

SHOCKED CONSCIENCE

“Then Joseph said to his brothers *I am Joseph. Is my father still alive? But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence.*” (NAS)

“And Joseph said to his brothers, *I am Joseph! Is my father still alive? And his brothers could not reply, for they were distressingly disturbed and dismayed at [the startling realization that they were in] his presence.*” (Amplified)

The Hebrew word and grammar for dismayed is (bahal/ niphil perfect). Bahal means to be dismayed, disturbed, or smitten in the conscience. The niphil perfect refers to the brothers consciences being disturbed to the degree that they were in a complete state of shock and unable to speak.

The sudden announcement by the Egyptian Prime Minister that he was their brother, Joseph, sent their conscience into shock so that they were unable to reply.

This lesson will study SIX aspects of a SHOCKED CONSCIENCE as related to the story of Joseph and his 10 brothers involved in a plot to destroy his life.

1. The Greek word for conscience is (suneidesis). Suneidesis consists of the preposition (sun/ together) plus the verb (eide/ oida/ to know absolutely) plus the suffix (sis/ action).

Suneidesis establishes the format for the human conscience. The Greeks believed that the human psyche consisted of two parts (ego/ consciousness/ sunoida) and (superego/ conscience/ suneidesis).

The Greeks combined the inner person who is aware he knows (sunoida/ consciousness) with the inner person who thinks and acts upon this knowledge (suneidesis/ conscience).

Socrates experienced this in his own life when told by the Delphi Oracle that he was the wisest of men and yet was aware of his own ignorance.

When consciousness and conscience come into conflict, there is an evaluation of some facts from different points of view such as (right and wrong), (truth and lies), and (good and evil).

We can see this principle in Abimelech’s problem with Abraham and Sarah in Gen.20:1-7. *“Did he not say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she herself said, ‘He is my brother.’ In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this.”* (20:5) *“I have done this with a clear conscience and clean hands.”* (NAS)

2. The conscience accuses even torments in regard to what one believes to be true, good, and right until some resolution is made (Rom.2:15).

While the conscience accuses and condemns (Joseph’s brothers), it also defends and acquits (Joseph).

“I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit.” (Rom.9:1)

“I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.” (1 Cor.4:4)

- 3. David expressed this principle when he cut off a corner of King Saul royal robe (1 Sam.24:5-7). The truth of God’s word brings self-accusation of a transgression and confession of sin and corrected behavior. (1 John 1:9; Psa.32:1-11; Heb.10:2).**

David’s confession of sin silenced self-accusation and liberated self-tormenting guilt of transgression and reopened the avenue on his side of relationship with the Lord and King Saul.

This will also be true for Joseph’s brother and you and me. It was not as easy for the brothers to reach this place in their lives (Gen.45-50) (50:15-26).

- 4. The reason it was more difficult for the brothers was because their consciences were defiled by cosmos diabolicus (1 Tim.4:1-2; Titus 1:13-15; Heb.3:12-13; 10:19-22).**

“However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.” (1 Cor.8:7)

“Keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.” (1 Tim.1:19)

After 30 years of living the lie their conscience had become callous to the truth. When confronted with the absolute truth, their conscience is thrown into shock (Prov.12:22; 26:24-28).

- 5. The reason Joseph does not have a similar problem with his brothers because his conscience has been cleared by the faith cycle of the word of God (2 Cor.4:1-2).**

Conscience with divine norm and standards allowed Joseph to endure suffering without becoming self-destructive or vindictive or vengeful towards his brother or God.

“For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.” (1 Pet.2:19-20) (1 Pet.3:14-17)

- 6. Joseph’s brothers were dismayed or distressingly disturbed in their conscience after exposure of years of living a deceitful lie.**

The brothers had created their own lie and choose to live it out deceitfully in their lives (Jer.5:5-6; Gen.37:31-36).

They took their father through a terrible story of Joseph’s death, a funeral, and mourning and deep grief for years. They were able to this because they believed Jacob wouldn’t believe his children would lie to him about something this horrible. *People who are easily shocked in conscience with the reality of truth usually have old man illusions of self, people, life, and God (Matt.7:1-5).*

Where did Jacob’s children learn to lie and be so deceitfully wicked? The apple doesn’t fall very far from the tree (Gen.27:10-13, 35, 41, 46).