



Genesis 49-50

"And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father." (Gen.49:1-2). Jacob is now one hundred and forty-seven years old and he realizes that he is dying. In those days, it was a customary practice to summon the family together when one senses death is near.

The twelve sons of Jacob gathered around him that he might prophecy over them, as he looked into the future of the various tribes and saw those things that would happen to them.

In verse two, he begins a poem. In the Hebrew, poetry is not in rhyme form as it is in English; but, is in thought form and in the repetition of words. So, the contrast of Israel the father to the sons of Jacob comprise the poetry in the first two verses and the words "listen" and "hear" comprise poetry. I really don't understand that kind of poetry, but that comprises poetry in the minds of the ancient Hebrews.

Now his sons are gathered around the bed, and Jacob is almost blind at this point. He musters all of his strength, in order, that he might sit upon the side of the bed.

Looking around the room at his twelve sons he, first of all, fastens his gaze upon Reuben, the eldest, the first born of Leah.

"Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power." (Gen.49:3). This was a common phrase for the firstborn son.

"Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it; he went up to my couch." (Gen.49:4). The potential was there, the birthright should have fallen to him; but, his problem was instability.

James tells us, in the New Testament, concerning the double minded man, "For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." (James1:7-8). The lack of excelling because of instability.

When Reuben sinned in going to Bilhah, the concubine of Jacob, nothing was said to him or against him at that time; however, it stuck in Jacob's mind and now, he calls attention to it and deals with it. "Because you went up to your father's bed; you defiled it." It's as though he first of all, addresses Reuben and then as though he is talking to himself. "I can't believe he went up to my couch!" Jacob tells Reuben why he does not get the birthright, it was the defiling of his fathers bed.

Incidentally the tribe of Reuben never did excel. There was not a single leader who came from the tribe of Reuben. It was a nothing tribe. They settled on the East banks of the Jordan River, where the land was rich for pasture, and didn't claim any inheritance within the land.

"Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united; for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall." (Gen.49:5-6). Jacob is saying that he doesn't want to be associated with them because they were cruel and without honor.

"Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel; I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." (Gen.49:7).

When they came into the land there was no inheritance for the tribe of Levi, but they were given cities throughout the entire land, so Levi was scattered in the land. Simeon settled in the area, to the south of Judah, which today is the area of Beersheba. The tribe of Simeon never, again, produced leadership. The tribe of Levi produced Moses and Aaron and their descendants and God chose the Levites for the priesthood.

This was certainly a demonstration of the grace of God. It wasn't because of the righteousness of the fathers, that this tribe was chosen for priesthood, but God's sovereign grace.

Now coming to Judah, it seems that he is passing on to Judah the blessing. "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee." (Gen.49:8). The name Judah means, "praise".

"Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up; he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes; His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk." (Gen.49:9-12).

This is a beautiful prophecy concerning Judah. This is the tribe that the brothers will praise. This did not happen for several hundred years, until David ascended the throne; then Judah became a dominant tribe and remained dominant, especially in the southern kingdom.

Shiloh is related to the Hebrew word shalom, "peace". The Prophecy is that from Judah the Messiah was to come and the tribe of Judah would be the ruling body until the Messiah came.

It is interesting that about the year six AD, the Roman government took from the nation of Israel the right of capitol punishment. Remember when they brought Jesus to Pilate, and Pilate said, "You have your law, go ahead and judge Him by your law." They said, "It is not lawful for us to put a man to death," signifying that the sentence that they wanted for Jesus was death. They could not condemn a man to death, for that power had been stripped by the Roman government about six AD

When that power was stripped from them, many went mourning through the streets; because, they thought that God's word had failed. Little did they know that in Nazareth, the Messiah, a lad at that time, was growing up. They were mourning in sack cloth and ashes, feeling that the promises of God and the word of God had failed.

In 70 AD, the scepter was taken and there was no longer a lawgiver which means that the Messiah had to come some time before 70 AD or, indeed, the word of God did fail. If Jesus is not the promised Messiah of Israel, there is none. There is to be none, because here God's word plainly declares that the scepter will not depart from Judah nor a lawgiver from between his feet until the Messiah, the Shiloh, the peace has come.

"...Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be," and that, of course, is a prophecy that was repeated by Isaiah in the 9th chapter when he says, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." (Isa.9:6-7).

Jacob speaks a phrase from Isaiah here in reference to Jesus, "...Until Shiloh come," or until our Prince of Peace comes.

In the latter portion of this prophecy, Jacob seems to quote from Isaiah's prophecy, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment." It speaks of the second coming of Jesus after the great tribulation period.

"Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border

shall be unto Zidon." (Gen.49:13). Zebulun settled in the northern part of the land which today is called the Galilee region.

"Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens; And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute." (Gen.49:14-15). He is going to be a lazy fellow. Issachar inherited the area that is known as the valley of Megeddo. That is, probably, some of the most fertile area in the land and they didn't have to do much work. Throw out your seed and it just grew. He became prosperous and lazy. That area is called the breadbasket of Israel and produces, even to the present day, an abundance of beautiful crops. It is in the area of Mt. Gilboa.

Next, Jacob fixes his eyes on Dan. This is probably the order in which they are standing around his room. Dan was born to Bilhah, who was the maiden of Rachel, and his name means "to judge." "Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD." (Gen.49:16-18).

"I have waited for your salvation, O LORD," seems to be thrown in without any reference to Dan. It is sort of a little after thought. The word salvation in Hebrew, as used here, is "Yeshua." Literally, Jacob said, "I have waited for Yeshua or Jesus." The tribe of Dan introduced idolatry to the children of Israel. In the later years, when there was a division of the kingdom, Jeroboam set up one of the golden calves in Dan. Next in order is Gad, one of Zilpah's sons. "Gad, a troop shall overcome him; but he shall overcome at the last." (Gen.49:19). The name Gad means "troop." A troop shall tramp upon him, meaning his land was most vulnerable to the invaders to the east.

"Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties." (Gen.49:20). Asher's descendants will be bakers and provide the land with rich bread and cookies.

"Naphtali is a hind let loose; he giveth goodly words." (Gen.49:21). The tribe of Naphtali will be the poets and speech makers.

"Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall." (Gen.49:22).

Joseph, Rachel's first born, the son that Jacob loved and had established, in his mind, as the heir. He claimed the two sons of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, as his own; thereby, giving Joseph the double portion. He talks about Joseph being a fruitful bough by a well and his branches running over a wall. Psalm One is an equivalent kind of a phrase, "...He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Ps.1:3). Here is a tree planted by a well, it's roots go down and draw from the subterranean water source and thus is a tree that is green and a tree that produces abundantly.

Joseph, a tree that is loaded with fruit. This could refer to the opulent style of life that he enjoyed as second in Egypt, only, under the Pharaoh. He had his own physicians, and we know from the text that he had them embalm his father. He, no doubt, had multitudes of servants and lived in a very grand style and thus, he is called a fruitful bough, his life bearing an abundance of fruit. "...Whose branches run over the wall," could mean that he doesn't hoard it all to himself. He is willing to share what God has blessed him with. Others also can partake of the benefit and purpose of God. If He has blessed your life, it is because he wants you to share those blessings with others.

"The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him." (Gen.49:23).

"But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel;)." (Gen.49:24). Though he was prospered abundantly, though he had the great wealth of Egypt at his fingertips, he had gone through some really heavy trials. Life was not always easy for Joseph. The archers had sorely grieved him. He had experienced a lot of grief in having them plot together to kill him. The grief of being sold by his brothers as a

slave. The grief of being falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, of rape, and spending years in prison because of the false charges. There was a deep hatred in the brothers hearts concerning Joseph. It says that they hated him and when he told the dreams that he had, they hated him all the more. Hatred so great that they actually conspired to kill him, then opted later to just sell him as a slave. Many arrows had gone his way; but, his bough remained in strength. That is, he did not retaliate though it was in his power to do so.

So many times when I am shot at, I want revenge. I want to get even. Who did that? I just start shooting at anything that is moving. It is part of our nature to desire to get even. It takes great strength not to get even, when it is in your capacity to do so. Joseph doesn't try to get even, his bough abides in strength. He could have destroyed those that sought to destroy him, but he didn't. The secret of that strength was the arms of his hands were made strong by Almighty God.

God was the one that was the restraining power in Joseph's life. He is a restraining power in our lives and is able to help us if we have that habit of just sort of flying off in a fit of temper. You can know the power of God. He will hold the arms of your hands so that you will not strike back.

"From thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel." God in the figure of a shepherd, something that becomes quite common as we move through the scriptures. This is the first direct reference to God as a shepherd. In chapter forty-eight, verse fifteen, Jacob declares that God had fed him all the days of his life. The word "fed," as used in that passage is translated "shepherd," from the Hebrew word "ra'ah," and could also be translated, "the God who has shepherded me."

This is possibly the first reference to shepherd, but, it's translated the God who has fed me, the God who has tended me and is equivalent to the Greek word tend. Jesus said to Peter, "Tend my sheep or shepherd my sheep." God is the shepherd.

Then the stone and this is the first reference to God as the "rock" or God as a "stone." Through the Psalms, this symbolism for God is used over and over. The Lord is "my rock" or "my strong defense." Even in the Song of Moses, Deuteronomy thirty-two, "their rock is not as our rock" and many other references to God as a rock in the Song of Moses. The rock was a symbol of strength, the symbol of protection. "Hide me in the rock that is higher than I." The place of defense, the place of protection, the place of safety and that is what God becomes to us.

There was a special symbolism of the "rock" according to the book of Daniel. There is that classic dream of Nebuchadnezzar seeing the progressive kingdoms that would rule over the world. When he came to the ten toes which are ten kings, and during the reign of these ten kings he saw a rock, out of the mountain, not cut with hands. It hit the great image in the feet so that the whole image crumbled and the rock grew into a mountain that covered the world. In Daniel's interpretation of the dream, that "rock" was the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to establish God's reign over the earth.

The "rock" for the children of Israel, when they were in the wilderness and were perishing because of thirst gave them water. They came to Moses and they said to Moses, "You've brought us out here to die, we and our children are dying of thirst." Moses said, "Who am I that I can give you water?" He went in before the Lord and said, "Lord, they are out there complaining, they need water. "God said, "Take your rod and strike the rock and water will come forth. "Moses went out and he took his rod and smote the rock and the water came flowing forth and the people drank and they were saved. In Corinthians Paul said, "There was that "rock" with them in the wilderness and that "rock" was Jesus."

He is the rock from which the water of life flows. The "rock" that was smitten for our sins; but, in the smiting of Christ the water of life flows to us today; thus, in the New Testament there is the beautiful invitation for all who are thirsty to come drink. Jesus gives the final invitation of the book of Revelation saying, "...And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev.22:17b). Jesus said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink and if you will drink of the water that I give out of your innermost being there will flow rivers of living water." When the people came a second time to Moses asking for water, after they had been in the wilderness for forty years, Moses was fed

up with their complaining. Moses went in before God and said, "God I can't take it, I have had it." God told Moses to speak to the "rock" and it would give forth water; but Moses was angry with the people and he struck the "rock." This was the reason that Moses was not allowed to enter "the promise land." He failed to represent God in the right way at the waters of Meribah. Once the "rock" was smitten, it didn't need to be smitten the second time. Jesus suffered once and for all. He was that "rock" and Moses destroyed the beautiful symbolism that God was setting up. All you need to do to receive the water of life is to speak to the rock. Come to Jesus and ask and you will receive the water of life freely. Moses paid heavily for that little outburst for he let his arrows fly. He did not hold his bow in strength.

"Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb." (Gen.49:25). Many blessings were to come upon Joseph. Those blessings of heaven, the rain that shall come down; blessings of the water that lies beneath, referring to the well of water; and the blessings of the breasts and of the womb or the multiplying of the tribe. Ephraim and Manasseh became large tribes and Ephraim became a dominant tribe.

"The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." (Gen.49:26). All of these blessings that God has bestowed on me, they are going to be bestowed now upon Joseph. God as a shepherd is related to the fruitful bough concept. The obligation of the shepherd really was that of providing good pasture for the sheep, so that the sheep might grow and be strong. The ability to be strong in the face of the temptation to take revenge. God's a stone, the rock, He is my defense. I don't need to defend myself. He will defend me. We see here the beautiful blessings that Jacob pronounces upon Joseph, the crown of the head of him who was separate, the word is Nazarite in Hebrew, from which later came the Nazarite vow, which was the vow of separation or consecration unto God.

Now, it is interesting that when he gets to Benjamin, although another favorite of Jacob, doesn't receive much of a blessing.

"Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil." (Gen.49:27). Not much for Benjamin is there? The tribe of Benjamin produced the tough fellows. History tells how fierce the Benjamites were in battle. The first king of Israel, Saul, came from the tribe of Benjamin. There were a group of Benjamites who fought with David and they were skillful with the sling. They could split a hair at a hundred yards.

"All these are the twelve tribes of Israel; and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them. And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite." (Gen.49:28-29).

In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a burying place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah." (Gen.49:30-31).

The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth. And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people." (Gen.49:32-33).

Historically, we have already covered more than half the time from Adam to Christ. His death was about 2,255 years after Adam, the creation of Adam. That means we have only 1,600 years or so left until the coming of Christ. In the book of Genesis we cover more than half of the history of the Old Testament as far as chronology is concerned. It is all compressed into the book of Genesis. From Exodus through to Malachi we will be covering the other 1,600 hundred years.

"And Joseph fell upon his father's face and wept upon him, and kissed him." (Gen.50:1).

On the way to Egypt, Jacob had stopped at Beersheba and offered a sacrifice to God. He had prayed and asked if it was God's will that he go down to Egypt. God appeared to him in a night vision and told him to go and that Joseph would be at his side when he died.

"And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father; and the physicians embalmed Israel. And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of those which are embalmed; and the Egyptians mourned for him threescore and ten days." (Gen.50:2-3).

The art of embalming which the Egyptians had developed was a tremendous skill and even today, we do not know how they were able to embalm the bodies to preserve them as they did. It wasn't an easy process, and it took forty days to do the embalming. Not everyone was embalmed, only the very prominent such as, the Pharaohs. If the cave of Machpelah was accessible today, it would be fascinating to explore it and try to find Jacob's mummy. The others buried there such as Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah and Leah would, by now, be dust; but, Jacob's body is probably still preserved being embalmed after the manner of the Egyptians. The Pharaoh's bodies are still preserved, mummified bodies, and so you would probably be able to find Jacob and possibly Joseph because he was embalmed too.

"And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh saying, My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die; in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again." (Gen.50:4-5).

Pharaoh might have been fearful that they would all leave. Joseph had proved to be very valuable to Pharaoh and thus the Pharaoh would be reluctant to see him move back to the land of Canaan at this point. It is interesting that Joseph doesn't go to the Pharaoh himself; instead, he goes to those in the Pharaoh's household.

"And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear. And Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt. And all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house; only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen. (Gen.50:6-7).

Ephraim and Manasseh were in their twenties now and Joseph was fifty-six when Jacob died.

"And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen; and it was a very great company. And they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation; and he made a mourning for his father seven days." (Gen.50:9-10).

They went past the Red Sea, over to the Eastern side of the Dead Sea, and up on the Eastern side of the Dead Sea until they came to the Jordan River. This was about the same route that their fathers will take later, under Joshua. They crossed the Jordan River and then made their way to Hebron where the cave of Machpelah was and there they buried Jacob.

They came to Atad, which is actually on the other side of the Jordan in the area that today is called Jordan; but, it was the area of Moab at that time. They came to the threshing floor of Atad, where they mourned with a great and solemn lamentation for seven days.

"And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians; wherefore the name of it was called Abel-mizraim, which is beyond Jordan." (Gen.50:11).

"And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them. For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a burying place of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre." (Gen.50:12-13).

"And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father." (Gen.50:14).

"And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him." (Gen.50:15).

Joseph was seventeen years old when they sold him as a slave and now he is fifty-six years old. Thirty-nine years his brothers have been suffering with guilt feelings for what they did.

"And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil; and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him." (Gen.50:16-17).

"And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not; for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not; I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them." (Gen.50:18-21). In the New Testament we read, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay sayeth the Lord." Judgment belongs to God.

Your intentions were bad, but God used your bad intentions to work His good. Often we find God reversing things. A person does things with wrong motives, but God is able still to use it for His glory. Don't be afraid, I am not in the place of God. I am not going to try and take vengeance against you. I know you intended evil for me, but God intended good.

The interesting thing is that even though God intended good, Joseph went through several years of real suffering and real testing before the good came out. Our problem is waiting upon God, waiting for the full cycle. The seven years or so that Joseph was serving in the house of Potiphar as a slave, we would have been plotting how to run away. The three years or more that he was in jail, we would have been planning an escape. We don't like to wait on God. We don't like this part of the story. We want to jump into the last chapter where they lived happily ever after. We don't want to go through all of the drama and the hardship and the trials getting to the good place. We want the goodies now, but yet, the purposes of God are not always accomplished immediately in our lives. It was years before Joseph could actually see what God had intended, the purpose and the plan of God. **Often times in our own lives it is years before we see the real purpose of God for some of the hardships we have endured and the grief we have experienced.** During this time, we find ourselves complaining against God. Why?

So often God doesn't tell us why, He just says, "Wait on Me child." We get upset when God says, "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, wait, I say on the Lord." Don't tell me that, tell me what you are doing. When is this thing going to change? When are we going to get a turn for the better? When are we going to see the reasons and the purposes for these things? I want to know, I want to know now! I don't want to wait. And yet, I have to wait.

Now, the tragedy is that so many times people jump out of the fire and strike out on their own. God hasn't responded and we've prayed for two whole weeks and nothing has happened. Obviously God isn't working and doesn't plan to work in this situation; so, we take things into our own hands. That is our problem. God doesn't always work His processes out in two weeks, but sometimes it takes years.

In Hebrews the writer said, **"And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise." (Heb.6:15).** Wait! The only way I can wait is to have that faith in God that He is in control and that He is working. I don't know what He is doing. I don't know what His plan is, but I have committed my ways unto the Lord. I have committed my life to Him and **it looks to me like it is the end, but it is all in God's hands and God is in control.** A couple of weeks ago an arsonist started a fire in the Santa Paula area. That fire swept through our avocado grove and burned 80% of the trees. It will be at least two years before we will be

able to have avocado's on those trees again, which means that we will lose about \$900,000.00 worth of avocados in the next two years. Whose avocados are they? The LORD's. Whose grove is it? The LORD's. If He wants to burn up His avocados that's His business, but I can hardly wait for the next chapter. I would like to know what God has in mind. Now I don't know what twists and turns are yet in the path. All I know is when I get to the last chapter they live happily ever after. One day I'm going to enter into God's glorious eternal kingdom and He is preparing me for that day. The tests, trials and hardships that I go through now are only preparation time for that day when I shall be with Him. He shall be revealing unto me the exceeding richness of His love and mercy towards me through Christ Jesus, My Lord.

I keep my eyes on the goal, upon the future, upon the end of the story; for, God has given us a beautiful insight into the end of the story. I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever, that is how the story ends. Whatever I have to go through to get there, I know that He is in control, because, all the way He is leading me in the path of righteousness for His name sake. He is leading my life. There is not a turn, there is not a twist in the path but what He isn't there leading me.

Joseph could see the plan and the hand of God through the whole thing and he wasn't about to take vengeance. This was what God had ordained and planned.

When Jesus comes again and the blindness is removed from the nation of Israel, they will see him whom they have pierced and realize that Jesus was their Messiah. They will mourn for Him and say, "What are the meaning of these wounds in your hands?" Jesus will say, "I know you intended it for evil but God meant it for good. It was necessary that I die that the world might be saved. Now don't be afraid, I will provide for you." He is going to take them in and wash and cleanse them, forgive them, and pour His grace upon His people.

Tragically, many people have taken the position that the Jews were to blame for the crucifixion and have sought to bring recriminations against them. No! No! You have got to see beyond that. It was all part of God's plan. When Pilate said to Jesus, "Don't you know I have power to put you to death?" He said, "You don't have any power but what God has given you." My Father has given the power. Jesus said, "I have the power, no man takes my life from me. I lay my life down", it is all with the purpose and plan of God.

"And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house; and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years. And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation; the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees." (Gen.50:22-23). He had the privilege of bouncing his great-grandchildren on his knees playing with them, and watching them grow. Oh how blessed he was.

"And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die; and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt." (Gen.50:24-26).

He had mentioned, God's going to get you out of this place, you are going to be delivered. That deliverance wasn't going to take place for another three hundred years, but, when you leave, take these bones with you.

This act of faith was enough to get him into the hall of fame. There is a hall of fame for the believers, those of faith in Hebrews, chapter eleven. It states, "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones." (Heb.11:22).

Joseph had faith in the promises of God. God had promised the land to Abraham and Joseph believed that God would take them back to the land. I want to be buried in the land of promise.

That's tremendous. All of Joseph's wealth and possessions were there in Egypt, but his heart was in the land of promise. Where is your heart? Is it in the land of promise? I hope so.