

# SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Morning

Date 6<sup>th</sup> July 2025

Preacher Rev Philip Knowles

Hymns 339

Read: Genesis 49:1-2, 22-26 Text Genesis 49:22-26

Series: Joseph (103) Title: Joseph's Battles (1)

**Genesis 49:1** reads *And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.*

While Jacob's words to his twelve sons known as the tribes of Israel, was a prophecy of their future, yet Jacob also mentioned their past.

In dealing only with Joseph, **verse 22** refers to Joseph's future blessings through his sons Ephraim and Manasseh.

For that reason, Ephraim and Manasseh, take Joseph's place, among the tribes of Israel, to count as one.

***Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall:*** Joseph's future speaks of fruitfulness, abundance, as seen by Ephraim and Manasseh.

Due to his union to Christ by faith, Joseph's life was continually supplied by the well of blessings from the Lord, so that he evidenced the fruit of the spirit.

As we come to **verse 23** Jacob then speaks of Joseph's past, referring to his humiliation of sufferings and sorrows by the hands of others.

The battles he faced through life such as rejection, betrayal, and temptation, where because he was a fruitful bough a fruitful son.

For that reason there are lessons to learn from Joseph's life, that while he experienced many battles **yet *the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob...***

...or to use the words of **Psalm 34:19** ***many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.***

Having considered that Joseph is a fruitful bough, let's consider, Joseph's battles.

## **I FIRST THE ARCHERS IN JOSEPH'S BATTLES.**

***The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him:***

From **Genesis 37** right through to **Genesis 41** the people who set themselves against Joseph both included Jews and Gentiles.

Jacob has described them in **verse 23** as **archers**.

The name literally means **masters of bow**.

Joseph's persecutors are compared to archers for the reason in battle...

... when archers shoot the arrow it was with a purpose to make impact, to wound, hurt and even end life.

To use a literal example, **1 Samuel 31:3** ***And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers.***

Jacob takes the scene of archery and figuratively applies it to show...

... that all who stood against Joseph, were like archers, and their arrows represented their words and actions...

...in which they took aim with the purpose to wound him.

Joseph as a godly young man filled with the Spirit, was the target to hit.

The archers in view sadly included...

... Joseph's own Jewish brothers, meaning his own family, his kinsmen in the flesh.

Also, Potiphar's wife, a Gentile woman.

They all waited for the right moment to strike.

There is certainly a picture pointing to Jesus Christ that both Jews and Gentiles set themselves against Him, waiting for the moment to strike.

Christ's own Jewish Kinsmen received Him not, but cried crucify Him and then the Gentiles crucified Him.

### **1, The Archers Skill**

The archers or masters of bow were skilled in hitting the target, and more importantly they knew how and where to hit causing the most pain and impact.

When the masters of bow shot the arrow they did not miss.

And so it was in Joseph's life, his archers did not miss, they hit him where it hurt, making him to be a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief.

They knew where to aim, they knew where to shoot at.

For instance, **Joseph brothers** shot at his love for his father and his father's love for him. Joseph received a coat of many colours due to his father's love.

They shot at the message he delivered from God that one day his brothers and father would bow before him and he would rule over them.

We know this was fulfilled when they came to Egypt and bowed before him as the ruler of the land. But they aimed for his message for they knew what it and they rejected him.

**Potiphar's wife** knew where to aim. She shot arrows to tempt Joseph.

Joseph was a young man, a single man, working hard, a good looking man, and she knew to shoot when he was alone.

She knew what to wear to seek and entice him. She aimed to get a response in her favour that Joseph would lie with her, but he refused, and said how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God.

Both these attacks in Joseph's life by the Jews and Gentiles, point to a greater than Joseph the Lord Jesus Christ, as Jew and Gentile shot the arrows skilfully at Him.

His Jewish kinsmen, the religious leaders, shot at Him by the message He received from God.

Jesus taught He is God and therefore, had authority to forgive sin as only God can forgive sin.

The Gentles whipped Him and nailed Him to the tree.

Oh the devil skilfully shot arrows at Christ tempting Him to dishonour God and worship Satan.

He knew the arrows to shoot, to try and get a response from Christ, to offer Him power, kingdoms, but Christ did not respond in favour because all power and kingdoms belonged to Him anyway.

Christ said ***Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.***

Oh believer, we have one arch enemy who is Satan but we have many archers who fight in his kingdom...

... and they are skilled with the bow, they are masters of the bow, they know where to aim, they know your weak points...

...they know to hit you where it hurts, they know how to wound and hurt you in the battle, to set you aside.

They shoot the arrow to aim for some who battle with the lust of the flesh, idols, adultery, addictions, financial pressure, overdose, murmuring, pride, anger, aggression, power struggle, popularity, depression, discouragement, feeling a failure, doubt...

...these are all arrows the archer aims to take you out of service and sight, to finish you off...

...so you will not be able to teach children the gospel, or you will be so injured you won't attend the services or prayer meetings, no one will hear the gospel from your lips.

That's why the Archers shot at Joseph and Jesus, because both were called of God to save a people.

If they were taken out of the battle, the people would have perished.

Likewise believer, God has called you to be a witness of the gospel, that through your life, many will come to Christ, but the archers shoot so that you are unable to do to.

## **The Archers Skill**

### **2, The Archers Speech.**

***The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him:***

The words ***sorely grieved him***, means ***bitter words or to harass by bitter words.***

All hatred and bitterness was represented by the arrows.

They knew what to say, seeking to ruin Joseph's life.

David uses the same expression about the wicked in his day, in **Psalm 64:3** ***Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:***

Joseph's brothers had nothing pleasant to say about or to him...

...rather they could only speak to him in bitterness, plotting against him, planning his betrayal.

They said of Joseph in Genesis 37:19 **Behold this dreamer cometh.**

Even Potiphar's wife to cover her sin, referred to Joseph as the Hebrew servant come to mock them.

Consider the Lord Jesus Christ...

... through His life, the archers **sorely grieved him**, they spoke in bitter words to Him.

Simeon prophesied of the archers bitter words against Christ's life, in Luke 2:34 Christ is **a sign which shall be spoken against**,

years later, the High priest said that Christ in Matthew 26:65 **He hath spoken blasphemy**; but at the cross, Psalm 22 prophesies in verses 8-9 **all they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, <sup>8</sup> He trusted on the LORD that He would deliver him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him.**

Matthew 27:47 **He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.**

Oh believer, Christ gave counsel in Matthew 5:11, that due to the union between Him and His people, then their opposers **shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake, or because our union to Jesus Christ.**

**Paul said in Philippians 1:29 "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake."**

The Archers Skill, Speech.

3, The Archers Spitefulness

**The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him:**

the last words **...and hated him**, are the cause, the spitefulness of their attacks.

**Genesis 37:4** *and when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren they hated him....”*

The word **Hated** used in **Genesis 49 and 37** means **hostile**. The idea is **to oppose, opposition, an enemy at war. They opposed Joseph, declared war on him, Joseph was now viewed and treated as a enemy by his own brethren.**

They hated his godly character, his message, the love between Joseph and their father.

In fact when Stephen in **Acts 7** gives the historical record of Israel, he states in **Acts 7:9** “*And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him*”

The expression *moved with envy* reads *became jealous*.

**Genesis 37:4** *they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him*, meaning they had nothing good to say about him or too him.

**V5** “*they hated him yet the more...*” the same words in **verse 8** “*...And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.*”

In **Genesis 39**, Potiphar, spake to Joseph day by day, her words were pleasant, until he refused her temptation, and then her words **sorely grieved him**.

In speaking to her husband she then referred to Joseph as **the Hebrew servant**, one who came to mock them.

Once again we are brought to see in the life of Joseph another elevated view of Christ, was also hated.

No man was or is or will be hated more than Christ.

The Lord Jesus said of sinners in **John 15:25** “*They hated me without a cause.*”

The phrase **without a cause** means *freely*, or *without a reason*.

In other words they hate me because they hate me, they hate me freely, they oppose me without a just reason.

The Lord then said to His people by way of warning, awareness and comfort, **John 15:18** ***"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you."*** **verse 20** ***"...if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you..."***

As Christ is hated freely so all in union or united to Him will also be hated opposed freely. **Psalm 69:4** ***"They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head..."*** **Psalm 109:3** ***"They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause."***

Paul said to the church at Philippi, **Philippians 1:29** ***"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake."***

In Joseph's life, the Arrows kept coming his way.

Believer, the arrows are aimed daily, their words shoot at you to make impact.

Sadly many believers suffer direct hits from their natural family members, as they reject them, refuse to go to church with them.

Also, in disobedience to the Lord, we have to say sometimes the family of God turns their bows upon one another, their words are not seasoned with salt but in envy, jealousy and bitterness, they speak to one another.

**But let me close by highlighting Verse 24** ***But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)***

Through every battle, every Archer and arrow, Joseph knew the God's presence, providence, protection power and prosperity.

God reveals Himself as the mighty one, the strong one.

Wherever Joseph was whether in the pit, prison, Potiphar's house or Pharaoh's house, the Lord was with Him.

The Lord gave him favour and all he did for the Lord's glory, the Lord made him to prosper.

Paul discovered this when he said in 2 Tim 4:16-17 ***At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me... Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me.*** Joseph found Christ to stand with Him and strengthen him.

Believer, when the arrows are shot at you, the Lord will draw near to you, and presence Himself with you, He is your shield, defender, and strength.

Every arrow that is meant for evil against you He turns it for you good to accomplish His eternal purposes.

Next time we will consider **THE ABIDING & THE ALMIGHTY IN JOSEPH'S BATTLE**