

Tribulations are not for our destruction but rather for the process of transformation to be completed in us – even when it is a brother causing the trial! We are instructed through the dramatic account of Joseph that trials not only form character but also propel us into future destiny.

One day Jacob sent his son Joseph to check on the well being of his brothers ... yet, *when they saw him afar off... they conspired to kill him ..finally selling him into slavery.* As tragic an ordeal as rejection, captivity, assault and imprisonment must have been for a young lad of seventeen to go through, Joseph knew God had control of his life. Consequently, he matured in his captivity and tribulations. He never thought he was betrayed or a victim because he knew God had chosen him for a purpose. Joseph knew his identity and purpose *before* he went to Egypt because God showed him in dreams.

Joseph's brothers despised him contemptuously because he was greatly loved by their father and gifted with dreams ... even plotting to kill him to eliminate any possibility of the prophetic happening. They were horribly mean and resentful. Jealousy is resenting another for something regarded as theirs – as if something is being stolen from them. Similarly, envy spitefully resents another for their advantages or prosperity. Jealousy and envy usually are coupled together and, as epitomized in the sons of Jacob, try to destroy divine purpose. *For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.*

The evidence suggests that as a young lad Joseph had already learned of God's promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – that their seed was destined to become a nation. He becomes committed to his father's vision and the future fulfillment of God's promise. This is a necessary characteristic for the making of a great leader. Like his father Jacob, he also heard God through dreams, gaining valuable knowledge and direction for the future well being of his family.

Joseph is not self-centered or “I” focused; he is not filled with *bitter envy* or *selfish ambition*; nor is he is feeling sorry for himself or trying to free himself from bondage. This amazing young man desires God's will. Therefore he looks at situations as God working everything out for good according to the promise given for the future generations of his family ... and he prospers.

Eventually, he interprets Pharaoh's dream and discloses an adept plan for solving their national crisis. Pharaoh sets Joseph under him to rule Egypt. Because he knows his destiny, he is able to overlook his brothers' horrendous acts of cruelty saying,

"God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt."

Joseph knew his identity and purpose before he ever went to Egypt. He recognized his captivity was the opportunity to fulfill God's divine plan for his family's deliverance. He may have been an imprisoned slave – son of a shepherd sojourning in the fields of Canaan ... yet God transforms him into a father to Pharaoh – and lord and ruler of all Egypt!

These were times of great adversity in the world, yet the famine brought money and wealth to the Pharaoh of Egypt. Through it all, Joseph was not obsessed with the accumulation of riches but in the well fare of the people. Joseph established the first welfare system. His plan of assistance was solely for the people's benefit - not binding them in sustained helplessness but providing them with the opportunity to prosper.

God's will has always been for man to prosper and provide for his family. Joseph renewed their expectations by not only giving them seed to eat – but also seed to plant. Their prosperity was in their seed potential ... much like the adage: "You can give a man a fish and feed him for a day or you can teach him how to fish and he will be fed for life." The Egyptians could have eaten all their seed and like the gaunt and ugly cows portrayed in Pharaoh's dream, devour their future seed potential. Joseph directs them in how the seed should prosper ... not just bread for today - but seed to fulfill their tomorrows.

Seed has tremendous significance in the Bible such as *seedtime and harvest* or *spilling his seed on the ground* ... that is, sowing seed into earthly things instead of spiritual – the temporal realm rather than into the eternal. Reference is often made to the *seed of Abraham* or the *good seed*. Because seed has the ability to reproduce itself again and again, we can have confidence that the matrix of His purpose can be reproduced in us. If we are of the *good seed*, meaning our potential is already sealed in us – we are growing in His purpose.

Many of us have been instructed and encouraged by Dr. Mark Hanby's message, "QUALIFYING THE SEED." He reveals an extraordinary understanding of *the process* for perfection of godly seed. According to this revelation, there is a necessity of not only being hidden in the House but also of allowing trials and tribulations to define our purpose. Certainly Joseph is an excellent example of how trials and tribulations defined his purpose – he is a seed planted in a foreign land for his nation's posterity.

We likewise have been given seed. We have the option of spilling this seed in the earth to fulfill our personal ambitions and as symbolized by the emaciated cows of Pharaoh's dream – devour our potential ... or we can plant our seed of purpose into another generation and eternally increase its productivity and measure. We actually take our knowledge of the kingdom of God to a new depth

of understanding as His seed regenerates 'Who He is' in the earth as the risen Body of Christ!

Joseph had a plan for Egypt's prosperity. God used him because he was not consumed with jealousy or envy towards those who were blessed. His plan for Egypt's success is significant to us as well because the objective was the well being of the people. Religious systems and welfare agencies minimize the potential of people because they target the symptoms and not the cause. They lost sight of the true objective and settled on a goal of financially aiding their present problems, not self-sufficiency but rather total dependency.

Joseph was a compassionate leader who considered the poor and planned for their success. Likewise, Jesus had tremendous compassion for the well being of the people - His whole purpose in life was to be about the business of His Father's kingdom. Jesus was consumed with compassion to do His Father's work. "*Zeal for My Father's House has eaten me up!*" Compassion literally means: 'with-zeal.' Passion is a motivator - whether it is for God's will or for selfish ambitions. Godly compassion is the desire to help our brother achieve his prophetic destiny and in so doing we fulfill ours.

If jealousy and envy are in our root system we will intentionally work *against* the well being of others - resenting their success. If we are self-seeking, our jealousy hinders God's purpose from being accomplished in and through us. Since *they apart from us could not be made complete*, we need each other to function in ministry and accomplish the finished works of Christ. We desire to be a manifestation of His perfect work, *being fitly framed together* in the risen Body of Christ, but if we judge, mock or speak evil of others, we are not only expressing a mean and ugly spirit but we are destroying His work! Jealousy and envy are hidden roots of the Destroyer that plant themselves deep within us to destroy our divine purpose.

Why is this relevant for us? Jealousy between the saints destroys our future potential. God's desire is for His Church to live in the double portion of His Spirit. The Church is in transition - this is the transfer of power that establishes a new order for the ministry of the saints. The heart of the father must turn toward the children and the children towards the father before we see the increase of God's power fill the earth.

We learn from biblical history that adversity has the capability of transforming man's will into God's purpose. He uses trials and tribulations to transform our nature into His. Therefore, if God is restoring His House and the process involves some reshaping of character and redefining of purpose, we eagerly comply because our goal is reaching our prophetic destiny in Him.

Everyone has trials in life but some look at these as catastrophic or as hardships to endure rather than as a challenging contest to win. Tribulation qualifies seed and builds our character. Great men develop their skills by making the trials and challenges in their life successful. This is what the Apostle James meant when he said, "*Count it all joy when you fall into various trials.* Challenges

should be met with plans to succeed. We set goals to make sure that each trial accomplishes His complete will for us.

Some of us came from dysfunctional or abusive families, yet if our resolve is to fulfill His plan as He reveals it, walk in forgiveness and being forgiven – then like Joseph, we are not a victim but rather a very prosperous overcomer. Joseph believed the dreams God gave him were truly a divine plan for living his life. He was totally convinced that what God says, happens!

If we agree with God's Word and become one with Him in thought and action, we likewise will achieve our prophetic destiny. If we believed God is truly manifesting His will to us, we would be living as mighty, valiant men instead of forever wondering *what* His will is ... or questioning if we are even *in* His will!

May His precious Word expand and flourish in you ... increasing your prosperity in every dimension of life ... enhancing your character through challenging tests ... and ultimately empowering you with a godly passion to achieve your prophetic destiny in Him.

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