

Genesis 45

THE "REVEAL" AND RECONCILIATION

Opening Thoughts

- * Marvelous imagery — some of which is lost in translation ...
 - ◆ Verse 2: He wept = He gave forth his voice in weeping
 - ◆ Verse 4: Come closer = Draw near

Opening Thoughts

- ◆ The LXX translates the Hebrew using the same Greek verb (εγγιζω) as Jas 4:8 [READ]
- ◆ Verse 26: He was stunned = His heart grew numb
- * We also have a marvelous picture of the essence of reconciliation — What?

Opening Thoughts

- ◆ Reconciliation pursues to offender!
- * Notice how Joseph — picturing Christ — has been and now in this final stage is actively pursuing his brothers
- * He makes the offer — Draw near ...

Opening Thoughts

- * But they must come and accept the offer of reconciliation
- * Which gives us a wonderful picture of what?
- * Christ's pursuit of sinners!!!

Structure of the Chapter

- * The stunning reveal and reaction ...
part 1 - vv. 1-3
- * The startling grace and reconciliation
- vv. 4-15
- * The solicitous bounty - vv. 16-20

Stunning Reveal - Part 1

- ◆ Up to now, Joseph had “outwardly” been cool, calm, and collected ...
- ◆ And now this shocking outburst of emotion
- ◆ Which must have completely confused the brothers!
- * And — his weeping was so strong that “everyone” heard it

Stunning Reveal - Part 1

- * Now, what would have surprised the brothers in v. 3 ... other than the obvious?
- ◆ He had to be speaking to them in Hebrew ...
- ◆ Which should have prepared them for the “big reveal” — I am Joseph

Stunning Reveal - Part 1

* Why does Joseph ask if his father is still alive?

◆ I have NO IDEA — other than his great desire to see his father ... its been 22 years

* How do the brothers react?

◆ They are “tongue-tied”

Stunning Reveal - Part 1

* Why were they tongue-tied?

◆ Because they were “dismayed”

* At first I did not like this translation — but once I looked up the definition of dismayed it is perfect

Startling Grace

- * So — I want to pause and reflect with some thought ??’s b4 we walk through the verses, and ...
- * Head off on a little excursus to address how we explain “The sovereignty of God in suffering”

Startling Grace

- * Thought questions first — let’s get your “brains in gear” ...
- * How can Joseph be so gracious?
 - ◆ Because he has discerned and accepted God’s providential control of his life

Startling Grace

* How does the text lead us to this conclusion about Joseph?

- ◆ Note vv. 5, 7, 8, 9 — God, God, God, God!!
- ◆ Perhaps his most commendable trait is the priority of God in his thoughts and actions

Startling Grace

* What has God's providential control produced in Joseph's character?

- ◆ Grace, forgiveness, and acceptance ...
- ◆ Despite how he has been treated
- ◆ Hated by his brothers and sold into slavery

Startling Grace

- ◆ Falsely accused and imprisoned
- ◆ Forgotten despite his kindness (cupbearer)
- * What was NOT produced in response to his circumstances?
- ◆ The slightest hint of pity or bitterness

Startling Grace

- * What providential “outcomes” did God produce in Joseph’s life?
- ◆ He elevated Joseph’s “station in life” — but not for Joseph’s gain ...
- ◆ He preserved the lives of “the many” though the life of “the one” — sound familiar?

Startling Grace

- ◆ God fulfills his plans to get the nation to Egypt
- * What primary tool has God used in Joseph's life to accomplish these outcomes?
- ◆ TRIALS — reminding us that ...

Startling Grace

- 🗑️ We need to be broken, or brought low, before God can confidently use us
- * Why does God so often need to use trials — and their attendant suffering?
- ◆ Because we are “stiff-necked” people!

Startling Grace

- * What one attribute is at the core of our hard-heartedness — and all sin really?
- ◆ Our desire for [autonomy](#)
- ◆ We want to do things our way ... not God's way

Startling Grace

- ◆ So God needs to bring trials — and suffering — into our lives to get our attention
- * Which brings us to our theological conundrum — God's sovereignty in suffering
- * And maybe more pointedly ...

Startling Grace

- * How do we reconcile the presence of evil in the world with a “good God,” and
- * How do we explain God’s apparent use of evil, at times, to accomplish his purposes?

Brief Excursus

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

The Problem of Evil

- * We note both in these events and our own lives the presence of evil in the world
- * In Gen 50:20 we will get Joseph's remarkable assessment, namely ...

The Problem of Evil

- * "You meant evil against me, (but) God meant it for good ..."
- * The presence of evil in the world raises an important theological question, namely ...

The Problem of Evil

- * How do we reconcile evil with an all-powerful, all-good God?
- * This gives way to a doctrinal branch of theology called — **theodicy** ...
 - ◆ Derived from two Greek words
 - ◆ Θεος = God; and δικη = justification

The Problem of Evil

- * Together they mean “**justification of God**” or “**justifying God**”
- * Which at the outset gives me great heartburn ...
- * God does not need to be “justified”

The Problem of Evil

- * Nevertheless, a “theodicy” is ...
 - ◆ An explanation for how God is not the chargeable or blameworthy cause of evil, and ...
 - ◆ It provides a Biblical response to charges made against God by the court of human opinion
- * Why do we try to reconcile, or defend, evil in the world?

The Problem of Evil

- ◆ Because evil is one of the most prominent and persistent arguments made to deny the existence of God
- * The argument proceeds like this ...
 - ◆ **Premise 1:** If God were all-powerful, he would **be able** to prevent evil

The Problem of Evil

- ◆ **P2:** If God were all-good, he would want to prevent evil ...
- ◆ **Therefore:** If P1 & P2 are true, there would be no evil in the world!
- * **BUT ...**
- ◆ **P3:** There is evil in the world

The Problem of Evil

- ◆ **Therefore:** No all-powerful, all-good God exists!
- * On the surface this is a logical and somewhat compelling argument ...
- * But, before we address it, let's define evil

The Problem of Evil

- * There are two categories of evil —
Any guesses as to what they are?
- ◆ **Physical evil** — natural disasters, illness, pain, and ...
- ◆ **Moral evil** — sin ... both of which arise from the Gen 3 fall (cf Gen 3:16-19)

The Problem of Evil

- * With that — Let's see how Scripture responds to the question of evil
- ◆ First — how does it NOT respond ... **With philosophical arguments**
- ◆ In other words — Scripture never seeks to explain the presence of evil ...

The Problem of Evil

- ◆ Instead — it acknowledges the presence of evil and God's response to it ...which is 3-fold
- * First is God's past response ...
 - ◆ God has always vindicated Himself by bringing periods of suffering (evil) to an end with acts of grace

The Problem of Evil

- * Can you think of some examples?
 - ◆ The exodus ... The entire book of Judges — and Job
- * Second is God's present response ...
 - ◆ To bring people to salvation and conform them to Christ — AKA God's "greater good"

The Problem of Evil

- * What passage might you appeal to for this category?
 - ◆ Of course — Rom 8:28-30 [READ]
- * What is the ultimate act of evil that God used for good?
 - ◆ Christ's crucifixion!

The Problem of Evil

- * Third is God's future response ...
 - ◆ Christ's return and Millennial Kingdom, and ...
 - ◆ The great white throne and Eternal State
- * In the end, we remember that ...

The Problem of Evil

- * God permits evil but is never the cause, or author, of it — Jas 1:13-18; Ps 5:4
- * So, how might you explain that evil is not anachronistic with an all-powerful and all-good God?

The Problem of Evil

- ◆ By God's granting human "free-will"...
- ◆ Which does not violate divine determinism
- * Why??
- ◆ Because man's free-will is ONLY "free" to act in accordance with its nature

The Problem of Evil

* What is the “nature” of unregenerate mankind?

◆ Depravity — Cf. Rom 3:10-12, 23

* Therefor, unregenerate mankind, operating in his “free-will” is only able to do what?

The Problem of Evil

◆ Sin — which they do “freely” w/o coercion

* In addition, physical evil works in accordance with its nature — Which is defined by what?

◆ The curse — cf. Gen 3:17 ... [READ]

The Problem of Evil

- ◆ Like mankind (Rom 8:23; 2 Cor 5:2,4), the earth is groaning under the weight of sin — cf. Rom 8:18-22 [READ]
- * So in the end — The better question is not the presence of evil, but why there is not MORE evil in the world ...

The Problem of Evil

- * To which we presently give thanks to the “restraining” work of the Holy Spirit (2 Thess 2:6-7), and ...
- * An all-powerful, all-good God!
- * One P.S. — we don’t resolve the tension by limiting any of God’s attributes, or denying the existence of evil
