

Money: Ends and Trends

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World Trend Watch—Part XII: The Coming Anti-joseph

“The seven years of abundance in Egypt came to an end, and the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said. There was famine in all the other lands, but in the whole land of Egypt there was food. When all Egypt began to feel the famine, the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Then Pharaoh told all the Egyptians, ‘Go to Joseph and do what he tells you.’” **Genesis 41: 53-55**

It is heart-rending to learn what people will sometimes do in order to eat ... to quell the pangs of hunger. In the story of Joseph, we see that people were prepared to do everything that he said in order to avoid starvation. Put in such a situation, acts of desperation to avoid immediate tragedy are understandable.

Such was the case in Egypt almost 3,000 years ago when Joseph reigned as vice-regent. He had been put in charge of the entire kingdom of the Pharaoh and was commissioned to prepare the nation for a coming seven-year famine. He ended up being an economic potentate. The entire commercial structure of the known world at that time as well as almost all the land in Egypt came under the control of this one man. Thankfully, Joseph was a godly person and his actions led to the saved lives of perhaps millions of people. Yet, the Bible remains silent on the judgment of his techniques. However, it is evident to any reader that the consequences of his actions were not entirely ideal. The entire ownership structure of the land of Egypt was changed virtually overnight from private ownership to vassalage. Also, as a result of Joseph's policies, a system of onerous taxation resulted that is *“still in force to today.”* (**Genesis 47:26**)

Just imagine what would happen if this type of power were given to a diabolical person?

A Sometime Misinterpreted Story

The Bible story of Joseph is a favorite of many. Not only does it celebrate the ultimate blessings that accrued to a righteous man, the story also shows how God can miraculously enter into the bad occurrences of our lives and ultimately work them out for good. (**Romans 8:28**) Yet, it may also be true that some aspects of Joseph's life have been sometimes misinterpreted. For one, more than a few twist this Biblical account as a proof reference for the existence of modern day Josephs. They wish to legitimize their quest for riches by claiming a basis for a Spirit-led ability to profitably forecast financial markets and economic trends. If anything, the story of Joseph counsels the exact opposite as we will see. What also may not be immediately obvious is that there are many levels of prophetic foreshadowing to be found in this account, not to mention endtime warnings for Christians living today. We will only scratch the surface of meanings here.

Crucially, the account of Joseph found in the first book of the Bible foreshadows the great dangers of an economic enslavement of the world in the last days — what I see as being represented by the modern-day phenomenon of globalization.

What is globalization? It is the present-day process bringing about a world-controlling, materialistic structure under the incentives of prosperity and gain. As such, this topic of

“globalization” leading enslavement and the rule of one man is the tenth and final of this World Trend Watch series.

Joseph: The Picture of an Economic Saviour

Many agree that Joseph presents an Old Testament picture of Christ. He suffered so that he might be able to save his family in Egypt, to go ahead and prepare a place for them. Much is also made of the fact that Joseph is the only character in the entire Bible besides Christ of which no character flaw or sin is explicitly mentioned. While this is true, Joseph was a sinner like every other human being. The only difference is that his misdeeds are a little more hidden. In fact, through his errors, this great man of God like all the others from Abraham to King David can be seen to have bequeathed lessons to mankind that are very relevant for our day.

A closer examination of his life reveals that the results of his actions were not entirely virtuous. While it is true that he served to save many lives, his mission was not performed entirely in the spirit of a merciful rescue operation. In the end, he instituted an oppressive system of control over the people of Egypt. Egyptians had to virtually sell their souls and freedoms to gain access to food. With the exception of a few — mainly priests, the immediate family of Joseph and probably other high-ranking elites — the entire land of Egypt came under the direct ownership of Pharaoh.

It is instructive to review how this all happened. When the famine first spread over the whole country, *“Joseph opened the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians.” (Genesis 41: 56)* Notice that he did not donate the grain to needy people, but instead required payment. Think of it. People were starving and he asked for money. Few Christian aid organizations today would think that they are fulfilling Christ's command to *“feed the poor”*¹ if they were profiting from their ministries. Another aspect to notice is that *“... all the countries came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the world.” (verse-57)* Here in the first book of the Bible we find the very roots of modern-day “globalization.” The whole world converged together for reasons of “bread.” Egypt had become the world commercial center and its grain became the common currency. Pharaoh came to this position of controlling the entire world by dispensing the means of economic sustenance. Here we see that the incentive of gaining “bread” had been harnessed by one centralized system ... even one man. This same process is sweeping the entire world today under the guise of “globalization.”

In time, because the famine was so severe, scripture tells us that Joseph collected all the money that was found in Egypt and Canaan. No doubt, he deposited the funds in Pharaoh's coffers. He took every last penny in return for grain so that people might eat and be saved from the famine. Now, the entire monetary system of that time was under his control.

Once all the monetary savings of the people had been used up, they then faced a cash-crunch. The famine continued yet they had no grain and no money. What to do next? They begged Joseph to give them food. What did Joseph do in response? He next took control of the nation's industry. He demanded their livestock. *“So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and he gave them food in exchange for their horses, their sheep and goats, their cattle and donkeys. And he brought them through that year with food in exchange for all their livestock.” (Genesis 47:17)*

Now Joseph was in control of a large part of the capital stock of Egypt. For Pharaoh he now had secured the ownership of the land-based transportation system (*donkeys and horses*) and the productive capacity of factories ... in other words, livestock. After all, in

an agrarian society as existed during that time, livestock represented assets that generated food and a large part of income. Now that Joseph had control of the key “factories” he could also now sell the outputs of milk, meat as well as transportation services.

However, the takeover by the state didn’t stop there. The famine continued. People needed more grain and they became desperate. *“Buy us and our land in exchange for food, and we with our land will be in bondage to Pharaoh”*, they now said. **(verse 19)** So Joseph did exactly that. He completely reduced the people to servitude and all the land — from one end of Egypt to the other — became the property of the state and under the control of one man.

Yes, Joseph saved many lives by storing up grain during the seven good years. That was good. But were his specific techniques ordered by God? He may have even gathered all the excess grain in the land by decree. No mention is made of him buying the surplus grain, though it specifically states that he later sold it. Scripture simply says that he gathered it. In fact, the text strongly suggests that he did not buy the grain, stating that the stockpiles eventually became so large that he was no longer able to keep an account of their size. **(Genesis 41:49)** Had he purchased the grain with money from the Pharaoh’s treasury, this problem would not have occurred. We can be reasonably sure that Pharaoh would have required an accounting of how his money was being spent. Whatever the case, whether or not policies of confiscation were pursued, in the end all the people of the land ended up in complete servitude. It doesn’t appear so much a work of mercy when it becomes clear that the whole saga turned out to be a giant opportunity for Pharaoh to gain power and wealth at the expense of those in need.

An Endtime Trap Foreshadowed

How long did it take for the entire known world to come in economic bondage to the Pharaoh? Scripture suggests three and one half years. Three one year periods appear to be indicated, two of them mentioned specifically. Livestock was used in payment for one year of grain supply. **(Genesis 47:17)** Another year was survived by giving up ownership of land. **(verse 18)** Before these two years, Joseph had already taken all the money in the land. **(verses 13-15)** For several reasons I conclude that this period could not have taken any longer than one year. As most wealth was represented by livestock and land in that day, physical money did not play as significant a role in the livelihoods of people. If only one year’s grain was purchased with livestock, then their money would certainly not have lasted any longer than a one period either. And, as already suggested, Joseph may not have bought the grain in the first place. Therefore, the seven years of plenty would not have produced a big cash hoard in people’s pockets.

On this logic, we so far count no more than three years. One additional half year is accounted for by the fact that it would have required at least one crop cycle for people to run out of food. As the Nile basin could support two grain harvests each year, it would be logical to assume that people would only have had laid aside provisions for one half-year, long enough to last until the next harvest. In any case, Joseph’s massive gathering program of excess grain would have ensured that not much more would have been laid aside by private farmers. That suggests that six-months of drought would have first taken place before food shortages occurred. If reasoning is correct, here we see that it probably required a three and one-half year period to bring the entire world under the control of one system that was under the authority of one man. From that time on they were in bondage, required to pay a 20% tax on the output of their labours.

This first three and one-half year period of the seven-year famine can be seen to foreshadow the first half of the Great Tribulation. It is during this period that a great world ruler rises, the Antichrist. He brings the world under his control in the name of peace and prosperity. Then, once he has much of the world in his grip, he tightens the noose and brings doom to the earth. Then starts the Great Tribulation the Great — the second three and one-half years.

Is the alignment between Joseph and the Antichrist a coincidence ... even a sacrilege of the beautiful story of Joseph? Not any more than is the recognition that this diabolical last-day ruler is specifically also conjured up to be a false christ, the Antichrist. If you agree Joseph was a type of Christ, then wouldn't it only follow that the Antichrist would also be an Anti-joseph? Whereas Joseph had a benevolent calling ordered by God to save physical lives, the Antichrist is a demonically-inspired person that seeks to physically entrap mankind for the purpose of destruction. Jesus Christ came to offer spiritual life for an eternity. The Antichrist comes to do the opposite.

Even if the three and one-half year period required by Joseph to enslave all of Egypt is an inappropriate parallel to the timeline of the Great Tribulation, the process of the enslavement of the people is highly significant. For the sake of bread, the people first gave up their money, then their livelihoods and professions, then their land and bodies.

Points to Ponder

Today, many people are looking for a modern-day Joseph — an economic savior. They want to find solace in a comfortable life, low mortgage payments, a secure job, booming financial wealth, growing export markets and a unfettered playing field for the globe's burgeoning multinational corporations (*the very seed beds of globalization*). Globalization is the sure route to that outcome say many leaders and politicians. We must give over our hearts, land and factories to serve this global system so that we might take part in the fruits of a world-wide economic order. So it may be. However, they risk falling captive to an Anti-joseph.

As the world looks to this system for sustenance, they become enslaved to its rulers. Eventually one man — the Antichrist — will arrive at its pinnacle of power to take control. And, most likely, he at first will appear as an Anti-joseph. After all, today, people are more interested in an economic savior than a spiritual one. Much of the world — certainly the societies in the Western World — have already forfeited their spiritual futures in their primary pursuit of earthly prosperity and happiness. Anyone who offers workable solutions to that end will be gladly received.

Were the people angry with Joseph when he enslaved them? Not at all. "*You have saved our lives,*" they said. "*May we find favor in the eyes of our lord; we will be in bondage to Pharaoh.*" (**Genesis 47:25**) Here we see that they willingly gave themselves up for bondage to the Pharaoh so that they might eat.

The entire world will do so again the Bible indicates. Only this time it will be in response to Anti-joseph. They will willingly allow themselves to become economically and financially enslaved to a diabolically-inspired person. Why? So that they might eat ... so that they may have quality of life and retain the many creature comforts that they have become used to.

This process is already long underway in the form of a world "globalization," a phenomenon that has accelerated in leaps and bounds these past few decades. The process itself has virtually become a god of prosperity and, in my view, is already

advanced to the point where Anti-joseph could arise at any time. That day could be very near. Only the Lord tarries and the Church must first be removed.

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ⁱ If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat;
if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. Proverbs 25:21. Also see Matthew 25:34-46.