

The **Story** of ~~**Joseph**~~ *God*

God's Invisible Hand in Our Lives

Genesis 37:1 – 50:26





The Story of Joseph

Welcome to Week 2





Review of Week 1

- This story is a historical narrative.
- All of the events really happened.
- All of the people are really real.





Review of Week 1

*As for you, you meant evil against me, **but God meant* it for good,** [50:20]*

This verse points us to the main points of the story:

- The trials Joseph encountered were part of God's broader plan
- He accomplished that plan by “weaving” together people and events
- It serves as an example of how God's sovereign “invisible hand” works in the lives of His people





The Sovereignty of God

A few examples of God's *invisible* hand:

- Joseph
- Joshua
- Jephthah
- Ruth
- David
- Nehemiah
- Daniel





The Sovereignty of God

Regarding God's sovereignty – the age-old controversy . . .



Does God *cause* things to happen?

or

Does God *allow* things to happen?





The Sovereignty of God

Regarding God's sovereignty – the age-old controversy

CAUSE:

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, ²and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them, that you may know that I am the LORD.” Exodus 10:1-2

ALLOW:

And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

Job 1:12





The Sovereignty of God

Cause vs. Allow



It turns out that a bunch of theologians back in 1646 wrestled with this very issue.

They determined it was simpler to think in terms of *first cause* and *second cause*.

Their beliefs on this issue as well as on all matters of theology were published as the *Westminster Confession of Faith (1646)*





The Sovereignty of God

Regarding *first* and *second* causes . . .

Westminster Confession of Faith (1646):

CHAPTER V. — Of Providence.

II. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the *first cause*, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly, yet, by the same providence, he ordereth them to *fall out* according to the *nature of second causes*, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

III. God, in his ordinary providence, maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at his pleasure.





The Sovereignty of God

Regarding *first* and *second* causes . . .

- God, the *first cause*, by His providence, decrees all things that come to pass
- Nothing comes to pass unless He ordains it
- His means for having things come to pass (*fall out*) makes use of the **nature of** *second causes*





The Sovereignty of God

God makes use of the nature of second causes –

Second Causes:

- things
 - rocks, trees, planets, etc.
- actions
 - planetary motion, winds and waves, thermal currents, etc.
- creatures
 - critters & people





The Sovereignty of God

What about our own nature?

God *makes use* of our nature; our natural inclinations

Our natural inclinations are *shaped* by our response to our trials

*Not only that, but we rejoice in our **sufferings**, knowing that suffering produces **endurance**,⁴ and endurance produces **character**, and character produces **hope**,⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Romans 5:3-5*

If this wasn't true, then trials would be of no value to us!





Review of Week 1

Trials are inevitable but profitable

*My brethren, count it all joy **when** you fall into **various trials**, ³**knowing** that the **testing of your faith** produces **patience**. ⁴**But let** patience have its **perfect work**, that you may be perfect and complete, **lacking nothing**. James 1:2-4*

“There must be a sound believing of the great truths of Christianity, and a resolute cleaving to them, in times of trial. That faith which is spoken of here as tried by afflictions consists in a **belief of the power, and word, and promise of God**, and in fidelity and constancy to the Lord Jesus.” M. Henry





Connecting the Dots

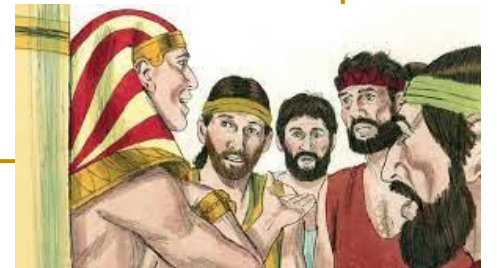
SO –



What does God's sovereignty and all that cause stuff have to do with Joseph and what he endured for nearly 20 years?



What does God's sovereignty and all that cause stuff have to do with the trials we will encounter in our lives?





Connecting the Dots

God's Decree Concerning Joseph

*When he summoned a famine on the land and broke all supply of bread,
¹⁷he had sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave.
¹⁸His feet were hurt with fetters; his neck was put in a collar of iron;
¹⁹until what he had said came to pass, the word of the LORD tested him.
²⁰The king sent and released him; the ruler of the peoples set him free;
²¹he made him lord of his house and ruler of all his possessions,
²²to bind his princes at his pleasure and to teach his elders wisdom.*

Psalm 105:16-22





Connecting the Dots

Regarding Joseph –

- *In Psalm 105, verses 16-22 proclaim that God ordained a time of famine in Egypt and the role Joseph would play in it.*
- *By His providence, He governed “all creatures, actions, and things” and wove the tapestry we know as The Story of Joseph*
- *The list of second causes in this story includes Joseph, Jacob, the brothers, Laban, Rachel and Leah, Potiphar and his wife, etc.*





Connecting the Dots

Regarding Us –

- *By God's decree, we were created and called according to His purpose.*
- *For I know the **plans I have for you**, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a **hope**. Jeremiah 29:11*
- *And we know that for those who love God **all things work together for good**, for those who are called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28*





Finally!!

- **We are now ready to explore** the various aspects of Joseph's life that eventually led to his role as vizier of Egypt during the time of the famine.
- **We are now equipped to more fully appreciate** how God's plan came to pass AND how it continually comes to pass





Anger, Hate, Jealousy

Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan. ²These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. ³Now 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. ⁴But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him. Gen 37:1-4



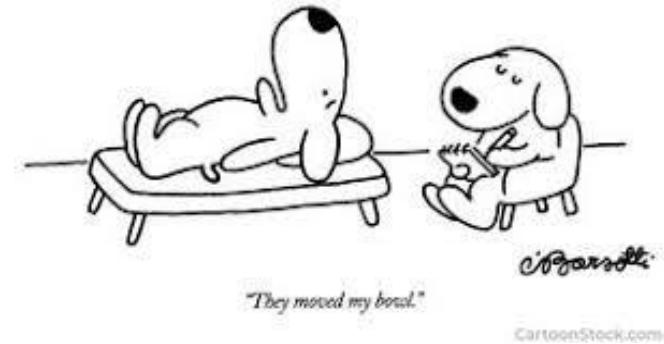
Anger, Hate, Jealousy



SO --

If you were a family psychologist . . .

What family issues stand out as “interesting”?



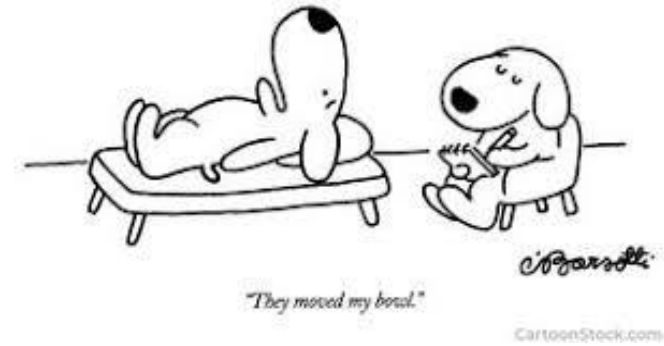


Anger, Hate, Jealousy

Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. ⁶He said to them, “Hear this dream that I have dreamed: ⁷Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf.” ⁸His brothers said to him, “Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. ⁹Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, “Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” ¹⁰But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?” ¹¹And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind. Genesis 37:5-11



Anger, Hate, Jealousy



Anything else grab your attention?





Anger, Hate, Jealousy

What do we know about **Jacob's life** before the events recorded in chapter 37?

What can we **infer** about his character from his behavior at the beginning of the chapter?





Anger, Hate, Jealousy

Should we imagine that God caused any of them to be angry or hateful or jealous or depressed or ungodly?

Can we blame Jacob for all the anger and hate and jealousy in the family?





Anger, Hate, Jealousy

The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. Ezekiel 18:20

