

***“The Foundations of Our Faith Revealed, Theme by Theme, Genesis —
The Sovereignty of God, Part 7”***

***Review: The Lord God Provided A Testimony for Jacob Through Hard Times, But
Nevertheless the Lord Allowed Joseph to Be Sold into Slavery***

- ***This begins the narrative of the most significant (or surely, one of the most awesome) workings of the Sovereign Hand of the Lord God found in the Old Testament). Let us open the curtain to see how the Lord begins this sovereign work, a work that will encourage our hearts as it has for so many of God’s people down through the ages:***

Gen. 37:3-11, 18-20

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of *many* colours.

4 And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told *it* his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:

7 For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.

8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

10 And he told *it* to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What *is* this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

11 And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

...

18 And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.

19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.

20 Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

[READ] Gen. 37:23-25

23 And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, *his coat of many colours that was on him*;

24 And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit *was empty, there was no water in it*.

25 And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry *it* down to Egypt.

Gen. 37:28, 31-36

28 Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty *pieces* of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

...

31 And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood;

32 And they sent the coat of *many colours*, and they brought *it* to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it *be* thy son's coat or no.

33 And he knew it, and said, *It is my son's coat*; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.

34 And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.

35 And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.

36 And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, *and* captain of the guard.

- ***Thus our story begins today. Joseph has been sold into slavery in Egypt and humanly speaking, nothing could have been worse. But, as we have seen so often and now near the end of the inspired Genesis account, with God all things are possible.***
- ***And indeed, the Sovereignty of God is revealed on every page! Amen.***

Today's Outline: The Lord Sovereignly Provides National Blessings for Israel:

- ***The Most Amazing Story of All is What Leads from Joseph's Enslavement to His Final Words***

- ***The Lord God Presents Jacob to Joseph and He Found the Nation of Israel upon a Resurrection Hope***

Next Time:

- ***Israel Blesses Joseph's Sons and Joseph Himself Prophetically Implying A Future National Heritage***
- ***Israel Dies with the Hope of a Future Resurrection in the Land of Promise***
- ***Israel's National Heritage Reaffirmed in Joseph's Final Words of Testimony***

I. The Most Amazing Story of All is What Leads from Joseph's Enslavement to His Final Words:

- ***Joseph was sold in Egypt by Ishmeelites by way of Midianites to Potiphar, an officer in Pharaoh's court. There could be nothing worse as man sees it and Jacob was tempted to see it exactly that way. After all, what had he just been through with the loss of Rachel and so much more? You remember the story well, I am sure, and what the consequence of this was for the patriarch:***

[REREAD] Gen. 37:34-36

31 And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood;

32 And they sent the coat of *many* colours, and they brought *it* to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it *be* thy son's coat or no.

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35 And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.

36 And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, *and* captain of the guard.

- ***But though Joseph was sold into slavery in a far land, God nevertheless sovereignly blesses Joseph as he served Potiphar:***

[READ] Gen. 39:1-6

1 And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither.

2 And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

3 And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand.

4 And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.

5 And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.

6 And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.

- *Again, we see here the sovereignty of God written on every page and sometimes in every line, even through the most difficult times in a person's life — yes, even then ...*
- *Potiphar's wife makes false accusations against Joseph and he is imprisoned, but the Lord God sovereignly blesses him. He goes from the highest position in his master's realm to the lowest, from Potiphar's high house as captain of the guard of Pharaoh to a prisoner in his jail, and all in a moment. One might think that satan was involved, perhaps working through this evil woman who had in addition to satan's also her own perverse motives in mind:*

Gen. 39:20-23

20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.

21 But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.

23 The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.

- *So, even there in the prison the Lord of glory sovereignly blessed Jacob! However, much disappointment comes to Joseph when he has been proven to be a prophet but is nevertheless left forgotten in prison.*
- *Then, pharaoh has two troubling dreams which only Joseph can interpret - his plan for Egypt during the coming famine is accepted and the Lord makes Joseph the second in command over all*

Gen. 41:38-46

38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find *such a one* as this *is*, a man in whom the Spirit of God *is*?

39 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, *there is* none so discreet and wise as thou *art*:

40 Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

42 And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;

43 And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him *ruler* over all the land of Egypt.

44 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I *am* Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over *all* the land of Egypt.

46 And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt ... [*Thirteen years had passed ...!*]

- ***Jacob sends his sons (except Benjamin) to Egypt to buy corn (wheat) that they might survive the famine (and thus begins the rest of the story, the inspired history of one of the most magnificent works of Almighty God in the life of a believer and his family. God works though human suffering and loss but brings blessings not possible in any other way for sinners such as ourselves.***

Gen. 42:7-15

7 And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food.

8 And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.

9 And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, *Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.*

10 And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come.

11 We *are* all one man's sons; we *are* true *men*, thy servants are no spies.

12 And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

13 And they said, Thy servants *are* twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest *is* this day with our father, and one *is* not.

14 And Joseph said unto them, That *is it* that I spake unto you, saying, Ye *are* spies:

15 Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither.

- *So Joseph devises a complex exchange of one brother for another, of Simeon for Benjamin, to “prove” whether or not his brethren are spies (and have lied about their mission) — But Jacob will not give up Benjamin if his life depends on it, or will he?*

[READ] Gen. 42:38 And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

- *But due to the severity of the famine, Benjamin is eventually sent with his brethren to Joseph for food and for the deliverance of the family left behind in the land of promise. And when all the brothers are finally assembled in his presence, he arranges a feast with all his brethren:*

Gen. 43:26-28

26 And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth.

27 And he asked them of *their* welfare, and said, *Is* your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? *Is* he yet alive?

28 And they answered, Thy servant our father *is* in good health, he *is* yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.

[READ] Gen. 43:29-31

29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, *Is* this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.

30 And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought *where* to weep; and he entered into *his* chamber, and wept there.

31 And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread.

- *Joseph through trickery now implicates Benjamin in theft he himself has instigated (chapter 44) and Benjamin is kept in Egypt while his brethren are sent back to their father. Though there are many jewels here in this chapter, I will leave them for your personal enjoyment later, as now the rest*

of the story here demands our careful attention. For Judah's plea convinced Joseph to reveal himself now to his brethren and that is probably for us the most moving part of this sacred narrative:

II. The Lord God Presents Jacob to Joseph and He Found the Nation of Israel upon a Resurrection Hope:

- *The time most anxiously awaited by Joseph finally arrives and he reveals himself to his brethren:*

[READ] Gen. 45:1-9

1 Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

2 And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I *am* Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.

4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I *am* Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

6 For these two years *hath* the famine *been* in the land: and yet *there are* five years, in the which *there shall* neither be earing nor harvest.

7 And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8 So now *it was not you that* sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not:

Gen. 45:10-15

10 And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast:

11 And there will I nourish thee; for yet *there are* five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.

12 And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that *it is* my mouth that speaketh unto you.

13 And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.

14 And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.

15 Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

[READ] Gen. 45:18-21, 25-28

18 And take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land.

19 Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come.

20 Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt *is* yours.

21 And the children of Israel did so

...

25 And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father,

26 And told him, saying, Joseph *is* yet alive, and he *is* governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not.

27 And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived:

28 And Israel said, *It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.*

- *When Jacob saw the wagons Joseph had sent from Egypt he was convinced that it was time to pack up and go. It must have been quite a sight. But Jacob stops his journey in Beersheba for worship and sacrifice at the altar so critically important in his life. For it was there that Hagar went when Sarah had cast her out, it was also there where Abimelech and Abraham had cut a covenant of mutual respect and protection. It was in Beersheba that he had stopped both on the way to Laban's land and on the way back accompanied by two wives and many children. And on this visit the Lord God speaks to him very directly about what he has promised to do:*

[READ] Gen. 46:1-7

1 And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.

2 And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here *am* I.

3 And he said, I *am* God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation:

4 I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

5 And Jacob rose up from Beersheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.

6 And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him:

7 His sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.

- *We should note that there is in verses 3 & 4 in the very words of Almighty God a promise given to Israel or Jacob regarding the nation that would be his heritage. Verse 4 in particular with the words “bring thee up again” and “Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes”. It would be in resurrection that the promises regarding the heritage and the land would be fulfilled. Such a comfort these words must have been for Jacob (or Israel, more correctly, as verse 2 indicates). But it will be carried out later for we return to Jacob in verse 5 as he departs with all his family and goods. For this is not quite yet the end of the story.*
- *Jacob lives on for another 17 years and the Lord God, the Sovereign Lord of Glory blesses him and his family through the famine in the best part of Egypt — and then he dies but not before he makes his sons covenant with him as we see written:*

Gen. 47:27-31

27 And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly.

28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years.

29 And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt:

30 But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace. And he said, I will do as thou hast said.

31 And he said, Swear unto me. And he swore unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head.

- *And it this act recorded for us in verse 31 that is singled out in Hebrews 11:21 as most significant, for this is the very work of faith signaled out for Jacob there. Jacob's faith was truly a resurrection*

faith as he took God at his word — remember Gen. 46:3-4! For only through resurrection could this promise be fulfilled and now, on his death bed he knew that so well trusting in his faithful promises. Is this encouraging, brethren? Amen and amen.

- *From the beginning of Joseph's captivity until he commands his sons here prophetically regarding their future heritage, how did the sovereign Lord God work to accomplish such an amazing result? That was the question we sought to answer today and the answer formed perhaps the greatest narrative found in scripture concerning the sovereignty of God and his amazing work.*

But how does this remarkable history of God's working sovereignly end, the history of how step by step the Lord God created a nation that would some day truly be the "apple of his eye", even "an elect and holy nation"? We shall see next time, and it is indeed precious as you might well expect.

Our Concluding Thoughts:

- *AS WE HAVE SEEN, THEIR FAITH WAS A RESURRECTION FAITH AND THEIR HOPE WAS A RESURRECTION HOPE BASED ON THE FAITHFULNESS OF ALMIGHTY GOD REGARDING HIS PROMISES OF A HERITAGE AND A LAND - THROUGH RESURRECTION. FOR THEY DIED WITH THEIR DYING REQUEST TO BE BURIED IN THE LAND OF THE PROMISE. JACOB WAS.*
- *I hope and pray that as we finish up our series next time on the Sovereignty of God as revealed in Genesis, we also will have comfort knowing that our trials, our sufferings, our persecutions, are never in vain in the Lord's good plan for his saints. Great blessings flow through them to us if we will rest in his always sufficient grace, for it is always sufficient!*