

April 15th

THE HIDDEN HAND OF YAHWEH

“Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.”

GENESIS 35:9-11

“Phantom of the Opera. Cats. School of Rock. These are all musicals that have been written by Andrew Lloyd Webber. Most of what he touches turns into musical gold. He also wrote a play about the Joseph of Genesis 37-50. The musical is called “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.” Donnie Osmond, of the famed Osmond Family, starred as Joseph in the Chicago stage musical. There’s been a lot of myth and legend that surrounds Joseph’s story. What do we find as we look closely at what God has included here? And what lessons does it give us as God’s men today?

Joseph was not innocent in Genesis 37. There, I said it. Joseph’s brothers are so evil in these chapters that people have often placed an angel’s halo on Joseph’s head. However, look again at the text. What does Moses include first in the narrative? Verse two says, “Joseph, being seventeen years old...brought a bad report of them to their father.” While we can make assumptions about Joseph’s “report” being true or untrue, the original Hebrew words that make up the English word are “evil report.” In the other cases in the Old Testament, the same words are used to describe an evil report being spread. What this describes is that Joseph was spreading bad news behind his brothers’ back out of a bad heart. Joseph’s words may not have been false, but they spread the divide between him and his brothers even wider. Moses starts with this fact and then gives more details in the next phrase: with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. The concubines that were used in the bride wars of Genesis 30. Jacob already has expressed wrath towards Simeon and Levi in the incident at Shechem, and these sons from Bilhah and Zilpah wouldn’t have been favored by Jacob either. God is setting the stage here for sibling rivalry. Sounds familiar, doesn’t it?

God uses the sibling rivalry for His glory. He doesn’t waste anything! In fact, God adds fuel to the fire. How many dreams does Joseph have? Compare this number with the number of dreams that Pharaoh has in Genesis 41. That’s right, they both have two dreams. But what does this mean? Listen to Joseph’s own words in 41:32: “And the doubling of Pharaoh’s dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about.” God uses 2 dreams to confirm that the dreams are His message! Even as Joseph tells his second dream to his father, his father “keeps the sayings in mind.” Sounds similar to the angel’s message to Jesus’ mother Mary.

Men, God is establishing a theme here in these thirteen chapters. While some of you are already aware of what Joseph says in 50:20 about God’s purposes, what if we never had those words recorded? Would God be directing these events any less? Men, this brings you hope. I don’t know what God is giving you today to handle. I only know that our God is true. He is faithful. He works with purpose in everything. You can walk in confidence and courage today because you follow a God who directs your life to make you more like Him. Nothing is purposeless. Everything is used for God to make you more like Him. Will you walk in trust today in God’s purposes for you?

Spend some time thinking about how God has directed events in your life to make you more like Him. Thank Him today that He doesn’t waste anything.

For Further Reading: Genesis 37