

Israel Worshipped

Genesis 47

“The outlook of Jacob...is something all Christians should have. We tend to be dazzled by the world, particularly its wealth. In the presence of those the world thinks important we stand mute. We need to learn, as Jacob learned, that we as Christians have more to offer the world than the world, for all its wealth and ‘importance’ has to offer. What do we have to offer? We have the ‘treasure’ of the gospel. We have the knowledge of the true God, which is salvation. We are the ‘fragrance of life’ to those who respond to our testimony. No greater wealth exists. There is no greater good to be done for anyone than to offer him or her the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ, in whom alone sinners can escape the wrath of God.” Boice

- I. Living the Christian life can be daunting at times, especially when it comes to preserving through the many trials of living in a fallen world with a sin nature that seems to be constantly nipping at our heels. It challenges us to put our trust in God to give us what we need to maintain an enduring faith, which implies having a relationship with Him. In the historical account of God forming the nation of Israel, we are given two powerful examples of how God worked in the hearts of two men who kept themselves God-centered despite the many trials He allowed for the strengthening of their faith in His precious promises to them. A French archbishop by the name of François Fénelon (1651-1715) wrote, *I have no doubt that God considers you to be one of His friends; otherwise He would not trust you with so many crosses, sufferings, and humiliations. Crosses are God’s means of drawing souls closer to Himself. And these crosses accomplish His purposes much more rapidly and effectually than all of our personal efforts put together. Crosses destroy self-love at its very root, down in the depths of the human spirit where we can hardly detect it. But God knows where it is lodged, and He attacks it in its greatest strongholds. If we have strength and faith enough to trust ourselves completely into the hands of God, and follow Him wherever He leads us, there will be no need of stretching and straining to reach perfection. But since we are so weak in our faith, and always stopping along the way to ask questions, our journey is lengthened, and we get behind in spiritual development. So, you see how important it is for you to abandon yourself as completely as possible to God, and continue to do so until your last breath. And don’t be afraid. He will never leave you.”*

Heb. 10:35-39

Gen. 28:14-16 *14 Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”*

Heb. 13:6 *So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”*

II. The fact that Jacob blessed Pharaoh is not something to be taken in a cursory way. In the Egyptian culture, Pharaoh was seen as a god, *“the earthly embodiment of the great sun god Ra.”* There was no one greater than him. For him to receive a blessing by a Hebrew shepherd that was detestable to the Egyptians showed the deep respect he had for Joseph and his father. Where did that come from? Could it be that Pharaoh came to understand that the God Joseph, his father and brothers worshipped was much bigger than the god he claimed to be? There was the evidence of Joseph’s interpretation of dreams, his business acumen, and his godly demeanor throughout his years, but he also must have seen something in the behavior of his family that showed a deep reverence, humility and obedience to the God they served. We must never underestimate the power we’ve been given to be salt and light in a culture that is steeped in polytheism. We are seen, watched, and judged because of our faith. Therefore, *... in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, 16 having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame (1 Peter 3:15-16).*

Gen. 47:1-26
Gen. 45:7
Heb. 7:7
Heb. 11:13,16

III. You sense, as Israel worshipped God, that his heart was brimming with gratitude and thanksgiving over the awesome privilege of knowing, loving and being blessed by the one and only true God of the universe. The substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, met their apex in ways that showed God’s faithfulness throughout all the uncertainty, doubt, and despair of circumstances that were out of his control but never out of God’s control. Therefore, he worshipped. *“In the Bible, the Hebrew word translated as “worship” is shachah and literally denotes the act of bowing down. The Greek word proskuneō, rendered as “worship,” means “to encounter God and praise Him.” Both terms seem to define worship as an activity or an action. However, an accurate depiction of biblical worship extends beyond mere activity. A better, more comprehensive definition of worship can be summarized in this statement: “Worship is the reverential response of creation to the all-encompassing magnificence of God.” gotquestions.org*

Gen. 47:27-31
Gen. 35:11

Psalm 95:6-7 *“Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.”*