

WHAT GOD DECLARES WILL HAPPEN

Genesis 41: 53 – 42: 5 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

It is wonderful to know that God takes the time in His holy Word to give us word pictures and life pictures of Himself. Joseph is a life picture of Jesus, a picture we call a striking and beautiful type of Christ, our only Lord and Savior. Seven outstanding events in Joseph's life almost photographically, foreshadowed similar events in the life of our Savior: Here they are: (1) **Joseph was especially loved by his father, as was the Lord Jesus.** Compare Genesis 37:3 with Matthew 3:17; John 3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 17:24. (2) **Joseph was hated and sold by his brothers, as was our Lord Jesus Christ.** Compare Genesis 37: 4 with Luke 19: 14 and John 1: 11, 15: 25. (3) **Joseph was unjustly condemned, as was our Lord Jesus.** Compare Genesis 39: 19-20 with Luke 23: 41. (4) **Joseph was raised to a position of great power and authority as was our Lord Jesus.** Compare Genesis 41: 41-45 with Acts 5: 31 and Philippians 2: 9. (5) **Joseph became a blessing to the Gentiles and took a Gentile Bride.** Compare Genesis 41: 41-45 with Acts 15: 14 and Revelation 21: 9. (6) **Joseph revealed His identity to His brothers and so will the Lord Jesus Christ.** Compare Genesis 45: 1-15 with Zechariah 12: 10. (7) **Joseph assured his brothers of His unchanging love for them, and so does the Lord Jesus to us.** Compare Genesis 45: 15 with Ephesians 2: 7.

This Joseph story is so full of truth when we stop to study it, that we are almost confined to only short passages of the Word to try to convey what God is trying to teach us. In our 10-verse text today, there are many inferred lessons that stand out, that stood out to me. I ask you all today to ask God to take you into this amazing life of Joseph with me. And as you begin to put yourself in this story when Joseph was 38, 21 years after he was sold into Egypt, what are the uncanny thoughts that strike you as you read this text? These uncanny thoughts are suggested in the way God reveals the Joseph story. Let's examine three of these remarkable questions and their answers as we see Jacob sending Joseph's ten old brothers to Egypt to buy grain. What are these three questions and answers? Notice these three questions and answers show to us afresh, "What God declares will happen."

WHO'S THE GO TO PERSON WHEN LIFE GETS TOUGH? IT'S THE ONE WHO HAS BEEN KICKED AROUND THE MOST. (I.)

Notice Genesis 41: 55, "When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh, for bread. Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph. What he says to you, do." Last week we reflected on the thought, "Life is hard, but God is good." God is forever capitalizing on the difficult preparation that He gives us in life to insure us that "He knows the way that we take and when He has tried us, we will come forth

as gold.” (Job 23: 10) Why does God allow us to get kicked around? Let me suggest to you that He knows that building persistence in us, pays off rich dividends. What does God know will happen if He allows us to be kicked around a bit and we learn to endure it? Let me suggest He knows 5 things. (1) **When our faith becomes persistent, it isn’t shaken by storms of adversity.** God allowed Joseph to endure tears, homesickness, sorrow, distresses until Joseph became a resilient saint. (2) **When our faith becomes persistent, it cannot be spoiled by success or prosperity.** It won’t go to our heads. Joseph’s rise to power did not change his dependence upon God. Joseph always gave God the credit and the glory. (3) **When our faith becomes persistent, we are not moved by sudden overt or inward temptations.** Satan is always on the warpath, eager to trip us up as saints of God. He tried over and over, without success with Joseph. (4) **When our faith becomes persistent, we will not give up or be disturbed by false, unjust accusations.** (5) **When our faith becomes persistent, we are not shaken, perturbed nor do we become embittered by broken promises.** Remember the cupbearer forgot Joseph for over two years.

Did you know that even watching animals in nature, we can listen and learn from the animals. This week I learned from a man named Gary Richmond. There’s something curious about the birth of a giraffe. Gary Richmond happened to be at the zoo at just the right moment to witness a strange and amazing interaction between a mother giraffe and her newborn. Gary was standing next to the animal keeper, Jack Badal, and he was filled with a lot of questions. There was the mother giraffe, standing while giving birth. The calf’s hooves and head were already visible. “When is she going to lie down?” Gary asked Jack. “She won’t,” he answered. “But that’s a ten foot drop to the ground! Isn’t anyone going to catch the calf?” “Try catching it if you want,” Jack responded, “but its mother has enough strength in her hind legs to kick your head off.” Soon the calf was dropped, really hurled, and it landed hard on his back. The infant giraffe laid where it fell, almost motionless. Less than a minute passed and the mother kicked her baby. She booted this little one hard enough to send it sprawling head over hooves. “Why’d she do that?” Gary asked. Jack Badal, the zookeeper said, “She wants it to get up,” The newborn giraffe knew what his mother wanted and haltingly struggled to rise. But after a few feeble tries, it gave up, sinking back to the ground. Boom! A second hearty kick from the mother rolled the baby giraffe over several more times. The calf again tried to prop itself up again on its God-given stilts. Finally, it managed an upright stance. Gary Richmond marveled at what he was beholding, charmed by the sight of this fledgling giraffe finally standing. “Boom!” It happened all over again. Jack Badal, didn’t wait for the question. He simply explained, “She wants it to remember how it got up. In the wild, if it doesn’t quickly follow the herd,

predators would pick it off." How many of us have something in common with that baby giraffe? How many of us have felt like we've been kicked off our feet over and over, when we were looking only for affirmation and kindness? Have you been carrying on your life, working your plan, your head above water, and then boom?

When we open up the Joseph story in Genesis 37, it doesn't take long and boom, and again it happened in Potiphar's house, boom, and again in prison, boom--the cupbearer forgot Joseph. Who kicked Joseph down? His own brothers. Who kicked him down time # 2? It was his trusting boss, Potiphar. Who kicked him down a third time? It was the cupbearer whose dream came true and he promised to remember Joseph. Somehow, Joseph managed to avoid the very thing that had consumed his brothers—kicked down, he avoided the emotional stronghold of bitterness. Have you avoided that stronghold, or are you bitter today? Joseph faced trauma of many different kinds, and the very high-jacking of his dreams without becoming bitter. Have you been side-swiped by kicks, beloved? Have you kept believing God. Then watch out—you are soon going to be eligible to become the go to person for others who are getting kicked around. And just like God has comforted you when you have been kicked when you are down, II Cor. 1: 3-5 tells us you will be able to comfort others who are getting kicked around just like you have been. Beloved, what God declares will happen. Who's the last person on earth these 10 brothers of Joseph would want to meet, who's the last person they would have ever dreamed would be the "go-to" man to help them in the time of famine? God would soon show them the man they had chosen to kick around—Joseph himself. Secondly,

WHAT'S THE LAST THING WE WANT TO DO WHEN OUR LIVES GET OUT OF CONTROL? IT'S THE THING THAT REMIND US OF WHAT WE HAVE TRIED TO FORGET. (II.)

Notice Genesis 42: 1-2. "When Joseph learned that there was grain for sale in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?" And he said, "Behold, I have heard that there is grain for sale in Egypt. Go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live and not die." Try putting yourself in the shoes of the 10 older brothers of Joseph. What do they most want to forget? They most wanted to forget their selling their own brother into slavery in Egypt. They had watched their daddy mourn the death of Joseph, and who knew—maybe he was dead by then. But look at this phrase, "Why do you look at one another?" Literally, why do you keep staring at each other? Why indeed did these brothers hesitate to talk about the problem of the famine and why did none of them offer to go to Egypt to purchase food? Was the reason because it was 250-300 miles across the blazing desert—on the Gaza Road down, down, down to Egypt—for them, it would take a minimum of six weeks? Was the reason

because of the problem that they might not get a friendly reception as foreigners? Was it that they were not anticipating the possibility of even one of them being arrested or enslaved like their brother Joseph had been? If that happened, who would care for their wives and children and who would care for their aged father Jacob? Those thoughts may have played into the brothers staring at each other.

But let's get serious! What's on the minds of these ten brothers? I can't tell you for sure, but I believe I do know. What has them at their wits end? Even the thought of Egypt was a smiting of their desensitized consciences. Twenty-one years have gone by and these 10 brothers must have had an unwritten-law, against any of them ever making any mention of Egypt. It was verboten, as forbidden as crossing the Bamboo, Iron, or Nile Curtain. But they had heard that Egypt had grain, and it reminded them of the memory now being raised back up in their minds of them selling their innocent brother, Joseph, into slavery in Egypt. It must have haunted them. When our consciences are guilty, just the mention of a name or of a scene, or of our own refusal to obey a command or prompting of the Lord—it all comes back, with a vengeance. I can remember speaking to a spouse, years ago, about taking back their estranged spouse. Had the spouse been a crocodile, I would have been swallowed alive. This spouse roared like a lion at me with “No!”

Conscience has a way of unburying our sins and digging up the past and rousing up doubts and fears and anger within us. What must Jacob have thought as his own sons treated the idea of going to Egypt like trying to avoid being cast into the lion's den? If just the thought of Egypt had anything to do with their listlessness and their inactivity, just staring each other down, it must remind us of how dangerous sin is—the memory of past transgressions that have the uncomfortable habit of resurfacing and springing up at the most unexpected moments. Pastor James Huffman tells the story of a little girl in London who held up her broken wrist and said, “Look, Mommy, my hand is bent the wrong way!” There were no tears in her eyes. She felt no pain whatever. That was when she was four years old. When she was six, her parents noticed that she was walking with a limp. Their doctor discovered that the girl had a fractured thigh. Still she felt no pain. The girl is 15 years old now. She is careful but occasionally she looks at blisters or burns on her hands. She thinks, “How did this happen?” She is insensitive to pain! Medical specialists are baffled by her rare situation called **ganglioneuropathy**. **Ganglioneuropathy** is a two-dollar word describing the medical name for a rare condition that renders a person desensitized to touch and physical sensation, and therefore incapable of feeling pain. That might appear to be a boon when a migraine is tearing the inside of your head out, or an abscess has ruptured deep beneath one of your molars, but what about when you trip over, and you realize

that there is a shattered bone sticking out of your wrist, or the smell of burning flesh is the only thing that alerts you to fact that your hand is resting on the hot-plate of a stove. Doctors don't know what to do with ganlieuropathy. Did you know that each of us, like Joseph's brothers, can have spiritual ganglineuropathy of our souls? Did you know each of us can grow insensitive or insensible to sin? Haven't we all watched what sin can do? We can be bruised, beaten, burned, tortured, or whipped, and then we can drink or drug ourselves into a pitiful stupor. Yet both saved and unsaved people, ignoring their screaming consciences, unaware of the God--hating sins around them, and uncaring that their own sins are killing them. Eliphaz correctly told Job in Job 15: 16 that "we all can drink injustice or iniquity like water?" Our righteousness we are told is as filthy rags—Isaiah 64: 6. What God declares will happen! We will have to face up to our sins sooner or later. We will have to be reminded of when we told God or another person that we would not receive a word from the Lord or when we were confronted by a scripture and we simply roared out our "No!" What God declares will happen. Thirdly,

WHAT'S THE GREATEST FEAR WE HAVE WHEN LIFE GETS DESPERATE FOR US? IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT WHAT HAS ALREADY HAPPENED ONCE MIGHT HAPPEN AGAIN. (III.) Notice

Genesis 42: 3-5. "So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with his brothers, for he feared that harm might happen to him. Thus the sons of Israel came to buy among the others who came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan." Here are the 10 brothers, sent against their will by their father to the land they are chagrined, and remiss to want to go to. And be sure, Jacob didn't trust his older sons. He knew what happened before when he sent his beloved son Joseph to see how they were doing. The leader of the Abraham, Isaac and Jacob tribe of Israel would send them all, but never Benjamin. Was Jacob suspicious of the older brothers also being jealous of their youngest brother, the only remaining son of Jacob's most beloved and deceased wife, Rachel? What fears were in Jacob's mind as he sent 10, but not 11 sons down to Egypt? We know what Jacob didn't know, was that the Almighty sovereign God was making sure the ten guilty sons of Jacob go down to Egypt to fulfill God's dream to Joseph. In the fulfilling of a divine purpose, God can use a famine, (Genesis 41) a kidnapping (II Kings 5: 2-3—Naaman's capture of a servant girl in the land of Egypt, a royal beauty contest—I just read the 10 chapters of Esther this week on Thursday, a sudden death, the death of Ezekiel's spouse—Ezekiel 24: 15ff., a dream—remember Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel 2. God can use a locust plague—Joel 1, a sickness—Hezekiah's-Isaiah 38, a government census—for our Lord Jesus' birth—Luke 2: 1-7. Don't put it past the Lord. The psalmist said in Psalm 115: 3—"Our God is in the heavens; He does all that He pleases."

What fears were on the minds of these 10 brothers? Soon these brothers of Joseph would speak in Hebrew in Joseph's presence, not knowing he spoke Hebrew too? When God deals with our guilty consciences, he will surface what He desires. The brothers said to one another in Genesis 42: 21-22, "They said to one another, "In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he begged us and we did not listen. That is why this distress has come upon us." And Reuben answered them, "Did I not tell you not to sin against the boy? But you did not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood." Jacob thought in fear, he might lose his second son of Rachel--Benjamin. The 10 brothers of Joseph feared they might have to stand trial before God for their sin, and we all must stand before God for every unconfessed sin—even every idle or careless word we speak. (Matthew 12: 36) What God declares will happen. Romans 14: 10-12 is clear: "Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God." So then each of us will give an account of himself to God."

No matter what Joseph's fears may have been, his trial of faith was over. Now as the 10 brothers trudge down to get grain in Egypt, with pricked consciences that had been desensitized, but not totally hardened, the trial of the 10 brothers is just about to get underway. The Spirit of God is now at work in each of their hearts. These patriarchs were sinful men, but sons of Jacob who knew God. Before they could be made full partakers of the blessing of Joseph, they too would have to pass through the fire. The one whom God appointed as their minister of grace to keep them alive, was now to be for a short time, the instrument of their trials. Notice that this trial of the 10 brothers was going to be (1) **a trial of their conscience.** Soon to be face to face with a man they believed to be a heathen Prime Minister of Egypt, they will be forced to admit facts, in remembrance of their brother whom they sold into Egypt. In the telling of these facts, all their fears surfaced, and smote them with inward reproach, rebuke, as they stood in a foreign land—guilty as charged in their spirits before God. The trial was going to be (2) **a trial of their hearts.** Soon they would be forced to leave Simeon in Egypt, to go back to their father, with a demand to bring Benjamin down and their hearts broke as they thought of his coming anguish and they also remembered Joseph's cries in the pit. The trial would also be (3) **a trial of faith.** They would soon realize in some mysterious way, God was dealing with them, and their faith would be mingled with deep fear. But in the trial ahead, God led these sinful brothers into peace as He will lead us.