



DATE: March 1, 2009

TEXT: Genesis 45:1-15

TITLE: "Genesis XXVIII: The Working of the Lord"

We are wrapping up our study of Joseph and our study of Genesis. I believe next week will be our last sermon in this series. Today we are reaching the climax of the story of Joseph. I will be sharing two lesson this morning. We are going to see God's hand as he works in the lives of His children. I want to see two particular men and how God has dealt in their lives.

Lesson # 1 See the working of the Lord in the brother Judah. Again, remember this account of Joseph was written almost 400 years after the death of Joseph. It was written by Moses as he was leading his people through the wilderness for 40 years. Moses had a purpose in writing this book. He not only was trying to preserve oral tradition.... he was sending a message to the Israelites who were wandering with him in the wilderness. One message that would become very important was the role of the tribe of Judah in the history of Israel.

Up to the 43rd chapter of Genesis Judah is pictured as a sinful brother. He is the 4th son of Jacob with Leah as a mother. He was the son who suggested that Joseph be sold as a slave

rather than being killed. Was this a selfish move or a move to save his brother's life? We do not know. After this incident, Judah moved away from his family and entered Canaanite society. He married a Canaanite woman and seemed to be headed in a direction away from the family. But suddenly in chapter 42 he was with the band of brothers traveling to Egypt to buy food. Upon returning to his father... it was Judah who assumed leadership after Reuben, the oldest brother failed. Judah said this to his father in *Genesis 43:8*

Then Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the boy along with me and we will go at once, so that we and you and our children may live and not die. 9 I myself will guarantee his safety; you can hold me personally responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him here before you, I will bear the blame before you all my life.

Later, as we saw last week, Benjamin was arrested Joseph threatened to enslave him. It was Judah who insisted that all the brothers return to Joseph and Judah who was the spokesman for the group. He concludes his plea for the Benjamin with these words.....

Now then, please let your servant remain here as my lord's slave in place of the boy, and let the boy return with his brothers. 34 How can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? No! Do not let me see the misery that would come upon my father."

Finally Judah was willing to take the place of his brother. Unlike 17 years before when he suggested slavery for Joseph... he was willing to become a slave to save his brother. The circle

is completed. Let me share one more word about Judah in the book of Genesis. Chapter 49 of Genesis, the second from last chapter, tells of Jacob blessing his sons. It takes place 17 years after Jacob leads his family to Egypt. Let me read this final blessing of Jacob to Judah...

8 "Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you. 9 You are a lion's cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness—who dares to rouse him? 10 The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.

Judah, and his descendants, would be the ruler. His descendants will rule the nation and they will rule the world. Jacob did not understand this when he uttered these words. Moses did not understand this when he was writing. But we know this was a prophecy. The tribe of Judah became the source of rule for all eternity. Do you remember that after Joshua conquered the promise land the 11 tribes divided up the land. (The tribe of Levi became the priestly tribe). But eventually the nation split and became two nations. Ten tribes joined the northern nation named Israel and the two southern tribes joined a southern nation named Judah. The two southern tribes were the tribes of Judah and the tribes of Benjamin. An alliance apparently was formed in Genesis that lasted for over 1000 years. Soon Israel was conquered and disappeared and all that

was left was the nation of Judah... the tribes of Judah and Benjamin

But this isn't the end of this prophecy. 900 years after the beginning of this Divided Kingdom, the tribe of Judah would produce another leader. This mans name was Jesus. The genealogies in Matthew and Luke are there for a purpose. They point out to us the wonderful plan of God... beginning in the book of Genesis and continuing today. The "rulers staff" was given to Judah... and for all eternity it will never be taken away.

I remind you of a fact I stated at the beginning of our study. The purpose of Genesis is to point us to Jesus Christ. The purpose of all of history is to point us to Jesus Christ. From the mouth of Jacob is the prediction of Jesus Christ. And it is not over. The prophecy is still not totally fulfilled. But it will be. Let me read from *Revelation 5*

4I (John) wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. 5Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals." 6Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders.

I hope you are saying "amen" in your head.... I was as I was writing this. Jacob called Judah the 'lions cub,' John calls Jesus Christ the "Lion of Judah"... who is also the lamb who

was slain.. And he will open up the seals that will bring about his return to earth as the triumphant King. Amen and Amen and Amen.

Lesson # 2 God has a plan and a purpose... not only for all of history... but for his children in that history. We are now to the climax of Joseph's story. Finally, Joseph reveals himself.

What is the reaction of the brothers? Fear and terror. They had thrown him into a cistern. They had sold him as a slave. Surely he would kill or enslave them. But then Joseph utters these magnificent words in *Genesis 45*

And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you..... But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8 "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt.

Allow me to finish this thought with the final words of Joseph recorded in the book of Genesis. 17 years after these events Jacob dies. Once again the brothers are frightened. Maybe Joseph was good to them because of his father.... would he now retaliate for their mistreatment. Joseph says these words... his last recorded words....

His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said. 19 But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? 20 You

intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives

Here is the truth of the book of Genesis... God has a plan and a purpose for your life. God is sovereign... God is omnipotent.... and God is love. All three of these truth are critically important to our lives.

My wife will tell you one of the favorite things I like to do is plan trips. My wife and I have never taken a preset tour or a preset cruise... because for me ½ the fun is the planning. I remember the first big trip I planned for Kim and myself. Kim went into the AAA store in New Castle the day they first opened. She signed for a grand opening drawing. Low and behold she won. The prize was free airfare to anyplace in the USA. At that time our finances were very, very tight... so we could go anywhere but we did not know if we could afford to sleep anywhere. But we decided to scrape up enough money to take a trip to the Canadian Rockies. We would fly into Spokane, rent a car and drive to Canada. We were excited. I took hours planing the trip. We had about 25 to 30 dollars per day for food and lodging. We stayed in some wonderful hotels... they did not have bathrooms in the room... but there was always one down the hall. I

planned day after day. Banff for two days..... Johnson Canyon for a day. Jasper for a day... a train trip to Edmonton to see a huge mall. Perfectly planned trip... until we arrived in Spokane and Kim's suitcase did not arrive and would not arrive until the next day. What would we do? We were suppose to be 100's of miles away. We had reservations at a wonderful, nice cheap hotel just over the Canadian border. I had a solution. We would abandon Kim's clothes and pick them up on the way home. Here is an amazing fact. Kim agreed. We went to a local K-mart... bought a new pair of tennis shoes... bought a pair of shorts and a couple changes of clothes and off we went. We had a plan. We had a purpose.

The amazing truth is this. God has a plan for our lives. He knows when we are born and he know when we are to die. At times we lose our luggage in God's plan. Usually the lose of our luggage is our own fault. We make decisions that are harmful to us. We chose a path that is not the will of God. The truth is this... when humanity chooses a path away from God terrible consequences are the result. Sin is awful and sin hurts, ...it hurts ourselves and others.

I think of the terrible story that has dominated our news for the past week. It is awful. It

is not what God would desire. Bad for women who was killed... bad for the baby boy... bad for the 11 year old boy... bad for the families... bad for everyone. But let me say this... even this tragedy can be made to fit into the will of God. Hear me clearly.. This was not what God desires... this was a result of sin and evil. But even this can be used by God for good.

God used the enslavement of Joseph for 13 years for good..... good for himself and good for his ancestors. Would the enslavement been God's first choice to get him to Egypt. Maybe not... but maybe it was necessary to teach Joseph and to teach Jacob and to teach Judah to truly trust God... but God used it for good. *Romans 8:28 says...*

28And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Does that mean God has a purpose and a plan for our lives? Yes. Even in the tragic and difficult events? Yes. God is Sovereign.... God is omnipotent.. And God is love. He has a plan and a design for you life. Trust Him! Even in the difficult times... trust him! The Good may not occur until after we die... But that is a short time compared to eternity. Trust him! Trust his love... trust His plan. The plan for the world... and the plan for our life began in Genesis and

continues to today.

AMEN