

God's Providence Triumphant Over Evil

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- [0 : 0 0] Genesis chapter 41. We're continuing the story of Joseph. And then there's going to be seven years of famine.
- And now we read verse 57. And all the countries came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph because the famine was severe in all the world.
- When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, Why do you just keep looking at each other? He continued, I've heard that there is grain in Egypt.
- Go down there and buy some for us so that we may live and not die. Then ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt. But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with the others because he was afraid that harm might come to him.
- So Israel's sons, that's Jacob's sons, were among those who went to buy grain for the famine was in the land of Canaan also. Now Joseph was the governor of the land.
- [1 : 2 6] The one who sold grain to all its people. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them.
- But he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them. Where do you come from? He asked. From the land of Canaan, they replied, to buy food.
- Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him. Then he remembered his dreams about them and said to them, You are spies. You've come to see where our land is unprotected.
- No, my lord, they answered. Your servants have come to buy food. We are all the sons of one man. Your servants are honest men, not spies. No, he said to them.
- You have come to see where our land is unprotected. But they replied, your servants were 12 brothers, the sons of one man who lives in the land of Canaan.
- [2 : 2 4] The youngest is now with our father and one is no more. Joseph said to them, it is just as I told you. You are spies. And this is how you will be tested.
- As surely as Pharaoh lives, you will not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. Send one of your number to get your brother. The rest of you will be kept in prison so that your words may be tested to see if you are telling the truth.
- If you are not, then as surely as Pharaoh lives, you are spies. And he put them all in custody for three days. On the third day, Joseph said to them, Do this and you will live, for I fear God.
- If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here in prison while the rest of you go and take grain back for your starving households. But you must bring your youngest brother to me so that your words may be verified and that you may not die.
- This they proceeded to do. They said to one another, Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life.

[3 : 34] But we would not listen. That's why this distress has come upon us. Reuben replied, Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn't listen.

Now we must give an accounting for his blood. They did not realize that Joseph could understand them since he was using an interpreter. He turned away from them and began to weep, but then turned back and spoke to them again.

He said he had Simeon take from them and bound before their eyes. Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to put each man's silver back in a sack, and to give them provisions for their journey.

After this was done for them, they loaded their grain on their donkeys and left. At the place where they stopped for the night, one of them opened a sack to get feed for his donkey, and he saw his silver in the mouth of his sack.

My silver has been returned, he said to his brothers. Here it is in my sack. Their hearts sank, and they turned to each other trembling and said, What is this that God has done to us?

[4 : 40] When they came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them. They said, The man who is Lord over the land spoke harshly to us and treated us as though we were spying on the land.

But we said to him, We are honest men, we are not spies. We were twelve brothers, sons of one father. One is no more, and the youngest is now with our father in Canaan.

Then the man who is Lord over the land said to us, This is how I will know whether you are honest men. Leave one of your brothers here with me and take food for your starving households and go.

But bring your youngest brother to me, so I will know that you are not spies but honest men. Then I will give your brother back to you, and you can trade in the land.

As they were emptying their sacks, there in each man's sack was his pouch of silver. When they and their father saw the money pouches, they were frightened.

[5 : 39] Their father Jacob said to them, You have deprived me of my children. Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and now you want to take Benjamin?

Everything is against me. Then Reuben said to his father, You may put both of my sons to death if I do not bring him back to you. Entrust him to my care, and I will bring him back.

But Jacob said, My son will not go down there with you. His brother is dead, and he is the only one left. If harm comes to him on the journey you are taking, you will bring my gray head down to the grave in sorrow.

Let's hear God's word preached. There are no stories like the stories of the Bible, and they're true. And they teach us much about God, about ourselves, and about our need for a Savior, and how Jesus perfectly meets our need as a Savior.

Well, this is our last week in this case study of God's providence in the life of Joseph. I trust we've seen many of the lessons on providence fleshed out in the life of a real man, Joseph, and that that will help us to identify God's providence in our own lives.

[6 : 59] So for today, just a few more lessons on God's providence from the life of Joseph. And the first is this. God's providence blesses the unbelieving world by putting the righteous among them.

The world is better off for having the righteous with them. Did you notice that when God saves a person, he doesn't take them immediately to heaven? Look around you.

He leaves us here. Why does God do that in his providence? Because he's blessing the world by the presence of his people. He's put us here as salt in the midst of a decaying and rotting society.

Salt is a preservative, and his people act as a preservative to slow and to even stop in some places and even reverse this decaying process.

Salt is also a flavor enhancer. Doesn't food taste better with salt? And the world is a better place, a more pleasant place, a more enjoyable place, because of the righteous who are here.

[8 : 08] He's put us here as salt and as light. Light where darkness reigns and where lies enslave and ruin people's lives.

And he's put us here as light to expose the works of darkness for what they all, and to call people to Jesus, the light of the world. And to give them salvation through Christ and that good life that is found in him.

That's good for the world. And we see that in Joseph's life, that his world was enriched by his presence. It started in Potiphar's house here down in Egypt.

And they were better off for having Joseph as their slave. For God was with him and blessed the work of his hands, so that the blessing of the Lord fell on Potiphar's house because of him.

When he was unjustly thrown into prison, the warden and all the prisoners were better off for having Joseph in prison with them. He served them.

[9 : 16] He served their interests. He served their happiness. God was with him there and blessed Joseph to the end that those around him were blessed. And then when Joseph was taken before Pharaoh, he became a blessing to the Pharaoh of Egypt and all of his officials, and then eventually to all of Egypt, saving their lives from starvation and extinction.

So wherever Joseph was planted by providence and moved around by providence, people were blessed because of his presence there.

Having a God-saturated man in their midst. And disciples of Jesus, that's what God's providence intends by leaving you in this world. That's why he didn't take you to heaven.

By his providence, he has you in that family, in that workplace, in that school, in that neighborhood, in that nation, to bless people.

Now, it's true that our world is not so quick to acknowledge that we are a blessing in their midst. Many times today in our nation, we are the ones who are being blamed for all that's wrong in the land.

[10 : 30] And we must not be put off by that. That's often been the case. The wicked king Ahab said of Elijah, you are the troubler of Israel.

And Elijah says, me? No, my friend, you are the one that's causing trouble. So, though the world doesn't appreciate the good that the righteous are, we are a blessing to them, and they are better off for having us.

They think we're a curse, a cog, a killjoy, that slows down progress in morality and education and science and all the rest. But God has us here to bless them nonetheless.

Isn't that gracious of God to a world in denial? So embrace that calling. Be the best neighbor.

Be the best brother, sister, mother, father, cousin, church member, worker, student. And bless those that God has planted you to be around.

[11 : 35] Bloom where God has planted you. Shine where his providence has put you. Be so saturated with the blessing of God. Taking from God.

Receiving from God. His blessings that you overflow in blessing. To those that you are around. You must be blessed in order to be a blessing. And so you must draw upon your ever-blessed and blessed God.

So who will you bless today? And who will be blessed by you this week? The whole nation of Egypt was to be blessed by God for the sake of righteous Joseph.

But then as Genesis 41 comes to a close, we learn that the famine was severe not just in Egypt, but in all the world and that all the countries were coming to Egypt then to buy grain from Joseph.

And this is the context in which Joseph learns more of the hidden purpose of God's hard providences in his life. And this is our second lesson.

[12 : 40] That the purposes of God's providence are not always understood at once. Indeed, we must wait for heaven for much of the purposes of God's providence.

But even in this life, God draws back the veil as time passes and we gain a little more understanding of why this and why that. But it's usually not all at once. And especially here in Joseph's life, we see that God's hard providences were not always understood in one shot.

He spent, Joseph spent the first 13 years of his life in Egypt totally in the dark as to why all this had happened to him. Why he should be a slave in Egypt, sold by his own brothers, falsely accused and spend the best years of his life as a prisoner in a dungeon prison to be forgotten by men.

He couldn't figure it out for the life of him. Instead, he just got on with serving God and others, doing what he could where he was. And God blessed him.

So after 13 years of walking in total darkness as to the reason for this providence, light from heaven came streaming in. Surely you are a God who hides yourself.

[13 : 57] 13 years without knowing. But then Joseph is called to the palace to interpret Pharaoh's dreams by God's help. And only then does he realize that God had brought him down to Egypt to save the whole Egyptian nation from starvation and extinction.

That there's the seven years of plenty. They could store up grain for the seven years of famine. But that was as far as the dreams went. Famine was an Egyptian thing in the dreams.

It is something that arose there with the Nile. And so he sees God's purpose is served in saving the Egyptians. It would be eight years later that more light is given.

With the famine now in the first year, after seven years of blessing, the famine now in the first, perhaps the beginning of the second year. It's found to be severe not only in Egypt, but in all the countries around.

And so by the very events of the day, Joseph learns about the providence of God. By what's happening around him, he realizes that God's plan all along was to use him not only to save the Egyptians, but other nations as well.

[15 : 11] And then one day, as Joseph is selling grain to these coming to him. He looks up and there they are. His ten brothers.

Hasn't seen them for twenty, twenty one years. Sure as can be. There they are. Standing there. Asking for grain.

The Bible says that Joseph recognized his brothers. He remembered his dreams and he realized the greater purpose of God in his providence. First, Joseph recognized his brothers as soon as he saw them.

He knew it was them. But they didn't recognize him. Remember, he was an 18 year or 17 year old kid when they sold him. He's now 38 or 39.

And he's not dressed like a Hebrew shepherd. But now with an Egyptian haircut and attire. And most of all, he is in a position, the last position in all the world where they would expect to find him.

[16 : 29] Ruler over all Egypt. Maybe if they saw a slave been over carrying a load through the market and look like their brother, they might recognize him. But not not here.

Not this majestic man that's over the whole land. And so they don't recognize him. They were in awe of this governor whose hands.

Were holding their very lives. And so they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. Now that's not the last time. It's just the first of many times as you read the story for yourself that you'll find them on their faces bowing down before them.

And that's the second thing. Joseph not only recognizes his brothers, but he remembers his dreams. Now again, these dreams were old dreams.

21 years ago. But Joseph remembered how his brother's sheaves bowed down to his sheaf of grain in his dream.

[17 : 35] And chills must have run up and down his spine as he now sees them bowing down before him in fulfillment of that dream.

And he no doubt remembered them spitefully saying, do you intend to reign over us when he told them the dream?

Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us? But as he remembers, he puts on a hard face and speaks harshly to them.

Even accusing them of being spies trying to find a weakness in Egypt's defenses. No, no, they objected. We're honest men, not spies. We've just come from Canaan to buy food.

And we must put in parentheses, you're honest men, but you have been lying to your father for 21 years about your brother Joseph. Well, they were at least honest in the fact that they weren't spies.

[18 : 36] We'll give them that. They said your servants were 12 brothers, the son of one man who lives in Canaan. And the reason they do this, we find out in the next chapter, is that Joseph was plying them with questions.

Come on. You prove to me that you're not spies. And he's asking them about their families and facts about them that he might catch them or else prove that they are telling the truth.

And so they say, well, the youngest, we're all 12 of, we were 12 of one man. The youngest is now with our father and one is no more. And if I were Joseph, I would say, tell me about this one who is no more.

What do you mean by he is no more? Did he just vanish into thin air? But Joseph was wiser than I, and so he didn't ask that question.

He just tucks it into his mind and goes on with his hard face, charging them over and over with being spies. And by the way, that carried the death sentence in Egypt.

[19 : 42] And finally, he put them all in prison for three days that they could feel their predicament. And when he brought them out, he showed them kindness. And he said, I'll tell you what I'm going to do.

I'm just going to keep one of you instead of all of you, Simeon. And the rest of you take grain back to your starving families. But you must bring your youngest brother back to prove to me that you really are honest men and not spies so that you may not die.

And now that they were in trouble and pleading for their very lives, their guilty consciences were screaming like a tornado siren in their hearts.

Bringing up that sin against their brother, again, over 20 years ago, that sin of selling him. And that came right up to the front when they got into trouble themselves.

And they said to one another, surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen.

- [20 : 54] And that's why this distress has come upon us. You see, time alone will not heal a guilty conscience. We sang it in the hymn. It's the blood of Jesus alone that can cleanse from guilt and can give peace to a condemning conscience.
- It is not just time. They've had 20 years. And the thought of Joseph pleading for his life says, guilty, guilty, guilty.
- Guilty. They didn't realize Joseph could understand what they were saying because he was using an interpreter in all of this interchange.
- But in fact, Joseph was so moved that he had to turn away and weep. And then compose himself and put on his hard act.
- And bind Simeon in front of them before sending the rest home with grain and provisions for their journey. And with their silver secretly tucked back into each one of their sacks.
- [22 : 01] Now, why the rough treatment? Why this stern face? Why this remaining incognito to his brothers? Well, it was to test them.
- To see, have they repented? Are they the same men that they were 20 years ago? Or has God brought them to repentance? How do they think of their father?
- How do they think of their brother that is no more? Or how do they treat Benjamin, this favored son now of their father? Any change here?
- And so he's proving them. Not just as the story goes that they're not spies. But proving their hearts to see if there's been a true repentance. And often God comes to those he's intending to save with that hard and stern face.
- And the law of the Lord convicts and says, you've come short here and there. If anyone offends just in one point, he's guilty of it all.
- [23 : 02] The wages of your sin is death. And it's a stern face. But he weeps with love. He weeps with love for the mercy that he wants to show.
- And that he was fixing to show. Just as Joseph was fixing to show mercy. He gave them provisions for their trip home. He gave them their money back.
- He gave them grain for their starving. You see, there was kindness. Behold the kindness and the severity of God. As he comes to bless those that have sinned against him.
- Joseph was not being vindictive. He was not trying to get even with him. His heart is so full of love. And a desire to bless them. That he weeps in love over them.
- So Joseph recognized his brothers. He remembers the dream. And thirdly, he now realizes God's greater purpose behind his hard providences.
- [24 : 08] It wasn't just to save the lives of the Egyptians. Yes, that. A whole nation of them. But also to keep his very own family alive.
- That's what he'll tell his brothers on their next trip back for grain. And when he reveals themselves to them. That God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth. And to save your lives by a great deliverance.
- So here he is. 22 years after leaving home. Joseph finally realizes that all this has happened for the survival of his own father's family.
- And that was the greater purpose of his hard trials. And as we've mentioned before, there was an even greater purpose in Joseph's strange providence.
- And we're not sure just how clearly Joseph realized it at this point. But it is something that has been made clear to us with the full revelation of scripture. And that was that the whole world would be spiritually blessed because of Joseph.
- [25 : 10] Joseph. As he spared the life of his brother Judah. So that 1900 years later. A baby boy born of a virgin.

And set in the manger. Would have the DNA of Joseph's brother Judah. Just as God had planned from the beginning.

And so Joseph's trials and all of these providences that were so difficult to live with and accept. They came upon him to.

To bring salvation. To you and to me. By the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Who as to his human nature was born.

The lion of the tribe of Judah. And he's still bringing salvation blessing to believers of all nations.

[26 : 09] Isn't that something? We've tasted that. And that. Your salvation. My salvation. Was bound up in the saving of Jacob's family.

Well on the way home. And that's the greatest purpose then for Joseph's providences. And that's his life then. The reason he takes up 13 chapters at the end of Genesis.

Is that this is a critical link in God's big plan of salvation. If Joseph's family dies of starvation. We have no savior.

But God's providence. Will bring the savior. Into the world. Well on their way home. The nine brothers stopped for the night. And one of them found his silver in the mouth of his sack.

And their hearts sank. Now here's. Here's Joseph's goodness. And kindness. And giving them their silver back. And immediately. Their guilty conscience. Views his kindness as something.

[27 : 11] Sinister. And their hearts sank. And they turned to each other. Trembling. What is this that God has done to us? Again. Their guilt. Guilty conscience screaming.

Once home they told their father Jacob all that happened. How the man whose lord over the land spoke harshly to them. Accused them of spying. Demanded they bring their younger brother to prove their innocence. And that he was keeping Simeon in prison.

And as they emptied their sacks. Each man found their pouch of silver. Returned. And again it says they were frightened. They were scared. God's.

You see the kindness of Joseph. Scares them. Because they have a guilty conscience. They can't even receive God's goodness. Without. The condemning. Of conscience.

And father Jacob was scared. And he could take no more of it. And said to them. You've deprived me of my children. Joseph is no more. Simeon is no more. Now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is against me.

[28 : 17] And though Reuben offered his own two sons as collateral. To be put to death. If he didn't bring Benjamin back. Father Jacob refused. My son will not go down there with you.

End of discussion. His brother's dead. He's the only one left. And if harm comes to him on the journey you are taking. You will bring my gray head down to the grave in sorrow. Let's consider Jacob just for a moment.

And the providence of God in his life. Because there's. There's a lessons to us from Jacob. As well as Joseph here. Jacob the father of all 12 brothers. But. From four different wives.

The wife of his love was Rachel. And Laban had tricked him. By sneaking Leah into the tent. And so he now has two wives. Rachel and Leah. And Rachel was barren.

And couldn't have children. And so Rachel and Leah get into this competition. To have the most kids. And they even give. To their husband. Their handmaids. To raise more kids. And Rachel's barren.

[29 : 16] And she says at one point. To her husband Jacob. Give me children. Or I die. As if life is not worth living. If I can't have children.

I'm ready to die. And finally. Rachel. Had two sons. Joseph. And then she died giving birth. To Benjamin. So God did give her.

Joseph. And Benjamin. But. She was not able to enjoy Benjamin. And we saw the favoritism. That Jacob had for his son Joseph. And the trouble it caused in the family.

And when he lost Joseph. He repeats his fault. With Benjamin. And now heaps. Favor. Upon him. And we see it here.

As he's talking to the boys. You guys. You're going to take away Benjamin. He's the only one left. How do you feel if you're one of the other ten brothers?

[30 : 19] What about me? Don't I count? No. He's the only one left. I had two sons. Joseph. And now I've got Benjamin.

And he becomes all the more protective. Of Benjamin. To be extra careful. Not to lose him. And Judah will tell Governor Joseph.

And their next trip back. About their father Jacob. And how his life is closely bound up. In the life of the boy. Such that if he sees that the boy doesn't return.

He will die. That's how much his life is bound up. And this is where we have a third lesson in Providence. It's a warning here for parents. Not to make idols of their children. Rachel.

As if life is not worth living with no children. God gives life. To barren women. To glorify him. As a barren woman.

[31 : 17] Jacob. Joseph held such a favored place in his heart. That when his robe was brought back with blood on it.

He said some ferocious animals devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces. And he refused to be comforted. And said no. In mourning. I will go down to the grave.

To my son. I'll go to my grave mourning. That's excessive grief. That's grief over much. As if all the reason to live had been sucked out of him.

Because Joseph was no more. Rather than learning from Joseph. It only. He only repeats himself. With Benjamin. God sometimes corrects us for our idols.

By taking them away from us. That's the lesson. Don't turn your children into idols parents. They're blessings from the Lord. Lord. Worship and thank and praise the Lord for them.

[32 : 21] And be wise. In how you raise them. Not with favoritism. And then the fourth lesson. Is that God's providence. Can look like it's against us. Even when it's working for us.

And this is where we see Jacob. Jacob. He says. Joseph is no more. Simeon's no more. Now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is against me. That's how it looked.

That's how it felt. But that's not how it was. Jacob. If you only knew what God was up to.

If you only knew what he's been doing. What he is doing. And what he's just about to do. For you. You're just days away from the end of your misery. And from the joyful news that your son Joseph.

Is alive. And that he is this man. Ruling over all of Egypt. With plenty of food. To save you. And your family. Your whole tribe of 70 people.

[33 : 19] And to move all of you to Egypt. Where you'll be given preferential treatment. For Joseph's sake. So that at the very time he said. Everything is against me.

Things were never more for him. Being worked together for his good. Now we can't tell Jacob that. But you and I know that. As we're reading. And Jacob should have known better.

You know. Jacob had received many promises from the Lord. Some of them. To bless. And provide for his family. Some of them were passed down from Abraham. To Isaac. And then to Jacob.

But many other promises were made directly to Jacob himself. He said. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth. Another time he tells them.

They'll be like the sand of the sea. And a whole community of nations will come from you. And kings will come from you. Amazing promises regarding Jacob's family.

[34 : 19] Now at the point in our story. His family is just around 70 in all. He's promised.

An uncountable. Number. Like the sands of the sea. And the dust of the earth. He's not quite there yet. Is he at 70? He's promised kings.

And there's no kings yet. And now here he is. Thinking he's lost two sons. And now Benjamin is wanted. Everything's against me. What about those promises, Jacob?

God is never more in control. Than when is. When life seems most out of control. And that's the mystery of providence.

You must believe it. And you do. You believe it by believing the promises. So Jacob could have reasoned from the promises. I can still count. I've got 70 in my family.

[35 : 14] We haven't reached the dust. We haven't reached the sands of the sea. God, you're going to some way. Feed us and keep us alive in this famine. Amen. And so it is with us.

We must believe the promises. Though our eyes have never seen it. And can't see it. Romans 8, 28. Do you love God? Are you one of those that he has called.

Brought to Jesus Christ. In faith and repentance. Then this is true of you. That we know all things are working together. For your good. God. So there's never a time for us to say.

Everything is against me. But rather always to say. Everything is working together for me. By my God. Who takes the worst things in my life. And is making something good.

Fulfilling his good purpose for me. Even when it seems like everything is against you. It's never more for you. If you have God on your side. Samuel Rutherford said.

[36 : 17] God's providence has a black side and a better side. And you see but the black side of providence. Yet. It does have a better side. And you shall see it.

And keep hope alive. Jacob had to wait 22 years to see it. Joseph nearly as long. Seeing only the black side. And so much seemed against him.

And at the point he felt his lowest. God was just about to flip it over. And show him the bright side. So hold on. Brothers and sisters. Hold on to the promise.

Do you know what a promise is? It's a revelation. Of God's plan. Those plans he's made for you. Before the creation of the world. We don't know them.

Except by experiencing life. And seeing what God has planned. Or by the promises. And the revelation of scripture. And a promise is telling you. What he's planned. A promise is the revelation.

[37 : 16] Of what his providence is fixing to do for you. Then take his promises. And suck that sweetness out of them. That in a promise. I see what God is going to do.

Have I said it? And shall I not do it? Jehovah says. Calmly. Trusting. In his word.

Well God's providence can look like it's against us. Even when it's working for us. And so the famine continued to be severe. The second year. And when their supply of grain got critical. Jacob told his sons.

Go buy some more food. And they reminded him. Dad. The man will not see us. Unless we take Benjamin along. And Jacob's back is now against the wall.

I could keep Benjamin here. And we could see. Watch each other starve to death. Or I could venture Benjamin. And send him. In the hope that we would get grain. And be able to live.

[38 : 14] So with his back against the wall. With no option left. He lets go of Benjamin. If it must be. Breathe and go. Take some gifts for the man. Double the silver. And go at once. And may God almighty. Grant you mercy.

Before the man. So that he will let your other brother. And Benjamin. Come back with you. As for me. If I'm bereaved. I'm bereaved. If I perish. I perish. And so he ventures.

With the prayer. To God almighty. That he would grant them mercy. Before the man. The governor. Remember we saw. That the king's hand.

Is in the heart of the Lord. And he directs it. However he wants. Proverbs 21. One. Jacob believes. That same thing. He believes. That God almighty. Can give favor. With the governor.

So that he will let. Them return. All of his sons. So he ventures. Upon. A God of mercy. Well there's much high drama.

[39 : 11] In the second meeting. With Joseph. There's more guilty fears. All along the way. As Joseph starts. Sees Benjamin. And says okay. And he invites him over. To his house.

And he comes home at lunch. And has the food spread. And everything you see. All this kindness. Heaped upon. And every step. They're scared to death. He's just doing this. To set us up. To kill us.

He seats all 11. At the table. In order. From oldest. To youngest. Some of you mathematicians. Tell me. What's the odds. Of that happening. 11 people. Lined up. In their packing order.

That scared them. They were astonished. And then when he gives food. To them. He gives five times as much. To his brother. Benjamin. You see. He's testing them.

When father gave me a robe. And loved me more than them. They tried to kill me. How will they treat Benjamin. Daddy's favorite now. And when they see me favoring him.

[40 : 11] He's testing them. Have they repented? Are they the same men? Have they been humbled? When he sends them off. All their silver is again.

Returned into their sacks. But Joseph's own cup. Is also slipped into. Benjamin's sack. And then the steward is sent after them. They're barely out of town.

And he says. Stop. Halt. One of you stolen. Joseph's cup. And they said. Not us. No. We didn't take it. He says. Well. Whoever's sack is found to have.

The cup. Stolen. In it. Will die. And of course. It was found in Benjamin's sack. You see. The test. Again. Benjamin.

Will the brothers return at once to Joseph. And they throw themselves down before them. Before him. And they say. God has uncovered your servant's guilt.

[41 : 05] We're your slaves. And Joseph says. No. Not all of you. Just the one. Who had my cup. The rest of you can return home. Will they give a rip about their brother Benjamin?

They didn't give a rip about him. When he was the favored son. And it's here that Judah makes one of the most. Stirring speeches with the most pathos.

As he steps forward and says. I took responsibility to bring Benjamin safely back to my father. And he just pours on the reasons why.

This great governor should have mercy. And spare Benjamin. My father will die. If he doesn't come back. With us.

Well they didn't care about their father. When Joseph didn't return. You see. There's a change here. And Judah is pleading. For Benjamin.

[42 : 08] On behalf of his father. And in the end. He says. Take me as your slave. In place of the boy. But don't make me face my father.

Without Benjamin. And see him go to the grave. In misery. That was all the proof that Joseph needed. As to the chains of heart.

In his brothers. And it was all Joseph could stand. Everybody out. He clears the place from all his servants. And now he's alone with his brothers. And he says.

I'm. I'm Joseph. And suddenly they were struck. And couldn't speak. Astonished. Dread.

Came over them. As they realized what he's saying. That this is the one we sold into slavery. And now. Our lives. Are in his hands.

[43 : 07] He wept so loudly. That the Egyptians. Though they couldn't see him. They heard him. And the message got all the way to Pharaoh. As we come to the end of our study of Joseph.

As a case study in the providence of God. Let's notice Joseph's understanding of God's providence. And we see it right here. As he reveals himself to his brothers. Remember Joseph's got a very thin Bible living.

When he did. And yet. He has an amazingly clear view of God's providence. He says to his brothers. Come close to me. Chapter 45.

I'm your brother Joseph. The one you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed. And do not be angry with yourselves. For selling me here. Because it was to save lives. That God sent me ahead of you.

For two years now. There have been famine. And in the land. And for the next five years. There will not be plowing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you. To preserve for you.

[44 : 08] A remnant on earth. And to save your lives. By a great deliverance. So then it was not you. Who sent me here. But God. He made me father to Pharaoh. Lord of his entire household.

And ruler of all Egypt. Three times. In case in their dumbfoundedness. They missed the first and the second time. It was God. It was God who sent me. It wasn't you.

It was God. Who took me from my homeland. Sent me far away into this land of my suffering. Into slavery. Into the dungeon prison. Into all this bitter bad stuff.

In order to work out his good purpose. Of saving the Egyptians. And saving you. And a remnant. From the chosen family. From which would come the Messiah.

Well he's learned to see God hiding. Behind second causes. Hasn't he? Yes it was his brother's hatred. But he sees God.

[45 : 08] Behind it. Not just his brother's hatred. Yes it was his run in. With Potiphar's wife. His unjust imprisonment. From the hand of Potiphar.

Being forgotten by the cup bearer. Being exalted by Pharaoh. Being blessed by his wife. With two sons. But to each one. Joseph could say. It was not you.

But God. Now that's a strong view. On the providence of God. And we have hundreds. And hundreds of more verses. About the providence.

He didn't have Romans 8.28. Did he? Or any of the other verses. On your verse pack. On the providence of God. And yet God had revealed to him.

That he's a God who. Is a God of purposes. And plans. And works them out. Because he has control. Over all his creatures. And all their actions. All the time. Oh to have Joseph's view of providence.

[46 : 07] Not only on paper. But in practice. Not only on the far side. Of trials. But while going through them. Teach us Lord. We alas. Forget too often.

What a friend we have above. Who works everything together. For our good. Yes. All these people involved.

In bringing pain. Into Joseph's life. Not you. But God. Sure. You were the hammer. Sure. You were the saw. You were the chisel. You were the piece of sandpaper. But God was the carpenter.

He was the one. Who was making something beautiful. Out of this mess. Well it was 17 years later. When father Jacob. Finally died. And that's when the brothers.

Were scared to death. That Joseph might now. Pay them back. That as long as daddy's alive. He's holding his dagger. And his cloak. But now that daddy's gone.

[47 : 02] He's going to kill us all. And so they come to him. And they. Send. First send word to Joseph. Sending a letter. Before they come. That before he died.

Father left instructions. Asking you to forgive. To forgive your brothers. The sins and wrongs. They committed. In treating you so badly. Please forgive them. And Joseph. When he read the letter.

Wept. He wept. To think that they would think. That he would repay them. In such a way. For their evil.

Done to them. Done to him. And then they come. To see him. And they threw themselves. Down before him. And said. We're your slaves. And Joseph said.

Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? It's only God's. To give. To take revenge. Vengeance is mine. I will repay. So you need to give place.

[47 : 57] To God's vengeance. That's what Paul says. In Romans 12. And. Joseph. Sees it here. I'm not in the place of God. You intended to harm me.

But God intended it for good. To accomplish. What's now being done. The saving of many lives. So then. Don't be afraid. I will provide for you. And your children. And he reassured them. And spoke kindly to them.

No more. Harsh face. Pure kindness. In response. To the evil. That was done to him. He learned.

Of God's powerful providence. That he's able to take. What other people. Mean for evil. What other people. Intend. And plot. And scheme. For evil. God is able to take.

And to work it. For good. So that it doesn't serve. Their evil purpose. But rather. God's good purpose. He thwarts. The evil purposes.

[48 : 52] Of others. To bring about. His own good purpose. What a high privilege. It is. To belong. To the Lord Jesus Christ. To have. To be on the positive. End.

Of all God's providences. Everything. That's happening. I'm on the positive. I'm on the bright side. Of his providence. He's working everything. Together. For my good.

So I cry out. To God. Most high. To him. Who fulfills. His purpose. For me. Because he's most high. Everything. Must obey. His will. And his will.

Is that I be blessed. And nothing. Can reverse that. To anyone. Who is in Jesus Christ. Now the great purpose. Of God's providence.

Then was to provide. Salvation. For guilty sinners. It was to bring. God's savior. Into the world. And that's what we've been. Looking at. At the end of Genesis. Providence. Is bringing about.

[49 : 44] God's plan. And there's no plan. Bigger than the plan. Of salvation. And so God's providence. Is bringing. Jesus. And his salvation. Into this world. His providence.

Is meant to bring us. To Jesus. And salvation. In him. There's many fingers. Pointing to Jesus. In this story. We see it in Joseph. Just like.

Joseph. Jesus was God's favored son. And his enemies. Rejected him. And falsely accused him. And nailed him. To a cross. And killed him. They clearly meant it. For evil.

And by that deed. Of killing them. God worked it. For good. For the salvation. Of a multitude. That no man. Can number. Like the dust. Of the earth. And the sand.

Of the seashore. Their evil deed. Was to be rid of Jesus. We don't want him. We don't want to see his face again. And God.

[50 : 45] Raised him from the dead. And exalted him. To his right hand. Why? So that he might pour out. Blessing. And salvation. Upon any. Who call on his name. Do you see the grace of God.

Behind his providence? And here they come. To Joseph. Confessing their sins. Owning. What they've done against him.

And any of you. No matter who you are. What you've done. If you come. Confessing your sins. To Jesus. And throwing yourself. Upon his mercy. He will forgive you. Even though you're the one.

That said. I don't want you. In my life. I don't want you. If now you will repent. And turn. And come to him. And confess. And say. Lord be merciful to me. The sinner. He will receive you.

He's just that gracious. He's just that good. And his providence. Is pushing you. Toward him. Are you convicted. Of your sin. Is your conscience.

[51 : 43] Bothering you. You can't get rid of it. Just by ignoring it. It will be there. For all eternity. In hell. Reminding you. You're guilty. You're getting. What you had. Coming. You didn't want Christ.

So you don't have him. Forever. And the only thing. That can cleanse you. From guilt. And a guilty conscience. Is the blood of Jesus. And he's saying. Come. Come. Come to me.

And I'll give you. Rest. Soul rest. Where there's no more. Of that guilt. The guilt is gone. And your soul. Is at rest. In Jesus. What a blessing.

To have this savior. We see him in Joseph. But we also see him. In Judah. Don't we? Take me. Take me. Instead of Benjamin. When we had sinned against God.

And every single one of us have. And every single one of those sins. Deserves hell. And eternal hell. To make up for the offense done. To God the creator.

[52 : 42] Jesus says. Take me. Take me. In place of the sinner. And punish me. Give me.

What she had coming. Give me. What he had coming. And he bore the wrath of the father. That salvation might flow. To us undeserving. Hell deserving.

Sinners. Hallelujah. What a savior. He's alive. God raised him from the dead. And exalted. You think Joseph was. Was lifted up. And exalted. God raised Jesus from the dead.

And exalted him. To his own right hand. And one day. Every one of your lips. And every one of your knees. Will bow and own that. But only those who bow the knee. And own him here now.

As savior and lord. Will be saved. So come to him today. He's a glorious. He's a wonderful savior. And you'll be kicking yourself. Wondering.

[53 : 39] Why did I wait so long? I told you before. That the first letters of the word providence. Are provide. Provide. And that is.

God's providence. Isn't it? The providing of God. Is the providence of God. When we needed food.

He provided food. When we needed saving. He provided a savior. His own beloved son. And not having spared him. Whatever we need. As his people. The promise assures us.

The lord will provide. Would you sing it with me? It's found in number. 79. In our hymnal. 79. The lord will provide. He provided for Jacob.

And his family. For Joseph. In Egypt. He's provided a savior. For you. And for me. Let's rejoice. 79. Stand with me. As we sing. Then go in the joy and peace.

[54 : 43] That comes from believing. Amen. Amen. Thank you.