

The Sovereign Hand of God in the Pit

Part Two: The God Who Directs Every Step

Life often feels like a series of ordinary decisions.

We make plans for the day. We drive familiar roads. We complete routine responsibilities. We have conversations that seem unremarkable at the time. Most days pass without any indication that something significant is taking place.

Yet Scripture teaches us that God is at work even in the ordinary moments.

His providence is not reserved for dramatic miracles or extraordinary events. He governs every detail of life according to His perfect wisdom. Nothing occurs apart from His sovereign will. The believer's confidence rests in the certainty that our lives are directed by a gracious Father whose purposes cannot fail.

Genesis 37 beautifully illustrates this truth.

After introducing Joseph and the growing tension within Jacob's household, Moses records the events that would set the remainder of Joseph's life into motion.

"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, KJV).

Jacob simply asks his son to check on his brothers.

Joseph simply obeys.

There is nothing remarkable about the assignment. It is the kind of responsibility a father might give to any trustworthy son. Joseph leaves home expecting to return after completing his task.

Neither Jacob nor Joseph realizes that this journey will change everything.

Yet God already knows.

The Lord who sees the end from the beginning has ordained every step of the journey.

The prophet Isaiah records the Lord's own declaration:

"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isaiah 46:10, KJV).

Nothing surprises God.

Nothing interrupts His purpose.

Nothing forces Him to reconsider His plans.

The believer finds great comfort in this truth because our lives are not governed by chance. We are not carried along by random events. Our heavenly Father rules over every circumstance with infinite wisdom and perfect goodness.

Joseph's response to his father deserves careful attention.

When Jacob tells him to go, Joseph simply replies, "Here am I."

Those words reveal a heart that is willing to obey.

Joseph does not argue.

He does not question his father's motives.

He does not ask whether the journey will be difficult.

He simply goes.

Throughout Scripture, this attitude characterizes those whom God graciously uses in His service.

Faithful obedience does not require complete understanding. God often calls His people to take the next step without revealing the entire path ahead. The Christian life is a life of trusting God's character when His purposes remain hidden from our view.

The psalmist reminds us:

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105, KJV).

Notice that Scripture is described as a lamp for our feet.

A lamp provides enough light for the next step. It does not reveal every turn in the road. God ordinarily leads His people in the same way. He gives sufficient light for today's obedience while asking us to trust Him with tomorrow.

Joseph obeyed because he trusted his father.

The Christian obeys because he trusts his heavenly Father.

As Joseph arrives in Shechem, an unexpected problem arises.

His brothers are gone.

What appeared to be a simple assignment has suddenly become uncertain.

Moses writes:

"And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks. 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 37:15-17, KJV).

This unnamed man appears only briefly in the narrative.

His name is never given.

His background is never explained.

He speaks a few words and disappears from the story.

Yet his brief appearance changes the course of biblical history.

Without this encounter, Joseph might have returned home.

Without this conversation, he might never have reached Dothan.

Without reaching Dothan, the events that eventually preserved Jacob's family during the coming famine would have unfolded differently.

This is providence.

God often accomplishes His purposes through people whose names we never know and through moments that seem insignificant at the time.

We naturally look for God's hand in extraordinary events.

Scripture teaches us to recognize His hand in ordinary ones.

A conversation.

A delayed trip.

An unexpected meeting.

A closed door.

A new opportunity.

The Lord frequently guides His people through what appear to be commonplace circumstances.

Solomon expressed this truth with remarkable clarity:

"A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps" (Proverbs 16:9, KJV).

Joseph made real decisions.

His brothers made real decisions.

The unnamed man made real decisions.

Each person acted willingly and responsibly.

Yet over every human decision stood the sovereign purpose of God.

Divine sovereignty does not eliminate human responsibility. Rather, it assures us that God's eternal purpose cannot be frustrated by human actions.

This truth reaches its greatest expression in the gospel itself.

From a human perspective, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ appeared to be the triumph of wicked men. Judas betrayed Him. Religious leaders falsely accused Him. Roman soldiers nailed Him to a cross.

Yet Scripture reveals what was taking place behind the scenes.

Peter proclaimed on the Day of Pentecost:

"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23, KJV).

Those responsible for Christ's death acted according to the sinful desires of their own hearts. They bore full responsibility for their actions.

At the same time, the cross unfolded according to the eternal purpose of God.

The greatest crime in human history became the means by which God accomplished the greatest display of His grace.

If the Lord sovereignly governed the events surrounding Calvary, then we may rest confidently in His government of every circumstance we encounter.

Many believers can look back over the course of their lives and recognize moments that seemed insignificant when they occurred.

An unexpected conversation.

A change in employment.

A move to another community.

A difficult season that appeared confusing at the time.

Only later did God's purpose become clear.

Joseph certainly did not understand what was happening as he walked toward Dothan.

He believed he was searching for his brothers.

God was preparing him for Egypt.

He believed he was completing an ordinary task.

God was positioning him to preserve a nation.

The Lord often accomplishes His greatest purposes through paths we would never have anticipated.

Perhaps you are living through such a season today.

You may not understand why certain events have unfolded as they have.

The future may appear uncertain.

The road ahead may seem unclear.

Genesis 37 reminds us that our peace does not depend upon seeing the entire path.

Our peace rests in knowing the One who directs every step.

The God who guided Joseph through the fields of Canaan continues to guide His people today.

His wisdom has never failed.

His providence has never faltered.

His purpose in Christ remains certain.

Because He directs every step, His children may walk forward in faith, trusting that the path He has ordained is always governed by His perfect love, infinite wisdom, and unfailing grace.

The next article will examine Joseph's betrayal by his brothers and consider how God's sovereign rule remains unshaken even in the deepest seasons of suffering.

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