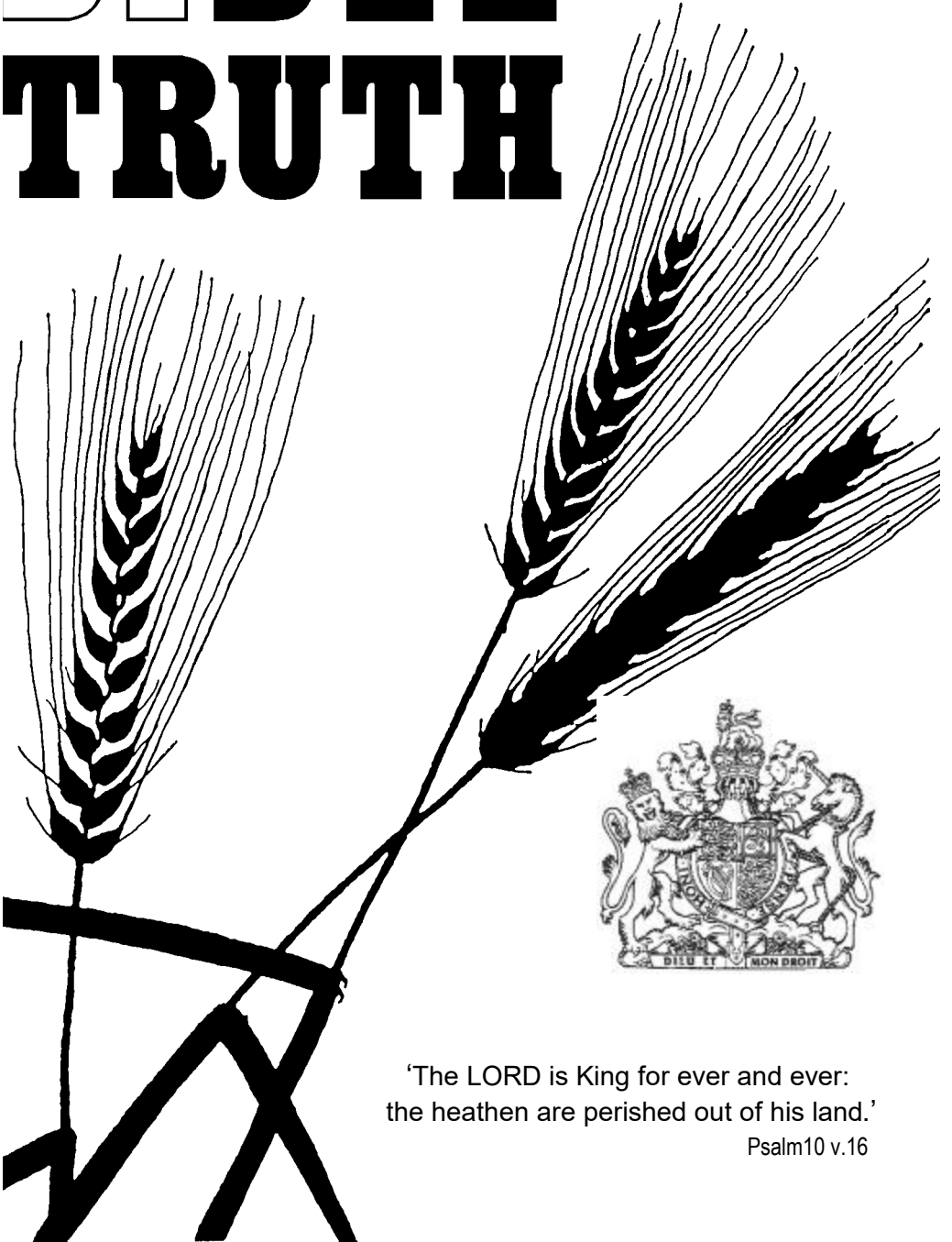


BIBLE TRUTH

No. 307
May / August 2023



'The LORD is King for ever and ever:
the heathen are perished out of his land.'

Psalm10 v.16

There is corn in Egypt

Genesis Chapter Forty-two

by the late Ray Johnson

There was a famine in the Promised Land. There had been famines before in the land of Canaan, even in Abraham's day when he went down into Egypt. Abraham is the father of the faithful, he is the type of the life of faith. Several patriarchs typify different aspects of our life in Christ Jesus.

For example, Isaac was the seed of promise and there was a famine in his days, but he was forbidden to go down into Egypt. This was the second famine after the famine of Abraham's day. As a result, Isaac went into the land of the Philistines. See Genesis ch.25 v.29 to ch.26 v.1.

Famine was the reason why Esau was faint and at the point of death, making him willing to part with his birthright and live rather than keep his birthright and die. In the famine there would not be the prey to hunt and he had lost his livelihood for he was a hunter. Jacob on the other hand had not such a flamboyant lifestyle, he was a plain man, who one may call a steady, industrious man. His livelihood, though a more secure method, would still be in jeopardy with the famine. In fact the mess of pottage, the price of the birthright could have been the last that there was of the food.

This is what I believe the case to be and that Jacob was prepared to die with the birthright rather than live without it. It may be nearer the truth to say, he was prepared to risk death and obtain the birthright, for he was a servant of God. Jacob typifies the servant and he knew the promises. He had dwelt with both his father and grandfather and what would be their main topic of conversation? Would it not be all the Promises, the Birthright Promises of God?

'By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:'

Hebrews ch.11 v. 9

Isaac had gone into the land of the Philistines, the intense danger of the situation Jacob and Esau were in is not emphasised in the scriptures and so is not received by many. Yet obviously by the reaction of Rebekah later, it must have been a fair enough deal worked out between the twins at that time. For when Esau was going

to renege on the agreement and obtain the birthright blessing, now that all danger had passed, Rebekah intervened on Jacob's behalf. Rebekah therefore determined that Jacob should not be cheated out of the agreement made in such dangerous circumstances. Jacob was no cheat as some try to make out, a deception was made by his mother's instigation, for him to obtain what was now rightfully his. There would have been no need for this if Esau had been just and honest and told his father Isaac that the birthright blessings were no longer his but Jacob's, for he had sold this privilege when the famine was sore in the land. Esau treated his oath as he did the birthright, he wasn't prepared to lose his life and hold the birthright, neither was he prepared to hold to his oath and lose the birthright blessings.

One can wonder what would have happened if Rebekah had left this situation in the hands of El Shaddai, how would the birthright have become Jacob's then? Perhaps Rebekah thought she might lose a son for it to happen? Anyway that we may never know for this problem was wrought out differently.

Now there was another famine and Jacob was old, the famine was sore in the land, but there was corn in Egypt. One thing Jacob did not know, nor any of his sons that were with him, was that there would have been no corn in Egypt if Joseph had not been there.

We cannot fathom the workings out of God's plan and purpose in our own or anyone else's life, but we must trust in unwavering faith, for the final end will justify the means. The lives of Jacob and Joseph confirm God's unwavering love and compassion in bringing to pass His divine will. It is not our own mean little lives that are so important, though they are to us, but the paramount thing is the accomplishment of God's will and purpose.

Joseph was under the Lord's tuition at an early age, we could call it God's college. Twice he had dreamed a dream and though his father pondered them in his heart, his brethren didn't take kindly to them. They seemed to think that they originated from Joseph and not from the Lord. Jacob on the other hand had had dreams of his own. Joseph knew they were of the Lord and passed them on to the household that they all may benefit from them. The result was a disaster for Joseph, he was sold as a slave, he almost lost his life and was carried down into Egypt. Bought by the captain of the guard, he proved to be a faithful and wise servant, but his loyalty to his master to some may appear to have been his downfall for he ended up in prison, in Egypt, a foreign land, far away from his own family.

What questions must have invaded his heart at that time. After speaking the truth as it had been revealed, being honest, upright and loyal to his master and then ending up in chains in a dungeon.

‘Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron:’

Psalm 105 v.18

What would we have thought in such circumstances? Have you had the times when all your praying seems to get the wrong results? It makes one think that there is a fault on the line. Are the requests really getting through?

Yet Joseph was in tune with the Lord, his experiences just forwarded his education, he had the blessings of God while working as a slave and now while in prison those blessings were still in operation, but he was still a prisoner. A prisoner of a kind, for he was a prisoner of hope, those dreams he had dreamt way back in the comfort of his family home still burned in his breast. He knew God was faithful and was working out a purpose in his life. He couldn't see the end of the matter but he had faith enough not to doubt the Most High God and knew that one day his dreams would become reality.

This training and trying experience took up the so-called best years of his life, from the age of 17 to 30. Any sacrifice to the Lord God should always be the best we have. This life of Faith produced the Promised seed, which developed into the Servant which became an obedient submissive life that enabled a glorious ministry to issue forth. From a prisoner in a cell to the head of government in Egypt in one day, ‘Only in the throne will I be greater than you’ (Genesis ch.41 v.40), said Pharaoh. How great is our God. Who ever would have thought such a thing possible? But with God all things are possible.

Joseph had been trained by God for the task that needed to be done and not only the Egyptians but many from other nations including Jacob and his sons were replenished because there was corn in Egypt.

Just consider what the Lord Jesus said,

‘So the last shall be first, and the first last: ...’.

Matthew ch.20 v.16

This parable (vv 1-16) regards the wages for working in the vineyard. They had all been hired at different times of the day yet all received the same remuneration. The last hired received their wages first and the first hired received theirs last. Those first hired would be able to fill their baskets with the choicest bunches of grapes, easily gathered from accessible positions and choose the most favourable parts of

the vineyard to work. Those coming in last would have to glean their grapes from the more inaccessible positions in the most unfavourable areas of the vineyard, reaping where others had left.

I feel sure that the Lord Jesus in this parable was showing that many are working in God's vineyard in areas so easily reached and have much to show for their endeavours. Others are working for the Lord in little known areas that are vital for the harvest to be gathered in and not many are aware of their efforts. Some are in the forefront now seen and honoured by many, some are in the background with little encouragement from others. But when the wages are paid out those who are in the forefront now being praised by many, will be in the background and those in the background will be brought to the forefront and honoured.

We have a famine in our day, '... not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:' (see Amos ch.8 v.11).

The Lord is calling people to glean where others have left behind, to remain true to Him even though it may mean rejection by their brethren, even in solitary and obscure situations. For it is only being in such places when we are all alone that the Lord is able to work in lives to prepare them for the ministry of the Sons of God. Only when the heart is fully attentive to the Heavenly Father can the Word of God work to the dividing between that which is of the soul and that which is of the Spirit, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart, (see Hebrews ch.4 v.12).

The Lord starts with the inside, to make that clean then the outside will be clean also.

'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.'

Matthew ch.23 vv 25-26

The finest details of our thoughts and intents of the heart, the very motive behind them are brought under scrutiny, there is nothing hidden from the searchings of the Holy Spirit.

We are no longer under the Law bearing it like a weight on our shoulders, for what was once a command has now become a promise. The Law is no longer a weight on our backs but a pavement underneath our feet. Thou shalt and thou shalt not are not commands but promises, you will not be running off with your neighbour's wealth

or anything else he has because it is contrary to your own heart for the love of God has been shed abroad in it (see Hebrews ch.8 v.10, Romans ch.5 v.5 and ch.13 v.10).

The Law is perfect for a nation to live together in peace, but for the Sons of God He requires truth in the inward parts.

‘Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.’

Psalm 51 v.6

The Law sees both you and all others receive their just rights, but those who follow on to know the Lord, relinquish all their just rights to the will and purpose of God. Just follow on, the Lord will do the rest, it may not be into a dungeon, but the way He leads will be a life-transforming miracle.

It’s those who have gone on through great trials that have the true ministry to give. As long as some are willing to press on and go through, there will be the corn, the Word of God, in the Egypt of this world.

***Away from the clamour, the striving and din,
Waiting before Him, that I may enter in,
To a richer, a purer, a closer abode,
Enwrapped in the will of JESUS my LORD!***
