hope means “confident expectancy.” How has the study of Joseph’s life encouraged you and strengthened your hope?

4) Considering all you have learned in the last several weeks, what does it mean to live in the shelter of a sovereign God?

¹ Sally Lloyd Jones, *The Jesus Storybook Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 15, 16.