

Genesis 37 v 5, 9 & 10

#### Joseph Part 4

*And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, what is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?*

Everyone has dreams, it is said that they empty our minds of the everyday things that have occurred in our lives, or the things we have been thinking about. In the Bible dreams in certain instances are more than what people have been thinking about, they are God given, and are a definite indication concerning something relative to the future, or it is the Lord giving a warning of something that can happen if the warning in the dream is not taken notice of.

There is a difference between a real dream which is seen during a time when we are asleep, and the visionary dream of a leader. Martin Luther King said "I have a dream" it was not a dream he saw as a picture, but one he had in his mind's eye, it was a mental concept. The biblical dream of Joseph that we are going to refer to was one he saw during his sleep, which was played to in his mind like seeing a video.

It will benefit if we look at some of those who had actual dreams that had a bearing on their lives. In Genesis 20 v 3 to 6 we read. *"But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife. But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou also slay a righteous nation? Said he not unto me, she is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her".* This dream preserved the righteousness of Abimelech.

Then we read of Jacob in Genesis 28 v 12 which says, *“And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it”*

Kiel & Delitzsch in their commentary, commentating regarding the ladder reaching up to heaven says *“The angel upon it carry up the wants of men to God, and bring down the assistance and protection of God to man”*

This also illustrates the unbroken communion of God with us, that is possible through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, because for man to have communion with God it is necessary for man to have a mediator. Paul says in 1 Timothy 2 v 5 *“For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus”*.

Jacob was alone, he was on a journey, and what this also conveys to us is that on our Christian journey even if we are in a place of aloneness, it is essential we know that the Lord is with us, and even in loneliness we can have unbroken fellowship with the Lord.

Jacob had another dream and through it is told to return home, he was sent away to live with his uncle Laban, and then marrying his daughters Leah and Rachel a dream instructs him to go home. Through a dream Laban is warned not to speak good or evil to Jacob.

There is the dream regarding Gideon, which was not a dream he had, but a dream of one of his men, Judges 7 v 15 says *“When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he bowed down and worshipped. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, ‘Get up! The Lord has given the Midianite camp into your hands.’”*

There is the dream of Solomon 1 Kings 3 v 5 *“At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, ‘Ask for whatever you want me to give you.’”*

In the book of Daniel there are a few instances relating to dreams, however we don't have time to deal with these in detail to night because of their eschatological significance.

In Matthews Gospel we have Joseph being told not to be afraid to take Mary to be his wife. The men from the east are told by a dream not to go back to Herod, and Joseph is told to go to Egypt, and he is then told to return to his own country on both occasions it was by dreams these messages were communicated to him.

We see therefore that dreams have played an important role shaping the lives of people and Nations. At this point we will return to the story of Joseph, and consider the events that stand out which reveals to us how the hand of God was a governing factor in his life. Let's look at.

## 1. The Purpose of God

In looking back over the life of Joseph it is without doubt that he featured greatly in the Purpose of God as it related to Israel and it's preservation.

But how do the dreams of Joseph connect to the purpose and preservation of Israel, it is only by looking at the story and then having an overview of it that we see the connection. To do this we must commence at the beginning and see how it pans out.

Joseph was the first son born to Rachel, who for many years was barren, during her barren years she cries out to Jacob and says Genesis 30 v 1 *"And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die"*

This cry of desperation that came from deep within Rachael, is to be the cry of every church that is not giving birth to new Christians. Rachael believed that not bearing children was a reproach and wanted her reproach taken away.

There came however a point in her life when it says in Genesis 30 v 22 *"And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb"* it tells us verse 23 *"And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach"* The birth of Joseph was important to Rachel for she had been carrying the burden of longing for a child for so long.

She had seen the number of sons being born that belonged to Jacob by Leah and Jacobs maid, which made her very envious, she was jealous and this must have affected her deeply, for you spence this when she cries out *"Give me children, or else I die"*

I wonder how deeply we long to see souls being born again, do we wonder why it is we don't see people being saved, do we cry asking God to take away our reproach, are we envious of the people being saved and added to other churches. God remembered Rachel; oh God remember us.

The purpose of God was being outworked when Joseph was born, for he was to feature in what the Lord would do in Egypt in order to preserve His covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The birth of Joseph was born according to the purpose of God.

## 2. The Providence of God

This aspect of God is amazing because His strategy ensures that all things work together for good to those called according to his purpose.

Following his dreams in which the Lord had indicated to Joseph the position that one day he would occupy, a position of authority a position others would look up to, he becomes the object of envy. What had transpired was thus, Joseph had verbalised the revelation God had made known to him by the dreams.

Once a revelation has been verbalised the enemy is aware of it, in Joseph's case two things worked negatively against him, one, his brothers called him the dreamer, and secondly his brothers became jealous. As we know it was Jacob who loved Joseph and gave him a coat of many colours which was the cause of their envy.

His brothers took advantage of the occasion when Joseph visited them on his father's behalf, and sought to destroy him. That is what envy always does, it does not seek the good of the person they are jealous of but seeks to destroy them.

When Joseph was put in the pit and then rescued out of it and sold to the Ishmaelite's it was the providence of God at work, it was at work to preserve His purpose. The Lord sees what we don't see, He's sees all things and knows all things, and His strategy is to make sure what He has determined comes to pass.

Thus, should instil a confidence in us to believe that nothing of what God had determined will ever fail. The devil will attempt to frustrate and kill off a revealed purpose, but all we have to do is to keep close to the Lord and wait His time and all will be well.

This is what transpired in Joseph's life, for it took years for the revealed plan of God to come to pass. After he is sold to the Ishmaelite's he is sold a second time in Egypt to a captain of the Egyptians name Potiphar, who gives him an important position in his house, but even here the devil

is at work to try and destroy Joseph, as he is wrongly accused of a sexual misdemeanour against Potiphar's wife and put in prison.

While in prison Joseph is given an authority over the other prisoners, in providence God had worked it that two prisoners would have dreams, which would have a direct bearing on Joseph's future. It was not a coincident that Joseph was in prison at the same time as two of Pharaoh's servants, who had fallen out of favour with the King.

Joseph was very sensitive to the needs of others, he had needs of his own but did not let them eclipse the needs of others, it shows that the nearer to the Lord we live the more sensitive to human needs we are. He notices the countenance of the two prisoners and enquires what is the matter with them. Each man in turn discloses to him their dream, first the butler, whose dream is interpreted having a favourable outcome.

The baker, because of what he heard decides to disclose his dream to Joseph, however the outcome was not what he wanted to hear. Both dreams were interpreted correctly by Joseph. Here again the providence of God is at work, placing the butler in the appropriate position ready for the next step the Lord was planned in forwarding His purpose.

The butler was now in a position to assist Pharaoh and advise him on the dreams he had, he remembers Joseph who had to spend another two years in prison after the butler was released. We could blame the butler for Joseph being in prison for another two years, but the time was not right for Joseph to be free, his freedom had to fit into the purpose of God, whose providential hand was controlling the affairs of Joseph and Israel.

### 3. The Preservation of God.

The butler suddenly remembers Joseph, it was the dreams of Pharaoh that triggered his memory and he remembers Joseph and the dreams he had interpreted regarding himself and the baker.

Genesis 41 v 9 says *"Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day"*.

Pharaoh calls for Joseph, and Joseph prepares himself to meet Him, listening to what he had to say. Because of the close relationship of Joseph with The Lord, he receives a revelation of what the dreams were all about, conveying the same to Pharaoh, who then responds to Joseph's advice concerning the appointment of a wise honest end upright man to carry out what had been revealed.

Implementing revelation is not to be taken lightly because it is carrying out the will of God. When the Lord made known the revelation to Samuel concerning the appointment of a King to replace Saul, he did not undertake the task lightly, but considered the action he was asked by the Lord to take, and even questioned the Lord about it.

In 1Samuel 16 the Lord tells Samuel that King Saul had been rejected as King and tells him that He had prepared Him a King among the sons of Jesse, he was to fill his anointing vessel with oil, and go to Bethlehem, call Jesse and his sons to a sacrifice and anoint the one the Lord points out to Him to be King in Saul's place.

It was important that Samuel anoint the right son of Jesse, he was very open to the Lord, which was his safety, because Samuel would have looked at the external appearance, and not the heart, but the Lord reveals to him that he is not to take in the outward appearance, because the Lord only considers the heart.

Now in relation to Joseph, Pharaoh saw more than the external appearance of Joseph, what he saw was the manifestation of the inner beauty and truthfulness, which was the outcome of Joseph's relationship with The Lord, but this was not what he had seen and experienced with the magicians and wise men of Egypt.

This shows to me how vital it is to keep our relationship with the Lord very close, the hymn says "Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me" if people don't recognise that there is something distinctly different about us, which reveals the attractiveness and the beauty of the Lord, then we need to examine our relationship to the Lord. If as a Christian, fellow believers are not prone to want to spend time with you, or talk to you, then it's time to examine what Charismatic manifestation there are in your life, what graces there are that are revealing the loveliness of Christ.

The appointment of Joseph to be the one to be responsible for setting up the food storage programme was all in the plan on purpose of God, which he did with the expertise of a mature leader. The Lord had prepared him for leadership from a very young age, he was a leader in Potiphar's house, then he was a leader in the prison, it was clear to Potiphar and the prison guard that Joseph was a born leader.

Leaders have initiative, they inspire, they motivate and generate people into action, they get things done, they strategize and mobilise. This is what Joseph did, slavery and imprisonment did not destroy the gift of a God that was evidently in him.

His leadership not only saved Egypt from starvation but is also saved Israel from extinction. Looking back over the story of Joseph we see how the purpose of God gradually unfolds as we see the providential hand of God used to secure the preservation of Israel.

Joseph was only seventeen when he was sold to the Ishmaelite's, and was thirty when he was released from prison, so he matured as a leader extremely quick.

After guiding Egypt through the years of plenty during which time he wisely stored up enough food to sustain Egypt, and other nations that came to buy food from him. It was during the years of famine that Jacob sent his sons down to Egypt to buy food. Once in Egypt, Joseph recognised his brothers, but they failed to recognise him. Once he had revealed himself to his brothers this is what he said. Genesis 45 v 5 & 7 *"Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life".*

*"And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance."*

The purpose of Joseph's trials and tribulation that he went through was all in God's plan, his birth was in God's plan, the dreams, the coat Joseph gave him, being sold as a slave, being accused of a misdemeanour, spending time in prison, interpreting dreams and being totally accurate about them, it all worked together for good, although at the time what the Lord showed to Joseph in the dreams seemed far away. In the end it all worked for good because the Lord preserved Israel through it.

To night we have considered.

The Purpose of God

The Providence of God

The Preservation of God