

Coat of Many Colors

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung 2/18/2017

God is involved in our lives much more than we know. Let's ask ourselves this question, "Why has God called us at this time?" That's a big question. Why does He not call everybody now, or just wait and call everyone later at the time of the Great White Throne Judgment? What does God expect of you and me right now?

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph had to begin pretty much from scratch learning about God and what He is doing. They certainly did not have all the literature, history, doctrine that we have available to us today to go by. And because Jesus has come, died, and sent His Spirit to motivate, guide and teach His Church that He raised up, we have so much more going for us today than they did.

We can see that many men in the Bible were called for special and unique responsibilities in the Plan of God, but why are we called now, at this time?

God has given us these immeasurable gifts for a purpose. He expects **great feats** and accomplishments from us. Jesus is speaking to His disciples right after the Foot-washing...

John 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and **greater works than these shall he do**; because I go unto my Father.

Jesus said that **we** will do the same works He performed – and even **greater!** How can that be? Brethren, what have you been called to do? Jesus clearly says that "big things" will continue to take place... We have not been called now simply because He wants us to feed His flock and preach His Gospel. There are people who need to be inspired and encouraged; there are lives that we need to make a difference in; there are areas where we need to let our light shine.

The entire Bible is a record of God's interventions, but in today's sermon we will look at Joseph – the son of Jacob/Israel – and see some of the many places where God intervened throughout Joseph's life for an extremely important reason.

Genesis 37:3 Now Israel [Jacob] loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a **coat of many colors**.

What wonderful gifts God has given us: Since we have all the literature, history, doctrine, Bible and God's Spirit, God must have given us these precious gifts for a most important reason – else He would have waited and shared them with all the world at a later time.

So much has been given to us – and Jesus says that because we've been called now and given so much – much shall be required of us.

Luke 12:42 And the Lord said, **Who** then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household,

Luke 12:43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when He comes shall find so doing.

Luke 12:44 Of a truth I say unto you, that He will make him ruler over all that He has.

Luke 12:47 And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

Luke 12:48 For unto whomsoever **much is given**, of him shall be much **required**: and to whom men have **committed much, of him they will ask the more**.

Are we doing what God expects of us? God's direct intervention is action taken to guide and direct our lives in preparing the way for our entrance into the Kingdom of God. That is true. But what if God has bigger plans now for our lives than we are taking into consideration?

Did you ever notice how often, when God called **men of faith**, their response was, “Here I am?” We will see an example of this today. (Genesis 37:13)

Meaning, “I’m at your disposal Lord – do with me as you will.”

It is an important question: “What is God doing with us at this point?” Possibly by looking at God’s many **focused interventions** in the life of Joseph we will be able to see how intricately God is involved in our lives, as well.

Are we approved of God? Are we the genuine Children of God? Spiritually, how did we get to where we are today? An incredible number of actions on God’s part have taken place in order for us to be the Christians we are today.

It seems to me that many of God’s people are willing to “blend into the woodwork” and try hard to be un-noticed. But God has definitely called us to be involved and productive. What is our purpose for being called by God?

It is easy for us to believe that God is so engrossed in monumental activities that He is too involved to be **mindful of us**. As a young man, that is what David wondered as he tended his father’s sheep by night. He looked up at the vast stars in the heavens ... And he prayed:

Psalm 8:1 O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Who hast set thy glory **above** the heavens.

Psalm 8:3-4 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visit him?

And yet, God is **entirely** mindful of us because His whole purpose is to bring His Children to Glory (Hebrews 2:10).

We are wrong to think that God is too far away and too busy to be concerned with the things that are happening in our lives. It is good that we know that He is wise enough, and that He possesses the unlimited capacity to **intervene** in every aspect of our lives. God intervenes in our lives and brings us out of the ways of this evil world.

God could raise up stones in our place – but that is **not His way** (Matthew 3:9). He requires our **direct** involvement. In His love, He desires that we, His Children, overcome this world – and He gives us the mind, the ability and heart to do so, and His Holy Spirit to motivate us. He intercedes in our time of need. He never lets down. He answers our prayers. He brings about a myriad of circumstances that we are unaware of – even in our daily lives. He is merciful, kind and gentle as He does so. He creates, gives, and cares for us – in order to bring us into the unity of God the Father and Jesus Christ, and make us into His image.

We know that God, through His Spirit, is guiding us into His truth. Jesus said:

John 16:13 When the Spirit of truth, is come, it will guide you into all truth.

We are the beneficiaries of all God’s truth and blessings - - God’s Church, and the end-time Blessings of Abraham. No one – ever – has been given more than we have received at this moment. That tells me that God has some very big expectations of us.

In looking at Joseph’s life, I want to explore the intricate details that God reveals in preparation for bringing His people into the Promised Land. And in the same way – the parallel to that for our day, is that we are being prepared for the Kingdom of God.

Joseph was born ~ 1745+ BC (Seems remote – but it is not – it is on-going) The Exodus likely occurred approximately 300 years later - somewhere around 1446-1447 B.C. The death of Joseph was about 1635 BC – that was more than 200 years before Moses would lead the Children of Jacob out of Egyptian bondage. And – it should not be surprising to see – God was very actively orchestrating events to bring about the Exodus.

What I would like for you to take from this lesson, brethren, is that God is every bit as involved – right now – in preparing His people for the World Tomorrow.

We have been discussing and studying Abraham, Isaac and Jacob of late – and sometimes it seems that God **did not** require a great deal of what we would consider to be “Godliness” in their lives.

They were not going to Sabbath services with a hundred people every week – singing hymns – potlucks – and summer camps... And yet it is abundantly clear that they **have qualified** for the First Resurrection.

By their faith and actions, they each showed that **God** was **FIRST – PRIMARY** and **FORMOST** in their lives – so that God could say of them, “They **believed in the LORD**; and he counted it to them for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6) – as in Abraham’s case.

They had to believe and trust in God – and that is what God expected of them. They believed and trusted in God with all their might.

We’ve seen some great examples of what God had to put them through to bring them to the point of conversion.

There are two kinds of Belief – **Worldly and Godly**.

Brethren, please do not get the Bible concept of **belief** mixed up with the Protestant **practice of belief**.

Protestants believe that there was a Jesus – period. But they do **not** believe that it is necessary to believe what the Master taught. They believe that “Jesus **did it all**,” and there is no need to live a life of holiness as He gave us example. They do not believe that it is necessary to heed His teachings, observe the feasts of the Lord, or obey His Commandments – because He did those things **so that** we do not have to. They say that the Law of God was nailed to the cross – it is gone and done away with—Meaning that the Sabbath need not be kept... They spend their time nullifying the teachings of Christ. They read these Scriptures and conclude they are saved **in** their sins.

Acts 16:30-31 ...What must I do to be saved? And they said, **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and thou shalt be **saved**, and thy house.

Romans 10:9 That if thou shalt **confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus**, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be **saved**.

Romans 10:13 For whosoever shall **call upon the name of the Lord** shall be **saved**.

God is not mocked. Those who are disobedient to His laws will not be saved.

Those who will not forgive and reconcile will not be saved.

Those who do not love one another will not be saved.

Those who do not **believe** what Jesus taught – and **do not live** His **principles**, His high **standards**, His **rule**, and His **law of love** for one **another** in their lives – will not be saved.

Jesus will not have a rebellious and contradictory flock following Him.

Ancient Israel, and even the Adversary “**believed**” in Jesus, but to no avail.

Romans 10:21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a **disobedient** and **contradictory** people.

James 2:19 You **believe** that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

Hebrews 11:21 By faith **Jacob**, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; [Ephraim and Manasseh]; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

Hebrews 11:22 By faith **Joseph**, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his **bones**.

Of all the courageous **acts of faith** in Joseph's life, why would Paul single out this one instance about Joseph's bones as an act of faith?

The answer is that it demonstrates so vividly that Joseph believed that God would deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage.

Joseph didn't just believe it, he "knew it for a fact." In Joseph's mind he said, "**When** you leave Egypt – take my bones with you."

Genesis 50:25 And Joseph made the children of Israel swear, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

"Do not leave my bones in this God forsaken land."

Exodus 13:19 And Moses took the **bones of Joseph** with him: for he had strictly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

Joseph sincerely and fully **believed** that God would **surely deliver** the children of his father Jacob – the Children of Israel – from Egypt – and Joseph acted on it.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph **acted in Faith** – and that is what God expected of them. We – as Christians – must have that same kind of Faith.

God frequently **imposes His** will to direct and guide the affairs of man in the way that they should go.

No one in history has been given as much Godly knowledge and resources as we have received.

Genesis 37:2 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**.

They were not behaving themselves – and Joseph told Jacob about it.

Jacob's boys were very carnal and prone to evil deeds.

The older brothers were not living their lives as Jacob had taught them.

Like so many – they knew better – but, they just would not live right.

The **Title of today's sermon** is taken from this next verse:

Genesis 37:3 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 colors**.

Favoritism in a family is a dangerous thing.

Favoritism always engenders **envy**, hate and strife.

Genesis 37:4 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.

That environment was intolerable for Joseph.

Genesis 37:5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

Genesis 37:6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:

It was like a vision for Joseph – very vivid and real.

Joseph knew that it would come to pass that his brothers would bow down before him.

Genesis 37:7 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.

Joseph dreamed that his brothers would bow down before him.

The dream would prove to be true – but it was **not a wise** thing to tell his ruthless brothers.

Genesis 37:8 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 37:9 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.

God was showing Joseph that he would be used in a might way.

Why did God show these things to Joseph ahead of time?

It was so that when they came to pass – when they came to fruition – it would bring glory to God who had orchestrated the entire course of events.

Brethren, the point that I want to drive home is this: God is just as active today – directing events all around **us** – so that we will be eventually brought to glory.

Genesis 37:10 And Joseph 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?

It seemed like so much nonsense to Jacob who had lost Rachael in giving birth to Benjamin – Joseph's little brother.

Genesis 37:11 And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

Genesis 37:12 And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.

Genesis 37:13 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.**

"I'm willing, able and ready to do your will."

"I'm willing, able and ready to do God's will."

Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Samuel – they all said to God, "Here am I."

Brethren, have we said to God – "Here I am – use me as you will?"

Genesis 37:14 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 valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

Genesis 37:15 And a certain man [an angel of God] found [Joseph], and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou?

Genesis 37:16 And he said, I seek my brothers: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks.

Genesis 37:17 And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

Genesis 37:18 And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to **slay him.**

There was a lot of hate in that family.

Those brothers, all children of Israel, conspired with one another to kill Joseph.

Genesis 37:19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.

Satan always believes that he can deter the sure Plan of God.

Satan cannot derail God's Plan – but he keeps trying to disrupt it.

Genesis 37:20 Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

Genesis 37:21 And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.

Ruben did a lot wrong in his life – but here he is Joseph’s savior.

God intervenes through Ruben.

Genesis 37:22 And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

Thankfully, Ruben honored and respected his father, Jacob.

Genesis 37:23 And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph out of his coat, his **coat of many colors** that was on him;

They hated that Joseph had gotten something so special from his father.

Genesis 37:24 And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was **no water** in it.

He would have drowned. (Joseph could have used some water and food.)

Brethren, have we learned – without a doubt – that when things are going badly – **really** bad – that God is still in charge of what is happening?

Over and over we are seeing God’s intervention.

Do we believe it for ourselves? We should.

Genesis 37:25 And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites [that’s their cousins – the children of Ishmael] came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.

It was a spice caravan of camels.

Genesis 37:26 And Judah said unto his brethren, What **profit** is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?

“We can turn a profit here!” The Jews are known for having the proclivity of being the bankers and doing business – and turning a profit – to this day.

Genesis 37:27 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.

That was Ruben’s argument – “Joseph is our flesh and blood” – but Ruben has gone of somewhere.

So Judah says, “After all, He’s our brother and we can make a buck.” Never mind Judah was content to kill him an hour before.

Genesis 37:28 Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

Twenty pieces of silver – That was serious money.

Genesis 37:29 And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes.

“Rent his clothes” – that is a symbol of desperation, anguish and mourning.

Ruben was beside himself – “What happened to Joseph?”

Genesis 37:30 And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?

Genesis 37:31 And they took Joseph’s coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood;

Genesis 37:32 And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father [Jacob]; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son’s coat or no.

That was a big **cruel** lie. How could they have been so ruthless, mean, malicious, and merciless to their father.

Those were some hard, cold godless men.

Genesis 37:33 And [Jacob] recognized the [coat of many colors], and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.

That was so hateful – how can people be so un-feeling?

Genesis 37:34 And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.

You do not ever get **completely over** something that painful – the tragic loss of a loved one.

Joseph was the joy of his life – from the wife that Jacob loved – Rachael.

Genesis 37:35 And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.

It certainly seemed to **Jacob** that all was lost as far as **Joseph** receiving the birthright promises was concerned.

Jacob's hopes and expectations were dashed.

Genesis 37:36 And the Midianites sold [Joseph] into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard.

Genesis 38 is all about Judah and Tamar...

Joseph is still very young – 17 or 18, but highly industrious, diligent, moral, honest and – God fearing.

Genesis 39:1 And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither.

Brethren, if you haven't picked up on it yet – God is intimately involved in Joseph's life.

Everything Joseph touched turned to gold – he had the "Midas touch."

Genesis 39:2 And **the LORD was with Joseph**, and he was a **prosperous** man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

Genesis 39:3 And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the **LORD made** all that he did to prosper in his hand.

Genesis 39:4 And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.

Potiphar **trusted** Joseph entirely and put everything in Joseph's hands.

Genesis 39:5 And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the **LORD blessed** the Egyptian's house **for Joseph's sake**; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.

Selling Joseph to Potiphar was no accident. It was God's **direct intervention** – bringing Joseph into Pharaoh's presence.

We are wrong if we think that God is **too far** away and **too busy** to be concerned with the things that are happening in our lives. He is **intensely** interested with every facet of our being. It is good that we know that He is **wise** enough, and that He possesses the unlimited **capacity** to **intervene** in every incident of our lives.

Psalms 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble.

God is bringing about our salvation – our conversion – our growth – while He is working out His great Plan for all mankind.

God **intervenes**, personally, in our lives and brings us out of the ways of this evil world.

God fully intends to dwell among us and be intricately involved in our lives (Exodus 25:8).

How involved is God in preparing the way for our entrance into the Kingdom of God?

Let's go back and pick up the story where old man Jacob – now renamed Israel – passes the birthright down past Joseph's generation to his grand-children – the sons of Joseph.

We will see **Gods direct intervention** right here – directing Jacob to give the greater blessing to the youngest of the two boys.

Genesis 48:14 And Israel stretched out his **right** hand, and laid it upon **Ephraim's** head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn.

Ephraim would become England and the entire British Commonwealth – a company of nations because God had said to Jacob, "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a **company of nations** shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins (Genesis 35:11).

And Jacob purposely placed his left hand upon Manasseh's head, blessing him to become the **greatest nation** the world has ever seen – the United States of America.

All of this was done in response to God's promise to bless Abraham in the first place.

Genesis 48:15 And he blessed **Joseph**, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which **fed me all my life long** unto this day,

Did you notice that – Jacob gave God all the **credit** and **thanks** for everything?

That is a believing – converted – spirit.

Genesis 48:15 (again) Jacob blessed **Joseph**, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which **fed me all my life long** unto this day,

Jacob had twelve boys. Their descendants today are the Children of Israel. And except for Judah, most **do not** realize that they are the Children of the patriarch, Israel. Let's look at that in the New Testament.

We know that we are Abraham's seed and heirs to the promises because of our belief in Jesus (Galatians 3:29).

1Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and **be ready** always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

Stephen was ready – though he never got to read Peter's words...

Stephen's testimony

Acts 6:15 And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

Acts 7:8 ... Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

Except for the sons of Rachael – Joseph and Benjamin – Jacob's boys were very carnal and prone to evil works.

Acts 7:9 And the [ten oldest] patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but **God was with him**,

Please **notice** – **God's direct intervention** – "God was with Joseph." We will see how God's intervention in Joseph's life would establish the Children of Israel in Egypt. God led them into Egypt – so that He could deliver Israel from Egypt. Unbeknownst to Joseph, or anybody else for that matter, – God was working out the events and details in a very intricate manner. God would deliver Israel from Egypt – a picture of Passover – and bring them into the Promised Land – a picture of the Kingdom of God.

Acts 7:10 And delivered him [Joseph] out of all his afflictions, and gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

From near death – Joseph was delivered. Not only that, Joseph was raised to the highest prominence in Pharaoh’s court. What we are reading right here in the New Testament, is **Stephen’s** testimony before the High Priest and Council at Jerusalem – only hours before his death. Stephen is the first martyr in the New Testament. We certainly see how powerfully God used Stephen. Stephen’s testimony continues.

Acts 7:11 Now there came a dearth [a famine] over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance.

All the food, hay, and grain – everything was gone and used up.

Acts 7:12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. [ten of the twelve patriarchs]

Acts 7:13 And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.

Brethren, keep in mind that the High Priest and the Council – that Stephen was addressing – knew this story very well – having grown up with it weekly in the synagogue.

Stephen has each of them saying silently, “Yes, yes, yes...”

Acts 7:14 Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.

Seventy-Five souls – that was the **whole** entirety of Israel – in Egypt!

Acts 7:15 So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers,

Acts 7:16 And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre - machpelah’s - that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem.

Brethren, Sharon and I have had the privilege of visiting machpelah’s cave where Abraham is buried. It is a holy place for **Jews, Christians and Muslims** – who recognize Abraham as their father as well.

Acts 7:17 But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,

In a few hundred years Israel grew from 75 to Three million souls.

Acts 7:18 Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.

God was working out those details that would lead to the Exodus – All Israel being delivered from Egyptian bondage.

God directly altered the course of events leading up to calling Israel out of Egypt.

End: Coat of Many Colors