

Reading: Genesis 45:1-28.

Theme: What a shock!

This chapter has been a thrilling and exciting chapter - well to me at least. We can enter so readily the situation we have had described for us. If it were a film, then no doubt the music, the close-up shots, the flashbacks to the past would all be included to convey the joy, the fear, the amazement and the emotion contained here in this episode of Joseph's life. The Bible so readily gives us the clear narrative for us to look at and apply to our lives. We have seen a number of things in this chapter: 1. The Dreadful Fright the brothers had. 2. The Great Delight they soon knew. 3. The Living Aright that was required of them. Yet the story would be incomplete if they simply rode off into the sunset, leaving Joseph and his greatness behind and then returned to terrible life-threatening poverty. There are two further things to look at:

4. The Providential Might.

Joseph had everything he wanted - power, wealth, food, possessions, a wife and children. Amazingly for a politician, he had maintained the respect and favour of Pharaoh and Egyptians over the past 9 years, but he was not high-minded or indifferent to his father, brothers and their families to dismiss them with just enough to get by on. Joseph, as the governor of Egypt, was the most powerful in the land apart from Pharaoh and was prepared to use his might to provide for Jacob, his sons and their families. Joseph was well aware of his position in the land (v8 & 9). In his authority he decrees his care for his father and all the family. He promises three great things to Jacob - we mentioned last time, but they're worth noting again in the context not of only the good news the brothers had to tell, but also from the standpoint of Joseph's authority. Joseph promised

a. Security (v10) - he promised them the land of Goshen, to live there, to provide for all their needs; **b. His own presence** is promised - *"thou shalt be near unto me"* AV (v10); **c. To care for their families** (v10b & 11).

Here was the mighty governor of Egypt, probably the most powerful man in the known world and he gives these promises. This is not a vague hope, or fanciful speculation, but were cast-iron promises, promises that were there to be accepted, to be anticipated, for they were guaranteed by who Joseph was and the authority and the might that he had.

What a lovely picture of this son who sought to honour his father, even though in human terms he had risen in rank and power far above his father, far above any expectation. Children, young or old, are still required to support and honour their parents to the utmost of their abilities. There were no excuses from Joseph - *"Well I have not known him for 22 years, he's changed, I've changed, we have our own way of life!"* Here is Joseph loving and honouring his father.

Joseph had made great promises, but he was not the greatest in the land. Pharaoh was the greatest. Yes Joseph had great authority given him by Pharaoh, but when this was done, Pharaoh said (41:40) *"Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you"*. Joseph was as a father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt, but Pharaoh was still Pharaoh.

The servants outside the room must have wondered what was going on. Then someone twigs, guesses, perhaps are told - only about the identity of the brothers, not the unsavoury business -

as total forgiveness excluded that. Although they didn't have e-mails, or mobile phones, or walkie-talkie radios, news of this soon reached Pharaoh and the palace. All the Royal watchers, gossip columnists of the day would have been excited over adding to the story of the decade.

Pharaoh and the court officials were pleased with the news and Pharaoh is in harmony with Joseph, shows his generosity and kindness in the commands he gives - v17 & 18 *“Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Do this: Load your animals and return to the land of Canaan, and bring your father and your families back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you can enjoy the fat of the land.’”* He goes beyond Joseph's commands - orders carts to be sent to bring back Jacob and the family in Canaan (v19) and even tells them not to bother about their belongings, for the best of Egypt was theirs to choose from as theirs (v20). Here is the lovely sight of the most powerful rulers in Egypt being in harmony, with all their might and power, making provision for Joseph's family to deliver them from the famine.

Let's just pause for a while and step out from this story of Joseph. Let's go back to eternity before time existed, when there was nothing at all except the eternal God - the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If we were able to observe them for billions of years, we would detect no unease, no unhappiness and no deficiency in the Godhead. The members of the Godhead have perfect happiness and enjoyment One with the other - being independent from anything that is created. God doesn't need any created thing or being to increase or maintain His happiness. Yet in His wisdom He made, created things - spiritual and material - the angels, the universe, this world, all the animal and plant

life, He also made men and women. In His love and wisdom, He knew what was going to occur in Eden - that Adam and Eve would sin and yet amazingly He not only allowed it, but before anything was made, He had made a plan to rescue men and women, boys and girls for time and eternity.

I hope you've followed the big step I have made so far; I'll tell you why I did so. Some people picture God the Father as the stick waving and angry God and Jesus as the One who set out to pacify Him and so it appears that God is pacified almost unwillingly, grudgingly by what Jesus did. This is not so. The Triune God was totally involved in Creation and also in the plan of salvation. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are in absolute harmony, have been so since eternity past, are so at the moment and will be in eternity to come. There has always been a perfect unity, harmony, enjoyment of one another, even in the roles they fulfilled in Creation and within salvation.

That said we need to realise that there came a point in time when God the Father, God the Holy Spirit withdrew from God the Son. When He was deserted, not only deserted and away from the felt enjoyment of the presence and company of the other two members of the Godhead, but at that moment we are told (Is 53:10) *"Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief;"* (ESV) God the Father crushed the Son by raining down blow after blow upon the Son the sword of His justice and punishment. The Son cried out after 3 hours of this *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*

Here the Father and Son seem pitted against one another, but it was not so, for they were both in harmony. Both working to the same blueprint and plan established in eternity past; both

achieving the same ends - our security, having His presence, us knowing His care in our lives, His making provision for us so that we would never be destitute and come to eternal poverty.

The harmonious providential might of God was securing for us salvation. There was a reason for that forsaking of the Son by the Father. It was because upon Him was laid the iniquity, the wrong, the sin of us all. There is no way and no other place for sin, my sin, your sin to be dealt with. Sin demands a legal penalty and penal judgement from the God it offends and holiness it is against. One sin is an infinite offence to the infinite holy, holy, holy God. Our wrong may or may not be serious against others, may or may not hurt and scar, but in heaven's sight it stinks and is infinitely offensive. Until we see that, until we realise we cannot excuse it, or remove it; we are not facing the reality of an offended holy God. We need to realise that on the cross the Lord Jesus took that sin and took its punishment, so that God can legally, justly and freely pardon **all** who trust in the Lord Jesus as their own Saviour, **but only those who do so.**

When the gospel message is proclaimed, it isn't just Jesus standing by and offering forgiveness, it is also God the Father, God the Holy Spirit, and along with them all the angels, all the believers in heaven seem to cry out. "Come and drink of this life-giving water". Almost the last verse of the Bible (*the 5th from last*) says *"The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life."*

We are to see the Father, Son and Holy Spirit working together - in Jesus' earthly life He always did and said everything the

Father wanted; the Holy Spirit reveals the Lord Jesus savingly to those and only those the Father and Son require Him to do so. Jesus in John 17:10 prays for all believers, including us and says (AV) *"all mine are thine, and thine are mine;"*

The harmony of Pharaoh and Joseph in their providential might for Jacob and his family, is a very inadequate, inferior picture of the purpose and harmony of the Triune God in His sovereign providential might in history, in time, for those whom God will save and call to Himself, will care for as He knows is best - not always an easy, prosperous, healthy life, but one that will be best for us as He knows is best.

One day He will bring us safely to heaven. Not on carts or donkeys, but He will bring us home to heaven, glory, where we will know, as never before, true security, His presence, love and care in abundance. When we consider Christianity, the gospel, we are not to think of it in limited terms; even just in terms of love and forgiveness alone, but see the whole power of the Triune God at work and then marvel at the love and forgiveness in this light.

Yet all this time Jacob still at home in Canaan, waiting for the boys to come home when they do, he has:

5. The Amazing Light.

Picture Jacob for a moment, he sees these carts, these donkeys approaching and then he realises it is his sons - he sees Simeon and thinks *"Great"*, then he sees Benjamin and his heart rejoices. Yes, all 11 aback, but the family reunion doesn't get started; wives and children are almost ignored. *"Dad, sit down have we got news for you!" "Well yes, I can see so much. How*

did you do it, how did it come about? It is really good to see you. Tell me more of..." "Dad be quiet! Joseph is still alive! In fact he is ruler of all Egypt!" (v26)

Jacob was in such a shocking, an amazingly bright light! He could not take it in, it overwhelmed him and he was stunned, his heart fainted within him, he did not believe them (v26). He eventually revives and realises it is true and so he determined to go and see Joseph before he dies.

Has there ever been a time when something of the amazing light of the gospel has stunned us? Have we ever been suddenly overwhelmed for the first time, even perhaps after many years as a Christian, it has hit us again that it really was *"the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me"*? We are told in the gospel, truths and things that we could not dream of unless they were told us by God in His word. We often speak of *"amazing grace"*, of *"love is so amazing, so divine"*, we can sing with gusto – *And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood? Died He for me who caused His pain? For me, who Him to death pursued? Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God shouldst die for me?*

Such a sense of amazement should always be in our hearts and lives, but the reality of such needs to be experienced in our lives i.e. we need to have trusted the Lord Jesus as our Saviour and not just be overawed by Him. We need to have the attitude of Jacob *"I am convinced... I will go and see him"*(v28) – for us it will be by faith now before we die, but when we die then we will see Him clearer, as He is - in all His glory and we will be like Him! Do we possess this sure and certain hope of eternal

life because we have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus?

If we do, we have seen the great light, not because we worked it out or up, nor because we did good works to deserve it, but because He in His sovereign might and love has opened our eyes and hearts to see such. If you are not sure of your relationship with Him, then call on Him to open your eyes to see your need of Him, to see your awful state even if you do many good deeds with sincere hearts and motives.

It may not be a great blinding light, like Paul, or a great earthquake, earthmoving experience like the Philippian jailer, but the Lord may open your heart quietly like Lydia. I urge you to seek Him. He has never turned away or disappointed true seekers after Him. Then you will know **a. Security** - He promises you heaven forever to live there, to provide for all your needs then and now. **b. His own presence is promised** - then and now. **c. To care for you** - then and now. No one is the loser in trusting the Lord Jesus as their Saviour but they gain much more than they could ever dream of or imagine and the Triune God is determined to do this for such ones as you and me – that is an amazing and yet delightful shock, but we are to make sure we do not miss out on such an amazing honour.