***Joseph, No. 2

RV132-01***

Please open your Bibles to Genesis 49. We are studying the tribulation evangelists in Revelation 7:4-8. This is segment number 8.

**Joseph**

We have seen that in Genesis 49, Jacob, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, while on his deathbed in Egypt, is evaluating the character of his 12 sons, and prophesying concerning their future conduct as a tribe. In Genesis 49:22-26, we have one of the longest prophetic sections in this chapter in Jacob's vision, and it deals, fittingly enough, with his favorite son, Joseph. Joseph, you'll remember, was son number 11. He was the child of his beloved wife, Rachel. Joseph, we observed immediately, had the quality of taking to heart the spiritual instruction of his father Jacob, and he did not compromise with evil in himself or in others. That is a quality that all parents like to see in their children, and all the smart kids immediately follow Joseph's example. You don't have to start as a spiritual idiot. You don't have to start off life on a scale beneath that of the level that your parents have reached, and in which they can instruct you.

Some of you come from homes where you did not have that advantage. Some of you can look back now and see that you started in a home where your parents were way down below where you are now. Some of you can look back and see that your parents may have been at a higher state, and they descend into a lower level, Reversion to some can set in. But the character of Joseph was to move on to the higher ground from the high ground on which he already began in his family, and he took it seriously.

One of the characteristics of youth is to think that it's honorable to start with high ground and to go down. In the Bible, we have a prime example of a character like that. We call him the prodigal son. Indeed, there are always young people who think that there's nothing so wonderful as reflecting the filth, and the dirt, and the ugliness of the world, and like the prodigal son, to end up in somebody's pigpen.

But this was not Joseph. Joseph was that kind of an exemplary young person who had the noble qualities such that he listen to the Word of God, and he said, "That's for real. That's where truth is. That's where reality is." And he took hold of it and ran with it. So, he was contemptuous of evil. He rejected it, and he didn't look upon it lightly when he found it in other members of his family. He had the quality of taking to heart the spiritual advantages that were offered him. He refused to forget the enlightenment of his parents.

Therefore, he was no slave to human viewpoint, nor to the immaturity of his peers. That's what causes young people to knuckle under – to want to be accepted by their peers, all of whom stand at a lower spiritual level than that upon which they find themselves as the result of the family they were born into.

Joseph's favor with his father, and his refusal to compromise his integrity, had some bad results. He was a boy who stood with honesty before God and man, but this earned him the hatred of his older brothers. Of course, this is a biblical principle. The Bible tells us that those who would live godly would come under persecution; would come under suffering; and, would come under the contempt of the world system. Satan's people do not like to see others who are walking in godliness and rejecting their evil. People who do evil want you to join them in their evil.

God revealed to young Joseph via dreams, as God operated in his day through dreams, that one day Joseph would exercise authority over his parents and his brothers. Joseph was described as a fruitful vine by Jacob in Genesis 49:22 – one that was abundantly being nourished, and one which would multiply. In fact, he became two tribes through his two sons. The dreams of authority that one day he would exercise over the other members of the family brought him into greater contempt and hatred on the part of his brothers. Consequently, Joseph suffered unjustly. But Jacob looked upon him, and told him that that's what was going to happen to him, in Genesis 49:23, while the archers and the antagonists are going to be harassing him (going to shoot at him), and he will be hated for it. However, he goes on to say that Joseph would come to victory. In 24, we have the description that Joseph will find himself in the position of the overcomer, in spite of the unjust abuse that he would be taking.

One of the nice things about Joseph also is that he never rebuked God for his lot in life, nor did he turn from devotion to divine viewpoint principles. He left his abusers to divine vengeance, and he never left the fact that he had the truth. It's easy to have the truth, and say that you've got the truth when things are going well. But when every time you do the right thing, you get shot out of the water, pretty soon you say, "I'm going to change my ways. This isn't worth it. I'm not going to follow this lifestyle." That's what the weak do. Joseph was not one of the weak. He was one of the strong, and he stayed with what he knew was the truth. He knew there was a god in heaven, and he knew that vengeance would be executed. It would be well for all of us to remember that as well.

One of the terrible things that was done to him was the fact that his brother sold him into slavery in Egypt, where, again, God graced him out by putting them into the home of the captain of the Pharaoh's guard – a man named Potiphar. And Potiphar soon saw that this was a super kind of person. Joseph just reflected that quality when you met him. Before long, he was in charge of the whole household.

Potiphar's his wife was a conniving, double-dealing type of woman who tried to seduce Joseph. And when he refused to sin against God, she falsely accused him to her husband. Potiphar believed his wicked wife, and he cast Joseph into prison. Many a Christian is led to do an evil because he believes the wrong people. The unsaved world does this all the time. Here you have an example of it in Potiphar, who did not have the judgment; who did not have the wisdom; and, who did not at least had the good sense to try to get to people who could give him the true information as to what happened. The result was that he believed the wrong person, and was guilty of an enormous wrong.

**Joseph in Prison**

Well, things just seemed to go from bad to worse for Joseph. The more obedient he was to the Word of God, the worse things became. So, we continue with the life of Joseph, picking it up there as he is now in the home of Potiphar; falsely accused; and, now thrown into prison. Well he no sooner gets into prison than the quality of Joseph begins to show through. A person who is oriented to divine viewpoint simply cannot be kept down, and the startling qualities of his character cannot be hidden for very long.

So, before much time went by, the warden of the prison, of all things, looks at this young man, and immediately develops a great confidence and rapport with him. Before you know it, what does he do but hand Joseph the keys to the prison? He says, "Joseph, I have a lot of things I have to do out here. I've got a lot of business I take care of. I can't always be at my desk. Here are the keys. The place is in your charge. You take care of it. And the warden went out skiing on the Nile River, and doing all the other important things that officials are supposed to do.

However, Joseph was there in full command of the prison, believe it or not. This is becoming a trustee in the finest sense of the word. So, in Genesis 39:21, we read, "But the Lord was with Joseph." That was the great thing about everything that Joseph did. God was still walking with him, because Joseph did not permit himself to get out of fellowship because of his adversities: "But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison, and whatever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand, because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper."

So, first of all, God gave the warden confidence in Joseph. Secondly, when Joseph took charge, because he was functioning on divine viewpoint, everything fell into place for him. We cannot pause now to deal with the decree of God. If you show up for the next session, we will go into that amazing, tremendous doctrine. There's not a thing that you did today that was not already inscribed in eternity past as the program that you were going to follow. There is a sovereign plan. There is an eternal decree that cannot be frustrated. There is a God who has put it all together. In Joseph life, there was this decree of God functioning.

However, on the other hand, you will notice that there is that inscrutable, unexplainable relationship that all of this was still the direct result of Joseph's faithfulness. And if Joseph stepped out of line, the decree of God would have also accounted for that, and would have brought disaster upon him as it did upon his brothers. So, while there is that amazing fact that God is running interference, and nobody is going to stop Him in your behalf, there is also the fact that your responsibility of choice is there, and you will bear the consequences, good or bad.

So, from our point of view, the smart money is on the people who turn to the doctrines of Scripture, and who choose to operate upon them, because then you may expect with absolute certainty that the finest that God has in His plan for you that He has inscribed in eternity past, is going to click off, one point after another, without any interference; without any confusion; and, without any frustration. So, when we do write, in other words, God overrules our enemies.

**The Cup Bearer and the Baker**

In prison, Joseph explained the divine meaning of the dreams that two of the prisoners had. They were people of some importance. One was the cup bearer, the chief butler of Pharaoh. The other was his baker. In Genesis 40:1-13 and in Genesis 40:16-22, you may read about the dreams of these two men. Basically, they each dreamed they would have a relationship. In the case of the cup bearer, he was squeezing the grapes back in. And Joseph said, "In three days, you're going to be restored to your position." The baker, however, found that he baked his bread with his three baskets, and birds came and snatched the bread away. And Joseph said, "I can tell you what that means, because God has revealed that, in three days, they're going to hang you, and you're going to be dead." Sure enough, this is what happened.

"Now Joseph said to the cup bearer, 'When you are restored to your place of service, you will now again be in the presence of the chief authority of Egypt, the Pharaoh himself, and I hope that you will remember me, and put a good word in for me. However, in came the decree of Almighty God, and the decree of Almighty God shut the mouth of the cup bearer. It was not time for him to tell what Joseph had done. That time was going to come two years later.

So, Joseph, again, with some disappointment, found himself in a position where his hopes had been raised, and now they were dashed. We read in Genesis 40:14-15 these remarks of Joseph to the cup bearer: "But think on me when it shall be well with you, and show kindness, I pray thee unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house." He says, "Get me out of this prison:" "For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon."

He is innocent. He is truly innocent. Prisoners often say that they're innocent, but this one really was innocent.

And in verse 23, we read the results of this appeal on the part of the cup bearer: "And yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him. What I' saying is that it was not entirely the decision of the cup bearer. It was not God's plan for him to do that at this point in time.

Two years later, Pharaoh has two dreams. These dreams are interpreted with Joseph's help. They're interpreted as the result of the fact that now the cup bearer remembers that he once had a dream, and there was a man in prison who could interpret dreams, and it was exactly on the button. So, now it was to the cup bearer's advantage to announce this to the Pharaoh, because this would put him in a good light. So, now he does perform that which he promised he would do, but which, in the providence of God, he has been delayed two years in doing.

In Genesis 41:9-13, we read, "Then spoke the chief butler unto Pharaoh saying, 'I do remember my faults this day. (Now I remember something I should have done.) Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in prison in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker. And we dreamed a dream in one night. I and he – we dreamed of each man according to the interpretation of his dream. And there was with us a young man, a Hebrew servant to the captain of the guard. We told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams. To each man, according to his dream, he did interpret. And it came to pass as he interpreted it to us. So, it was. I was restored up to my office, and him, he hanged.

**Pharaoh's Dreams**

So, now, two years later, the dream of Pharaoh comes on the scene. Pharaoh is standing by the Nile River in his dream, and he sees seven sleek fat cows come out of the river, and they start munching on the vegetation in the reeds by the edge of the river. Suddenly, seven skinny, scrawny, crummy cows from some place way up north came out of the water. And those skinny creatures gobbled up those good cows just like that. Pharaoh says, "That's strange," and he wakes up. He thinks about it a little bit; turns over; falls asleep; and, has another dream back-to-back. This time, he sees seven full lush heads of grain on one stalk. And all of a sudden there appears next to it a shriveled, dried-up stock that the east wind has just destroyed. And the shriveled stalk eats the seven heads of green on the good stalk.

Well, Joseph says, "These are two dreams, and they have the same meaning. Then he proceeds to explain to the Pharaoh that during the next seven years, the land of pharaoh would be lush with an abundance of food. But following that, there will be seven terrible years of famine, and God has chosen to warn him (to prepare him) to take action against it.

Of course, Joseph is doing this totally under the inspiration and information that God is giving, and that's why he can do this. So, don't run out and try to find somebody who can interpret your dreams, because there isn't anybody like that. Dreams don't mean anything. But in this time, it meant something; God gave the interpretation; and, he was indeed speaking to Pharaoh.

Furthermore, God told Joseph what to tell Pharaoh to do about it, because that was immediately the question that came to Pharaoh's mind. Genesis 41:33: "Now, therefore, let Pharaoh seek out a man discreet and wise, and set him up over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years;" pass a government edict, and confiscate 20% of all the produce of the land from everybody during this seven-year period of plenty:

"And let them gather all the food of those good years, that come and lay upgrading under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for storage in the land against the seven years of famine, which will be in the land of Egypt, that the land perish not through famine. And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants. And Pharaoh said to his servants, 'Can we find such a one as this is – a man in whom the Spirit of God is?'"

He said, “Why do we look any further? We've got him standing in front of us. He has described himself:” "And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, 'Forasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is none so discreet and wise as you are." I don't know how far Pharaoh went in his relationship and understanding of God, but there's one thing for sure. All of those animal, crazy, idol gods that were characteristically worshiped in Egypt had a totally different complexion in the mind of Pharaoh undoubtedly at this point. When he said, "God has revealed it, he was talking about the God of Joseph – a God who obviously, to all of them, there was a God who was infinitely superior to anything that they were used to.

So verse 40 says, "You shall be over my house, and according unto your word all of my people shall be ruled. Only in the throne will I be greater than you?" Isn't that something? For 13 years, this young fella has been knocked around with one injustice after another. It had been 13 years, since he was 17 years old. Now he's 30 years old, and he's second in command of one of the all-time great empires of the ancient world. Talk about being promoted!

"And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt. 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 around his neck. These were signs of authority. The ring was the instrument which was used to imprint the seal (the authority of the Pharaoh) in various materials relative to any action that was taken.

"And he made him 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. Pharaoh said unto Joseph, 'I am Pharaoh, and without you, no man shall lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.'" So, Joseph was given the outward accouterments of his near royal position. The Pharaoh drove around in a Mercedes Benz chariot, and he had a second one (a high-class Cadillac), and he gave that to Joseph. So, people knew, when they saw these chariots coming, that these were men of status, and what their relative relationship was.

So, things are moving ahead, finally, for Joseph. The Pharaoh, furthermore, gives him a wife. This was a girl named Asenath. She was the daughter of the Potipherah, who was a priest at On, a city which we know from the ancient world as Heliopolis. And she bore two sons to Joseph: Manasseh; and, Ephraim.

In Genesis 41:45, we read about this: "And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him his wife Asenath as the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

In verses 50-52, we read, "And until Joseph were bore two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bore unto him. Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh, for he said, 'God has made me forget all of my toil, and my father's house." The name "Manasseh" means "forgetting:" And the name of the second he called Ephraim (which means fruitful), 'for God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.'"

So, the evil that Joseph's brothers brought against him was turned to blessing and exaltation by God for the godly Joseph. God is sovereign. He has already programmed, in eternity past, a total decree. All of the details are there, and that decree will not be frustrated by you, or me, or anybody else. I can tell you one thing you can do. You can beat your head bloody against the decree of God, as Joseph's brothers were doing, and as Joseph himself refused to do. He recognized that there was a God who called the play. And there was only one thing that Joseph wanted to know – like a good member of a football team, he got in the huddle, and all he wanted to know from God, the great quarterback, was: "What's the play? What's the play we're going to run?" And Joseph was ready to go with it. There was no debate. There was no confrontation. There was full acceptance.

Well, of course, there was, inevitably, vindication for this young man. In Genesis 49:24, in Jacob's prophecy concerning him we read, "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 there is the shepherd, the rock of Israel." In Jacob's predictions, the rock of Israel (God) would enable Joseph to overcome his enemies, so that his bow (his instrument of attack and defense), his weapon, would remain strong. And his arms would remain mighty in God, meaning that he would enjoy victory.

Furthermore, Jacob prophesied great prosperity for Joseph in terms of rain, and wells, and healthy reproduction of animals and people – the real wealth, and the good health that only God can give. And what can be better?

In verse 25, we read, "Even by the God of your father who shall help you, and by the Almighty who shall bless you with the blessings of heaven above: rain; blessings of the deep; wells (which were very important in that part of the world) that lie under; blessings of the breast and of the womb, in people and in cattle, which is real wealth." And it's interesting the way the Bible phrases this, because that's what it's talking about. It's talking about God prospering Jacob.

Real wealth is not money. The dollar bill you have in your pocket is not real wealth. If you go out and spend the dollar bill for some possession, like a hamburger, or something other of a material nature that has some value – that is wealth. No matter what happens to the dollar, in its price up and down, that is not wealth. That can come and go. But once you've converted that into a material possession, which is what Joseph had, that is real wealth. When people do not trust governments, then they go out and they try to convert their means of exchange for something that is real wealth. They buy antiques; they buy pictures; they buy artworks; and, they buy whatever they can. They buy extra cars. They buy anything they can to put their money in something that really maintains a value. This is the kind of stuff that God gave to Joseph. He was a man who had real wealth.

Furthermore, Jacob enjoyed greater blessings than Abraham and Isaac had enjoyed. That was interesting that as Jacob talked to Joseph, he said, "I have been more prospered than even my forebears, greater than Abraham and Isaac. I have been prospered greater than they, and you are going to be better even than that."

So, verse 26 says, "The blessings of your father (meaning himself, Jacob) have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors (above Abraham and Isaac) onto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." Even greater blessing would be upon Joseph.

Well, of course, the blessings were enormous upon Jacob, who had 12 sons, and great wealth, and fruitful land. And these great blessings, to be on Joseph above that, were the blessings of one who had been separated by God from his brothers, and marked with special divine prosperity and happiness. That's what verse 26 is all about.

The position of Joseph in Egypt, and the subjection of his brothers to him, illustrated this promise of having even greater blessings than anything his family had ever enjoyed. That's exactly what happened. In Genesis 42, the time came when the seven good years were passed, and then came the years of famine.

The years of famine did not simply hit Egypt. It hit that whole part of the world. So, way down in Canaan land, where his family was residing, they found that they could not raise food. Finally, Jacob saw that they were nearing a disaster stage. The word had gotten out around that part of the ancient world that there was plenty of food in Egypt. So, he sent the brothers to buy food from the Pharaoh. And in they walk, and whom should they confront but Joseph? He recognizes them, but they don't recognize him.

Genesis 42:3-6: "And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy grain in Egypt." They left little brother Benjamin at home: "But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob did not send with his brethren, for he said, 'Lest perhaps mischief befall him.'" Jacob said, "He's all I have left now of Rachel. I don't want to lose him like I lost Joseph:" "And the Sons of Israel came to buy grain, among those that came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan."

Verse 9: "And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, 'You are spies; to see the nakedness of the land you are come.'" Immediately when he sees them, Joseph's mind clicks back to the time when he was a 17-year-old kid, and he had those two dreams about his father and mother and his brothers bowing down before him under his authority. And immediately he recognizes that here is the fulfillment. Now he immediately puts into motion a plan by which he is going to get the whole family together. So, he proceeds to accuse the brothers of being spies who are coming out here to spy out the land, and finally he agrees to sell them the grain, but he says, "One of you is going to have to stay here until you bring that other brother, that little brother Benjamin here, so that I know you're telling the truth."

In Genesis 43:26, we read, "And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present, which was in their hand, into the house, and he bowed himself to them in the earth." He has had a present brought to him. He's entertaining his brothers, and he asks about the father and so on, and rejoices to discover that the father is still alive. So, the brothers are bringing presents now to Joseph. They're under his authority.

At this point, Joseph does not gloat over the situation. He does not decide to really rub it into these characters and make them pay. This was not characteristic of Joseph. He was not the vengeance kind. Yes, he's been abused. Yes, he's been misrepresented. Yes, he's been lied about. Yes, he's been cheated out of his freedom. However, he knows that there is a decree, and he knows that God is going to click things right along.

Genesis 43:23: "And he said, "Peace be to you. Fear not. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks. I had your money. And he brought Simeon out onto them." This is on their return trip now. Joseph told his servants to put their money back in the sacks. At the first rest stop, they open their sacks, and they're horrified to see all the money back in them. When they came the second time, they brought the money back to give to him, and he says, "That's all right." Simeon has been kept as a hostage. He brings the man out, and they see that Simeon is well.

Verse 24: "And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they wash their feet, and he gave their donkeys fodder. Genesis 43:29-30: "He lifted up his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin." They did bring Benjamin back with them now as per the requirement. "And he lifted up his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, 'Is this your younger brother of whom you spoke unto me?' And he said, 'God be gracious unto you, my son.' And Joseph made haste, for his heart yearned over his brother, and he sought where to weep. And he entered in his chamber, and wept there."

This is not a man of vengeance. Instead, when he sees them, and he sees little Benjamin, he knows that he's going to lose control of himself. So, he gets out of their sight. He gets into his own chamber, so that he can break down and weep over the joy of again seeing that brother, and the knowledge that the father is well.

Finally comes the moment of truth in Genesis 45. You can't help but admire Joseph as his handling of the summary of all the evil that has been done to him by members of his own family. Genesis 45:1: "Then Joseph could not control himself before all them who 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 brothers." He sent all the servants (all the Egyptians) away. Then he said, "The real Joseph is now going to stand up," and he reveals who he is to his brothers. His brothers are dumbfounded. They cannot believe what they are seeing and hearing: "He wept aloud, and the Egyptians in the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, 'I am Joseph, does my father yet live?' And his brethren could not answer him, for they were terrified at his presence;" and, well, they should have been.

"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 you sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that you sold me here, for God did send me before you to preserve life." I love this. Joseph knows the doctrine of decree. He says, "Fellas, it's all clicking along. It's all coming out, one point after another. You meant it for evil, but God was in the picture, and he was overriding your will, and he was directing that to a great blessing: "Why should I become indignant. Why should I become angry because you have abused me? Why should I be such a fool as to assume that you're going to get away with something in the presence of God, who's got all the plans worked out?" Joseph is saying, "And every problem in eternity past relative to me has already been solved. It has already been solved." And the same is true of you and me.

"For these two years the famine has been in the land. And yet, there are five years to go in which there shall be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve your posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So, now it was not you that sent me here, but God." It was the doctrine of the divine decree – the total overall plan of God with every detail: "It was not you that sent me here." Well, wasn't it? It looked like it was. No, it wasn't, but God: "And he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and Lord of all this house, and the ruler throughout all the land of Egypt."

Verse 15: "Moreover, he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them. And after that, his brethren talked with him." Finally, they believe him, and finally they relaxed. Well, Jacob and His Sons received, through the authority of Joseph, the best land that Egypt could offer. When Pharaoh heard what had happened, he said, "I want you to go back with a party; send a caravan back; and, you bring all of your family, all 70 of them. Bring them here into Egypt, and they will have the fat of this land to live upon." Isn't that something? When a godly person stays with the Word of God, and operates on doctrinal principles, all the slobs around him get blessed – just a reckless, careless lot was blessed because of faithful Abraham.

How often it works the other way. When you have a careless parent, the child suffers. And we Christians are always amazed that that's the way it is. We think that we should say, "Hey, God, I don't like what you're doing. I'm going to override your decree in your plan. I don't like that. You say that when a parent is out of line, his children will suffer the consequences of his parents' attitude to the third and fourth generation. I want his parents' attitude to be wrong, but I don't want the kid to suffer the consequences." Who do you think you are, Bonzo? God is going to bring you down in a hurry if you try playing that game. Here you have a dramatic example of that very fact – that these people were going to be blessed because Jacob stood by the Word of God; and none of them, not even one of them, deserved that kind of blessing.

So, in Genesis 47:11-12, we read, "And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a position in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses as Pharaoh had commanded. And Joseph nursed his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household with bread, according to their families.

Genesis 47:27: "And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt in the country of Goshen, and they had possessions therein, and grew and multiplied exceedingly." They had a wonderful deal from Pharaoh. When Pharaoh sent the caravan, he instructed them to tell Jacob, "Just leave everything." When you get here, we're going to take you down to Levitz, and we're going to let you walk through and pick anything you want. You're going to have the finest of the furniture that we have in the land. We'll supply everything you need. Just leave the junk, and come on up here. Just take what you consider your heirlooms and the important stuff." What a blessing that was, just because of Joseph, who went beyond his own parents in spiritual maturity, and did it quickly, and did it in his youth, because he did not turn his back upon the Word of God that he had inherited from his parents, but he built upon it.

So, indeed Joseph was one of the patriarchs who gave his progeny (his descendants) as an example of living by the divine viewpoint of the Word of God without compromise, and without apology, and leaving the consequences of mistreatment in the hands of Almighty God. Joseph lived to be 110 years old, and then, when he did die, he got the superior type of embalming in Egypt. The Egyptians were experts at mummifying a body. That's what they did to Joseph.

In Exodus 13:19, we read, "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had solemnly sworn the children of Israel, saying, 'God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones away from here with you." Before Joseph died, he made the Jews promise that when God would lead them back to the land of Canaan, as indeed he said that he inevitably and surely would: "I want you to understand that you are to take my bones back with you." So, they did.

In Joshua 24:32, we read, "And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, they buried in Shechem, in a plot of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem for 100 pieces of silver. And it became the inheritance of the children of Israel." So, Joseph was taken and buried back in the land of Canaan.

Joseph's experience illustrates a principle that we would do well to remember. It is stated in 1 Corinthians 15:46. Paul say, "However, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual." What this verse is saying is that it is characteristic within the human race for people to come up with their best efforts first. It is not first that which was spiritual, but that which is natural. That's the thing that the human viewpoint character does. First, he comes up with his best efforts; his own solutions; his own calculations; and, his own conniving, and the decree of God never even enters his mind. And these always fail. Then God comes into the picture with a divine solution – the spiritual, and that's the thing that always works.

So, first we have Adam coming in with his human natural approach. He eats of the tree. Then comes the real solution in Christ. So, we have Cain, who says, "I have a better way of worshiping God," and demonstrating sacrifice with his vegetables. And afterward comes Abel, the real answer. First, we have Saul, the terrible king of Israel, who very natural in every respect, and out of touch with divine reality. Then we have David, who comes along with real spiritual solutions.

**Joseph and Jesus Christ**

Joseph is actually what we call a figure of Jesus Christ. He is a type of Christ. For you will notice that both Joseph and Jesus Christ were special objects of a father's love; that both of them were hated by their brothers without a cause; and, that both of them had superior claims which, though true, were rejected by their brethren. Joseph claimed the authority of his dreams. They were rejected by his family. Jesus Christ claimed to be the sinless son of God, and that He was the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, and His nation rejected him. The brethren of both of these men wanted and conspired to kill them. Joseph was figuratively slain by being sent away from the family in slavery into Egypt. Jesus Christ was actually slain. Both of these became a blessing to the gentiles, interestingly enough. Jesus Christ became a blessing to the gentiles, who up to that time were dogs and outcasts from the Commonwealth of Israel.

Furthermore, both of them found the bride among the gentiles. Jesus Christ, who was to have the church, which is basically of gentiles, who will be His bride, as Joseph found a gentile bride in Asenath. Both reconciled and exalted their brethren. Both of them reconciled their brethren to themselves, and exalted them. Those who believe in Jesus Christ have been reconciled to the living God, and they have been exalted into the family of God. This happened with Joseph and his family as well.

So, Joseph is a fantastic figure. You could go on and on, reviewing the history of this man from his boyhood days through his mature years. You just can't do anything but stand back and admire, and wish that all of us could have his character qualities. It bore a very serious and a mighty good influence in the life of his two sons: in the life of Manasseh; and, in the life of Ephraim, and in the descendants of these two boys. It is also unfortunate that we must say that, in the case of both of these boys, their descendants came to the point where they forgot their heritage. They forgot who they were. Where they were riding on the wave of the blessing of their forefathers, they descended into serious divine discipline.

So, we will look at what became the two half-tribes of Joseph, for Joseph's name was removed from the list, and Manasseh and Ephraim were listed as half-tribes. So, the result of this was, and I should say that, later, Jacob, when he saw these boys, after he came to Egypt, adopted them as his sons, so that they were on an equal level with all the other sons – his own flesh-born son. So, Manasseh and Ephraim joined Benjamin as the true descendants of Rachel, so this was a very gracious and a very lovely thing that Jacob did, so that his beloved Rachel had three tribes to be descended for her that would be under her name: the two half-tribes through Joseph. These two sons themselves have a lot of significant lessons, let alone Benjamin, and we shall tie it up with them next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1984

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