

## JOSEPH: FROM THE PIT TO THE PALACE – PART III

### **Genesis 37-50**

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#### Genesis 45:5,7

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

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

#### Genesis 50:20

<sup>20</sup>But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

#### To Summarize, Again – Where We Are With Joseph and His Story:

Joseph had been cast into Pharaoh's prison for a crime he had not committed. Even far worse, he had dodged the sexual advances of the wife of the chief officer of the guard under Pharaoh. In doing the right thing by God and his slave owner, instead of being rewarded he was punished, imprisoned and cruelly slandered and mistreated.

In the invisible guiding hand of God, the chief butler for Pharaoh had been thrown into prison in the same place as Joseph.

The butler had a dream and Joseph was able to interpret his dream: In three days the butler would be restored to his position before Pharaoh as his personal servant. It happened exactly as Joseph had said it would.

This is where the story picks up again. Joseph had asked of the butler "Remember me before Pharaoh that I might be able to get out of this place", but the butler forgot him. (40:14,23)

It wouldn't be until two full years had passed that the silence of God would be broken.

God's silence doesn't mean He has forgotten us; usually it is the very time that He is at work. Eventually He breaks the silence and allows His best to come our way.

Genesis 41: <sup>1</sup>Now it happened at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream ...

<sup>8</sup>And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh. <sup>9</sup>Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day:

<sup>14</sup>Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.

This is where the butler is going to remember his faults regarding Joseph. He knows the guy who knows what dreams mean.

The Scripture is making a point here on purpose of the two full years for Joseph in prison. It captures the monotony Joseph was experiencing in daily life with no answers coming any time soon. This is a major part of the difficulty of life in the struggles to survive: waiting on the Lord and trusting Him for the future.

The casualty rate among Christians is startling. Thinking there are shortcuts to success, we are not willing to wait on God. We want it now with no discipline and obligation to duty during the tough times when God is silent. In our impatience to fulfill our needs we must not disregard the Word of God, flying in the face of what is right by doing what we know is wrong.

Even Jesus Himself did not do what He wanted, when He wanted to. He often said "My time is not yet come." He said "The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He sees the Father do. I can of My own Self do nothing; as I hear I judge, and My judgment is just, because I seek not My own will but the will of My Father which hath sent Me." (John 5:19, 30)

What Satan tempted Jesus to do was to act on His own, turn those stones into bread in disregard for the Father's will, gratifying His own needs.

Life sometimes runs in slow motion when we are suffering from the daily routine of monotony, but it will become a disaster if we speed things up in our foolish impulsiveness.

None of us like going to work day after day, but it is there God is developing our character. How can we live in the palace of prosperity without indulging in the filth of the flesh if there has been no self-restraint practiced in a time of testing??

Disappointment and delay, with our life on hold; nothing happening, is the best education we can receive from God. It is there where we are looking to trust in the Lord for His plan, and not for our own foolish expectations. The things we dream about when we are young and dumb are nothing compared to the great things of God which will count for eternity.

The story of Joseph's life of disappointment, broken dreams, mistreatment and betrayal by those he thought were his friends is the very story of us all and what we must endure if we are going to let God have His own way with us.

I didn't think I would be freezing the frame here in the movie of Joseph's story but this lesson of waiting is the most important one in our life.

The flesh screams at us to be satisfied on the spot in our needs, wishes and wants.

We can't "just do it" and "get on with it" and "be done with it". Wait on the Lord and trust Him for something infinitely greater than a petty, momentarily passing feeling! Life must not be turned into moments of pleasure or we will discover too late the flesh can't be satisfied no matter how much you feed it. It would be a tragedy to discover too late the God-given opportunities and gifts He had for us because we were off doing stupid things, chasing a feeling.

We must wait on the Lord!

Joseph wasn't the only one who was beaten down by life and feeling he had been forgotten by God; there was Job.

He endured the death of ten children and the loss of everything he owned, including his health. His friends turned their backs on him, questioning his genuineness. His wife said “Why don’t you curse God and die?”

In Job 23: 8 He said “Behold I go forward and He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him.”

Job has questions and God is not answering them, yet. He wishes he could have a meeting with God and ask Him “Why?”

What God is doing, he has no idea.

He snaps together, re-gathers his faith and says, “I know this... I know this, but He knows the way I take; when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot has held fast to His path; I have kept His way and not turned aside.”

God is the one who determines how long the process will take. It is only after God has made us genuine at heart and taught us what is really important in life and has opened our eyes from fantasy to reality that He can trust us to be His servants. God wants to put our life on display in a testimony to His faithfulness, ending the story of our life in a spectacular performance!

The two full years for Joseph in prison were boring, long, dull; a slow, grinding, uneventful nothingness! It is during those times of waiting on God loyally that everything is happening. Events are occurring unknown to us where God is at work, setting up the time and place without our help. God is staging the “God happening”; the “God Event” that will have a profound change in the lives of many people who will witness for themselves what God did through your life.

It is when life is put on hold and we faithfully wait for God to move that He is shaping us for a significant future to rock the world around us. Being hidden alone in silence with God will change our attitude from Why, to What, to Whom. It is in the solitude of being left alone with God that He alone will become the object of our undivided attention. When we have gotten to know and experience the Living God in a personal way, it is then all the “What’s” and “Why’s” will give way to the God we have discovered, and have learned to love.

If you find yourselves being put into a place alone with God, with no one else around, it is a special invitation for you to use that time to open up the Scriptures in a serious quest for truth. It is a time to discover Who God is, and what He wants to do through your life.

Abraham waited long disappointing years for the birth of Isaac: How did his waiting turn out?

Moses didn't lead the Exodus until he was 80: He thought he was useless to God. Elijah waited at the brook; Noah waited 120 years in ministry while building a ship when it had never rained; Paul waited after his conversion in Arabia before God sent him into the ministry. Jesus, Himself, waited 30 years in His up-bringing and education before His ministry began.

God is working while people are waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting.

What's happening in the present? Nothing. What's happening for the future? Everything!!

### The Turning Point – Pharaoh's Dream (Gen. 41:1-14)

Pharaoh dreams a dream; God is giving him a future of Egypt. Nobody can interpret it.

<sup>1</sup>And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river. <sup>2</sup>And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine and fatfleshed; and they fed in a meadow. <sup>3</sup>And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured and leanfleshed; and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river. <sup>4</sup>And the ill favoured and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke. <sup>5</sup>And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. <sup>6</sup>And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them. <sup>7</sup>And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream. <sup>8</sup>And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh."

The chief butler all of a sudden remembers Joseph, who had years before interpreted his dreams that happened exactly as he said they would.

41:9 “Then the chief cupbearer spoke to Pharaoh, saying, I would make mention today of mine own offenses.”

He told Pharaoh about his experience with Joseph in prison and that he would be able to give Pharaoh the meaning of his dreams.

Pharaoh says, “Go get him now!” Joseph is taken out of prison in a snap of time and finds himself standing before Pharaoh interpreting his dream.

How fast things can change: in a day, in a moment, when you least expect it. You’re in the prison one moment going about your daily routine and in the next moment you’re taken out of prison and find yourself before the most powerful man in the world, looking around at a palace, and you’re up to speak!

In spite of all our human suffering in this life, God will take us from the pit, from the prison, to the palace; from God’s palace to the throne room of God.

“<sup>15</sup> And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. <sup>16</sup> And Joseph answered Pharaoh saying, It is not in me, God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.”

Joseph recognizes before Pharaoh he has nothing in himself to speak to Pharaoh except it comes from God.

Joseph knew it, and anyone who has ever honestly spoken for God in the ministry knows that it is not in us what to say.

We lean totally upon the Word of God and pray the Holy Spirit will use us. In our humanity we know we are no different from anyone else, and if anything is going to be said, God is going to have to say it through us. Sometimes we watch in amazement how God can touch an audience or one person’s life when we humbly trust Him to save a soul or change a life. It is amazing!

Joseph interprets the dream and lets Pharaoh know what God is about to do in Egypt in the next 14 years (vs. 29).

There shall be seven years of plenty and a great harvest of grain and cattle. But after the seven years, there shall be seven years of massive famine (vs. 26-32).

But Joseph doesn't stop there. He has learned through the long years in slavery and in prison how to effectively use his skills in management and administration. He has the wisdom that God has given him through his faithful and loyal service to his slave masters, to advise Pharaoh what he should do.

<sup>33</sup> Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise and set him over the land of Egypt."

He advises him to gather into the storehouses the harvest of the years of plenty, that when the years of famine come, the people of the land shall be spared (vs. 34-36).

Pharaoh is thoroughly impressed – Joseph finds the dreams of his youth come true.

<sup>37</sup> And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. <sup>38</sup> And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?"

Pharaoh did not find Joseph, it was God who placed him right into the presence of Pharaoh and into the palace. Wow – unbelievable – the dreams Joseph had from God at 17, in a place of great honor had come true. Joseph, in all his sorrows and pain, held up under pressure because he believed God had promised him a future! God had been faithful and Joseph lived to see it with his own eyes.

God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him (Heb. 11:6).

<sup>39</sup> And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, For as much as God has showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. <sup>40</sup> Thou shall 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... <sup>42</sup> 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; <sup>43</sup> and 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."

God had always been with Joseph. He had connections in high places. The invisible hand of God had guided his every step from the pit, to prison and now to the palace.

When we think our break has come, and our expectations are going to be realized, here comes disaster, setbacks and rejection. It is how God guides His people to prove them genuine in love, hope and faith. It is in our broken expectations, earth-shaking disappointments and indefinitely delayed hope, we must decide then and there we will go on with God. We must believe the best is yet to come. God has places, people and events He will have us encounter, to guide us to the purpose He created us to do in His work.

### The Countries Come to Egypt for Food – It’s Time to Meet the Family

“<sup>57</sup> And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn because that the famine was so sore in all the lands.”

42:1 “Now when Jacob (father of Joseph) saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another <sup>2</sup> and he said, Behold I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down there that we may live and not die. <sup>3</sup> And Joseph’s ten brothers went down to buy corn in Egypt... <sup>5</sup> And the sons of Israel (Jacob) came to buy corn...”

It is through Jacob (whose name God changed to Israel) and his twelve sons (who would become the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel) that this people will become a great and mighty nation in Egypt. They are now right where God wants them to be for the next 400 years until the time of Moses and the Exodus.

Everywhere we go in the story of Joseph we see the invisible hand of God guiding the events and the steps of His people in making connections with each other to fulfill His purposes. It was God Who sent the famine to get Joseph’s brothers down there to meet up with him in fulfillment of Joseph’s dreams when he was 17.

God doesn’t miss a thing in our lives, nor do the events in the world miss a beat in how God has arranged them.

Whatever the world means for evil, God will mean it for good to bring salvation to His people.

“<sup>6</sup> And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land, and Joseph’s brothers came and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth.”

Wow! How amazing is the mighty hand of God in the affairs of men? All the endless suffering Joseph had gone through, the journey of the long road ended up right where it was supposed to.

Remember the dream Joseph had when he was 17, where he saw his father, mother and his brothers bowing down before him? It was God revealing to Joseph His future plans for his life. Somehow he would end up in high places to preserve his family and the nation of Israel that would come from them. Now it's happening right before Joseph's very own eyes.

They didn't recognize Joseph but he sure knew who they were: “<sup>7</sup>And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them,”

“<sup>9</sup> And Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed of them...”

The unfolding of the story of Joseph leads us to where Joseph reveals himself to his brother.

45:1 “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 to his brother <sup>2</sup> And he wept aloud... <sup>3</sup> And Joseph said unto his brothers, I am Joseph; does my father yet live? And His brothers could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. <sup>4</sup> ...And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold unto Egypt.”

Yes! They were deeply troubled in the presence of this great man in Egypt who is the one they had done so much evil to and sold as a slave to die in chains. They were troubled (scared to death) about what he would do to them, troubled about their guilt before God in the presence of this miracle, troubled about how this could possibly be. How could this be Joseph? He was as good as dead. They had not believed a word he had told them, nor in his dreams that had really been from God. What would God do to them for this? These merciless, heartless, vindictive, jealous brother had killed their own brother in their own minds and now he is standing before them alive?

Who do we see in all this? What's the picture we are getting by now?

It is Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Joseph is the very portrait of Christ, and His evil brothers who did these terrible things to Him are you and me, for whom He was crucified. Christ, at the hands of sinners, was supposed to be dead and now He is alive, three days later, standing in front of His brothers.

Who really crucified Christ? God, in His love for us, sent His only begotten Son into the world to die for our sins at our own hands. He Who came to save us, we hated Him, rejected Him and sold Him for thirty pieces of silver. He claimed to be the Son of God and we, in contempt, refused to believe on Him. Here He stands today, knocking on the door of your heart, wanting to come in, and we feel our guilt for the evil things we have done and wonder how God could ever possibly forgive us. Christ died for sinners so God could forgive us.

If Joseph forgave his brothers then can Jesus forgive us? You say how?? Here is the answer:

“<sup>5</sup> Now therefore be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that you sold me here: for God did send me before you to preserve life...<sup>8</sup> So now it was not you that sent me here but God!!”

“God sent me to save you”; God sent His Son, Jesus to save us! This is the Grace of God. It is God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense that offers us the free gift of salvation if we will receive Him as our Lord and Savior.