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Joseph's Suffering And Triumph

“Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good” Genesis 50:20

A. Intro

To begin with there isn't any way that we can fully do justice in our short study to Joseph's life, but what we can hope to do is study the trauma that he experienced out of all this, how it impacted his life and the faith that sustained him.

When people think about Joseph the concepts that usually come to mind are: his brothers sold him into slavery, he was falsely accused in Egypt, ended up in prison, made second in command under the Pharaoh, the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine, and the statement he made that, You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.

An interesting point is that the statement Joseph made in Genesis 50:20 came later on in his life. I can't find any record that this was something that he believed at the onset of his life in Egypt, but was actually a conclusion that he had come to later on down the road.

What we want to note is the psychological trauma that Joseph went through as the result of what his brothers did to him, the state of his heart, how all the things he suffered impacted him, his character and doctrinal integrity, his grace and faith and ultimately his spiritual victory over all his earlier tragic circumstances!

To simply summarize Joseph's life with a single statement does not do justice to all the things he suffered. But by studying his life and soul we can look at a person who suffered in so many ways the same things that so many believers have suffered, either before they came to Christ or afterward!

And by looking at this man's life we can learn some things that we can apply to ourselves. We can see that in time God brought him through all these things victorious in every area of his life and his soul. And if God did it for him, he'll do it for us! So we have hope.

B. Family Background.

Joseph was the firstborn son from the union of Jacob and Rachel, the woman he was in love with. *“And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son.” Genesis 30:24*

Rachel also asked for another son, who ended up being her demise, *Ben-Oni*, whom Jacob named *Benjamin*. *“And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.” Genesis 35:18*

Joseph, when he was seventeen, was tending the flocks with the sons of *Bilhah*, Rachel's maidservant, and *Zilpah*, Leah's maidservant. *“These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.”* Genesis 37:2

Now we start to get into the family's dynamics. Joseph brought back to his father a bad report about what was going on. So what do you think his brother's reaction over this would be? We can see the brother's resentment toward Joseph building up over a period of time over several things.

Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, *“Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.”* Genesis 37:3 One, because he was born to him in his old age. And two, more than likely due to the fact that he was the firstborn between him and Rachel, who was the only one that he really loved out of the four women.

This favoritism, which occurs in so many home and is definitely to be avoided by all parents, was obvious to all his other sons and created a cause of resentment toward Joseph by his older brothers. In fact, they hated him so much they couldn't speak a kind word to him. *“And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.”* Genesis 37:4

And when Joseph had a dream, they hated him all the more! Dreams were often regarded in society as a sign of divine favor and communication. *“And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.”* Genesis 37:5

And when he told them what the dream entailed, that he would rule over them, they hated him all the more! *“For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made **obeisance** to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, **Shalt thou indeed reign over us?** or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? **And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.**”* Genesis 37:7,8

And when he had another dream, and told them what this new dream was, and in that dream his father, mother and brothers would all bow down before him...well one can see the rage building up in his brothers. *“And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.”* Genesis 37:9

Even his father rebuked him over the matter, and we see that his brother's resentment was based upon envy of him. *“And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.”* Genesis 37:10,11

C. The Betrayal.

Joseph's brothers had moved the flocks to near Shechem and his father, Israel, (Jacob), sent Joseph there to check on them. *“And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I. And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.”* Genesis 37:12-14

It was there that his brothers plotted to kill him and throw his body into a cistern. Reuben intervened in the matter and tried to get them to just throw him into a cistern without killing him so he could retrieve him later. *“And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.”* Genesis 37:21

It's interesting what the brothers said when they saw Joseph coming toward them; they called him a **dreamer**. *“And they said one to another, Behold, this **dreamer** cometh.”* Genesis 37:19 We can see their resentment spewing forth.

All during this terrifying ordeal, as his brothers were wanting to kill him, Joseph was begging and pleading for his life. *“And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.”* Genesis 42:21 So they decided to sell him to the slave traders. *“Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content.”* Genesis 37:27

The Ishmaelites took Joseph down to Egypt where they in turn sold him to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard. *“And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard.”* Genesis 37:36

We also need to keep in mind that Joseph could have very well believed that his father was in on the plot because he sent him down to his brothers! Especially after his father rebuked him when he told his dad that he was going to bow down before him too! So if your dad was angry, rebuked you and sent you down to a trap, what would you think?

Now we want to stop and think about all the emotional trauma this seventeen year old boy was going through. His heart was torn to pieces; he was ripped from the love and security of his home; his whole family had turned against him; he suffered the maximum form and level of rejection and abandonment; he was sold off into slavery and was taken down into a land he knew not what fate awaited him there.

From a study of Joseph's life we will find things that we have been talking about that might strike a familiar chord with many a believer: fear, probably some anger, grief, betrayal of trust and love, repression and/or suppression of emotions, dissociation, shutting down of a part of the psyche as a defense mechanism, etc..

D. The Passing Of Time.

Some will say, though, that Joseph was victorious over all this because of his statement, *“Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good”* Genesis 50:20 But this was a statement that he had made many years later on in his life. Now Joseph had been in Potiphar's house for a period of time before Potiphar's wife falsely accused him. After that he spent several years in prison. The Word says that Joseph was now **thirty years old** when he entered into Pharaoh's service. *“And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.”* Genesis 41:46

Once again we have to stop and remind ourselves of what Joseph had gone through. There was all the aforementioned trauma of being horribly ripped from his childhood home; becoming a slave in a foreign land; now falsely accused; facing a husband's wrath; and thrown into prison which could end up in death, being tortured, or a life sentence.

And we want to have a time check. He was taken from his former life at the young age of seventeen and now he's thirty years old. **Thirteen years have passed!** We also want to remember that emotional trauma is complex because it's never just one feeling that one has to deal with, but a cluster of emotions that we have to sort out and deal with.

We know how Joseph was taken from the prison and put in charge of Pharaoh's palace because he was able to interpret Pharaoh's dreams with God's help. *“And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed 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 will I be greater than thou.”* Genesis 41:39,40

But what we want to note is that this *opened the door* for Joseph to walk into this promotion from the prison to the palace, the *rag to riches* idea, but that wasn't enough to keep him there! It was Joseph's organizational skills and God's grace that kept him in that place of favor with the Pharaoh.

Just because one held a high position in Pharaoh's government did not necessarily translate into it being a permanent position, as the chief baker and cup bearer found out. *“And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound.”* Genesis 40:1-3

Joseph displayed organizational skills when he was a young man at home where his father made for him, not a multicolored robe, but a long sleeved robe. It's true that Jacob loved him more, but the long sleeved coat showed that he held a position. It was a robe where the sleeves extended down to the hands, and its hem went down to the feet; more tailored to the idea of management than working. *“Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.”* Genesis 37:3

Obviously these organizational skills that were displayed at an earlier age were not at the level needed to run a world class government. So what other factors could have contributed to this level of skill?

With the Lord's help Joseph further developed his skills in the running of Potiphar's household. And when he was thrown into prison, the warden put him in charge of the prison and its prisoners, thus further developing his skill. *“And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.”* Genesis 39:22,23

There was also the added impetus of **he had to make it work!** The tragedy of the past was behind him, in a manner of speaking, and here he was a young man who was a stranger in a foreign land. So all there was left for him to do was to concentrate on his work.

But there was also a subconscious factor at work in him that he may not have been aware of that drove him as well. And how do I know that it was in him? Because it's in everyone; it's human nature. When his brothers wanted to kill him, but sold him off into slavery instead, his whole life was thrown into **chaos**, with its resultant sense of insecurity and fear! This trauma would create in the soul a need to be in control of the things going on around him for protection. **So organization would prevent chaos!**

Joseph's organizational skills came from having an organized mind. And this organized mind not only influenced how he handled things in the outside world, but how he handled things in his thinking, emotions and faith.

One of the necessary skills involved in being a great organizer is the ability to **categorize** or **compartmentalize** things so that you know where to put them and deal with them, either now, or later on down the road.

When the soul is overwhelmed with emotional trauma, such as what Joseph went through and many others in their youth, there is no way that the individual, especially when they are young, can deal with all the pain, hurt, anger grief and any other emotions that they may be experiencing at that time.

The first order of business is **to survive the trauma event so one can survive and go on in life**. This is why those who have suffered childhood abuse are called survivors. As we have pointed out the repression of emotions, or dissociation, are childhood survival defense mechanisms people employ to do that.

And so is compartmentalizing. This is where we take certain emotions and certain traumatic things we go through in life and put them, so to speak, in a basket. Where, perhaps, we can deal with them later on, or maybe not at all. It's a way of handling them without having to deal with them. And the reason why we do that is because we can't handle them. At least not then.

Which brings us back to Joseph and his organizational skills that came from his organized mind. How could Joseph have survived what he went through with his brothers and afterward? We know he exercised faith, but what we're talking about is how did he handle his emotions while going through all this?

We know that Joseph applied survival defense mechanisms like everyone else does because he was human, because he was a young man of seventeen years of age, and because he was begging for his life! “*And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.*” Genesis 42:21

His brothers said that he was distressed of soul, *nephesh tsarah*, which covers such as ideas: *tremendous stress, anxiety, fear and terror*. Joseph was *frightened to death*, as we would say. One of *tsarah's* derivatives is to scream shrilly.

Can we not imagine how terrified Joseph was? Surrounded by his older brothers who wanted to kill him! The terror! The betrayal of love and trust! The family unit is to be the one place where children are supposed to feel sheltered, protected and loved, but for Joseph it turned into a place of terror. **Can we not see the influence this would have on his soul?**

Then it goes on to say that he pleaded with them, or *besought* them. The word used is the hithpael infinitive of *chanan*. This word was used when one was **imploring the mercy** of a god or a king; a supplication that was usually done on bended knee, and here it's idea is **intensified**. In other words, **Joseph was begging his brothers not to kill him!**

Did Joseph believe the threat was real? Yes! Did Joseph want to live? Yes! Was Joseph traumatized emotionally? Yes! Was Joseph in a survival defense mode? Yes! He was begging for his life!

Joseph survived this traumatic situation, but the stress was not over. What would the slave traders do to him? Where would they take him? What would his new owners do to him? And later on, what would happen to him in prison? One stressful situation after another with each one having to be dealt with by a survival defense mechanism, such as in begging for your life. Now compartmentalism comes into play, because it is a survival defense mechanism that the soul employs to deal with trauma.

We want to note that Joseph characterized his existence in Egypt as the land of his **suffering**. “*And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.*” Genesis 41:52 Even though he had been promoted later on to a high position, power and wealth, there was suffering going on inside of him as the result of what had been done to him by his brothers.

Repressing, or the compartmentalizing of one's painful emotions is not a denial of doctrine or faith. It's a defense mechanism that the soul automatically employs to survive. Faith can be there all along with a view of moving forward and getting past the trauma.

Dealing with our emotions is not a cut and dried matter that can be done at the flick of a switch. Sometimes it takes years to deal with him, especially those that are painful that we have repressed in our younger days. Dissociating ourselves from a painful and traumatic event; repressing it all into the subconscious, is something that people do, but oftentimes later on in life we will have to “*face our inner demons*”.

Now Joseph was thirty years old when he began his service for the Pharaoh and when Pharaoh gave him a wife, *Asenath*, the daughter of the priest of On. *Asenath* bore him two sons toward the end of the seven years of plenty putting Joseph now around thirty six to thirty seven years old. See how the time goes by.

On is the Hebrew word for *Heliopolis*, or the City of the Sun, or more accurately the city where the worship of the sun god, *Atum*, was centered. It's interesting that Joseph married a woman whose father was the priest who conducted the worship of *Atum*! But what could one say to the Pharaoh in these circumstance? “No thanks!”

Apparently the Pharaoh did this because he saw that Joseph was a spiritual man, a man in whom the spirit of God, Elohim, resided. “*And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?*” Genesis 41:38 And what better arrangement in Pharaoh's mind than to have him allied with the priest of *Atum* through marriage.

This brings up some interesting points. What about marrying outside of Israel's racial line? What about the idea of right man right woman? And what about having a politically arranged marriage? How does one reconcile all these things? **And I say, go back and look at what this poor guy went through and just mind your own business!**

E. *Forgetting* The Past.

In Genesis 41:51 Joseph said that God had made him forget all his **toil** and his father's household, “*And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.*” To *forget* is the piel preterite of *nashah*, which is both intensive and causative.

To **forget** is to fail to remember, to be unable to recall, to push something out of one's mind; it can be done intentionally or unintentionally, or used as a figure of speech, such as in forgiving someone. It is where memories are unable to be recalled and can come about as the result of Alzheimer's disease, or by trauma resulting in amnesia. It can also come about as the result of a psychological defense mechanism where painful memories are repressed down into the subconscious to avoid pain.

In Lamentations 3:17 the prophet Jeremiah said that he had forgotten prosperity. “*And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forgat prosperity.*” Which is to say that any prosperity he had experienced happened so long ago it's as if he never experienced it. It's not that he had never had any prosperity in his life, but it was so long ago it was as if he never had it at all.

Perhaps some of this idea is found in Joseph's statement that God made him forget his toil and suffering and his father's household. It all happened so long ago, it's as if I never had a family! Remember, Joseph is around thirty eight or thirty nine years old by this time.

Suffering also can make one *forget* the prosperity they had in life, as with Jeremiah. But so can **prosperity** make one *forget* the suffering they have gone through!

So Joseph didn't forget because of Alzheimer's disease, nor due to amnesia, and he wasn't that old. But the text shows that there was a certain amount of forgetting due to repressing feelings into the subconscious because of the emotional trauma he went through, which were revealed later on in the reunion with his family.

There are many ways that we can *forget* a painful past. One, we can consciously put it out of our minds. Two, we can disregard it as being of no value, inconsequential, of no importance to us. Three, we can do it as a defense mechanism avoidance technique to protect our souls. Four, so we can concentrate on a present crisis. Five, present details and responsibilities occupy our minds throughout the day. Six, physical pain tends to get our minds off of things. Seven, prosperity tends to help us forget what we've gone through. And eight, there is the idea of forgetting due to forgiveness.

But what does it mean to forget? Does it mean that you have actually forgot something and can't remember it to save your life? Does it mean that you have forgiven? Does it mean that you have dealt with it and truly put it behind you in life?

I think that when we get into serious emotional trauma that Joseph, and many other believers have gone through in life, we will find many of these aspects involved. I think with Joseph there was forgiveness of his brothers, and there were also elements of repression going on as well. There were also the elements of pressure, responsibility, pain and trying to survive the present crisis that he had to deal with. **In time, Joseph put what had been done to him by his brothers behind him and went on to try to live his life.**

The first thing he mentioned that he had forgot was his *toil, amal*. *Amal* looks at both the inner condition of the soul, as well as what one is going on outside that has affected it. When the soul is brought into view, it speaks of affliction, drudgery, spiritual anguish, to be weary, misery and exhausted. It also looks at the factors going on in one's life that caused that mental, or emotional, state in the soul. In a positive sense it can also denote the positive result that transpired out of all that.

So which is it you say? All of them! One has to understand the Semitic mind that spoke with a smaller word vocabulary. When they used a word it always had a cluster of related ideas that came with it. So when they expressed a concept all its aspects resonated, although in a given context one nuance will be in the foreground.

Weariness, affliction, exhaustion and anguish of the soul are brought out, alongside what one had to go through, and how it ended up on a positive note!

The **worker** labors hard all day in the field; he ends up weary and exhausted, but he has money at the end of the day to take home to his family.

The **businessman** was physically and mentally tired from all his travels and talking to people, but at the end of the trip he has made a nice profit.

The **student** of the Torah labored hard over the scrolls each day, which left him weary of mind and body, but he gained wisdom and knowledge.

The **believer** goes through a trial causing him much anguish of soul, but he comes out the other end with relief, healing and victory.

The **slave** has a life of drudgery and hard labor. So what positive thing does he receive? He has food for the day and a place to stay.

For **Joseph** *amal* is how he concluded his life up to the point that he got a wife and two children. His life as a slave in Potiphar's house, *amal*; his time in prison, *amal*. But remember, *amal* didn't just look at the outside, but the inside as well. The hurt, the trauma, the anguish of soul were all as the result of his external situation, which had been caused by his brothers. But now that things had turned for him he had forgotten it.

The second thing that Joseph forgot was his **father's household**. He put it as, "*For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.*" We note that he didn't put it as my father and brothers, but in a **very impersonal way** of all my father's household. It's more of looking at them as the people who just happen to live there.

And when he's talking like this he's referring back to the life that he used to have! How did he know that his family was still alive? They could have all died by now for all he knew! So, in a sense, the whole thing that had gone on back then was still with him. How many of us have had things happen to us in our childhood that still live on in the present?

There was a time that he dearly loved them all and was close to them, but when his brothers tried to kill him and sold him off into slavery, that pretty much said it all. This was the worse form of rejection by one's family. And the message they sent to him was clear. "OK, I get it. You don't love me. You didn't want me. I get it!" Now they were the people of a family I used to have in the dim and distant past. They're just the people who were in my father's household.

I know that Joseph had repressed his emotions and compartmentalized the whole tragic affair that his brothers put him through because: **one**, because he was human; **two**, he had to survive and go on in faith; **three**, because of his weeping when all those feelings came gushing forth; and **four**, the way he handled his brothers when he spoke **harshly** to them, "*The man, who is the lord of the land, spake **roughly** to us, and took us for spies of the country.*" Genesis 42:30 We have to ask ourselves why he didn't tell them who he really was on his first encounter with them? Why the charade? Why the deception? Why his harsh treatment of them?

He knew that they were his brothers, but they didn't recognize them. *“And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.”* Genesis 42:8 They started discussing their guilt, (see how our emotions can still affect us years later on in our lives), over what they had done to him, but they didn't realize that he could understand their conversation. And here we begin to see Joseph **weeping** for the first time. *“And he turned himself about from them, and **wept**; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.* Genesis 42:24

On Joseph's second encounter with his brothers, when they brought back his younger brother Benjamin with them, he rushed out of the room and broke down and **wept** at the sight of his him. *“And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son. And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to **weep**; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there.”* Genesis 43:29,30

On Joseph's third encounter with his brothers, when they were brought back because of a guise that he played on them, on this occasion he could no longer control himself. He sent his attendants out of the room and broke down in **uncontrollable sobbing** so loud that the Egyptians hear him. And he finally told them who he was. *“Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And **he wept aloud**: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, **I am Joseph**; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.”* Genesis 45:1-3

After this, when he was going to send them back to get his father, once again he hugged Benjamin and **wept** and he kissed and wept over his brothers. *“And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and **wept**; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and **wept** upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.”* Genesis 45:14,15

A little side note on this, when Joseph was sending them back to get his father, as they were leaving we see his love and a little affectionate humor come out when he said, *“Don't quarrel on the way!”* Genesis 45:24 NIV

And later one when his father came down to Egypt, and Joseph saw him for the first time in around twenty years, Joseph hugged and hugged his father and **wept** for a long time. *“And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.”* Genesis 46:29

We know that Joseph survived this childhood crisis, and we know that he kept moving forward by faith, for he had his dream that he would rule over his brothers, and that his father and brothers would bow down before him. He didn't know **how** it was going to happen; he didn't know **where** it was going to happen; and he didn't know **when** it was going to happen. All he knew was that **it was going to happen!**

Just like his forefather, Abraham, based his life on the promise that God was going to give him a son. He, too, didn't know when, where and how it was going to happen. All he knew was it was going to happen because God promised it!

So we have to ask ourselves, is there a promise, or promises, from God that we are hanging on to in life? Is it that he will never leave us, nor forsake us? Is it that he will provide all our needs? Or that he will answer our prayers? Or that we can have communion with him everyday? Or the promise of the eternal resurrection?

Joseph realized, and maybe it was just then at that point in time that he realized, that God put him through all that for the dual purpose of saving their lives, a physical matter, and the one that God would use to preserve his elect, a spiritual matter. *“And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.”* Genesis 45:7

What this shows is that God can use a believer for his own purpose, that the believer can be strong in his faith, have doctrinal integrity and forward momentum, but still have tremendous emotional trauma in the soul that they have to deal with. And it also shows, that at the end of it all, God brings them through to the other side with healing, release, freedom, happiness and great prosperity, as well as accomplishing his will.

Joseph was put through a horrible ordeal in his childhood by his brothers; one that created a lot of scar tissue in his soul. His scar tissue didn't go away on the camel train by the slave traders. Nor did it go away while he was in prison. But over the years of his life it did finally consummate in the reunion with his family.

Normal childhood survival defense mechanisms can be seen in all this as he tried to survive what he was going through. We see repression, compartmentalism and dissociation from his family. We also see tremendous hurt and grief and probably some other things. But we also see faith, forward momentum, the maintaining of his doctrinal integrity and so many other things.

And we also see that God was working in all this to bring about his purpose. And even while he was living all those years in Egypt, with all that he had to go through, we see God prospering him in every area.

From seventeen years of age until he was thirty and began to serve the Pharaoh was thirteen years of his life gone by. The seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine put him now at forty four years of age! Twenty years had gone by before his reunion with his family. He was able to spend many years with his father after that, (seventeen), and was finally laid to rest when he was one hundred and ten years old. *“So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.”* Genesis 50:26

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