

## God's Providence In The Life Of Joseph (Gen. 50:19-21 DBR) Pleasant Plains 2-21-2016PM NICK ANGEL

- **\*Open to Genesis 50 and Read 49:28ff\*** A couple of weeks ago, we considered the Integrity of Joseph, and how he handled some very difficult circumstances. Joseph excelled in his integrity and he overcame every obstacle. His resilience lead to the saving of his family, and in **Genesis 50** we find where Joseph's father, Jacob, has left this world. Joseph is immensely saddened by his father's death, and that sadness even touches the Egyptians. **(vv.1-3)** Joseph goes to Pharaoh and requests that he be allowed to go back up to the land of his father when Jacob had made him swear he would be buried. **(vv.4-6)**
- Pharaoh grants Joseph's requests and Joseph, along with a great multitude of Jacob's household and Egyptians, makes the long journey to Canaan where they mourn for 7 days and they bury Jacob's body in the cave of the field of Machpelah where Abraham and Sarah are buried. . **(vv.7-14)**
- Upon the death of their father, Joseph's brothers come to the realization that with their father's death could come some retribution from Joseph because of all of the bad things that they had done to him in his earlier life. The text says that the brothers devise a plan to send a message to Joseph saying that his father had requested that he forgive his brothers for their sins against them. Upon hearing the message, Joseph weeps. When his brothers come to him in person, they fall before him and declare themselves as servants to him. **(vv.15-18)**
- The meat of our lesson is found next here in **Genesis 50:19-21**. Joseph's response is remarkable and truly shows his heart and his trust in God through everything that he has been through in his life. He tells them not to be afraid. He acknowledges that what his brothers had done to him very much had evil intentions, but he goes on to explain that God meant it and used those actions in order to continue bring about their current situation where they were safe and prospering in Egypt. Joseph comforts their hearts and promises to provided for their families going forward into the future.
- We could discuss the forgiving heart of Joseph, but instead I would like to focus on something that Joseph acknowledges in what he says in **v.20**. Joseph, through what he says, acknowledges God's providence in his life, and I would like to discuss that this evening and consider a few learning points from this text. God's providence **(His special protection or special provisions for His people in order to preserve a particular outcome)** is something that we are often reluctant to discuss because it is something that we understand to be mysterious or something that we can never confirm. I think there is some truth to those feelings, but I think that we can at least have confidence in the fact that God does work even today, and we'll discuss some of that this evening. Let's begin by considering some possible places where God provided for Joseph in order to bring his family to where they are in **Genesis 50**.

### **I. Possible places where God provided for Joseph:**

- A. Joseph not being killed by his brothers.
  1. This was something that very much was going to happen. His brothers had every intention to kill Joseph when he came to meet them in Dothan. **(Gen. 37:17-20)**
  2. If it had not been for Joseph's oldest brother, Rueben, who heard and stopped the murder from taking place **(Gen. 37:21,22)**...Joseph would've been dead and his family wouldn't be where they are in **Genesis 50**.
  3. Now, we don't know for sure that God worked through Rueben, but Joseph seemed to have confidence that in some way God was with Him and caused the good to be the outcome.
- B. Joseph being bought by foreigners who end up taking him to Egypt.
  1. Even though they weren't going to kill him, Joseph's bothers still imprison him in the pit and take his coat of many colors. **(Gen. 37:23,24)**
  2. What happens next is just crazy when you think of all the others possibilities of what could have happened. While they are eating and trying to figure out what to do next with Joseph, some Ishmaelite/Midianite traders pass buy and the brothers end up selling him to these traders. Where do they end up going?? To Egypt...which is the place where Joseph said God caused all these things to lead him and his family to be. **(Gen. 37:28,36)**
  3. The chances of all of this happening have got to be just ridiculous. And what comes next in the journey of Joseph just adds to the incredible odds.
- C. Joseph being sold to Potiphar, and his quick rise in power and authority.
  1. Then once he gets down to Egypt, who is it that Job is sold to? A powerful man within Egypt who was the captain of the bodyguards for Pharaoh. **(Gen. 39:1)**
  2. Not only does he get sold to this individual and into this house, but we can positively verify that God's providence was upon Joseph in the fact that Joseph quickly rose to power and made everything within Potiphar's house. **(Gen. 39:2-6)**
  3. The text is very clear in the fact that God was with Joseph and He very clearly provided for Joseph so that Joseph would rise to power.

- D. Joseph interpreting dreams for Pharaoh and being put into a great position of power within Egypt.
1. Then the last example of God's providence within the life of Joseph is God being with Joseph and allowing him to interpret the dreams of Joseph which lead to Joseph again gaining a position of great power and authority within Egypt. **(Gen. 41:39-45)**
  2. God was with Joseph in giving him the ability to interpret these dreams. If Joseph had not been able to interpret these dreams then who knows if he would've made it out of jail, and especially into the great position of power that made the circumstances of **Genesis 50** possible.
  3. God was certainly with Joseph during his life. We know that for certain at some points, but others we don't know for sure. Joseph was confident in God's provisions for Him and I think there are some things we can learn from Joseph.

## II. Learning Points For Us:

- A. God is in control.
1. The reason God is able to act as He does is because He is in complete control of all things. Only one who is in control of a situation can have the influence that our God in the happenings of this world.
  2. Some would seek to act as if God isn't active in this world by saying that God has set things in motion and then He has backed away and just lets stuff go as they may without any action on His behalf.
  3. I just don't see that as being the case. Instead, I see Daniel saying something very different. He believes that God is highly involved in this world and He is in complete control. **(Dan. 2:19-23)**
- B. God uses the decisions of man for His purposes.
1. Joseph explicitly says this to his brothers. He, with full confidence, was certain that God would use the actions of men, even evil actions, to accomplish what He desires to be done.
  2. Think about everything bad that was done to Joseph. He was kidnapped by his brothers. He was sold to absolute strangers. He was taken to a foreign land. He was sold to another foreign people. He was framed for a crime that he didn't commit. He was thrown in jail because of that. But through all of it, God was able to work and use it all for His glory and good.
  3. Things may look terrible, and the worse case scenario might be playing out, but that doesn't mean that God isn't able to use it for His purposes. He is in control and He will use whatever means necessary to accomplish his purposes.
- C. God's purposes will be accomplished.
1. For people to think that they can interfere with the plans and purposes of God is just insane. God, the Creator of the universe, cannot be stopped or deterred. He will also accomplish what he wants to do.
  2. The story of Joseph proves that very thing. It was God's will for His people to spend 400 years in a foreign land. **(Gen. 15:13)** His people being in Egypt allowed for them to grow and prosper into a powerful people.
  3. But, again, think of how easy it would have been for His plan to be deterred. Just one thing could have been different, but God's plan wouldn't be altered. The coming of Jesus is just another evidence for the fact that God's will and purposes will be accomplished. God always wins.
- D. We must trust in God and His Providence.
1. As Joseph went through all of his ordeals in his young life, he never lost his hope or trust in God. He lost hope in his family ever coming and saving him **(Gen. 41:51)**, but he never lost hope in God, and God continually blessed him through everything that he went through.
  2. Joseph's example is one that we can continually learn from. Joseph probably didn't know when all of this was going on that God was working behind the scenes for the greater good. Yet, he never gave up. He never lost hope, and his faith stayed in the Lord. When he got to the end, he was able to look back and see just how much God had done for him.
  3. As we go through life, there will be times when things seem pretty bleak. We might not be able to see where God is working. We might not be able to pinpoint exactly where He intervened for us, but we ought to trust that He is. God is faithful to us, and He knows exactly what we need. He loves us, He cares for us, and He provides for our every need to accomplish His will.

We serve and awesome and powerful God who will not be defeated. In our Revelation class in our small adult class, we have stressed that fact. The earliest Christians were constantly being persecuted, yet they persevered because they knew that they served a God who would not be defeated. We ought to take so much encouragement from the fact that our God is alive and active in the lives of His people, today. We might not always be able to pinpoint what He has done, but we ought to always trust that He is active and that His will is going to be accomplished. May we always put our trust in Him and know that He will have things work out for the best. May He be praised and glorified and we trust in Him and live according to His will.