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Let's resume our study now in Genesis chapter 46, where Israel took his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night. Dreams have played an important part in this story, haven't they? Here is another vision of the night, which is another way of saying a dream.

Jacob himself began his career when he left to go up to the household of Laban. When Jacob was leaving the borders of the land of promise and laid his head down on the rock, he had that night vision of the ladder or the stair that ascended to heaven and the angels going up and down upon it. God confirmed the promise to him that he would be with him while he sojourned outside the land and that he would bring him back to the land.

Do you remember that? Here, Jacob is once again about to cross the borders of the land and go outside the land that has been promised to him and to his descendants. And once again, God appears to him in a vision of the night and says, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here I am.

I wonder why he didn't say Israel, Israel. But he says, Jacob. I will not pretend to you that I have fully figured out why this name changes back and forth.

We know the emphasis or the symbolic value of the names. Jacob is Jacob, the man in his humanity and in his failures. And he is on the road making progress in the life of faith.

And Israel is God's name for him having overcome, being an overcomer. And so my guess would be here that when God calls him Jacob, that it is a reminder that he is going to be further refined and completed. Because, of course, suffering is on the way down the road in the land of Egypt.

His descendants, God knows, are going to be in hard bondage. And this is yet another theme of reversal manifestation, if you will, where Jacob is going down for preservation and for blessing and for a reunion with his son Joseph. And yet God knows in the great eternal plan that includes human history and the history of Israel in particular, that this sojourn in Egypt is going to be far longer than they perhaps realize at this point anyway.

But he says, Jacob, Jacob. And he says, Here I am. So he, God, said, I am God, the God of your father.

Do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. Now this, in the light of our later knowledge of what's going to happen, this is quite a remarkable statement, isn't it? God is going to make a great nation out of Jacob outside the land. He's going to make a great nation of Jacob during the 400 years of slavery and hardship

that will follow once the Pharaoh, who knows not Joseph, comes to power.

And they begin to be fearful of the numbers and the prosperity of Jacob's descendants. They're going to enslave them. But God says, I am the God of your father.

Do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. So it is during the sojourn outside the land that he's going to be made great. Jacob has already made the decision to go to Egypt, hasn't he? God, it isn't that he said, Well, I'm too afraid something might change.

And God has to come and convince him. He's already made the decision to go in the same way that he had already made the decision to leave when God confirms to him that he will be with him and bring him back when he's heading north. This time he's heading south out of the land.

And in each case, it is a time for Jacob to develop, to grow, and to learn things. We saw all of the lessons that Jacob learned when he traveled north to Laban's household, about deception and about loyalty and about looking out for oneself by one's own efforts rather than trusting in God. And here God says, I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again.

And Joseph will put his hand on your eyes. This is a euphemism for you will be with him all the way until you pass out of this life. To put the hand on the eyes.

You've seen this in the westerns after the brave individual dies and they go and shut the eyes. This is the reference. He says, you yourself are not going to return to the land before you die.

You're going to be down in Egypt. Joseph, you'll be with Joseph all the way until you die. So he says a lot with just a short phrase.

He is going down to Egypt. What did Jacob think would happen? When did he talk about going down? When the brothers came back and said, we've got to take Benjamin back with us. He said, you will bring down my gray hairs to Sheol.

He thought that if anything went wrong in Egypt, he would be brought down to Sheol, to the grave or the pit. And in fact, he's going down to Egypt, which is going to be salvation. And even in the midst of that salvation, there's going to be the making of the great nation, the fulfillment of God's promise is going to take place during the sojourn in Egypt.

And of course, you can already see a great application here of principle to our situation. We have been united with Christ. We are citizens of the heavenly kingdom.

We are the possessors of all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, it tells us in Ephesians chapter 1. And yet after our salvation, we sojourn outside our land of promise. We are in

this life and it is a day-by-day deliverance. It is a day-by-day salvation.

We are delivered out of this present evil age day-by-day, if we claim that deliverance. And yet the delay in reaching our final destination is for a purpose. It is so that we can be made into a great nation, if you will.

So that we can be reflectors of the glory and the grace of God. This is the perspective that we saw in our scripture reading this morning, isn't it? In Psalm 102. Even in the midst of trial, even in the life of the desert where your skin is sticking to your bones and you're like the owl and you are suffering reproach.

This is going to come on the nation of Israel a hundred years down the road, isn't it? They're going to be in bondage in Egypt. And the things that came to them by way of blessing will be gone. But all things work together for good.

And in our personal existence, our individual lives, the same principle pertains. We are sojourners. We are here on this earth and there are times when being here is the greatest of blessings and we experience the great deliverance that is our heritage because of the work of Jesus Christ.

There are other times when the experience of that seems very far away and it seems as though we are in trial and in testing. And it seems like there are, like the song says, trials dark on every hand and we do not understand the way that God is going to lead us to that blessed promised land. But, as it continues to say, if we do our best when he puts us to the test, we will understand it all better by and by.

And we will see the role that these things have played in preparing us for the future. We know that the millennial kingdom and the eternal kingdom of the Father are not sort of frozen states of bliss. When I was a little boy going to Sunday school and people talked about going to heaven and there were angels and harps and golden streets and pearly gates involved.

And I thought, well, we would be kind of like a mobile. You have seen what they hang sometimes over a baby's crib or people back in the 60s used to hang these up just for decoration. There would be these little sticks with threads and you would have angels with trumpets or other things that would hang, kind of like an indoor wind chime.

And that was my conception of what heaven was going to be. We would just be suspended in a state of bliss, sort of just experiencing the moment for eternity. I did not have any concept of action or activity or progress or any further, because the way it was taught to me, well, we will know everything, what is hidden will be revealed, we will understand everything and God will just infuse us all and we will be perfect, we will be in the greatest state of ecstasy and we will just sort of be... The girls got a thing that looks like an aquarium, that you can put this mermaid and some fish and decorations in and

you fill it with gel and you can stick that in there and you can arrange it the way you want it to look, like an undersea scene and then it just stays that way for weeks.

And I think for a lot of believers, that is sort of what the eternal future is like. God is just going to arrange us in a real happy fashion and we will just be like a snapshot of happy people. That is not the case at all.

You look at the history of the angels in the past, the hints that we have in Isaiah and Ezekiel, the clues that we have there. There has been an ongoing civilization, if you will. There is a society, there is a hierarchy, there are functions that are performed, there are activities, there are changes that take place.

Creatures make decisions that change their relationship to God, either for the better or for the worse. In the angelic civilization, and it is the same in this, the preparation, the learning, the soul transformation that we have the opportunity to experience in this life has a purpose. It isn't just sort of a temporary state of affairs and it doesn't really matter how much progress you make or how much you learn or whether you succeed or fail in the trials of life.

It is all going to kind of even out and everybody is going to be on the great golden street in the sky in the eternal future. That is not the picture that Scripture paints. There are going to be the least and there are going to be the greatest.

There are going to be levels in the human civilization of the eternal future just as there are in the current angelic civilization that exists in eternity. There are going to be functions to perform. Certainly in the millennial kingdom to rule and reign with Christ implies activity, responsibility.

Scripture is replete with references to commerce and trade and worship and activity, rulership, justice, life and death are going to continue in the millennial kingdom. We are being prepared to fulfill roles in that kingdom and not just to accomplish the tasks any more than in this life. We are just here to accomplish tasks.

It is all an opportunity to reflect the glory of God, to learn about God. He is infinite. There is an infinite amount to learn about Him and His character.

He is revealing Himself through the things that He does and it is just going to be a heightened opportunity for knowing and loving the Lord God in the millennial kingdom and in the eternal future. To the extent that we recognize that and seize and lay hold of it in this life, we are going to be prepared to do the same thing in the next life. It is an active life.

I did a study one time of all of the different things that are spoken about the millennial kingdom and the eternal future in terms of activity and what will be taking place and it took pages just to write it all down. Well, we say all of that to say that in the same way

that Jacob is assured by God that when he leaves the land of his heritage, he leaves the land that God has promised him to sojourn in a foreign land, he begins that sojourn in a state of blessing and a state of prosperity in the midst of famine. He is going to have the best of the land of Egypt.

He has reunion with his beloved son and so forth. But God still calls him Jacob and that implies to me at least that there is still going to be the opportunity for progress and for growth and for bringing to maturity this nation that God is going to build outside the land. God will build the nation outside the land and then return them to it in the same way that God is creating a peculiar people for the Lord Jesus Christ.

The church is God's special gift. People who come to faith in this age have been given by God to the Lord Jesus Christ and we are being perfected and completed outside the land, if you will, to be united with Christ and brought to the place of our citizenship in the eternal future. All of this, if we meditate on it, if we remember it day by day, we remember it when we spill something, when we break something, when we have the normal trials and tribulation of life that will help us maintain our objectivity, our perspective, that these things happen for a reason.

There is nothing that comes into our lives that hasn't been foreseen by God. There is nothing that happens in our lives that cannot be used by God if we have the perspective, if we recognize Him and His eternity in the mundane things of life. That's where our forgiveness of one another is going to be rooted and sourced.

That's where our perspective that creates within us hope and that undergirds our faith and that will manifest itself in love toward one another. Why is Joseph able to love his brothers, to fall on their necks weeping and kiss them and give them great blessings and send them back to the land full of provision? It is directly a mark of his forgiveness and his understanding that God has worked these things together for good and it is primarily a message that he sends to his father through his brothers. He sends the ten donkeys laden, the twenty donkeys laden with gifts from Egypt to his father.

And so we see that interrelationship between love for the father and love for one another that we should have ourselves. And that is the ultimate expression of that triad of Christian virtues that we've studied in the past. So, I will surely bring you up again and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes.

And then in verse 5 of chapter 46, Jacob arose from Beersheba and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones and their wives, in the carts which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. They don't have to march down there under their own steam. They have been given provision that is not from their own goods.

Once again, a reminder that we don't accomplish our own salvation, whether you talk about eternal salvation or our daily salvation. It is not the fruit of our own efforts. God

has provided the means to transport us.

And these carts from Pharaoh are mentioned several times and I think that is important to note. Jacob doesn't move himself. When he went north up to Laban, he was on foot carrying himself and he basically had all of his possessions on his back.

Now, he already has a party of 70 that are going with him down to Egypt and the means of transporting them has been provided from the destination. They took their livestock and their goods, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him, his sons and his sons' sons, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt. Notice that there is still no mention made of Leah in all of this, in all of the discussions between the brothers and Joseph.

Dinah has never come up. Leah has never come up. We know that Dinah is certainly alive and a factor in the family.

That was the reason for the massacre at Shechem. Leah is certainly the mother of quite a number of these brothers, Bilhah and Zilpah, but none of the mothers are mentioned. Why is that? It seems like sort of a strange omission.

Only when you count heads and arrive at the total of 70 do you realize that they are in this number, but they are not directly mentioned. And why is that? I think it is to underline and emphasize the symbolic value of these activities, of Jacob, of Joseph, of the brothers, and as you see the foreshadowing and the picturing of the Lord Jesus Christ in delivering His brethren in particular, His role as Messiah, and the fact that they, pictured by the ten brothers, Joseph picturing the Lord Jesus Christ, and alternately, depending on which way you view the story, Jacob and love for Him as the Father to them all. And when the brothers develop the same love for the Father and the same willingness to sacrifice themselves for His sake, as Joseph has, that's what unites them.

And remember, Jesus said, You will not see Me again until you say, Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord. And when they value the Lord, when the nation of Israel values the Lord the way Jesus does, that's when He's going to return. That's when He will be reunited, because they will have the common bond of love for the Father.

And in an alternate view, you see Pharaoh, who is the king outside the land, and whom Joseph represents. In fact, it's quite fascinating to see the language that is used. This actually comes from the lips of Judah.

In verse 18 of chapter 44, Judah came near to Him and said, O my Lord, please let Your servant speak a word in my Lord's hearing, and do not let Your anger burn against Your servant, for You are even like Pharaoh. Literally, this says, You are the likeness of Pharaoh. You are the image of Pharaoh.

And it is a suggestion to us of the relationship between God the Son and God the Father, between Jesus Christ and His humanity, being the fullness of deity in bodily form, being the image of God restored that was lost at the fall. And the language here, you seem to have God the Father bracketing this entire situation. He's represented by Jacob on the one hand, He's represented by Pharaoh on the other.

And in each case, it is a reflection of His image, or it is an expression of love for Him that makes a lot of these things possible. And in each case, it is as though you can't represent God the Father by just one figure. His grace and His generosity is expressed in the actions of Pharaoh as an object of love and loyalty.

He's represented by Jacob. But there is an awful lot to remind us that the people in this story are foreshadowing future things and future concepts. And so then it gives a roster in chapter 46, verse 8. These are the names of the children of Israel, Jacob and all his sons, who went to Egypt.

Reuben was Jacob's firstborn, the sons of Reuben, Hanach, Palu, Hezron, and Carmi, the sons of Simeon, Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman. You get the idea that Simeon... This is a little additional insight on Simeon's character, that he has fathered a son with a Canaanite woman. The sons of Levi, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

This is going to be very important in the later history of Israel when the sons of Levi begin to perform the function of leading worship and being the custodians of the tabernacle and later the temple. The sons of Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. The sons of Judah, Ur, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah.

But Ur and Onan died in the land of Canaan. So we have Shelah, Perez, and Zerah. The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.

The sons of Issachar, Tola, Puvah, Job, and Shimron. The sons of Zebulun, Sered, Elan, and Jalil. The sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan-Aram, with his daughter Dinah.

All the persons, his sons and his daughters, were 33. You'll notice that they are listed separately and listed by name, not only the sons, but the sons of the sons, the grandsons. Why would all of this information be recorded here? Well, keeping in mind that the first recipients of the book of Genesis were the Israelites themselves, Moses set these things down and gave this history as a part of the Pentateuch to Israel.

Everyone in the land, apart from those who came as proselytes or the mixed multitude, but the children of Israel themselves, they are all going to be able to trace their heritage back through one of these sons and grandsons, aren't they? And it personalizes this story. It tells them this. A lot of people know a little bit of their family history.

They may know that some ancestor was in the Civil War, or they may be a daughter of the American Revolution or something. I've been looking up some information about some of my forebears when we took our vacation and went to Hull, Massachusetts, and we're tracing out what happened in the past. Things are always more significant to you when you realize that this is someone that's directly related to you.

And so here, people in Israel, this isn't just a fable. It's not just a fairy story. They say, oh, yes, this is our heritage.

I'm from the line of Hezron or Hamul or Puva or Shemron or one of these individuals. That's the clan within the tribe that I'm from. And so this is an appeal to the people of Israel.

When I say an appeal, I mean it's an opportunity for them to recognize the historicity and also the applicability of these things because God has dealt with them as a nation, as a people, and indeed as families individually and personally. And we can see great foreshadowing of later things here, but what would the Israelites have drawn from this story? What should they have drawn from it? How many times in the history, the later history of Israel, have they had oppression? Have they had hard times? Have they been looking around? You can see it in the Psalms. How long, O Lord, will You leave us in these dire straits? We're downtrodden.

We're overridden. The people's rage and the nation's imagine a vain thing, and we're hemmed in on every side. We're suffering military defeat.

We're oppressed. We're pillaged and plundered and overcome by others. And, of course, all of this is based on the fact that they haven't followed God fully and from the heart, and God told them in the law that this would happen.

But they find themselves in this state, and they think, what can we do? Here in the book of Genesis, you have the story of the brothers who have committed a great wrong, who have sold their brother into slavery and live under the guilt of that. And it's a strong picture of repentance, forgiveness, cleansing, restoration, and the fulfillment of promise. You couldn't ask for a better Bible for people to carry around.

They didn't really have a scroll in every household, did they? They didn't have the opportunity to unroll the Torah and read and study the way we do. What they did have, though, was a great history of oral storytelling. And a great way to remember something is to put it in the form of a story.

When you take these memory courses today, whether it's Evelyn Wood or a lot of these other mega-memory and so forth, one of the techniques that they use to help people memorize information to pass tests or to keep things on file is to weave the information into a story. And to get those unrelated facts to cling together, you can just make up a

story and say, if you need to remember numbers, and I can't think of an example off the top of my head, but if you needed to remember a series of numbers, they say, well, put them in the form of a story. Say there were 76 men who had to go 100 miles in order to pick up 131 barrels of beer.

And by stringing those numbers into a story, later on you can recall, oh, yes, 76 men, 100 miles, 131 barrels of beer. And you remember those numbers because it's a part of a story. Here, the truth of God's grace, God's forgiveness, at the point of repentance, at the point of acknowledgement, where there is a genuine change of heart, God forgives, God cleanses, God restores, God blesses, even though things look dark.

This has been woven into the fabric of the history of Israel. It's their living oral history, their Bible. And when times are tough, when they find themselves in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation as individuals, they can think, you know, Joseph was one of several brothers who were perverse and crooked in their dealings, and yet God preserved him, God protected him, God blessed him, even though he had to go through dark trials, God used him to be the mechanism for blessing.

There's a great deal of truth that the Israelites can cling to and can make application of just if they possess knowledge of this one book. There is so much doctrinal truth that we find flowering out and being illustrated and explained in great detail in the later Word of God that is in incipient form or in seed form in Genesis. You can find virtually every great truth of Scripture, including all of the truth about Christ, in the book of Genesis.

It's such a wonderful, sort of a Reader's Digest condensed version of everything that God has to say to us in the 66 books in this first one. So we have this list of names, we have this list of people, and we also have distinctions being made because they are listed first as being sons of Leah. The sons of Leah are distinguished from the sons of Zilpah and the sons and daughters of Bilhah and Rachel.

So it begins by listing the sons of Leah up through verse 15. Then in verse 16, the sons of Gad, Ziphion, Hagi, Shuni, Esbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli. The sons of Asher, Jimna, Ishuah, Isui, Bariah, and Sarah their sister.

And the sons of Bariah were Heber and Malchiel. And you notice that generally speaking, the daughters and the sisters and so forth don't seem to receive much note because they are not the namesakes of clans and family groups within the tribes. But every once in a while, you find one that is noted and is mentioned because she raises sons who become clan leaders or family group leaders.

And you have to suspect that when one of them is mentioned by name this way, it's because she was a great woman of faith and raised sons who God honored by making them the scion of the family. So these are sons of Zilpah in verse 18, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter. And these she bore to Jacob, sixteen persons.

The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife, were Joseph and Benjamin. To Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potipharah, priest of An, bore to him. The sons of Benjamin, Bila, Bikur, Ashbel, Gira, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Mupim, Hupim, and Ard.

These were the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob, fourteen persons in all. The sons of Dan were Hushim. The sons of Naphtali were Jazeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shalem.

These were the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter. And she bore these to Jacob, seven persons in all. All the persons who went with Jacob to Egypt who came from his body, besides Jacob's sons' wives, were sixty-six persons in all.

And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two persons. All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy." So, it is the physical descendants of Jacob that are being counted. We have mentioned, as I mentioned earlier, of the wives and so forth, but the persons who came from Jacob's body, these are the ones who are numbered among the seventy that go down to Egypt.

Of course, seventy is a number of significance. It is a multiple of seven, which is the number of completion or perfection. And the notation here is a reminder to all of the later generations in Israel of their beginnings and of their origins, and the fact that it is God's grace in trial.

It is God's grace in adversity. It is God's grace in spite of failure and sin. It is God working all things together for good that has brought them into existence.

Then in verse 28, "...he sent Judah before him to Joseph to point out before him the way to Goshen." And you see that in this last chapter or two, Judah has risen to the leadership role among the brothers. He is the one that makes himself surety for Benjamin. He is the one who is spokesman for the group before Joseph.

He is the one that returns and addresses Jacob. And now he is the one who is going to lead the way to Goshen. And this foreshadows the role that the tribe of Judah is going to fulfill in providing the leadership for the nation of Israel in terms of the kingly line of David.

"...So they came to the land of Goshen. Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel. And he presented himself to him and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while." Joseph does a lot of weeping in this story, doesn't he? He weeps in the presence of his brothers or because of the presence of his brothers three different times.

And now once again, he weeps when he sees his father. "...Israel said to Joseph, Now let me die since I have seen your face because you are still alive. Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, I will go up and tell Pharaoh and say to him, My

brothers and those of my father's house who were in the land of Canaan have come to me.

And the men are shepherds for their occupation has been to feed livestock and they have brought their flocks, their herds and all that they have. So it shall be when Pharaoh calls you and says, What is your occupation? You shall say, Your servant's occupation has been with livestock from our youth even till now, both we and also our fathers that you may dwell in the land of Goshen. For every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians." Very interesting, because what is going on here? Joseph is front-loading.

He knows that Pharaoh is going to ask them what their occupation is so that he can determine how to place them in Egypt. And he says, You be sure and tell them that you are shepherds and you are animal tenders. And that way he will put you in the land of Goshen.

What is this going to do? It's going to keep them separate. They're not going to be dispersed throughout the land of Egypt. They're not going to intermingle.

They're not going to lose their identity among the Egyptians. They are in Egypt, but not of Egypt. And even though they are there as a part of the purposes and plan of God, they are not to take on an Egyptian identity.

And Joseph ensures this by making it clear that they are something that is anathema to the Egyptians. They are shepherds. And this is something that the Egyptians look down on.

They say it's an abomination. In the same way that the Egyptians would not eat with them, they're not going to live with them either. And this is necessary.

This separation is necessary to keep themselves pure, to keep themselves true to their identity and their national heritage so that they can inherit the promises of God. And this is particularly interesting to meditate on when you think about Joseph himself. Who is Joseph married to? As it tells us in this listing of descendants.

He's married to Asenath who's an Egyptian. His sons Ephraim and Manasseh are half Egyptian. So is it possible for Egyptians to come into the fold of Israel? It is.

You know that Joseph wouldn't marry someone who didn't care about God given his dedication to the things of God and his being true through good times and bad. So Asenath is obviously someone that he shares love for God. Potiphar is his father-in-law who was the priest of On.

But he has these sons. And so people can come in in the same way that later on Rahab will come in. Ruth the Moabitess will come in.

But to leave and to disperse and intermarry with the Egyptians, Joseph ensures that this is not going to take place because he establishes their identity as shepherds. Something like oil and water that isn't going to mix with Egyptian society. And he says, you be sure and answer this because of course they can do many things.

They can raise crops. They can farm. They can engage in merchant-type operations.

But he says, you establish your identity as shepherds. Something that is anathema to the Egyptians so that Pharaoh, although he's going to be a benefit to you and bless you and give you the best of the land, he's going to keep you separate. Why is this? Joseph still remembers the promise of God.

Even in the midst of prosperity, even in the midst of the joy of reunion, Joseph has been thinking ahead and he's remembering the promise and the purpose of God. And that's what guides his decisions. He doesn't say, oh, come down here to the palace of Pharaoh and we'll build you 12 houses right here next door to me in Pharaoh and you can live right here among us.

He says, there is a particular place for you. Once again, we see great application for ourselves as we live in this world, as we sojourn outside our land of promise even though we are in the world. We should not be of the world.

We should not compromise. We shouldn't intermingle the philosophies and the quote-unquote scientific truths that people try to say, well, all truth is God's truth, so anything we find out that's true, we can incorporate it into our Christianity. We can use psychology.

We can use philosophy. We can take all of the things that are true and it's all God's truth. No, it's not.

God's truth is in God's Word and it has supernatural divine power to transform, to liberate, to conform us to the image of Jesus Christ. And the truth of mathematics and the truth of psychology and the truth of biology and so forth, the truth of nutrition or whatever else it might be, that is not transforming truth. And in that sense, it is not God's truth.

God's truth is transforming divine power truth. And it's important to make the distinction. Do not let your unleavened bread get leavened with the leaven of the Pharisees or of Herod, Jesus told his disciples.

And we run that risk. We see it happening all around us in Christianity today where people say, well, our mission is to evangelize and bring people into the fold, so let's use some of these well-tried and tested marketing techniques. Let's use the old bait and switch.

Let's introduce subtle kinds of pressure and attractiveness. We can bait and lure people in. We'll soften the idea of sin and judgment.

We'll soften the issue of Jesus Christ and present Christianity as the great band-aid, the big Excedrin pill that will ameliorate pain and solve problems. And we'll attract people in. And later on, we can fill them in on these kind of uglier sides.

And this is mixing with the Egyptians. This is thinking that we can integrate and rationalize it away by saying all truth is God's truth. Well, it's not.

We have to guide our lives and our decisions by what Scripture teaches. I heard a good sermon this morning on the radio from a guest preacher there at Wilshire Baptist. And he was talking about the concept of how do you know when to do what? And he used as his text Luke 4, the temptations of Christ, that we've recently studied.

And there is a time... Their Scripture reading was out of Ecclesiastes. There's a time for everything under the sun, a time to be born, a time to die, and so on. And there was a time for Jesus to preserve Himself and live like when the crowd at Nazareth wanted to cast Him off a cliff or when Satan told Him, cast Yourself down.

And then there was a time to allow Himself to be crucified and to die on our behalf. How did He know when it was time to die? How did He know when it was time to walk through the crowd and be preserved? And it was a really excellent message. And we need that discernment.

And that comes from the Word of God. It doesn't come from human wisdom. It doesn't come from logic.

It doesn't come from experience. It comes from the living and abiding Word of God. That is our deliverance.

That is our salvation. That's what guided Joseph to know that he couldn't just dispense grace and mercy and forgiveness to his brothers without proving that there had been a change of heart. He couldn't bring them down to the land and know that they would preserve their identity and preserve their future as a nation before God unless they had this as their foundation stone.

Recognition of God. Love for their Father, as it were. We have that same opportunity and that same responsibility to preserve our identity and be true to our Heavenly Father as we sojourn outside the land.

The only way we can do that is the way Joseph did. Joseph lived right in amongst the Egyptians. Joseph married an Egyptian.

How did he preserve his identity? How did he ensure that he was in a position to be a

blessing and be a reflection of the glory and the grace of God? He did it by never forgetting the promises, never forgetting the Word as it had been revealed to him. And he was true to that in the good times and in the bad. Even in the midst of his greatest joy, being reunited with his Father, whom he loves, he immediately remembers the principle that the nation has to be preserved intact and pure.

He knows that there are dark times ahead, but he's going to ensure that by living in Goshen, they can fulfill the destiny that God has provided for them. Well, this is where we're going to pause for this morning. Let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank You for the truth of Your Word. We thank You for the wonderful place that we occupy in Your plan, for the wonderful, gracious, extensive provision that You have made for us. We thank You for the presence of Your Spirit.

We thank You for the opportunity to enjoy the personal presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and indeed Your own presence in our souls through the transformation, through the orientation to Your plan and purpose that we see throughout the Scriptures. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these things on our minds and hearts in the hours and minutes of the days ahead, so that we will see, even in the most mundane and ordinary circumstances of life, the opportunity to remember who we are and why we're here and to live in a way that's pleasing to You and glorifying to our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask in His name.

Amen.