

BUT GOD MEANT IT FOR GOOD

GENESIS 37-50

I. THE ACCOUNT OF JOSEPH EXPLAINS HOW ISRAEL ENDED UP IN EGYPT.

Gen. 15:13-16 Then the LORD said to him, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. ¹⁴ But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure."

A. After calling Abraham to the Promised Land, God tells Abraham ahead of time that the Israelites would become slaves in a foreign country and be mistreated for 400 years.

B. In the 4th generation, when the 400 years are over, they will return to the land of Canaan.

1. The sin of the Amorites had not yet reached its full measure. We know from history and archaeology how dreadful the Amorites were. Eventually, they would reach a point of no return, but until then, God gives the Amorites more time to repent. Yet when their sin reaches its fullness, there will be judgment. God would not let the Israelites take the Promised Land from those living in it until they became so corrupt that they forfeited their right to the land. God is a moral God. He would not just push one people out and His own people in.

2. God will also punish the nation they serve as slaves. The nation was not specified at that time. Through the story of Joseph, we find out that the nation is Egypt. Egypt's time for judgment had come.

C. Tribes, nations, and empires rise and fall. There is great devastation as one group is displaced or taken over by another. God allows this so that in the midst of it all, people will cry out to Him and find Him. God is orchestrating everything, without violating the free will of anyone, in order to produce voluntary love in the hearts of as many people as possible.

Acts 17:26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. ²⁷ God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.

D. God assures Jacob about the plan. It's okay to leave the Promised Land. God will go with them to Egypt and He will bring them back (Gen. 46:3-4)

II. GOD SENDS JOSEPH DOWN TO EGYPT FIRST TO PRESERVE HIS PEOPLE.

God does not call Himself the God of Joseph. God does not speak to him directly like He did to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, nor does He send an angel to speak to Joseph. Yet, the account of Joseph takes up the most number of chapters in Genesis. Why is Joseph's life so significant?

- A. Joseph was mistreated by his brothers, who sold him to traveling merchants. He was wrongfully accused in Potiphar's house, forgotten by everyone in a prison. And yet, it is God who sends Joseph down to Egypt for a great purpose.
- Genesis 45:7 But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.***
- B. What if God had rescued him when he was mistreated by his brothers and thrown into the pit? What if God did not allow Joseph to go to prison, etc..
- 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.***
- C. 3 Sources of pressures in life and how we are to respond:
1. My own folly. Repent of it. Humble yourself. If it's other's sin, forgive (1 Jn. 1:9-10; Mt. 6:15)
- John 1:9-10 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.***
- Matt. 6:15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.***
2. Satan's rage. When the enemy attacks, resist him. (Jam. 4:7)
- James 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.***
3. God's training plan. Endure it (Heb. 12:7)
- Heb 12:7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?***
- D. Often in circumstances, it is usually a combination of all 3. We can't always clearly tell what % of which is involved. Sometimes very apparent. Sometimes, can't figure it out. God is producing voluntary love in the hearts of redeemed people in the way He's leading the planet. Love is voluntary. If we say yes to God, He overrules whatever is going on and produces love in the heart. The missing piece that human history can't see is that we're going to a marriage supper.
- Rom 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.***

III. JOSEPH AS A FORESHADOWING OF JESUS.

We see the nobility of Joseph's reactions in the face of trials and testing. We do not find him filled with resentment, there is no complaining, no questioning of God, not even a sense of injustice. Joseph becomes a "type" or foreshadowing of Jesus: Sent by their fathers to their brother, rejected by their brothers who conspired to kill them, had their robes taken from them, betrayed for a few silver coins, brought to Egypt as young boys, falsely accused, had two fellow prisoners – one raised up, the other lost, began their divinely appointed ministry at the age of 30, forgave those who wronged them, were ultimately exalted after their suffering, and God's purpose was for them was to save their people (Lk 24:27).