

Genesis

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[0 : 0 0] the words which I trust the Lord will enable me to make a few remarks will be found in the book of Genesis chapter 49 and we'll read the 22nd of the two following verses the book of Genesis chapter 49 the 22nd of the two following verses Joseph is a fruitful bough even a fruitful bough by a well whose branches run over our wall the archers have sorely grieved him and shot at him and hated him but his bow abode in strength and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob from thence is the shepherd of the stone of Israel there are certain portions of the word of God which to the Lord's people are very special to them and I believe that the life and the experience of Joseph who is a type of Christ is very precious to many of the Lord's people and especially in times of distress times of doubt and times of sorrow we don't read of Joseph's sins but we do read of his troubles his trials and as the purposes of God unfolded before him so he was brought to realize that his life was not his own right from the commencement of his life his brethren were against him he was sold they hated him they had no brotherly affection or love toward him he was sold he was sold to the Ishmaelites he was sent down into Egypt there he served as a servant in Potiphar's house there he was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife he was cast into prison there he was used by the Lord in a mysterious way to interpret the dreams of the butler and the baker who promised to help him and soon forgot him and then the Lord delivered him and united him to his brethren

Joseph is a fruitful bell and these words have been spoken to him in the times of his affliction in the times of his sorrow he would never have believed it any more than the Lord's people today can believe the promises in the word of God unbelief is so rife within the hearts of the Lord's people and it's all very well for people to remind us especially the professor to remind us of the promises in the word of God how we need the Lord to come and to apply these very things to our hearts well now as you know this was the blessing of dear old Jacob to his sons and this blessing of blessings as he spoke with regard to Joseph he didn't say

Joseph was he said Joseph is a fruitful bell but the poor old chap doubtless when he was brought the coat of many colors little did he think that Joseph was going to be a fruitful bell little could he realize what was before him in his pathway and you know the Lord has seen fit not only to hide from us the trials which we shall have to pass through but also the Lord has hidden the blessings and when we are brought into times of trial and sorrow the things that we can only see for the most part are the things which are going to bring sorrow we lose sight of this almighty God who if we are his people is working on our behalf to bring about a great blessing the Lord does not afflict willingly the people of God but he brings them into those places to try their faith and then having tried their faith he rewards their faith not a natural faith but a

God given faith and Jairus if you've seen his early days was a favoured man the Lord had given him an insight into the future what the Lord had prepared for him and it's not unusual for the Lord at times to persuade and to bring upon the minds and experiences of his people something with regard to the future if it were not so where would his people be if only in this life they had hope but also I'm speaking now with regard to the providences and the ways in which the Lord works even in this life sometimes the Lord prepares a person for a certain work and it may be many years before that purpose is fulfilled and how it will be tried and we can well imagine how Joseph who was able to interpret the dreams of the butler and the baker and how we believe that he was able to interpret the dream which the

Lord had given him and how his dear old father observed these things but what a lot happened in between Joseph is a fruitful bough even a fruitful bough by a well whose branches run over the wall there was the prophecy with regard to the Lord Jesus is coming upon this earth as he came unto his own so his own would not receive him how his own brethren cast him out how even the Jewish nation today will not acknowledge the Lord Jesus as the Redeemer and the Christ I'm speaking now as a nation I know there are some of the Jewish nation who have been brought into the knowledge of the things of

[8 : 03] God but for the most part the Jewish nation as yet know nothing of the way in which the Lord Jesus is able to appear and save the soul how he's cast from them how he's been sold but what a mercy for you and I that he was I say it was a mercy because if it were not so but it had to be because it was all part of the divine will and purposes of the Lord that the Gentile nation should also be brought to know him he's a fruitful bough the fruit of the Lord Jesus it would take long to speak with regard to the fruitfulness of his work of redemption and sometimes when we're given a little hope of what the Lord has done for our own souls it would even take us a long time to speak of his goodness and his mercy toward us as he brings to our remembrance those things which he has done for our souls and yet it's sad to say to say there are so many today who have not the fruit have not the knowledge or the experience which this

Lord Jesus has done for them they have a religion but like the Jewish nation they are devoid of any personal experience any personal understanding what a solemn thing if there should be any here tonight who have a form of godliness and yet you know nothing personally would regard the Lord Jesus and his work of redemption if he's never been made precious to your soul and there are such characters you know they go regularly to the house of God and some in very high places some go forth professedly in the name of the Lord blind leaders of the blind but this I do know that if we have been rightly taught we should know something of this

God personally I know it's good when we can gather in the house of God and when we can meet with others who are like-minded and who perhaps have been taught the same things but that will never do that will never save our souls we must be brought to know something personally of this God personally of his power Joseph was a subject the same as many others that we read of in the word of God who were brought to know something of a personal experience we hear much of theology today but we hear so little of personal experience of the things of God what a mercy it is if you and I have a little personal religion we may not have much but to have some personal religion now if we have and if we are true followers of the Lord

Jesus Christ well then we shall be able to follow the experiences of Joseph Joseph is a fruitful bell even a fruitful bell by a well whose branches run over our wall there is a wall that wall of petition which separates man from God sin and it's a great barrier it is sin which causes us to take hold of unbelief to cast aside faith it is sin which separates us from worshipping God it is sin that is responsible for our departure from true worship sin it is sin which has brought this nation and the churches the denomination to which we belong into the solemn state in which we are today but whilst we may have altered yet this

God has never altered he's the same God he has the same power faith and as we read of the way in which he appeared to Joseph to Jacob to Abraham and all those patriarchs of old how he appeared to Noah and the faith that was given and the way in which they walked Enoch and others who walked with God how little do we find in the day in which we live of that same faith and that same walking with God it is good when there is that longing desire within our heart oh for a closer walk with God but does it spring from our heart do we know what it is to have a closer walk with God if we do well then we shall expect something Joseph is a fruitful bell even a fruitful bell by a well whose branches run over the wall the archers have sorely grieved him you'll know much of these arrows which the archers fire only to the

[14:13] Lord's people you know the religion of old people ask for the old paths don't they but they don't really want them the old paths was a pathway of tribulation and it is through much tribulation you shall enter the kingdom not through a few trials not through a few afflictions not through a few family trials or even a few church troubles but through much tribulation you shall enter the kingdom now here we see Joseph he was cast out by his brethren he was sold we've already spoken to the way in which he was treated but had God forgotten him had God forgotten the promises and the love that he had toward him had the purposes of God changed of course not nothing can ever change and

Joseph says when I consider I'm afraid of him when we come to consider that nothing can change the will and the purposes of this God they're fixed and they were fixed in eternity his purposes towards his people were all fixed in eternity and nothing can alter him and the archers have sorely grieved him the grief that Joseph endured is not mentioned to any great extent in the word of God the grief which the Lord Jesus endured is not mentioned to any great extent in the word of God why because we wouldn't really understand it one said much we speak of Jesus blood but our little understood but there is sufficient mentioned in the word of

God to give us to realize the awfulness of sin and the reality of it and the hatred which Satan has to God firstly and then to his people and if we are his people we should know something of these archers there will be many arrows centered upon us personally we shan't find that this is a very joyful thing we shan't find that we are able to accept the Lord as our saviour because one of the first arrows that will be fired at us will be fired from God himself and that will be the arrow of conviction where it will come from God as it did to

David thou art the man and how when these arrows come the arrows of conviction and I believe that these arrows are more or less constantly with the people of God while they travel through this life they are not a people who are able to judge others and put this one on a pedestal and pull that one off a pedestal they are a people who are concerned more with their own soul than the souls of others I know that there will be an interest and a concern with regard to the souls of others but their chief concern will be their own soul and whatever position they may hold in the church however high they may be in the church if they are truly the Lord's people they will be subject to these arrows and they will be sharp arrows and we were speaking recently to a friend and how we were reminded how Phil

Pott in one of his discourses mentioned about these arrows and how he said that if we are hard if our hearts are hard the arrows will not touch us but if our heart is soft well then these arrows will have an effect they will penetrate has the arrow of sin penetrated your heart has your heart been softened so that you know something of true conviction of sin as the arrow of conviction has entered your soul or is it as yet your heart is so hard you know nothing of this arrow and is there a day that goes by but what there is an arrow of some sort that penetrates your soul where you realize your sinful nature the depravity of your nature and your helplessness against that great enemy of souls the archers have sorely grieved him and shot at him and hated him

[19 : 54] Joseph how he had all those against him his brethren Potiphar's wife it seems as if everybody was against him when we can't consider the Lord Jesus look at his life look at the hatred that he met with he was despised and rejected of men a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and we hid as it were our faces from him and people talk about being followers of the Lord Jesus who know nothing of it if we are true followers of the Lord Jesus we too will know what it is to be despised and rejected of men men of sorrows and acquainted with grief and it won't be the man in the street either that will despise and reject him it will be the proud professor the same as it was with the Lord

Jesus the high priest and all those in high authority we are living in solemn days and there are very few that know what it is to walk the pathway the child of God but one of the hymn writers years and years ago I don't know what he would pen today if he was with us but in those days he said the few that I can call my friends are like myself in fetters bound and weariness their steps attend the archers have sorely grieved him and shuddered him and hated him now you see what was the motive of Joseph's brethren to get rid of him and as we read later as they said within their heart we will not have this man to reign over us and have not we said the same how we said we are going to do this we are going to do the other we are not going to put up with this we are not going to put up with that but how the Lord brings us into that place where we are brought to do that which the

Lord will have us do those very things that we said we wouldn't do the Lord brings us into that place of submission he brings us into that very place where we are made willing in the day of his power willing yea more than willing if only this God will reveal to us that he's our God do you know something of this in your own experience to be more than willing whatever the Lord may have brought you into you're able to come with one he said thus make me willing glorious lamb to suffer all things for thy name why because he saw something he says at last be where my Jesus is and reign in everlasting place you take our little ones who are gathered with us tonight how long is their life we can look back to our childhood days it only seems a moment ago doesn't it and what's the future going to hold what is there in this life as we've seen even this week what man makes of man

I know we should be thankful to be citizens of this blessed nation but although we're favoured about many nations and we would acknowledge the Lord in this what is there in it how his day is desecrated how even those who profess to know the truth are willing to cast aside his word and to go their own way rather than to follow his word and his precepts and how there is this hatred which is still in the hearts of the brethren and this is how it will be right down to the end of all time the archers have sorely grieved him and shot at him why is it one from sinner and from saint we meet with many a blow do you know what that man was talking about we meet with many a blow the archers have sorely grieved him and shot at him and hated him but his bow abode in strength you know there is that within our nature which is revengeful and it's good when we can look back and see the restraining mercy of

God in not allowing us to take matters in our own hands now you take Joseph when his brethren came to him he was governor over all the land of Egypt what he could have done how he we know that he tried them but he tried them in love he was strange to them but he was strange to them in love but what he could have done to them he could have tortured them he could have brought agony to their person he could have starved them to death and then he could have done damage as it were to the whole of his brethren and his father and if he had been left to himself he would have done but what a difference we used to have a dear old deacon who is in heaven now and he used to say what a difference the grace of God makes within the heart doesn't it and so it was with

[26 : 13] Joseph what a difference the grace of God made within his heart there was no revenge no revenge why he wept sorely didn't he for his brethren but you see his bow abode in strength his strength was in the Lord those words were on our mind this morning and they came in such a way as we were looking upon certain matters of a personal nature and those words seem to come with a certain amount of satisfaction and we wondered whether we might even have to speak from them tonight no man careth for my soul and so it appeared you see to Joseph no man cared for my soul but I looked on the right hand and beheld that there was no man that would know us refuge failed me no man cared for my soul

I cried unto thee O Lord I said thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living and you'll be brought to this point if you're a child of God no man will be of any avail to you whoever he may be however good that man may be and however godly that man may be there'll be no help to you the Lord will take away all props he'll take away every hope and you'll find this that your bow will abide in the strength of the Lord but his bow abode in strength and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob that's where your strength is and when one is given faith to see this almighty God and who he is and what he is and what he's capable of doing and what he has done and not only what he has done for Joseph and what he has done for Joseph's brethren and what he has done for others in the word of

God but also what he's done for you isn't it a mercy when we can really look back and see something that this God has done for us now in spite of all these archers and you know it's the fear of man that bringeth us near isn't it but this I believe I can say there have been times when as far as man is concerned I've never been afraid of any man and when the Lord is with us who should we be afraid of why should we be afraid of man but have you ever been afraid of God to have that godly fear before our eyes this is something that's lacking in one's experience and all I can speak of are those things that I experience myself and this is something

I find lacking in my own experience this fear of God which is an unctuous light to all that's right and a bar to all that's wrong the professor he has a wonderful light and he's able to do this and he's able to do that but how we find the archers and they're able to come and they're able to penetrate into our heart and these arrows that penetrate they're true and they wound us and there's nothing that will wound your heart more than your own personal sin I hate those sins that made thee mourn and drove thee from my breast have you ever really felt it have you ever really experienced it to hate sin and then to hate yourself because of sin I know this is strange today but this is the way I believe the Lord has led me and the only way that I know but how the Lord in Joseph is a fruitful bow a fruitful bow by a well whose branches run over the wall now what a mercy there is that that middle wall of petition is broken down as far as the Lord's people are concerned you know when the

Lord said it's finished so the veil of the temple was rent so there was an entry into the holy of holies and where poor sinful creatures with all their sin were able to enter without any aid of man without any fear of man they were able to enter into the holiest of holies and when we hear men today speaking of praying for this and praying for the other what a mercy it is if you and I have known what it is for that wall for the branches of that wall for the branches of that vine to come over to our wall all that which separates us what shall separate us from the love of God said Paul what shall separate us nothing can when these branches run over our wall it seems that there's a speed how the Lord comes with speed to his people in their time of need the archers have sorely grieved him and shot at him and hated him but his bow abode in strength and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty

[31 : 57] God of Jacob from thence is the shepherd the stone of Israel this is the one that guides this is the one who leads this is the one who directs how sometimes we spend hours and hours planning what we're going to do and thinking that this is going to happen and that's going to happen and nothing of it ever happens as we think does it in fact it's usually the reverse as we get all our plans arranged we're going to do this we're going to do the other but does it work out that way how we have to prove that our life's minutest circumstance is subject to his eye and then what a mercy it is to be able to look back and see that we've not been left to ourselves in spite of the various things that have come into our life these very arrows of course us to stop we haven't been able to go as we would we haven't been able to gather the speed that we would because the

Lord knows just where to wound you see this is the purpose of Satan Satan is controlled by God don't ever let us lose sight of this that Satan is under the power of God he's not equal with God he hasn't the same power of God Satan with all his hellish crew with all his hellish darts and all his archers and all his enemies and all his hatred is all controlled by God and so when he comes in when the enemy comes in like a flood the Lord says he will lift up a standard against him the sins of the Lord's people were all cast away in eternity but there are the arrows there are the archers there is the hatred which is felt you know there are times when you don't need to see the arrow you don't need to see the bow but you can feel the hatred you can feel it as you feel the wound of the arrow it's not the arrow it's the effect that the arrow has upon us but thou shalt not fear the arrow that flyeth by day for what a mercy it is when we can look to this

God and then to see that strength now what is the strength but his bow abode in strength and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob it is sin which weakens it is faith in the precious blood of the Lord Jesus that strengthens it is the gospel it is his word it is the reality and the belief in these things that however black we are we are comely in the sight of the Lord or when one is able by faith to believe that I am black but comely to feel that however black we may be and black we are but not in the eyes of God the Father when seen through the merits of his dear son oh what a strength it is to one who is cast down to one who is burdened by sin who one is the target of

Satan though your sins be a scarlet oh come let us reason together all the promises the encouragement in the word of God for those who have been the subject of these archers who have been wounded but how the Lord seen controls everything he that goeth forth weeping bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him and how many a poor sinner there is even upon this earth how many there are in heaven who have known something of the sorrows of the way who have known something of the sharp afflictions and temptations of Satan but have also known something of the almighty power of this

God but his bow abode in strength it abode and nothing can move it nothing can alter it how firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord is laid for your faith in his excellent word but what more can he say than to you he said ye who unto Jesus the refuge have fled and that's where you'll have to go now what is the effect then of these arrows well they'll drive you away they won't drive you any closer to those who fire them will they you know man talks about being separated and separate yourself from this and separate from the other you can't do it because the first one I would separate myself from is myself and so would Paul have done he said oh wretched man who shall deliver me from the body of this death he couldn't separate himself from it so he couldn't separate himself from his own body I'm sure he couldn't separate himself from others and neither will you but these arrows will as the archers come they won't draw you nearer to them they will drive you away from them but they will drive you to the cross of the blessed redeemer they will and they'll drive you to him as your refuge and you'll find him to be a wonderful refuge but his bow abode in strength now poor old Joseph you see how he even his faith and the wonderful promises he had how he put faith in the baker and the butler that have no avail no avail don't go to man don't trust in man some trust in chariots and some in horses but we will remember the name of the

[38 : 37] Lord our God what a mercy it is to be able to remember these things and how the Lord does bring to our remembrance his mercy and his goodness toward us in these things now then do you know anything of these archers do you know anything of these arrows perhaps there are some here who have fired a few arrows it's a solemn thing to be a tool in the hand of Satan solemn to be a tool in the hand of Satan but what a mercy if we receive some of these arrows and if they've sent us to the Lord that's where they'll send you and as you're said to the Lord so you'll know something that this mighty God of Jacob the mighty God of Jacob ought to be able to think of that to think of the soothing effect of this mighty God of Jacob how he delivered his people how we were speaking recently of that good Samaritan how he bound up the wound it was a bond you see it was bound wasn't it he poured in the wine and the oil and then put him on his own beast took him to a place of rest and he said I'm coming again and you know we'd always be pleased to see someone that has helped us in times past wouldn't we anyone that has helped us in our need we'd always be pleased to see them wouldn't we he says I'm coming again and he is coming again and that mighty God of Jacob is coming again and he's coming again with that mighty resurrecting power when all the dead will be raised to life again he's coming as that judge of all the earth and he's coming with that arrow which will say departure curse it

I never knew you and where they will enter into eternal punishment but those who have been the target those who have been rejected despised of men will be received come in thou blessed of the Lord why standest thou without Joseph is a fruitful bow that is the fruit of the Lord Jesus Christ his fruitfulness it all comes from that well there's such a depth you know in a well there's a depth there's such a reality and one's not able to go on you know very long without water and so this water from this well and you see the bow the fruitfulness is even a fruitful bow by a well whose branches run over the wall and one will have to say yes all these things which were against me were for me to see absolute perfection in the way which the Lord has worked that all these arrows there was there was no arrow that was misguided there was nothing no painful dispensation in our lives but what was directed and what was controlled and restricted by this almighty power the almighty

God the mighty God of Jacob from thence is the shepherd of the stone of Israel he was the one that guided the arrow he's the one that guides his people and he's the one that will guide us to heaven at last if we are his people and you know that is a painful arrow which is often in the heart of the Lord's people am I one of his people it's a painful arrow and it's an arrow that we shall never really have removed until we come with a psalmist who said I shall be satisfied when that arrow is removed when I awake in his likeness have you got that arrow within your heart that arrow which is a painful feeling at times am I right am I deceived am I one of the Lord's people because you see there's so many arrows which seem to point the wrong way don't they but what a mercy if the

Lord has given us that grace and that faith and that sight to see that all these things work together for our good and to know that this God is the mighty God of Jacob we must leave it may the Lord have his blessing amen