

**Images of the Messiah**  
**Ancient Hebrew Literature**  
By Dionysis Theodorou, April 2002

Joseph is the eleventh son of Jacob. Jacob is also called Israel. I suppose that Joseph was Jacob's favorite son not only because, as the text says, he was the son of his old age—for he had another son by Rachel, Benjamin—but also because he was the most good-in-heart and obedient to the good will of his father. His brothers also despised Joseph because of the love that the father had for him.

God reveals to Joseph something that will come to pass years down the road, when He gives him two dreams which are alike in that Joseph becomes the saviour of his own family. When he repeats the dreams to his father and to his brothers, his brothers hate him even more; but his father keeps these things in his heart. His brothers say to him “Do you mean to rule over us? Do you mean to reign over us?”

Years later, another son of Israel, Moses, is faced with a similar rebuke by one of his own brothers: When Moses saw two Hebrews fighting, he said to the offender, ‘Why do you strike your fellow? And the other responded, ‘Who has made you chief and ruler over us?’ It appears that God had revealed to Moses that the time would come when he would deliver the people of Israel out of the house of bondage by his hand.

Joseph is sold by his brothers into slavery and he finds himself in the Kingdom of Egypt where God eventually after much trial and temptation—although the Lord was with Him all along—raises him to a position of great authority in the land of Egypt: Joseph is second only to Pharaoh.

Meanwhile back in Canaan Jacob is grieving for his son Joseph; and the brothers of Joseph know in their hearts that they have committed a great injustice. There is a famine in the land, and the brothers of Joseph, are sent by their father to Egypt where there is much grain because of the wise and Godly stewardship of Joseph.

Thence the dreams which Joseph had years before are in this very moment fulfilled. His brothers who had rejected him, and hated him because of the goodness of his heart and because of the hardness of their heart, have now come to bow down before Joseph, who has been raised, by God, to a position of power and majesty: he is their saviour.

We notice a pattern forming throughout the Bible. Those who are highly esteemed by man are not necessarily esteemed highly by God.<sup>a</sup> Joseph is first rejected by his own family; but is chosen by God to do a marvellous work of salvation; and eventually the Lord opens their hearts and they accept Joseph. Moses is rebuked for his efforts to reconcile two of his brothers who are fighting and in effect he is rejected as a leader, only to be accepted and followed when God chooses.

David had an almost identical experience after Samuel had anointed him. He went to the camp where Goliath was provoking the Israelites and he inquired about what was going on, with the intention of fighting the giant himself. He was ridiculed by his brother Eliab

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<sup>a</sup> But the Lord said to Samuel, “Pay no attention to his appearance or his stature, for I have rejected him. For not as man sees does the Lord see; man sees only what is visible, but the Lord sees into the heart.”  
1 Samuel 16:7.

and rejected by the rest of his brothers <sup>b</sup>. In Psalm 118 David says, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone. This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our sight.”

The Bible speaks of another king that arises, and is rejected by His brothers <sup>c</sup> only to be accepted at the fulfilment of times when God opens their eyes and their hearts. This one is the Messiah, the King of Israel.

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<sup>b</sup>. 1 Samuel 17:28-29.

<sup>b</sup>. But Jesus said unto them, a prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. Mark 6:4.