

FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH CAFÉ: “Genesis” (Subtitled: Is there a snake in your Garden too?) Further subtitled: Lessons from the Garden! Genesis Lesson 33 (47:1-48:22): Some Summary Thoughts:

As Genesis moves towards its closing verses, the Joseph story continues to give us a fascinating insight into the essence of faith. As we noted last week, faith involves not only the future but also the past. Simply put, if faith includes the ability to “see the unseen,” then our trust or faith also involves God’s revelation, not only of the *Divine* hand in history, but also the *human* hand. As Joseph looks back over his life, he affirms that not only have humans been involved in his history (for good and ill), but also more importantly, God has been involved (always for the good). God has faithfully been present, step-by-step and hand-in-hand, with those He chose to accomplish His tasks. The same can be said for our lives as well. The life of Joseph also reminds us that things are not always what they seem.

- The Lord uses a famine and even hostility from siblings as a means of preserving his people! And in an ironic turn of events, the former Hebrew slave of the Egyptians, Joseph, actually enslaves the Egyptians. He takes their land and places them into bondage to Pharaoh, while providing land to the people of Israel and allowing them to flourish and multiply abundantly.
- The Lord also circumvents human cultural norms to accomplish His Purpose. As seen previously in Jacob’s own life (27:27-29), the younger son receives the blessings/ benefits of the oldest son when Jacob blesses Joseph’s sons.

When that which has been previously unseen, is revealed through the spectacles of faith, The Joseph story as well as the rest of Genesis reminds us that there is a Divine-Human dimension in the scheme of God for His world. Like it or not, like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, God’s people are active participants in this Divine-human drama; we are not spectators in life. Several aspects seem to stand out:

- The first step, as Jacob has shown us throughout his life, is to recognize and affirm that God is sovereign and walk or journey with Him in His plan for His creation.
- Second, we should keep the perspective that humans, while originally created for co-reign with God (Gen 1:26-28), are not puppets. Nor do they have power within themselves to thwart the Divine plan.
- With Abraham and his descendants, we see God break into His created time-space continuum to effect His plan as He purposed or willed it. This continues as God delivers His physical people Israel out of future bondage by His power in their exodus from Egyptian slavery (Ex 1-15) and culminates in the second exodus – the ultimate breaking into history of God-made-man, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who dies on the cross. Christ’s death at human hands, burial, and subsequent resurrection by God’s Power to His current reign-in-glory mark the church of today and the future union of all creation at the close of the age in which we live.