



**THE PUZZLEMENT OF LIFE.** By: *David W. Lankford*

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As we begin this newsletter this month, we want to take our scripture text from **Genesis 37:3**, **"Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him"**. We need to understand that Joseph obtained divine favor from God and the truth is, Joseph had nothing to do with it. Just like Mary the mother of Jesus, the Lord God of Abraham brought her into a divine relationship with him wherein she would bring forth the Son of the living God. Joseph himself was also brought into a divine relationship with God and thus he too had nothing to do with it on his part. Regretfully, many Christians become envious and jealous over God's anointed and God's appointed. Joseph was chosen to save many people's lives and thus he became a puzzle of sorts and somewhat of an enigma. Even the very coat that his father gave him was a type of a puzzle. The Hebrew says that the word **colors** here in our scripture text means many pieces. This reminds me of the times when my grandmother use to make patch quilts. For days my grandmother and my great aunt would sit and cut pieces of cloth into about 6 inch squares and then they would sit down and sew all the pieces together and make a quilt. They would buy rolls of cotton and placed the cotton between the two outer panels to make the quilted blanket. You see,

this coat of many colors that Israel/Jacob had made and had given to Joseph demonstrated the puzzlement of his life and the lives of his brethren. Often times as the children of God, we profusely grapple to understand the plan of God and the will of God for our lives. But what we must understand is that God's will is always perfect and He is truly working together all things for our good. For that very reason, Paul declared in **Romans 8:28-29**, **"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren"**. The designated plan and divine purpose is the predestined will of God for our lives. Unless we walk in the Holy Ghost, we will always grapple to understand why we find ourselves in a place of difficulty or a pace of puzzlement. The Random House college dictionary says the word **puzzle** means **"a contrivance designed to amuse by presenting difficulties to be solved by ingenuity or patient effort"**. Not only was the life of Joseph, but the lives of both his brethren and father was one profound puzzle. Often times when people start to put a puzzle together they become frustrated and irritated because they are grappling to get the right pieces into the right places. This causes frustration and sometimes insurmountable impatience. Jesus

gave each of us a stern warning found in **Luke 21:19**, **"In your patience possess ye your souls"**. Had Joseph lost his patience through all the grave difficulties, persecutions, and sufferings that encroached his life, the plan for Israel his biological father, and the plan for Israel as a nation could have come to naught. For that very reason, God chose Joseph to be the man to suffer many misunderstandings and much sorrow. Though Joseph endured much suffering, he truly demonstrated untold patience in trusting the Lord. This coat of many colors was descriptive of Joseph's life and how his life would be until his death. There were many pieces of the puzzle that would ultimately become a beautiful portrait of God's plan of redemption. When we are facing a puzzle or perplexity within our lives, we must not allow the puzzlement to mystify, confuse, or baffle us concerning God's will. A puzzle often times is like a riddle of sorts. We read in **Judges 14:12-19**, **"And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if you can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, that I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of garments: But if you cannot declare it me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it. And he said unto them, out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that**

**they said unto Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burned thee and thy father's house with fire: have ye called us to take that we have? Is it not so?"** Early on in the fourteenth chapter of Judges, we see that a young lion roared against Samson as he was on his way to a city named Timnath: thus he rent the lion and killed it. Returning from Timnath, he beheld a swarm of bees and honey within the carcass of the lion. Because his enemies could not figure out the riddle, they blackmailed Samson's wife and threatened to burn her and her father's house with fire unless she told them the meaning of the riddle. The enemies of God will never understand the riddle neither the puzzles of God. The very word of God is very difficult to be understood by those who walk after the flesh. Luke said in **Luke 24:45, "Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures"**. However, as a child of God, you are to discern the sometimes obscured circumstances within your life. Paul said in **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"**. As a child of God and looking back over my own personal life, I can see where my life too has been a puzzle. I am sure as many of you are reading this newsletter today that the puzzle of your life is undoubtedly coming into clear and pristine focus. The brothers of Joseph thought after having sold him into slavery he would be no more and would be totally forgotten about,

but like many, they could not see the finished part of the puzzle. You see,,,,, they were a part that was to finish the entirety of the puzzle. Once the famine had set in and life had become very difficult and arduous, they needed food, and they needed it badly. Jacob heard there was corn down in Egypt, thus he sent them to secure food for their families. The fact that Joseph had gone before them, God was already putting the parts of the puzzle into divine order. Though Joseph was the biggest part of the puzzle, they were a part of the puzzle to complete the true picture. Once they arrived in Egypt and Joseph revealed himself as their brother, the puzzlement was completely gone and the true picture was now crystal clear. God had sent Joseph before them to save lives and not to destroy lives. It is in times of great difficulty that we grapple and struggle with the difficulties of life, and we lose our patience in waiting upon the Lord and His perfect will. Let me say this emphatically: you can quit anytime you choose but you will never see the finished puzzle until God's will is fully executed within your life! What a beautiful picture and portrait that we are able to see as Joseph sends for his father and family and they all come back to live in Goshen. Often times the puzzlement of life can frustrate the child of God, but I want to assure you, the grace of God is sufficient to see you through the puzzle or riddle that demands so much of your life and understanding. The old gospel song: "We Will Understand it Better In the By and By", is so apropos today. There have been times when each of us were frustrated and aggravated when being antagonized by the devil. This is when you must step

back, be patient, and trust the Lord with all of your heart. We read in **Proverbs 3:5-7, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil"**. Often times our rationale is skewed by the trials and tribulations that we are suffering to endure, thus, it is imperative that we trust in the Lord with all of our heart! Trust is nothing but faith and saying within our own hearts: God I know you have everything under your divine control and because of that I will not be perplexed by the puzzlement that I now find within my own life. I want to assure you today, that if you trust God with all of your heart, He will surely work out everything for your good. If He knows when every sparrow falls to the ground, He certainly knows everything about you. Often times things will look bleak and very disturbing, due to the turbulence of the storm, but the Sun is always shining on the other side of the storm and clouds and so it is with the Son of the living God. Do not grow weary in well doing for you shall reap in due season if you do not faint. May the God of all grace and the God of all comfort be with you and your family in the days to come. My wife and I thank you from the very depths of our hearts for your love and support for the ministry. Do pray that we remain faithful in preaching an uncompromising message from the Word of the Most High God.

Serving With You All,

Pastor David W. Lankford