

Joseph's Faith Journey Begins

Genesis 37:1-36

"Christ prefigured by Joseph: Innocent, beloved by his father, sent by his father to see his brothers, is sold for twenty pieces of silver. Through this he becomes their Lord, their savior, savior of strangers and savior of the world. None of this would have happened but for their plot to destroy him, the sale, and their rejection of him. In prison Joseph, innocent between two criminals. Jesus on the cross between two thieves. He prophesies the salvation of the one and the death of the other, when to all appearances they are alike. Christ saves the elect and damns the reprobate for the same crime. Joseph only prophesies, Jesus acts. Joseph asks the man who will be saved to remember him when he comes in glory. And the man Jesus saves asks to be remembered when he comes into his kingdom." Blaise Pascal/Boice Commentary

- I. David Guzik introduces the life of Joseph this way, *"Jacob (Israel) was father over a troubled family. With sons from four different mothers, all living and working together, there was much rivalry and competition. Yet Jacob had a clear favorite — Joseph, who was the son of his old age. We all have ideas and dreams about what a perfect family should be. By anyone's measure, Joseph's family had a lot of problems. As a young man, his father Jacob tried to trick his grandfather Isaac into giving him the family fortune instead of his older twin brother. It all fell apart and Joseph's father Jacob had to run for his life when his twin brother vowed to murder him. Jacob went away, more than 200 miles on foot. He did not see his father Isaac for more than twenty years, when Isaac was almost dead. There is no record that he ever saw his mother again. Jacob found a place with his mother's relatives, but his uncle cheated him and treated him like a slave. Jacob married two of his cousins, and took two more concubines (legal mistresses). Between them all, they had twelve sons and one daughter. There was constant competition and conflict among all the children and all the mothers. It was one great big messed-up family; still, it brought forth Joseph, and furthered God's great plan of the ages... God's word to everyone is this: Your messed-up family — past, present, or future — does not mean God has forsaken you or that some cloud has come over you that will never pass. God works in and through difficult and messed-up families."* The Old Testament teaches us about the character of God to not only give us an understanding of the God we serve, but to also give us encouragement in knowing that He truly does work all things to the good of those who love him and have been called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28). All that and so much more despite our failings and shortcomings. *"That is why we must never chafe against circumstances God brings to us. We call them 'mere circumstances' and treat them lightly. But they are not 'mere circumstances.' They are God's weaving of the tapestry of our lives."* Boice

Gen. 36:1-2,6-9

Obadiah verses 2,10

Gen. 37:1-4

- II. The prophet Jeremiah wrote, *Who can speak and have it happen if the Lord has not decreed it? 38 Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both calamities and good things come? (Lamentations 3:37-38).* Solomon wrote, *A man's steps are from the Lord; how then can man understand his way? (Prov. 20:24).* He says In Proverbs 20:24, *the heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.* The sovereignty of God is to be defined by Him alone. He is sovereign, we are not! *God has the ability to do anything, to take action and intervene in any situation, but He often chooses to act indirectly or to allow certain things for reasons of His own. His will is furthered in any case. God's "sovereignty" means that He is absolute in authority and unrestricted in His supremacy. Everything that happens is, at the very least, the result of God's **permissive will**. This holds true even if certain specific things are not what He would prefer. The right of God to allow mankind's free choices is just as necessary for true sovereignty as His ability to enact His will, wherever and however He chooses (gotquestions.org).* We might think it unfair that the young man Joseph was about to have his whole world shattered by brothers who hated him. Yet, God would not have allowed it if He knew Joseph to be incapable of fulfilling His will concerning the covenant promises he gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob... Which raises the question: what is his will for your life and are you up for the task no matter how difficult?

Gen. 37:5-24

Rom. 8:28

Prov. 3:5-6

John 15:18-19

James 3:16

Heb. 12:15

Gen. 42:21

2 Peter 1:3 *His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.*

- III. God is not in any way insensitive or indifferent to the pain and suffering His saints go through. Peter makes that clear when he says, *cast all your anxiety on him because I care for you (1 Peter 5:7).* If anything, we know that we are deeply loved and cared for by Him, especially in knowing the price he paid, by those who hated, abused and murdered Him, for the sake of our salvation. He understands suffering and being sinned against in ways we can hardly comprehend. Boice states, *God loves! God grieves! God agonizes over the distress and sorrow of his children. Jesus wept over unbelieving city of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41).* *When we go through difficult times, not knowing why they have come or why God is permitting them, we are tempted to believe that God does not care, that he is indifferent. But we are taught otherwise. Jesus said: Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? (Matt. 6:26,28,30)... God indeed cares for us, even when others do not."*

Gen. 37:25-36

Gen. 50:20 *You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.*