

## Joseph 1 - Mission Vision

As we move on to the rest of the book of Genesis, we are going to be looking at how God worked in the life of Joseph. Although it will be through the tribe of his brother Judah that the line of kings will descend to provide the King of kings, Joseph and his descendants will be blessed because of him amongst all the sons of Jacob. Although God has His gracious plan of redemption that He will unroll according to His purpose, there are many who are blessed according to their Godly character. Joseph was just such a man who God blessed and used for His glory. Very quickly we are introduced to what his character was like and how he fit into God's mission for the children of Israel.

### 1. Hope deferred -

God was going to use Joseph, but he was not ready yet — he and his mission were not yet ready for prime time. Joseph was immature, the family of Joseph was not ready, and Egypt was not ready for receiving them. From Abraham to Isaac and now down to Jacob, we see that, at best, they were strangers in the land of Canaan.

Genesis 37:1 And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

God's mission for Israel to take the Promised Land had been in an infant form for over 150 years at this point. It is in this context that we continue and meet Joseph. God's plan for the promise originally made to Abraham is still not ready to be fulfilled yet. God had originally revealed to him that it was going to take quite a while before his line would be able to take the Promised Land and *why*. The Amorites were dominant in the land of Canaan but they were not ready to be taken over because the Bible says that the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full.

Genesis 15:13-16 And he said

unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

<sup>14</sup>And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

<sup>15</sup>And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

<sup>16</sup>But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

Israel would have to go down into Egypt where they were kept in incubation, figuratively speaking, in the region of Goshen. Even after 400 years of captivity in Egypt where they grew and multiplied, they were *still* not ready to take the land over completely. Before going in to conquer the land under Joshua, they were told that it was going to take a while.

Deu 7:14,16-18,21-23 Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle.

...

16And thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that *will be* a snare unto thee.

17If thou shalt say in thine heart, These nations *are* more than I; how can I dispossess them?

18Thou shalt not be afraid of them: *but* shalt well remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt;

...

21Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the LORD thy God *is* among you, a mighty God and terrible.

22And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee

by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee.

23But the LORD thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed.

We get the idea that long time periods were more easily endured (for example Jacob was in his 70s when Joseph was born), but still being a stranger in the land for 150 years at this point where we are in Genesis could possibly make someone ask like a kid in the car for more than 20 minutes, "Are we there yet?"

Prov 13:12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but *when* the desire cometh, *it is* a tree of life.

After 150 years and still a stranger, with more than 400 years to go...How is it possible to keep lasting and staying on track? It is God's mission that carries one through. Joseph's life will be a testimony of one man able to carry *his* part of the mission. His story is the first one I want to share about someone having to wait and go through God's timing, not their own, as they face the problems of life. It will take Joseph 17 years to finally begin to see the fruit of his patience, but his sense of mission is what is going to carry him through.

## 2. Joseph: a man on a mission -

The first thing we want to notice is about Joseph's sense of mission. He is a young man who has a sense of responsibility about mission.

- Joseph distinguished himself early in his life.

Gen 37:2-38 These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his

brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.

- Joseph's father had big plans for him.

<sup>3</sup>Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.

<sup>4</sup>And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

- God had big plans for Joseph.

<sup>5</sup>And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

<sup>6</sup>And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:

<sup>7</sup>For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.

<sup>8</sup>And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

<sup>9</sup>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.

<sup>10</sup>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?

<sup>11</sup>And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

God revealed through a dream His plans for Joseph. But, you can also see here Joseph's youthful immaturity in the way he shared this with his brothers.

- Joseph's brothers had big plans for him

Joseph's brothers had big plans for Joseph, except they were not the same as Joseph's, their father's, or God's. There will always be opposition to God's plans, and also for anyone who plans at all. Someone by virtue of years of experience might be able to make quicker decisions, but *their* plans were fleshly and reactionary. Such plans are short-sighted, ill-conceived, and without vision.

<sup>12</sup>And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.

<sup>13</sup>And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I.

<sup>14</sup>And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

<sup>15</sup>And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou?

<sup>16</sup>And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks.

<sup>17</sup>And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

<sup>18</sup>And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.

<sup>19</sup>And they said one to another,

Behold, this dreamer cometh.

<sup>20</sup>Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

<sup>21</sup>And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.

<sup>22</sup>And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

<sup>23</sup>And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him;

<sup>24</sup>And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.

<sup>25</sup>And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.

<sup>26</sup>And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?

<sup>27</sup>Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content.

<sup>28</sup>Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

### 3. The power of a mission -

At the stage of Joseph's life in Genesis 37, his sense of mission is not proved out yet. It is only an *initial*

revelation. His sense of mission will prove to be real as he meets the demands of life. As you watch those demands play out, you can see how having a firm grip on your mission will pull you through the tough times. Even if you don't have a clear definition of your mission (which Joseph did have), being mission *minded* will help. Determining your goal saves a lot of lost time waiting for success to come by chance. There are plenty of Biblical examples.

- Joseph will demonstrate this in Potiphar's house, while in prison, in service to Pharaoh, and ultimately with his family.
- Moses was able to outlast Pharaoh, temptations by his own people, and travels for 40 years toward one goal
- Daniel stayed on mission through the administration of several kings and was blessed to see the ultimate end of all time.
- Nehemiah was repeatedly tempted to get off mission but foiled his detractors and rebuilt the city in record time.

Biblical heroes were able to be testimonies to us today because they stayed on mission.

We can see this borne out even in every day life. Consider a high school football player working towards the goal...

- Although some people are cheering him, a bunch of others are booing him, he keeps pushing for the goal.
- The alternate quarterback's mother is calling for his replacement, but he keeps pushing for the goal.
- People hit him, push him down, grab at him, but he gets back up and pushes toward the goal.
- He gets hurt and taken out, yet he wants to get back in and push for the goal
- Some big ugly guy crouching down in a line against him,

saying mean things, but he pushes toward the goal.

- His own teammates might make jokes about him, yet he pushes toward the goal.
- He loses miserably, but the next week he gets back in and pushes toward the goal.
- He faces a losing season, he comes back next year and still pushes toward the goal.

And all the while he grows, gets stronger, and gets better.

When you are...

- students for life, never finding yourself
- changing careers
- changing partners
- bad times

....identifying your mission will get you on track and pull you through.

- The believer at the start of his Christian life as floundering in carnality and has to develop spiritually.

1Cor 3:1-2 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto **carnal**, even as unto babes in Christ.

<sup>2</sup>I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

The only mission for the carnal Christian is to survive.

Matt 16:24-26 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

<sup>25</sup>For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

<sup>26</sup>For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for



his soul?

Ps 49:6-8 They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;

<sup>7</sup>None *of them* can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:

<sup>8</sup>(For the redemption of their soul *is* precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)

Eccl 2:22-24 For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun?

<sup>23</sup>For all his days *are* sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity.

<sup>24</sup>*There is* nothing better for a man, *than* that he should eat and drink, and *that* he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it *was* from the hand of God.

- As he responds to God, he opens himself up to direction of the Holy Spirit.

John 16:12-15 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

<sup>13</sup>Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

<sup>14</sup>He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

<sup>15</sup>All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

Instead of trying to take *more* control to feel more secure in life, we *yield* control over to God.

- At some point, life is determined

by the mission we are on for Christ.

Philippians 3:13-14 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

<sup>14</sup>I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Have a mission philosophy. A mission philosophy contains a mission statement and basic principles for carrying out that mission. The mission statement is clear and was clarified by Jesus shortly before He was to ascend back to heaven (even though He is with us spiritually always).

Matt 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

This mission was meant to be carried out as a church. There are actually a number of basic principles that can come into play for carrying out our *personal* mission. There is one guiding principle that Jesus gave that we can always fall back on: The Law of Love.

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Paul echoes this in Romans 13 and 12:

Rom 13:8-10 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

9For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

10Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

Rom 12:9-21 *Let* love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

10*Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

11Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

12Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

13Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

14Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

15Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

16*Be* of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

17Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

18If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

19Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written,

Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay,  
saith the Lord.

20Therefore if thine enemy  
hunger, feed him; if he thirst,  
give him drink: for in so doing  
thou shalt heap coals of fire on  
his head.

21Be not overcome of evil, but  
overcome evil with good.

I often like to describe our mindset as one working on our assignments as they are carried past us on a conveyor belt. We do our work on them and let them pass on to the next person. Our job brings an improvement, but we are content to do what our piece of the work is. As we maintain a servant mentality, we find joy in doing our part to bring someone an inch closer to fulfilling their mission. Joseph had that loving servant mentality, which is proved out when he gets to the end of his mission where he demonstrates that love unequivocally to his brethren. His mission in God's work is fulfilled and along the way it kept him on track with all those he came into contact with.

The first challenge that someone should have is to make sure that God's mission has first been carried out *for you*. Make sure that you have surrendered to God and accepted Jesus as your Savior. Then find your place on the team that is working together to carry out that mission. Understand the mission of the church and your place in it. Where do you fit and what is your function? What is your mindset? What are you doing to contribute to God's mission physically and spiritually?

1. Hope deferred - Genesis 37:1, Deu 7:14,16-18,21-23, Prov 13:12
2. Joseph: a man on a mission - Gen 37:2-38
3. The power of a mission - 1Cor 3:1-2, Matt 16:24-26, Ps 49:6-8, Eccl 2:22-24, Matt 28:18-20, John 13:34-35, Rom 13:8-10, Rom 12:9-21