

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of May 20, 2018

THEME: "Joseph, Son of Jacob"

THE DIVISION

Sunday Read Genesis 37:1-4

"Now Israel (Jacob) loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was a son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors." Joseph ran into a lot of problems as a teenager and a young man because of the jealousy of his older brothers, actually his half brothers in that they were the sons of another woman. Joseph was the firstborn of the wife who was his father's first love. The problems in Jacob's family are still another proof that one of the favorite targets of the adversary is the home where he employs one of his favorite strategies: create division. That is the same strategy he uses in trying to create problems in a church family. Families are made up of people who are different, and that is a good thing because each person is a unique creation of God. There are many different tasks to get done, and that takes people with different talents and abilities, different interests and ambitions. That is how God made us; but He also desires that we get along with each other and capitalize on our differences and surely not have them become a wedge between us. When Jacob gave Joseph that coat, I doubt that he realized it would become an issue that would bring to the surface the resentment of his other sons. Why was he blinded to this sibling rivalry? Who knows? But one thing is for certain, by God's including the account in His Holy Scriptures, we can use it to encourage us to be very careful in the relationships in our own homes and in our churches.

THE DREAM

Monday Read Genesis 37:5-10

"And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brothers: and they hated him yet the more...And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it to his brethren...And he told it to his father." How about those dreams Joseph had! I guess all of us have shared dreams with others because of the impression they left on us. Why did Joseph share the dreams? Did he realize that he might cause some bitterness, or was he simply sharing what he thought were interesting dreams? Whatever his motives, his brothers resented them; they felt that Joseph was trying to demean them and show himself to be superior. Their resentment for him turned into a bitter hatred. How amazing that God turned all this bad into good! What an illustration of the truth of Romans 8:28-29: *"All thing work together for good to those who love God and are the called according to His purpose, to mold them..."* The dreams turned out to be prophetic, with God showing things that would come to pass. That tells us something about God: He wants people to know His plans so we can be prepared. That is particularly important in that we are seeing the fulfillment of so much of His prophecies fulfilled in our time. We know that God changed His ways of revealing Himself from how He did in times past. We read that in Hebrews 1:1: *"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son."* The Bible and the Holy Spirit's guidance are God's means of revealing Himself in the Church Age in which we are living.

THE DEAL

Tuesday Read Genesis 37:26-28

"And Judah said unto his brothers, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites." As time passed, the brothers finally got their opportunity to get revenge. When they got him alone after his father sent him to check to see how his brothers were doing, they thought about killing him. The one brother, Reuben, took exception to that idea, and rescued Joseph from his death. As they pondered what they might do, some traders on their way to Egypt passed by. They came up with the idea of getting rid of Joseph by trading him to these slave traders and Joseph would be gone forever. They would then tell their father Jacob that he was devoured by a wild animal. It seemed like a slick plan, and they would be free forever from what they considered to be a nagging nuisance. So the deal was made

and they were finished with Joseph. Or so they thought. God had different plans, plans He knew all the time as they were working out the details of hatred and animosity. What a great God we have, making good out of bad!

THE DEFENDANT

Wednesday Read Genesis 39:17-19

"And she spake unto him these words, saying, the Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me: and it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out. And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, after this manner did thy servant unto me, his wrath was kindled." As it turned out by Divine Providence, God was working out an amazing plan without anyone knowing it. Joseph was placed in the house of an officer of the Pharaoh. Seeing that this was a special man favored by God, that officer appointed him as the overseer of all he had. His wife was attracted to Joseph and tried to entice him into a relationship, which Joseph resisted. Persistent, the woman tried to force herself on Jacob, who resisted and fled the house despite her attempts to hold him back by grabbing his garment. She then used that fragment of clothing as evidence that her accusation of attempted rape was accurate. Totally innocent, Joseph, of course, tried to defend himself against the false accusations, but to no avail. The woman's husband believed his wife's lie.

THE DETAINED

Thursday Read Genesis 39:20-23

"And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison." Her husband believed her false accusations, and he had Joseph thrown into prison. Totally innocent, Joseph was unjustly placed in jail. Where was God in all of this? God was with Joseph, and was simply bringing to pass His wonderful plan for his life! It did not take the warden long to realize that there was something special about this Israelite. So impressed, he gave Joseph the duties of overseeing all the other prisoners. Before long, the Pharaoh sent another two of his workers into the prison, where by Divine providence, they got to know Joseph. Before long, this imprisoned baker and butler both had dreams for which Joseph offered to give them the interpretation of their dreams, explaining that God was trying to tell them something. Joseph explained to the butler that he would be restored to his former position in the palace. Joseph asked the butler to speak favorably of him to the pharaoh in such a way that the pharaoh might see fit to release him. Unfortunately, Joseph had to tell the baker that the pharaoh would have him put to death. As it turned out, Joseph's interpretations of the dreams came to pass. I am quite sure that Joseph's hopes were high, but the butler forgot all about him when released.

THE DIRECTOR

Friday Read Genesis 41:25-40

"And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne shall I be greater than thou." God had the Pharaoh dream two dreams that troubled him badly. When there was no adviser to help the king with the meaning of his dreams, the butler remembered Joseph and told the Pharaoh that this man in prison could interpret dreams. When the Pharaoh called Joseph to the palace and complimented him for this unusual ability, Joseph corrected him and told the Pharaoh that it was God, not him, who knew the meaning. After hearing the details, Joseph told the Pharaoh that God was telling him of a coming seven year famine after seven years of plenty. He advised the Pharaoh to appoint someone to put into place a plan to store food during the seven good years to provide for the seven years of famine. The Pharaoh appointed Joseph to be that man. God indeed made good out of what seemed bad!

THE DRAMA

Saturday Read Genesis 45:1-4

"Then Joseph could not contain himself before all them that stood by him: and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man, while Joseph made himself known to his brothers." The severe famine did indeed arrive, and it was worldwide reaching beyond Egypt extending to the land of Jacob's family. Hearing of the plenty thanks to God having revealed the oncoming problems, Jacob sent his sons to see if they could get food. Who did they

have to meet to ask for food? None other than, without their knowing it, their brother Joseph, the one they had sold into slavery. Joseph posed questions about the family, and asked to bring their younger brother Benjamin back as a condition for granting their request. Much to their dismay, they had no choice. When they mentioned the condition to Jacob, he would have none of it and bemoaned the circumstances, even complaining to God. Having no choice, he consented. In the end, Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers, and this led to a great reunion with his father. Is not God good!