Providence Working Through Suffering

Genesis 37

INTRO: Joseph’s story is God working through everyday events to accomplish His purposes

- Shows how Israel gets down to Egypt in fulfillment of prophecy (Gen. 15:13-14)

- It was God who sent Joseph to Egypt (Gen. 45:7-8; 50:20)

- through hatred and rejection of Joseph, Father’s favoritism, and Dreams

God working in it all

1. Introduction of Jacob’s Family (1-2a)
   1. Lived in Canaan – land of his father
   2. Esau left for Seir
   3. Left Jacob ownership of father’s estate
   4. Toledoth – “these are the generations” (v.2)
      1. The 9th toledoth of Genesis
2. Jacob is Hated By His Brothers (2b-11)
   1. Joseph’s Immaturity Bring Hatred (2)
      1. Joseph pastures with his brothers (2)
      2. Notice which brothers
         1. Sons of Bilhah & Zilpah
            1. Already been lot strife in family
            2. Leah -Rachel in conflict
            3. Presume carry over to sons
            4. Jacob didn’t react to Dinah defilment and her brothers defile Shechem – Jacob only cares about himself
            5. Imagine how they felt about “Jacob’s favorite”
         2. The servant wives
         3. Joseph is only son of favorite wife
      3. Joseph brought a bad report (2c)
         1. Could just be tattle-tale
         2. Could be false report
            1. Dibba – always used as untrue report
            2. Here called “evil” or “bad”
   2. Joseph’s Favored Status Brings Hatred (3-4)
      1. Israel love Joseph more than all others
         1. Jacob shouldn’t known better
         2. He suffered under Isaac’s favoritism of Esau
      2. Israel made him a special robe
      3. Brothers hated him
      4. Could not speak peacably to him
         1. Couldn’t stand to be around him
         2. Couldn’t abide his friendly speech
   3. Joseph’s Dreams Bring Hatred (5-11)
      1. Joseph is given a dream of sheaves (5-8)
         1. Interpretation: his brothers will bow to him
         2. They hate him for this dream
            1. Dreams sealed their hatred for him
            2. Seen as arrogant, self-focused – brat - spoiled
      2. Joseph is given a dream of starts (9-11)
         1. Interpretation: his family will bow to him
         2. The Brothers are jealous of him
         3. Jacob rebukes him but thinks on these things (God working?)
      3. God’s hidden hand of providence working in all this
      4. Main character is God working to fulfill His Word
         1. Later Joseph would affirm this
   4. APPLICATION: our life will be tangled with sin, unfairness, tragedy
      1. From our own sin – others sin against us
      2. God’s power always at work to fulfill his plan
      3. Tho no one in this story sees it – God is working
3. Jacob is Victimized By His Brothers (12-28)
   1. Jacob Sent To Check On His Brothers (12-14)
      1. Brothers go to pasture near Shechem (12)
         1. Hebron is 20 miles south of Jerusalem
         2. Shechem is 30 miles north of Jerusalem (5-6 day journey)
      2. Israel sends Jospeh to check on them (13-14)
         1. Shechem a dangerous place – why?
         2. Sensible that Israel wants to check on them
   2. Joseph Found Wandering In a Field (15-17)
      1. An unkown man finds him wandering in a field
      2. He gives him directions to where his brothers are (providence)
      3. He sends him to Dothan
         1. Dothan another 14 miles farther north
   3. Brothers Plot against Joseph (18-22)
      1. They saw him coming from far off (18)
      2. They conspire to kill him (19)
      3. Reuben commands him be thrown in pit not killed (20-22)
         1. His desire is to rescue him later
         2. So that he might regain status with his father
            1. Out to protect himself
            2. Tried to take over – sleep with concubine
            3. Wants to be hero – bring him home
            4. Get back in dad’s favor
   4. Brothers Beat Joseph and Throw Him Into a Pit (23-24)
      1. Stripped him of his precious robe
      2. Throw him into the pit
   5. Brothers Sell Joseph Into Slavery (25-28)
      1. Sit down to eat?
         1. Gen. 42:21 will say they heard his cries to stop
      2. See Ishmaelite traders coming
      3. Judah suggests selling him to traders
      4. Sold him for 20 shekels
   6. Reuben finds Joseph gone from Pit (29)
4. APPLY: where was God – why didn’t God warn him in Shechem?
   1. Why the sudden appearance of the man to give directions?
   2. Why the sudden appearance of the caravan to save him from death
5. Josephs’ Brothers Deceive Jacob (31-35)
   1. They dip his torn robe in blood of goat and take to Jacob
      1. Sons use brothers clothing and goats blood
      2. Jacob had deceived his father with Esau’s clothing and fur of goat
   2. He immediately assumes Joseph dead
   3. Jacob mourns – refuses to be consoled
6. Joseph Finds Himself in Egypt at Potphers House (36)
   1. Now Israel’s human savior is in place
   2. God planned it all
7. APPLY: Life full of unfairness and tragedy
   1. God works in it all to do his will
   2. Life is unfair – hurts – filled with sin and sinners
   3. Wounds are everyday occurance
   4. God is working for his people.