

The Unrecognized Mediator

Read time: 4 minutes 37 seconds

It would be impossible to read the Bible without in some way reading our own personal experiences into the text and the lives of those who we find within its pages. For instance, when I read the story of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, I can't help but think about how I felt when my wife and I lost a child. It would be less than human to not only read the text, but also feel the words within us as the events taking place connect with the reality that is our individual lives.

With this in mind as Jewish believer in Yeshua (Jesus), when I read the story of Joseph, it sets off fireworks of emotions within me. Why does this story evoke within me such a strong emotional response? It is that, like Joseph, because of what G-D supernaturally revealed to me (that Yeshua is the Messiah), I was rejected by my brothers (my Jewish People). Like Joseph, this rejection for a period of time symbolically caused me to dwell outside of the land of my people among the Egyptians (Christianity). However, even though I lived in the land of Egypt, like Joseph, I remained committed to my G-D and His Word.

Like Joseph, I also was raised up within my own symbolic Egypt, and while living there, I was able to show many people how to survive the famine (read Amos 8). However, even though I was blessed and even though I was ultimately able to help both Egyptian and Jewish people find the Bread of Life, I was like Joseph, still unrecognized as a brother by my brothers.

For many years, I believed that the reason my brothers didn't recognize me as their brother was completely the fault of my brothers. After all, it was they who rejected me and caused me to leave my spiritual home and go to Egypt. However, one day while I was reading the story of Joseph, I came upon a series

of verses that changed my life and set me free from the self-imposed bondage of my feelings of rejection. These verses are found in Genesis 45:1-3:

“Now Joseph could no longer restrain himself in front of all those who were standing by him, so he cried out, ‘Get everyone away from me!’ So no one stood with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. But he gave his voice to weeping so that the Egyptians heard, and Pharaoh’s household heard. Joseph said to his brothers, ‘I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?’ And his brothers were unable to answer him because they were terrified at his presence.”

To understand what is taking place in this text, we must remember what we have just been reading in the story. Over and over, Joseph’s brothers spoke to Joseph about their father. At this point in the narrative, there is no way that Joseph doesn’t know that Jacob is alive in Canaan. Yet, when Joseph finally breaks emotionally because of his love for his brothers, he asks the question “Is my father still alive?”

In this moment in time, Joseph has finally fully forgiven his brothers and is revealing himself to them. He does so by saying, “I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?” In this one short statement, Joseph sets himself free from rejection. His concern changes from concern for himself, to concern for his father. Remember that this statement cannot really be asking if his father was still alive because Jacob being alive was already clearly stated. This was Joseph rejecting his rejection and reminding himself and his brothers that Jacob was his father also.

He was restoring his relational place as one of the brothers. The bottom line is that for Joseph, it was more important to be recognized as a son of Jacob than it was to be recognized as one of the brothers. This is because Joseph understood the absolute truth that as long as they shared the same father, then the rejection of his brothers was irrelevant because as

long as their father was their father he would always be their brother regardless of their opinion.

This truth changed my world as a Jewish believer. It forever removed my acceptance of the rejection of my brothers. My motivation changed from my attempting to cause my brothers to accept me as their brothers, and my motivation became asking them the one and only important question. Does my father live?

If I can get my people to say, "Yes, my father lives," then eventually their hearts will turn and they will see me as their brother. I don't believe it was a coincidence that Yeshua spoke the words we read in Luke 23:34: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing," and when Yeshua was speaking these words while men fought over his garments (remember Joseph's special robe). Yeshua spoke these words to His brothers at that moment in time to remind them, and by extension us today, that His Father Lives. It was also not a coincidence that right after he spoke these words, a sign was posted over Yeshua's head, which read, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS."

Joseph taught me that my goal should never have been to get my brothers to stop rejecting me. My goal should always have been and should always be to ask my brothers the question: "Does My Father Live?" Because if My Father lives, then we already are brothers—even if they don't recognize me yet.

Bring *Charisma* magazine home with a subscription today!

Eric Tokajer is the author of "Overcoming Fearlessness," "What If Everything You Were Taught About the Ten Commandments Was Wrong?," "With Me in Paradise," "Transient Singularity," "OY! How Did I Get Here?: Thirty-One Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before Entering Ministry," "#ManWisdom: With Eric Tokajer," "Jesus Is to Christianity as Pasta Is to Italians" and "Galatians in Context."