

GENESIS 45

PROVIDENCE, FAITH AND FRUITION

All of us have had a "eureka moment" at some time or another, I'm sure. On the old 80's show, the A-Team, Hannibal's famous saying was, "I love it when a plan comes together!" This usually took place at the end of the show where the team had reached its objective. Then, and only then could they say with full confidence that they had completed their mission. Hindsight illuminated and confirmed what had been only hope, faith and several educated guesses when the plan was being hatched.

We serve and all-knowing, all-powerful God that is in all places at all times. In fact, I feel like Hannibal was quoting the Lord without knowing it when he made his declaration of the plan coming together. God looked down through time and knew that His plan would eventually come together. He declares the end from the beginning. This is real life however, not television. It takes longer than an hour to plan, implement and pull off a rescue of some sort.

It took several weeks of drilling and rehearsing in mock-up compounds with several possible scenarios for Seal Team 6 to be able to complete their mission of capturing Bin Laden. It took 10 years of searching prior to that and then when he was located there were still those in intelligence circles that doubted whether or not the man in the compound was really him. Ten years is a long time to wait to get a victory. Well, God's plan has been in work for 6,000 plus years.

From creation until now, that plan has been in work and eventually God's enemy, Satan, will be captured, put on trial, and thrown into the Lake of Fire.

As we have gone through Genesis, we have read about the creation, the fall, the flood and now we see the fruition of another part of God's plan. Joseph was a major part of it with his brothers playing the supporting

cast. At first they seemed to be nothing but the villains in the play, but today their true purpose will be made known. Real life is like a good thriller. And like any good thriller, there is always a twist, something that is not as it had once seemed.

Recap – Joseph’s life from the well to VP.

- Thrown into well
- Sold into slavery by his brothers
- Bought by Potiphar
- Falsely accused of rape and imprisoned
- Interpreted dreams for butler and baker
- That opened the door for him to interpret Pharaoh’s dream
- That interpretation moved Pharaoh to make him second in all of Egypt.

We will continue today with the story of Joseph and his family as they are reunited. We turn the page on another chapter of God's plan for mankind; the building of a people set apart to and for Him. Let's look at chapter 45 and see how amazing the plan of God is.

Gen 45:1 *Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers.*

Gen 45:2 *And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it.*

Gen 45:3 *Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence.*

Gen 45:4 *And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.*

Gen 45:5 *But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.*

Gen 45:6 *For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting.*

Gen 45:7 *And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.*

Gen 45:8 *So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.*

Remember that they had all just finished a big meal in the banquet hall of Joseph's residence. Judah had just made the speech of a lifetime. It obviously moved Joseph to the point of tears.

At this point Joseph cleared the house in order to reveal his true identity to his brothers. We have to remember that his identity wasn't necessarily a secret to the Egyptians. They knew he wasn't one of them. This is why he ate by himself at his own table. It is quite possible that the Egyptians knew he was a Hebrew though his brothers didn't.

There are a couple of different schools of thought here as to why Joseph sent everyone out of the room. The obvious reason was that this was a personal moment and Joseph was overcome by emotion. The second line of reasoning is that he proved himself to be a Hebrew by showing his brothers that he was circumcised, which is also a very personal moment. We won't marinate on that one too long.

What we should see, and what is one of the biggest nuggets to chew on here is that we get a good look at one of the conundrums of the Bible.

We have continually brought up the fact that what men had intended for evil God used for good. That is something we see continually in scripture. Did Joseph's brothers send him to Egypt or did God send

Joseph by manipulating his brothers? I believe that in God's foreknowledge He already knew what Joseph's brothers had in store. He used their actions to accomplish His goal. Sometimes we see God working behind the scenes and sometimes we see Him working out front. Sometimes God is acting/ moving and sometimes it is as if He is reacting to us. In the end, God takes lemons and makes lemonade. He is sovereign.

Joseph didn't relieve his brothers of their responsibility in sending him into slavery, but he also recognized God's providence.

Gen 45:4 And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.

Gen 45:5 But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.

In hindsight we can also see that all of Joseph's trials served a purpose, not just for him but also for his family. When we go through illness or some other trial such as Joseph, we tend to think that it is focused on us, but we have to see it in the light of scripture.

Joseph was going through a whole lot. However, it wasn't just a learning process for him. It was so that his family, those that would become the nation of Israel centuries later could fulfill their destiny.

It really isn't all about us, which is another reason we shouldn't throw a pity party when we are in a tight spot. Our suffering could be for the benefit of someone else.

This was also an opportunity for the family to see the fulfillment of the dreams Joseph had.

Gen 45:9 *"Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph: 'God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry.*

Gen 45:10 *You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have.*

Gen 45:11 *There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for there are still five years of famine.' "*

Gen 45:12 *"And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you.*

Gen 45:13 *So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here.' "*

Gen 45:14 *Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck.*

Gen 45:15 *Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.*

So now Joseph gives them instructions to take back food and gifts to their father with instructions to return to Egypt in order to live there throughout the rest of the famine, which was five years. After the plan was handed out they wept and talked with each other. This was really the time of the reunion.

But the news wasn't sequestered to just Joseph's house.

Gen 45:16 *Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, 'Joseph's brothers have come.' So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well.*

Gen 45:17 *And Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Say to your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan.*

Gen 45:18 *Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land.*

Gen 45:19 *Now you are commanded—do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come.*

Gen 45:20 *Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.' "*

Gen 45:21 *Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them carts, according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey.*

Gen 45:22 *He gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments.*

Gen 45:23 *And he sent to his father these things: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey.*

The news was received as a blessing in Pharaoh's house. Pharaoh was proof for Joseph. In fact, not only did he confirm Joseph's offer but he "one-upped" it by sending transportation for them to ride in on the way back! The heart of a pagan king was moved to give the best land of Egypt to strangers, people that would not even be allowed to eat at the table of an Egyptian.

Now let me ask you a question. Why do you think this was possible? Did God soften Pharaoh's heart or was it because of the love and respect Pharaoh had for Joseph? The answer is that because of the relationship Joseph had with Pharaoh, a softening of his heart had taken place. It had probably taken place for the most part over time, but it culminated in this particular event. **There was a working relationship there; one of trust and respect.**

Most of the time, when God moves in a person's heart, He does it through people and circumstance. Joseph was in the right place at the right time to gain the trust of Pharaoh. God made that happen through the actions of Joseph's brothers. Remember what he said to his brothers earlier?

Your testimony and your actions can be used by God to soften the heart of someone in which you come into contact. You may have been talking to them about Jesus for years thinking they didn't listen, when in reality their heart was slowly being softened. The flip-side of that though is that if we act like knuckle-heads, we can actually harden their hearts towards God. This is why we have to walk in the Spirit at all times. We should always be on our best behavior.

Gen 45:24 So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, "See that you do not become troubled along the way."

Gen 45:25 Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father.

Gen 45:26 And they told him, saying, "Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart stood still, because he did not believe them.

Gen 45:27 But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived.

Gen 45:28 Then Israel said, "It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

In verse 26 we see that upon their return home they told their father about Joseph only to have him not believe them. There is also a hint at Jacob having a heart attack. The news was such a shock to him that his heart at least skipped a beat. In verse 27 it says that he didn't believe them until they told him the actual words of Joseph and he saw the "Cadillacs" that Joseph had sent with them.

At that point he believed Joseph though he had yet to see him.

The only way people will know Jesus is alive is if we tell them His words and show them His blessings in our lives.

b. *It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive*: Knowing that the favored son was alive - back from the dead, as it were - changed Israel's testimony from, "all these things are against me" (Genesis 42:36) to, "it is enough."

This testimony of faith comes from Israel, not Jacob. **When Jacob was in charge, we saw a whining, self-pitying, complaining, unbelieving type of man. But Israel, the man God conquered, had a testimony of faith.**

GENESIS 46:1-7

LEAVING HOME IN PREPARATION FOR COMING BACK

Are you familiar with the word, counter-intuitive? It essentially means "going against what you know." Something just doesn't make sense based on what you know already. We have all come across something like this. If you are a mechanic it has happened many times I'm sure. Something has gone wrong with what you are working on and based on what you know, you can't figure out why it is doing or not doing what it should be doing. These things come up from time to time.

This reminds me of the time that Robin and some other ladies were going to North Mississippi for some kind of conference. They were all car-pooling and the driver of the car typed in the destination on her GPS. Once the GPS told them which way to go they followed the directions religiously. They left out pretty early that morning. Around 9:00 or so I got a call from Robin asking how to get to Tupelo from Alabama. Of course I was trying to figure out why they were even in Alabama when all they had to do was hit HWY 45 and head straight north. You can imagine what a conversation that was. The GPS for some reason had taken them into Alabama and onto highway 17 north. She called me when they got to highway 78, thank goodness. The point is that it was

counter-intuitive to go through Alabama when they were headed to North Mississippi especially since they were already in Mississippi. To her credit Robin was the one that realized something was wrong.

At any rate, there are times in our lives, our spiritual lives when something comes up that is counter-intuitive. It just doesn't make sense based on what we have been taught previously. Immediately red flags go up and that is a good thing. **We need to pay close attention when something doesn't seem right. It is at that point that we need to make sure we are paying attention to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit so we don't make a mistake.**

That is where we find Israel/ Jacob today. He is in the position of making a major move; one that in many ways is counter-intuitive. So let's go to chapter 46 and see how Israel deals with this situation.

Gen 46:1 *So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.*

Gen 46:2 *Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!" And he said, "Here I am."*

Gen 46:3 *So He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there.*

Gen 46:4 *I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes."*

Gen 46:5 *Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives, in the carts which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.*

Gen 46:6 *So they took their livestock and their goods, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him.*

Gen 46:7 *His sons and his sons' sons, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.*

I think you can see how a father would have wanted to see his long lost son after all those years, but we aren't talking about just any reunion

here. If that were the case then Joseph would have taken some vacation time and just flown in on Pharaoh's jet to spend some time with his family.

What we are talking about is moving everything from the family to the entire business. We are talking about leaving your land, land promised to you by God, and moving to a foreign country, a heathen nation where you are on the bottom rung of the ladder. I can see the trepidation in Israel. He wants to see his son, but it means leaving everything. **After all, wasn't he promised the land of Canaan? Why would God have him leave everything?**

We see in verse 3 that Israel/ Jacob was scared to go and he had a right to be scared. Remember what happened to his grandfather? In Genesis 12 Abraham had gone to Egypt because of a famine. He was afraid of what might happen to his wife so he told a big lie and when it was found out Pharaoh sent him packing back home. It was a big mess, but the moral of the story was that **he was in trouble for trusting in Egypt instead of trusting God. Now, in the middle of a famine, he was looking at leaving everything, including the land he was promised to go to Egypt. It sounded too familiar. To compound things, Isaac had also contemplated going to Egypt in a time of famine but God had told him not to do so.**

In an oral culture where you listened to your elders, Israel was going against all that he knew.

However, also weighing on his mind was most likely the recollection of a promise God had given to his grandfather before he was known as Abraham.

Gen 15:13 Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years.

Gen 15:14 *And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions.*

So how did he handle this dilemma? I believe he is like any other man. Remember, there is nothing new under the sun and all things are common among men. I'm sure he dwelled on it and mulled over it for a time, as he was slowly moving south. We see that he headed toward Egypt and then stopped at the southernmost point in the Promised Land, Beersheba. Here he would stop, sacrifice to God and pray. Abraham and Isaac had both lived there for awhile. Abraham had planted a Tamarisk tree commemorating where he had called on the name of the Lord. Isaac had received a promise from God there and had built an altar in that place. **It was probably here that Israel stopped and sacrificed looking for some confirmation on this huge move.**

So what did God have to say?

Gen 46:2 *Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!" And he said, "Here I am."*

Gen 46:3 *So He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there.*

Gen 46:4 *I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes."*

God spoke to Israel in a dream. I believe He still does this at times today.

Act 2:16 *But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:*

Act 2:17 *'AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS IN THE LAST DAYS, SAYS GOD, THAT I WILL POUR OUT OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL FLESH; YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, YOUR OLD MEN SHALL **DREAM DREAMS.***

Act 2:18 AND ON MY MENSERVANTS AND ON MY MAIDSERVANTS I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT IN THOSE DAYS; AND THEY SHALL PROPHECY.

Act 2:19 I WILL SHOW WONDERS IN HEAVEN ABOVE AND SIGNS IN THE EARTH BENEATH: BLOOD AND FIRE AND VAPOR OF SMOKE.

Act 2:20 THE SUN SHALL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS, AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE COMING OF THE GREAT AND AWESOME DAY OF THE LORD.

Act 2:21 AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS THAT WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED.'

See, it says that the old men will dream dreams. We just don't remember them most of the time. The point is that I believe God still speaks to us this way but it isn't an everyday occurrence. Caleb and I helped a lady out one day with a ride. I have known her for 20 years and the church has helped her out from time to time. We gave her a ride. While in the truck she was telling about all the visions she had gotten from God. It was just one after the other. Everything to her was an omen. As a result she is in a constant state of interpreting omens and signs. This is not how it works. **We do see people in the Bible having important dreams and visions, but they weren't an everyday occurrence and they had to do with major elements of God's plan.**

As I stated earlier I do believe **God still speaks to us in dreams, but primarily we have His Word and the conviction of the Holy Spirit who gives us peace with decisions based on what we know about the Word.**

There are some things that are obvious. For instance we are not to steal or murder. **What we have here with Israel though is what appears to be an exception to the rule that has been passed down from father to son for three generations; that is don't go to Egypt during a famine, trust in God.** It sounds like a good rule of thumb.

Metaphorically Egypt represents the world and we are not to rely on the world for our sustenance or knowledge.

So what is happening here? Did God change His mind? No, we have to look at the context of the situation. **Abraham and Isaac were going to Egypt for the wrong reasons.** They were going because of a lack of faith and because **they hadn't consulted God.** Now **God is telling Israel to go to Egypt.** In fact this is nothing new. He is simply enacting a promise He had made earlier in Genesis 15. **It is just that now the timing is right. It does no good to invoke a scripture when we take it out of context.**

Israel was doing the right thing by considering the teaching of his Father and Grandfather. They had both learned from their experiences and directly from God. **However, he didn't stop there. He didn't just lean on tradition. He took the time to pray and seek God's face.** It was there that he found his answer. **God confirmed not what Joseph told them to do, but He confirmed what He had promised earlier to Abraham;** namely that there would come a day when He would take His people to another land in order to build them into a nation so that they would later be able to return and take possession of what He had promised.

God's plans often seem to take us away from the objectives He has placed before us in order to prepare us, only to bring us back again so that we can accomplish the original goal.

The moral of this story is that we should respond to warning signs when we appear to be going the wrong way. Sometimes we may be going the wrong way, other times it may be the Lord steering us to a place of preparation for our mission. **The only way to know for sure is to seek His face and His will.**

This is the communication He craves and it should be a goal of ours also. We can't go wrong doing this.

Seek God's face, not just His hand!

So we see that our faith in the all-knowing all-powerful God, even in the hard times, can see us through. Not only will it see us through but it also has a great effect on those around us. **If we live our faith by walking and talking in faith we positively affect those around us. That in turn can affect the destiny of a whole nation. Is that not what we are asking for in these perilous times? Is that not what we need in America today?**

Finally, our faith should be like that of Israel, not like that of Jacob, though they are the same man. We cannot afford to be schizophrenic in our faith. We have to be consistent, even-keeled. This also makes our testimony credible. **We need to believe even though we don't yet see the promise.**