

On the Beginning

43. Joseph's Wisdom

NOTE ESPECIALLY Genesis 50:14-26

We come now to the final sentences, paragraphs, and words of the Book of Genesis, and they deal with a very significant subject: God overruling the misdeeds of wicked men to benefit His servant. Even though man is fallen and Creation is cursed, life is not really in chaos. God is still on the throne!

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."
(Romans 8:28)

In orchestrating events to fulfill His purpose, God manipulates sinful acts to work together with everything else and finally work to the good of those that love Him. Note these scriptures:

"Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." (Psalm 76:10)

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." (Acts 2:22-24)

Joseph's life is a wonderful illustration of this fact. He said to his brothers,

". . . as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive."
(Genesis 50:20)

1. Joseph's Brethren Fear **Retribution**.
Apparently they had not learned much over the years about doing the right thing. After Jacob died, the brothers of Joseph told him a lie in an effort to save their own necks!

"And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father." (Genesis 50:16-17)

They deserved Joseph's wrath, which was now invested with the royal authority of Egypt, and they thought that only their father had stood between them and death. But they were wrong!

2. Joseph Brings **God** Into The Equation.
Read carefully Joseph's reply.

“And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.” (Genesis 50:19-21)

How had Joseph been able to “handle” the events of his boyhood? How had he been delivered from bitterness? How could he treat “*kindly*” the brothers who had done him such harm? He brought God into the story! In his mind he saw God using the events of his life to accomplish good. He said, “*Am I in the place of God?*” He believed that although his brothers “*thought evil*” and did evil, “*God meant it unto good,*” and turned the whole nightmare of betrayal, slavery, and imprisonment into a story of deliverance for the family of Israel, and many others. The way to face the presence of evil in your past life is to put God into the story, and see Him as being in charge. God makes it all work together for the good of His servant. Believe it, and act on it, as Joseph did.

3. Joseph Dies In **Faith.**

The final lines of Genesis speak of God’s blessing of Joseph’s life. Verses 24 and 25 of Chapter 50 tells us some of what could be called his “last words.”

“And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.” (Genesis 50:24-25)

In Hebrews 11, we are told,

“By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.” (Hebrews 11:22)

We all must live by faith, and we must die by faith. Joseph died believing that God was going to keep his promise to Abraham and bring Israel back to Canaan. His faith helped Joseph understand the meaning of his life. Putting God into the equation helped him see part of the reason for what had happened to him over the years. But what he said about his life serving “*to save much people alive*” was only *part* of the reason he was sent to Egypt. Over 200 years before, his ancestor Abraham had been told “*that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them . . . and also that nation, whom they serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance*” (See Genesis 15:7-16). The nation was to go down to Egypt and be enslaved there before being delivered and brought up to Canaan. Joseph’s experience was given in order that these plans would be fulfilled. Something revealed centuries before and something that would happen centuries later were tied to God’s plan for Joseph’s life.

The truth is that every Christian’s life, and the things that happen in our lives, have to do with things bigger than the events of our life-span. That’s why we must live and die *by faith*. At best, we will see in this life only *part* of “why” things happen to us. (See I Corinthians 13:12). Our

lives are part of a much bigger picture. If we trust in the Word of God, this will be our wisdom!