

Genesis 42

Read Genesis 42: We cannot control worldwide events, or even local events. One thing that we are given power over is our decisions in each scenario. God sets up the backdrop; and we make a series of choices based on our priorities.

Does History Make the Man or Does the Man Make History?

This question explores the relationship between individuals and the broader historical context in which they exist. It's a classic debate among historians, philosophers, and sociologists.

History Makes the Man

- **Contextual Influence:** Individuals are often shaped by the historical circumstances they live in—wars, economic conditions, social movements, and cultural trends shape values, beliefs, and opportunities.
- **Collective Movements:** Significant historical events, like the Civil Rights Movement or Industrial Revolution, highlight how people are part of larger social currents that shape their identities and actions.
- **Limitations:** Historical context can limit individual choices and actions. For example, societal norms in a specific era may restrict personal freedom.

The Man Makes History

- **Individual Agency:** While history provides a backdrop, individuals have the power to make choices, take actions, and impact their surroundings.
- **Influential Figures:** Great leaders and thinkers (e.g., Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi) have shaped history through their decisions, beliefs, and actions, proving that individuals can effect significant change.
- **Revolutionary Ideas:** Innovations and revolutionary thoughts often come from individuals who challenge the status quo, leading to shifts in historical trajectories.

Both perspectives are valid and reveal the complex interplay between individuals and history. Individuals are influenced by their context, but they also have the capacity to change it, creating a dynamic relationship between the two.

God gives gifts as abilities to men according to his plans. We may have a central theme in our lives; like Joseph. Joseph's dream about his family bowing down to him has come true.



His family is unknowingly bowing down to him as the new Governor of Egypt. Joseph's abilities to manage other people's affairs well are once again being used for the benefit of others. God used Joseph to save the children of Israel (and the whole world) from famine.

Like King David, God's training for a high office can be lengthy and brutal. You have to really become that sold out servant.

God used the famine to drive his people away from a land increasingly succumbing to Canaanite idolatry for 400 years. Idolatry would have ruined the children of Israel. God knew that he would have to cleanse this contagion of sin one day.

¹³ God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, ¹²where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. ¹⁴ But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with ¹³many possessions. ¹⁵ As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete." (Genesis 15)

Joseph had a chance to be mean to his brothers, as they had been to him. He did show them a little bit about what it was like being put into prison. Instead, he chooses grace. He just wants to find a way to see his little brother, Benjamin. He also wants to see how contrite his brothers are about their sin (years ago) towards him. Joseph also sees through these manipulations that his brothers have been carrying a burden of guilt for what they did to him.

Joseph is living out his potential according to God's grand plan for himself and for the world.

At the same time Jacob is living out the legacy. Like Joseph, Jacob is a pretty capable guy. He has a way of getting what he wants; but his life is characterized by unexpected set backs. Jacob represents the average believer who diminishes his joy by letting his skills move past God's plans. Many plans look good on paper. You might even be the perfect person in a perfect setting. Without waiting on God; you will always side step the blessing. Jacob feels like the circumstances of his life have once again turned against him. He fears that Benjamin may be lost if

he goes to Egypt. That would be the loss of a second favorite son...plus now Simeon is in an Egyptian prison.

⁹ And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my fathers." (Genesis 47:9)

Joseph's brothers thought that his interpreter was not sharing everything they were saying to each other. Obviously, Joseph could understand them. Joseph learned the details that had been in the back of his mind. Who sold him out and who tried to protect him? He overheard the infighting under pressure. Reuben (the oldest) tried to take responsibility, and he wanted to protect him. The brothers tricked Reuben as to what really happened to Joseph. I assume that Reuben is learning the details in real time too. Later, Reuben offers his own children as collateral for Benjamin. Reuben was not a bad guy. He just had an eye for things that were his downfall. As Joseph bound Simeon it should have seemed like the curse of exactly what they had done to Joseph many years ago. Was Simeon the worst instigator? Why know that he was one of the most violent ones.