

Troubled
at His
Presence

Genesis 44:25 – 45:28



~ I become troubled when I consider the depths this story takes us to spiritually, I must admit. This strikes so close to home for me that it becomes beyond uncomfortable. We are in the middle of a story that is so dramatic and so spiritually mind-boggling that if you don't have a real compassion and a true feeling of mercy here and tenderness for these men - and for Joseph - then I would refer you to conduct a spiritual self-inventory whereby you examine yourself to see if you are in the faith; because I would highly doubt that you are. In our last report, we saw how this is the 'hinge' of the Christian life. It all swings on our love for others. If you don't have compassion and love and mercy for other souls – ALL souls – then there is a high likelihood you are not a born-again child of God. In fact, there is no chance at all. This story should be SO real and SO applicable to the Christian that it should make us churn inside and our hearts to melt like butter.

Our Spiritual Safari has brought us back to Egypt with the eleven brothers to buy food. The first round of food they purchased they took back to Jacob – but it soon ran out. Now, they have eaten up all of that food and they're back to buy more. I wonder how Simeon felt about that? Remember, Simeon was left in prison as a ransom to prove they weren't spies. Well, if the famine had ended while they were back home then the brothers would not have returned for Simeon. Simeon knows that; and he knows that he would have died in prison, too; lonely, hungry and heartbroken in regrets. I am sure there were several nights he prepared himself for just such demise. Of course, I think Joseph would have intervened – but that's another story. Simeon didn't know that kind of grace existed, either!

Anyways, you will recall that they had to bring back Benjamin as part of the deal to prove to the food czar they weren't spies in the land. Jacob didn't

want to let Benjamin go with them but he had to. Now, they have been made this luncheon by Joseph in Joseph's home and they are there with them right now. At first, the brothers had been afraid to the point of vomiting but, by the end of chapter forty-three, they were eating and drinking and, apparently, they are a little more at ease; because they didn't know who this was yet. Joseph has been very hospitable but he is preparing a test. Remember, he took his divining cup, of which we could say much more but won't, that he used for prophecy, and framed Benjamin with it. Joseph was a prophet of God and this is how he did it. We saw all of that in our previous several reports. We'll have several other instances of it in the future. However, remember, that cup was placed intentionally by Joseph's steward, at Joseph's command, in the sack of Benjamin to frame Benjamin criminally.

Joseph let them leave and get a little ways out there on the desert and then he sent his men after them. Well, when Joseph's men caught up to them out there they were so sure this couldn't have happened they said that whoever did it should die! Not only should that person die but the rest of them would be their slaves. They were confident this cup was not in their possession. Unfortunately for them, the ole "frame-up" – as we saw with Potiphar's wife towards Joseph – was a normal standard of ethics and conduct of business as usual in Egypt. So, they are brought back to Joseph and he says Benjamin is going to be his slave.

Remember, these men had once plotted to murder Joseph but they sold him into slavery instead so they could make some money. So, Joseph told his brothers to leave Benjamin behind and go on home. You will remember Judah came near and pled for his brother. Judah recounts a very loving story of Jacob and how they had gone back the first time. Judah told Joseph the whole story in detail. I am sure he confessed to delaying their return for Simeon and that he felt convicted by that now, too. Judah told Joseph all about Jacob and how Jacob didn't want to let Benjamin go. Remember, Judah pledged his own life to his father for the safety of Benjamin? Judah explained how the brothers simply could not go home without Benjamin. He is still in the middle of that explanation when Judah tells Joseph....

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25 And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food.

26 And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us.

27 And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons:

28 And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since:

29 And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befalls him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

~ Several things should be noted here. Judah is recounting this conversation he had with Jacob about the return to buy food. The way Judah tells Joseph the condition of their father, Joseph can see that Jacob had been deceived about what had happened. Now, Joseph knows what lies they told Jacob about his demise so long ago! This is partial confession because this is the first time we have heard exactly what occurred. Yes, they have said he was dead, but they haven't given any details and certainly haven't admitted they had anything to do with it.

Jacob is also growing in grace all alone back home; but he's still leaning on his son Benjamin. If they had returned without Benjamin it would have meant the death of Jacob, to be sure! There are many Christians that reveal a beautiful and sincere faith in God in time of death. For others, the death of a loved one actually causes a physical, mental and spiritual collapse. Well, friends, quite frankly, I don't care how much you loved them, if you're a child of God you believe you will see them again one day. You also believe they are present with the Lord if they are absent from this body - and that should, honestly, cause you to rejoice. I think the level of grief shown at a funeral for a loved one corresponds directly to the level of SELFISHNESS the griever has in their heart! The man and woman who are walking by faith won't break in the time of dying....

30 Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life;

31 It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave.

32 For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever.

33 Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.

34 For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

~ This is a true compassion and concern for old man Jacob by his son Judah. Judah is the self-appointed spokesman for this entire group now; but I think any one of the brothers would have done the same thing. Joseph conducted the test and Judah was willing to take his place. The Lord Jesus has taken our place. Christ took the place of the guilty! That's what this Holy Book is all about, my beloved ~

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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 unto his brethren.

~ In our last report, we said there will come a day when the Lord Jesus Christ will make Himself known to His own. The first time Jesus came unto His own His own received Him not. Jesus was delivered up to be crucified. When Christ returns He will make Himself known and someone will say to Him, "....what are these wounds in Thy hands?" to which Christ shall reply, "I received these in the house of my friends." We are told when He makes Himself known there will be a fountain for cleansing in Jerusalem. Christ

making Himself known is going to be a little bit deeper than most people realize that it will be today – in fact, a WHOLE LOT deeper! It's going to be a very private family affair, too. There will be weeping....

2 And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

~ Well, no one knows what's just happened. The stewards were startled, and the brothers were completely freaked out. I think they would have called nine-one-one emergency if they had that service in that day. I think Pharaoh himself was probably eating dinner and had to get up and look over that way....

3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were TERRIFIED at his presence.

~ The last time these brothers had seen Joseph was the night they had thrown him in a pit and sold him into slavery. I'm sure their last memories were of Joseph screaming and pleading for help. They just spilled their guts in confession to him when they didn't even know who he was. The brother's minds are now effectively broken down to incomprehension and, if they were scared before, there are no words to adequately convey what they are experiencing emotionally at this moment....

4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

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

~ Joseph had the spiritual insight to discern that God had allowed all of these bad things to happen to him for a very definite purpose. Joseph clearly saw God moving in his life. When a Christian sees the hand of God move in his personal life, he doesn't become angry, and he doesn't seek revenge – he seeks to be closer to God! For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth betimes. Well, Joseph gives God the glory for all those things

that have happened. Would you have? COULD you have? All things – ALL things – work together for good to those who love God. Joseph loved God and that is why he is NATURALLY compassionate towards those who despised and hated him. That compassion is iterated in this remarkable, beautiful, stunning statement made by Joseph giving the glory for his troubles to God....

6 For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.

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

8 So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not:

10 And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast:

11 And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.

~ God is still moving in the life of Joseph as Joseph acknowledges ALL of the hurt, tragedy and injustice that has been permitted in his life to be the plan, purpose and providence of none other than, the True and Living God of his fathers. We have also seen the plan of God unfold. There was a long time left to go in the famine and if Joseph wasn't in this position of power there is a good chance Jacob, and his entire family would have died from starvation. Jacob would not have lived through this famine in Palestine, to be sure. Joseph sees all of this now. As we move on, we'll see that Goshen was the very best part of the land in Egypt; and Goshen is the place in

which God is going to establish Israel as a nation. They were brought by God to a place where they were initially sheltered from the rest of the world. Out of the land of Canaan and into this place they shall go; and we saw a long time ago that the family life and the family dynamics, that is, the abject dysfunction thereof, dictated that the Lord get them out of the land of Canaan. So, Joseph is still speaking but the brothers are speechless. They are literally dumbfounded and immobile - completely overcome with paralysis of emotion....

12 And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you.

13 And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.

14 And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.

15 Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

~ When they finally regain their composure, the brothers speak. When the news of what happened finally gets out, one of the servants of Joseph slipped over to Pharaoh's place and immediately filled him in. The steward tells Pharaoh everything and Pharaoh is very happy. If you will consult secular history the Hyksos Kings were on the throne in Egypt and trust was a huge issue for them. I think they were very happy to see Joseph's family because they all knew his family should be people who can be trusted....

16 And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants.

17 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan;

18 And take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land.

19 Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come.

~ Interestingly, a wagon, naturally, implies a wheel. The Egyptians had the wheel at this time, but the Canaanites did not. Technology was very unevenly distributed amongst the nations at the time in which we are studying and was very slow moving across regions. Anyways, Pharaoh really likes Joseph, I'm sure. To have more Joseph's around would be a pleasure and a blessing for any land. Pharaoh tells them to just leave it all behind and come on with just the shirt on their back....

20 Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.

21 And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way.

22 To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment.

23 And to his father he sent after this manner; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way.

24 So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.

25 And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father,

26 And told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not.

27 And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived:

28 And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.

~ Well, we end this leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God by considering one account that my heart personally loves dearly. The drama suits me well. Jacob, however, has plans to make a quick trip to Egypt to see his son but return home when the famine is over. Well, Jacob is going to Egypt – but he isn't coming back. The whole clan was transplanted down there, and we will continue to follow along with them in our next report as they are being led by the Hand of God through the life of Joseph – just as you and I are being led by the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ today ~

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