

RUSSELL SANDERS

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THE LIFE OF JOSEPH – LESSON 24

HAVE NO FEAR

We see in Genesis 50:15-21 the fear and anxiety of Joseph's ten older brothers. They were now back home in Goshen of Egypt. With Jacob now deceased, they were afraid that Joseph would now seek vengeance for the terrible wrong they had done to him as a teenager. They figured that he had not done so in the previous seventeen years in Egypt out of respect for their father. With their father now buried, what might he do to them? Would he make them slaves, or put them in prison as Joseph had been, or even put them to death as was in his power to do?

They were so fearful that they sent a messenger to Joseph because they were afraid to go to him personally. If he was going to have someone killed let it be the messenger instead of one of them. They told the messenger what to say. He was to ask Joseph to forgive his brothers of their trespass against him.

The messenger spoke the words to Joseph exactly as they had instructed. He said in 50:16, ***"Thy father did command before he died, saying..."*** and delivered the message. We do not know if Jacob had actually said this or if the brothers concocted the story out of fear for their lives. Nonetheless, it effectively touched Joseph and he wept over it. The brothers had never recognized that Joseph had truly forgiven them in his heart when they first arrived in Egypt.

The messenger did his job to "run interference" ahead of them. Now they presented themselves in person to Joseph. They fell down in obeisance before him and offered themselves to be his servants. Joseph rejected their offer of servitude. He told them in verse 19, ***"Fear not, for am I in the place of God?"*** He acknowledged that they had planned it for evil against him, but God had planned it for the good of Israel's family to save them.

He then promised that they and their families would be nourished. He spoke kindly to them and comforted them. Just as Jacob had a prophetic gift, so also was Joseph a prophet. God had shown him what was to come through dreams, interpretation of dreams, great understanding of God's plan, and wisdom from God on how to rule. These are the same attributes we find 1100 to 1200 years later in the prophet Daniel.

When we spend time in God's word and in deep prayer in the Spirit, we also can be given understanding of "the times and the seasons" in which we are living. We need not have any fear of it. However, just as Joseph had to prepare Egypt for hard times of famine, so also does wisdom from above prod us to make preparations.