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Joseph's Revelation

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As we prepare to complete reading the Book of Genesis, the revelation I witness is the repeated message of the Book of Genesis that Old Traditional Ways no longer work effectively in different times, so different New Beginnings are continually being found.

God created CREATION {in Hebrew the ADAMA} and out of the Creation created a Creature, out of the humus a human, an "Adam" to garden The Garden, but instead of being thankful and trusting, humans turned away from God to follow their own desires.

So God chose Abram to be God's companion promising blessings along the way, but Abram heard in the promise that God would give him a Child and Land. God gives the child, then God questions if Abram is faithful only because of the gift or because he is faithful? After sending Ishmael away, Abram sacrifices Isaac as the One who "trusts God always".

While Isaac trusts God, when he has twin sons, he loves Esau the first-born twin more than Jacob. Jacob succeeds in tricking both Isaac and Esau to be First-born, then runs to Laban to be indentured 14 years to marry Laban's daughters. Jacob is married to the First-born in order to get the Younger, receiving two mistresses as well, and conceiving 12 sons. Jacob runs away from Laban only to be reunited with Esau. Jacob loves Joseph the 11th son more than all the rest. Joseph has dreams of his family bowing to him.

#2 son Judah, leads his brothers to conspire against Joseph, selling him as a slave to the Ishmaelites. Joseph is sold by the Ishmaelites to Potiphar, Potiphar's wife makes a pass at Joseph, for which Joseph is thrown into Pharaoh's dungeon. In the dungeon, Joseph interprets the dreams of the Baker, the CupBearer and the Jailer. They in turn suggest to Pharaoh that Joseph interpret his Dreams. Pharaoh's dream is that 7 Fat Calves come to the River Nile to drink, then 7 Sickly Calves came and consumed the first 7. Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream as being a warning of 7 years of Prosperity followed by 7 years Famine. Pharaoh makes Joseph his Governor throughout Egypt. The Famine causes Jacob's Sons to leave the Promised Land for Egypt, where Judah has learned to sacrifice himself to protect Jacob's family. Joseph reveals himself to the brothers.

If you heard the same names over and over, a redundancy of people each choosing to do a new thing only to discover that they were still seeking the old traditions, then we have gotten the point!

Let us read Genesis 45: 1-20.

Increasingly, I am hearing from people that what we want is to get this time over with. We survived the 1960s, we survived this President and that one, all we want is to survive COVID 19 and Black Lives Matter, and the Election, to get back to our Old Traditional Ways before these distractions. There have been times when I too have looked forward to 2021, but the point of all of Genesis, particularly Joseph's Revelation is not for us to regain control of life as it used to be. BUT whether we have allowed ourselves to be transformed to consider life's circumstances differently? If we go through all of life without being aware

of the transformations and struggles of life, then we become like Joseph's brothers unwilling to grasp and take advantage of Joseph's Revelation and we become subject to the world.

Joseph has been cut-off, dead-to-the-family for years, sold as a slave when a 17 year old, his brothers have perpetuated a lie for years. Rather than owning what they had done to their brother, they tell Father Jacob that his favorite son was attacked and killed by a wild beast, his coat torn to shreds, profaned by being covered in blood. The problem with secrets is that Lies and Secrets take on a power all their own. Instead of having to contend with Joseph the 11th Son, whom their father loves best, and Joseph's dreams; the brothers tell lie upon lie to keep the secret hidden, but their Father never forgets the loss of his child. The relationship between family members festers surrounding this conflict. Instead of being "family, who trust one another", each becomes a separate tribe, hiding things from their father, hiding sins from God. Famine comes to everyone, and the brothers in desperation travel to Pharaoh's Court for Government aid.

Possibly being betrayed, abandoned by family, surviving as a slave, changed Joseph; perhaps spending years in Prison changed him; or being elevated from being a prisoner in the dungeon to the authority and power of being Governor of all Pharaoh's holdings changed him so radically his own brothers did not know Joseph. But I believe his brothers did not recognize Joseph because they believed their own lie that he was dead. Being dead, cut-off, they did not worry about Joseph, they did not have to compete with him, cut-off from reality, from all relationship with them, in their minds Joseph no longer existed. This meeting is especially poignant because all those years before, Joseph's dreams had been that as the Sheaf of Corn, as the Star in the Heavens, his family would come to Joseph for help, would bow down before his authority and power! But Joseph DOES recognize his brothers, AND Joseph does not attempt to go back to the way things were! There come times when we decide that to continue to hate and be hurt are burdens no longer worth carrying. That regularly reminding ourselves to drink the poison of hate, is too much and we need to transcend to a different revelation. Joseph's Revelation is not only that their long-lost brother is the Governor of Egypt. Joseph's Revelation is that The One who was Dead, is Alive. Joseph's Revelation is FORGIVENESS and RECONCILIATION. Joseph's Revelation is that Joseph is no longer the 17 year old they wanted to shun, enslave, kill, but is the one who now Grants them what they need for their Life.

Joseph's Revelation is not only about who he is and his family, but also a different understanding of God. Rather than the Ancient World belief, that the Gods were in Heaven and played with people in life. Different from the belief that God had set the world in motion and was distant and removed from life. That God has a Divine Plan for our lives, or that God is in control of our every action and decision. According to Joseph's Revelation, while by our Human Will we may choose to do harm to another, or choose to get ahead succeeding by beating others, God is FREE to use our decisions and actions for God's own purposes. This means that God may appear not to exist, but the Judeo-Christian understanding is that where ever there are signs of life rather than the power of death; signs of reconciliation rather than estrangement, God has been at work in, with and under human affairs.

Our minds leap to other passages of hurt and cut-off between brothers, wishing for Reconciliation, Life and Forgiveness. If when the Prodigal Son returned home in addition to the Father welcoming him, his brother had! If when Jonah was sent to prophesy warning to Ninevah and they repented, if Jonah had rejoiced! Would that the reunion between Esau and Jacob, or between Isaac and Ishmael, or Cain and Abel, could have been like this! Are there broken relationships in your lives? Possibly a death, or those we have made dead to us, a punishment that has never been let go? It is time, to let the past be passed. We cannot go back, even after all of the current crises of the world are resolved, we can never go back to the

ways things were. Instead, we chose to live healthy lives, practicing basic public health, hugging not as an act of obligation but of thanksgiving you are in my life. Only when we treat one another as living human beings with the sanctity of life, can we resolve the tensions and conflicts between us.

Genesis is not the whole of the Bible, and the Revelation of Joseph is not the end of the Book of Genesis. The missing link between Joseph's Revelation and the start of the Book of Exodus comes in Chapter 47. Joseph with Pharaoh's blessing brought Joseph's father Jacob and all their family from Canaan to Goshen. This was already the second year of the 7 year famine.

Resuming the story at verse 13

“Behold there was no food in all the land, for the famine was very severe.

The land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine.

Joseph collected all the money to be found in the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan, in exchange for the grain that they bought.

When all the money from the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan was spent, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said “Give us food!” And Joseph answered “Give me your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange, if your money is gone.”

When the year was gone, they came to him saying “We cannot hide from my lord that the all our money is spent, and our herds of cattle are my lord's. There is nothing left but our bodies and our lands. We with our land will become slaves to Pharaoh; just give us seed, that we may live and not die, and that the land not become desolate.” Then Joseph said to the people: “Now that I have this day bought you and your land for Pharaoh, here is seed for you; sow the land. And at the harvest you shall give one fifth to Pharaoh, and four-fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and food for yourselves and your households, and food for your little ones.” They said, “You have saved our lives, may it please my lord, we will be slaves to Pharaoh.” Thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the region of Goshen; they gained possession of it, and were fruitful and multiplied exceedingly.