

"God's Love Story Sermon Outlines"

by Doug Hamilton

Section 3: Be Willing to See God Through Big Picture (Genesis Chapters 37-50)

Genesis 37:3-4 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic. ⁴ His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and *so* they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms.

- The primary reason that Joseph was the Jacob's favorite of the twelve sons was because he was the first child of his favorite spouse Rachel (Gen 29:18-20). For years Jacob wanted to have a child with Rachel, but her womb was shut. Joseph was the answer to prayer.
- He was shown preferential treatment as demonstrated by the multi-colored tunic, something that was an honor to have in that culture. Because of this, his ten older brothers hated him.

1) God provided Joseph a glimpse of His Big Picture,

Two Dreams

- Genesis 37:5-11 He had two dreams of the same nature. In the first dream, Joseph and his brothers were binding sheaves in the field, but his brothers' sheaves were bowed down to his sheave. In the second dream that Joseph had the sun, moon and eleven stars bowed down to him as well. Both dreams communicated that his family would someday be bowing down to him and they did not appreciate it, believing is to be haughty.
- Often times the majority of people will fail to see the big picture of God. It would not be logical to assume that Joseph understood what the dreams meant in their entirety, but it was obvious he knew God was going to use him in a BIG way.

God provides to the Christian a glimpse of the Big Picture as well.

Joseph is not alone when it comes to catching a glimpse of the Big Picture of God.

- God shows Christians in advance that they are presented by Christ as faultless before His presence (Jude 24).
- We have already captured a glimpse of the glory that shall be revealed unto us in Christ (Romans 8:18).
- We have a glimpse of the Big Picture that we will be raised imperishable and incorruptible (1 Cor 15:54).
- We can already envision the Big Picture in the future of having the body of our humble state being transformed just like Jesus was (Phil 3:21).
- We have already caught a glimpse of the Big Picture of heaven where there will no longer any death, mourning, crying or pain (Rev 21:4).

Just like Joseph captured a slice of the Big Picture in advance through a dream, we also catch a glimpse of the Big Picture of God through the writings of the Bible.

2) There is always RESISTANCE to the Big Picture.

Hated and Despised (Gen 37:12-ff)

- One day Jacob sent Joseph to go check on his brothers who were shepherding out in a distant field. They said "*Here comes this dreamer! Now then, come and let us kill him*

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and throw him into one of the pits; and we will say, 'A wild beast devoured him.' Then let us see what will become of his dreams!' (37:19-20)

- Jacob's firstborn, Reuben, convinced them to simply scare Joseph by throwing him into the pit and rescue him later. The problem was before Reuben's return, the other brothers sold him into slavery to the Ishmaelites.
- When Reuben found out that Joseph had been sold and taken to Egypt, together they tried to cover it up by informing Jacob that Joseph had been killed by a wild beast. They even went as far as to dip Joseph's multi-colored garment in goat's blood. The news crushed Jacob's heart (37:33-34). It was one of the most sad times in biblical history, a father believing his child was killed and devoured by a beast.

Tempted, Setup and Imprisoned

- Gen 39:6 says that Joseph was "*handsome in form and appearance*". His master, Potiphar, had a stay-at-home wife. Her lust for Joseph persisted until one day she just threw herself at him only to meet refusal and resistance. She was angry and decided to frame Joseph by saying he attempted to rape her. When Potiphar found this out, he had Joseph thrown into prison. It is always frustrating when the Big Picture of God offers blind resistance as an obstacle.

Christians also should expect resistance to the Big Picture of God in this life.

It is not easy to be a Christian in this life. There are many obstacles to the Big Picture of God in our lives.

- We struggle against tough relationships of this world (employers, enemies and even family).
- We deal with health issues, employment issues, sin, temptation and thousand other trials.
- Sometimes people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you on account of Jesus (Matt 5:11), but we press on toward the Big Picture nonetheless.
- We wrestle against principalities, powers, rulers of darkness of this world and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places (Eph 6:12), but refuse to give up!

Jesus never promised us an easy time, but a great resistance from the moment of conversion. Some will lose friends, families, jobs, money and even their lives, but are willing to embrace the Big Picture even unto death, knowing that God is faithful (1 Cor 10:13). Having contrast is all part of the big picture. We will always meet resistance when it comes to the Big Picture of God.

3) God always offers Christians hope in the Big Picture.

Privilege

- Gen 39:21-23 Even while being locked up in prison for something he did not do, God provided hope for Joseph. *The chief jailer committed to Joseph's charge all the prisoners who were in the jail; so that whatever was done there, he was responsible for it. The chief jailer did not supervise anything under Joseph's charge because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made to prosper (22-23).* Joseph was blessed with privilege which in return nurtured hope.

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Opportunities

- Genesis 40:5-23 Two of the fellow prisoners with Joseph had a couple of dreams of their own. They came to him for interpretation. The cupbearer had his dream interpreted positive and he was restored to his office just as Joseph foretold. The chief baker had his dream interpreted, but it was a negative outcome, resulting in his execution, just as Joseph predicted. This would turn out to be the basis for his future opportunity to appear before Pharaoh.
- Gen 41:1-8 A couple of years later Pharaoh had two very troubling dreams of his own. In the first dream seven gaunt cows came out of the Nile and consumed seven fat cows. In the second dream, seven withered ears of corn consumed seven plump ears. Pharaoh sought to have the dreams interpreted, but no one was able. It was then the royal cupbearer remembered Joseph in the prison and his ability to interpret. He was cleaned up and brought before Pharaoh, interpreting the dreams accurately and resulting in his promotion to Prime Minister of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh. He was only thirty years old when this occurred.
- Under Joseph's direction in the first seven years of abundance, the storage houses were filled with grain to the brim. When the seven years of famine followed, the people were able to come and buy grain from Joseph and Pharaoh. Verse 57 states "*The people of all the earth came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the earth.*" The result was a whole new level of power for Pharaoh. God was truly providing opportunities for Joseph and these gave him great hope!

God also provides Christians hope in the midst of the Big Picture.

- How many times has He allowed the ends to meet when there seemed not to be enough?
- How many times have we been at the point of hopelessness and been encouraged by the kind words of other Christians or experienced the power of prayer?
- How many times have we not had an answer, but discovered it from the open Bible or in the circumstances of God?
- How many times have we been comforted at a funeral of a saint, being reminded that they are finally at peace?
- *Ps 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me;*
- God provides Christians us hope in the midst of the Big Picture!

4) God is always working behind the scene of the Big picture.

- Gen 42:1-2 says that the famine was also in Canaan and causing hunger to Joseph's family. Jacob sent all of Joseph's brothers, except Benjamin, to buy grain. It was intriguing when they showed up in Egypt. *Genesis 42:7 When Joseph saw his brothers he recognized them, but he disguised himself to them and spoke to them harshly. And he said to them, "Where have you come from?" And they said, "From the land of Canaan, to buy food."*
- He remembered the dreams from years prior and realized they were coming true. Joseph orchestrated a scenario by accusing them of being spies, locking them up for three days. Upon their release he told them not to come back without the youngest brother Benjamin. To make sure they would do so, he imprisoned Simeon.

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- When they arrived back and Jacob heard that Benjamin would have to go to Egypt, he refused to even entertain the idea. He was not going to lose the “only” son left whom reminded him of Rachel. The famine continued and Jacob once again called for his sons to go back to Egypt to buy more food. Judah reminded his father Jacob that Benjamin was required to go or the consequences would be severe. Under protest of this, Jacob permitted it.
- They appeared in Egypt before Joseph. *Gen 43:6 When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to his house steward, “Bring the men into the house, and slay an animal and make ready; for the men are to dine with me at noon.”* He brought Simeon out of the cell and united him with the others. Joseph invited the brothers to a meal with him, but they still did not recognize him. He checked on the status of their father Jacob and upon seeing his younger brother Benjamin, he had to leave the room to gather his composure.
- After the meal they headed back to Canaan. Joseph orchestrated another setup, having his royal cup hidden in Benjamin’s grain sack. As soon as they were out of sight, he sent his men to arrest Benjamin for theft. They were hauled back before Joseph, resulting in Benjamin’s arrest. They pleaded that if Benjamin did not return with them that Jacob would die from grief. *Gen 44:34 “For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me—for fear that I see the evil that would overtake my father?”* Judah even offered himself as a substitute for Benjamin, but what was about to occur would totally turn their worlds upside-down.
- *Gen 45:1-4 Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried, “Have everyone go out from me.” So there was no man with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ² He wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard of it. ³ Then Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence. ⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Please come closer to me.” And they came closer. And he said, “I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵ “Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.*
- Finally we see the big picture and God was working behind the scene to bring it about! He was sold into slavery in order to provide deliverance for his family. They would go back to Canaan and move the rest of the family, including Jacob the father. They had a joyous celebration as they settled in the Land of Goshen in eastern Egypt.

God works behind the scene to bring about His Big Picture for the Christian.

It is about the Big Picture!

- Genesis 46:27 states that “...all the persons of the house of Jacob, who came to Egypt, were seventy.” They were twelve tribes totaling seventy souls. If there was no redeemer in Egypt concerning Joseph, the Israelites would have perished, but that was not in the big picture.

A REALLY Big Picture!

- *Exodus 15:27 Then they came to Elim where there were twelve springs of water and seventy date palms, and they camped there beside the waters.*

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- This account was more than 400 years after the account of Joseph. The Israelites had grown into a group of millions from only seventy people of twelve descendents. That is really big picture!

An Even Bigger Picture!

- Matthew 1:21-23 “She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”²² Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:²³ “BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,” which translated means, “GOD WITH US.”
- Those seventy grew into millions, took the Promised Land, were carried away into exile and able to bring forth the Savior of the world! That is an even Bigger Picture!

The Biggest Picture of All!

- Genesis 15:5 God told Abraham “...Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”
- Hebrews 11:12 Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, *as many descendants AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE.*
- John 1:12-13 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name,¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
- Revelation 7:9-10 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches *were* in their hands;¹⁰ and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”
- What started out as a crime against a young man named Joseph ultimately led him through slavery, through imprisonment, through government, through deliverance, through nation building and through a Messiah and all who chose to follow Him. That is the Big Picture which God has been working behind the scene of the Christian.

Conclusion Summary

God's Love Story must be viewed as the overall Big Picture. He loves us so much that He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16). We must never forget that our lives in this realm are but one chapter of a greater theme overall. In the next lesson we will be covering the Plagues of Egypt.