

God meant it for Good

Genesis 50:20

We have read a key verse in one of the most beautiful and compelling accounts in all of Scripture. The life of Joseph is a story of betrayal, suffering, grace, and ultimate salvation through the matchless provision of God. Joseph's story begins in Chapter thirty-seven, and continues through the remainder of Genesis.

One reason so many love the account of Joseph's life is due to the fact that he is a beautiful Old Testament type or picture of Christ. There are many parallels in the life of Joseph and the life Jesus would live as He came to provide atonement for our sin and reconcile us to God.

Another reason Joseph's account resonates with so many is because most can relate to his struggles. While our lives may not face the extremes that Joseph's did, we all find comfort in God's faithfulness to Joseph through what appeared a hopeless and dreadful situation. The life of Joseph is an Old Testament precursor to the statement Paul would make thousands of years later that continues to comfort and guide our lives: [Rom.8:28 – And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.](#)

As we discuss the [aspects](#) of Joseph's life that prompted our text verse, I want to consider the thought: [God meant it for Good.](#)

I. Joseph endured Suffering – As one reads the account of Joseph's life, beginning in Genesis 37, it is evident that he endured a lot of suffering as a young man. (Time will not permit us to read the entire account of his life, but I hope to reference some of the most difficult struggles he faced.) Speaking to his brothers, after years of separation, Joseph declared – [But as for you, ye thought evil against me.](#) This reveals the suffering he had endured. We know that:

A. He was Attacked – The Bible reveals that Joseph was favored by his father. At the time of his birth, Jacob already had ten sons born unto him. Joseph was the eleventh son born to Jacob. Clearly, Joseph was favored by his father, as evidenced by the coat of many colors Jacob made for Joseph. God's hand was upon Joseph early in his life, and he possessed great wisdom, having the ability to interpret dreams. His standing with Jacob and the Lord resulted in jealousy among his brothers, and they plotted to kill Joseph. Reuben convinced the others to spare Joseph's life, and the decision was made to sell him into slavery. Joseph was sold into slavery and taken to Egypt, separated from his home and family, all at the hands of his brothers.

- Most can relate to Joseph's life in regard to the attacks he faced, at least in part. While we may not have been sold into slavery by our own family, we all have face unwarranted attacks and mistreatment by those we loved and trusted. Life presents its share of adversity.

B. He was Accused – Once in Egypt, Joseph was purchased by Potiphar, captain of the guard of Pharaoh's army. Joseph soon found favor in Potiphar's eyes, and he was asked to manage the house and possessions of Potiphar. Things appeared to be looking up for Joseph, even though he was a slave, but his new-found prosperity would not last. Potiphar's wife desired Joseph, and when he refused her advances, she falsely accused Joseph and he was cast into prison.

- Surely, we too can relate to such accusation being brought against us falsely. While these accusations may not have resulted in us being imprisoned, we have endured times when others attacked our character, or falsely accused us. These situations are difficult to endure, especially when we know they are without merit.

C. He was Abandoned – Miraculously, Joseph again finds favor with the keeper of the prison. Although he is imprisoned for a crime he had not committed, God continued to show favor to Joseph, elevating him among his peers. While in prison, he met two men who were servants of Pharaoh – the butler and the baker. These men had experienced troubling dreams, and Joseph interpreted their dreams. The butler would be restored to his position within the house of Pharaoh, but the baker would be executed for his crimes. Hearing of his good fortune, the butler promised to remember Joseph when he was restored, but he quickly forgot Joseph, abandoning his promise. Joseph would have to spend two more long years in prison.

- Joseph may have been abandoned by his brothers years earlier, and most recently by the butler, but God had not abandoned him. We too may be betrayed and abandoned by friends, family, or acquaintances, but God will never forsake or leave us!

II. Joseph recognized Sovereignty – *But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good.* Through all Joseph had endured, he recognized the sovereign hand of God upon his life. While it may have appeared at times that hope was lost, God was working behind the scenes to preserve Joseph's life and use him in a miraculous way. Joseph enjoyed:

A. God's Protection – While his brothers' hatred for Joseph drove them to extreme measures, God protected him against their attacks. Potiphar's wife made false accusations, and yet God protected Joseph from punishment that would have taken his life. Through everything Joseph

endured, God was there protecting and preserving his life. We too can rest in the sovereign hand of God, protected from the attack of the enemy. I do not know what we may face in this life, but believers are secure within the hand of our Lord. **John 10:28-29 – And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. [29] My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.** He is our shield and fortress against the assaults of the enemy.

B. God's Provision – As Joseph faced being sold into slavery, falsely accused, and imprisoned, it may have appeared that God had abandoned him, but in fact, God was always near, making provision for Joseph. God providentially moved Reuben to spare Joseph's life; He gave Joseph favor in the eyes of Potiphar, and then in favor with the keeper of the prison. Behind the scenes, God was always in control, orchestrating events for the good of Joseph. His accommodations may have been less than desirable at times, but God was faithful to provide for Joseph.

- Our lives will present situations we had not expected, and likely would rather avoid, but even in the midst of our struggles, we can rest in the provision of God. We can't see what God is doing, but we know He is working for the good of those who love Him. Our lives are not lived by chance, nor are they dictated by circumstance; we are kept in the providential hand of God.

C. Joseph's Promotion – No doubt there were times when Joseph wondered if he would ever be released from prison. Likely he questioned why all of this had befallen him, and yet Joseph remained committed to God. He served the Lord in the midst of great adversity, trusting God when he had no idea what God was doing or how his circumstances would unfold. Eventually, after two long years in prison, following the butler's release, Pharaoh had a dream that couldn't be interpreted by any of his advisors or magicians. The butler, maybe seeking personal advantage, remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh about him. Joseph was able to interpret Pharaoh's dream, and he was promoted to Prime Minister of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh.

- We can't always see what God is doing, but we can rest knowing His perfect will is always accomplished. In His time, and according to His will, God will move in our situation and place us where He desires us to be. You may be struggling in a prison of doubt and despair at the moment, but God has a plan for your life. Remain faithful in the valleys of life, and in His time, God will bring you out, using you according to His plan!

III. Joseph received Salvation – **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.** Joseph, nor his brothers, had any idea what God was doing, but He used Joseph's situation to provide salvation. God provided:

A. Physically – The interpretation of Pharaoh’s dream revealed a great famine would come upon the land. God gave Joseph wisdom to store up provisions in the abundant years to last throughout the famine. God brought Jacob, and his family to Egypt during the famine, saving their lives from starvation. Through all of his suffering, God spared the life of Joseph.

- The life we now live, we live by the good hand of God and according to His favor and blessing. Many may choose to deny it, but the breath we breathe, and the lives we live are provided by God. We are here today because the Lord allowed us another day to live. He daily meets our needs and provides for our lives.

B. Providentially – Joseph and his family likely failed to see the enormity of this situation. God had called Joseph’s great-grandfather, Abraham, out of a life of idolatry, promising to create a great nation through which all nations of the earth would be blessed. God used their time in Egypt to preserve their faith, separated from the idolatry of Egypt in the land of Goshen, and allowing them to prosper physically, becoming a great nation. All of this was done to preserve the people through which Christ would come. Had Jacob and all his family perished in Canaan due to the famine, Christ would not have been born. God sent Joseph to Egypt, not by accident, but through His providential plan to secure the people through which Christ would come to provide salvation for all men. God used Joseph’s suffering to save many people alive – both physically and spiritually.

- I am thankful for the suffering of Joseph, which was providentially used to save the people through which our Savior would come. God preserved His people, and kept His promise. Christ was born of the lineage of Abraham through David, lived a perfect life to die on the cross as the perfect atoning sacrifice for sin. Thousands of years prior to Christ’s birth, God was orchestrating events that would lead to His coming as Savior and Redeemer.
- We often tend to question God’s purpose in our lives. Why does He allow certain events? Why do we face particular situations? We must rest in the providence of God, knowing we are secure within His hand and He is directing our lives according to His purpose. He will use our struggles to strengthen our faith and accomplish His will for our lives.

Conclusion: Maybe, you like Joseph, are dealing with a difficult situation in life. You may be wondering why this has come upon you. If so, rest knowing the Lord has a plan, and He is working in your life according to that plan. We may never see all that God is doing, but we know His is just, faithful, and righteous. Trust His grace when you are unsure of the path you travel. If you are yet unsaved, I trust you have understood all God did through the ages of time to provide a Savior for you. Christ provided for your salvation. Receive His gift of grace through repentance and faith!