

## Genesis 42-50 – The Generations of Jacob

*If an unbeliever asks you to explain how the Christian God interacts with the affairs of the world, what would you say?*

### First Journey to Egypt

*Read Genesis 42:1-38*

#### Summary

- Famine in the land
- Sons of Jacob sent to buy grain, except for Benjamin, the youngest, because father feared for his safety
- Once arrived, Joseph recognizes them, but they do not recognize him
- Sons of Jacob bow themselves to Joseph
- Joseph hides his identity, treating them like rough and like strangers

*Why would Joseph hide his identity from his brothers?*

- Testing, teaching, and dream fulfillment
- Writer doesn't tell us directly, but probably meant for us to come to all these conclusions

#### Summary:

- Joseph remembers these prophecies, and probably wants to see how family is doing
- Begins by accusing them of being spies looking for the weak points in their defenses
- Brothers claim they are not spies, state they are sons of one father (because what spy would risk their entire family), and that they are honest or honourable
- Joseph continues to hammer the brothers with the accusation
- This causes them to divulge more and more details about their family
  - Youngest one is with their father, and the other of the twelve is no more (which is Joseph)
- Joseph calls them to prove themselves, and ultimately has one of them stay, while the rest take the grain back. However, they cannot return unless they bring their youngest
  - "If you are honest men" prompt a discussion of their guilt towards Joseph v.21

#### Lesson:

- Not the normative way to handle conflict
  - This story is descriptive, and not prescriptive
  - This is not the normative way in which Christians should handle conflict between people
- Though the brothers claim to be honourable, they are not
  - Joseph begged them for mercy, he was distressed, and they did not listen
  - Ruben rubs in the last point, "Now his blood is being required"
- Joseph and the brothers are well aware of God's sovereignty
  - Brothers know that God is aware of their sin and they think that He is requiring restitution from them
  - Joseph knows can see how God's plan of fulfillment is coming about v.9

#### Summary

- Simeon is detained (could likely be the one who ringer leader who sold Joseph to slaver traders), while rest of family leaves
- Joseph weeps, likely because he sees their regret
- Before they leave, Joseph puts money back into their sacks; this is done likely because:
  - To show kindness to his brothers
  - Ensuring their return by making them out to be thieves
  - To test them
    - Will they abandon Simeon as they abandoned Joseph?

- Brothers are surprised at finding the money in their sacks,
- Brothers report back to Jacob all that has happened
- Jacob is upset and does not want to lose Benjamin as well, and Reuben promises to protect Benjamin at the cost of his two sons.

#### Lesson:

- Brothers trapped by past
  - Brothers cannot escape the power of their past guilt
  - Live in fear of provoking a new sorrow on their father for taking Benjamin
- Brothers and Joseph see divine intervention
  - Joseph follows his divine dreams
  - “What is this that God has done to us?”~43:28 Clearly, their aroused conscience are interpreting every unexpected development as a sign of God’s wrath on their deeds
- There is hope for a reconciliation within the family
  - The brothers show a repentant attitude toward what they have done
  - Show guilt and remorse over what they did to Joseph

### **Second Journey to Egypt**

*Read Genesis 43:1-45:13*

#### Summary

- Reuben’s promise does not cause Jacob to act
  - Offered up his sons, not himself
  - Jacob likely remembers how Reuben slept with his concubine (35:22)
- Judah pleads with his father, willing to take all the blame himself if Benjamin is not safe
- Father relents, brothers are sent back to Egypt with Benjamin
- Meets Joseph, and explains that the money was found in their sacks
- Joseph receives their money, inquires more about their father, Simeon is returned, and the brothers reveal Benjamin
- Emotional outburst by Joseph from seeing Benjamin
- Joseph sets up another test for them
  - See if they would give up their brother to save themselves, as they had done in their youth
  - Joseph’s cup is also put in Benjamin’s bag
- Brothers leave Egypt and then are halted by Joseph’s men
- Accusations are made against brothers, Benjamin is found with cup, and all of them are returned to the city

#### Lesson:

- Brothers do not abandon their youngest
  - Brothers show solidarity with Benjamin and do not abandon him

*Describe Judah in his youth and the Judah we see now*

- Growth of Judah
  - Had brothers sell Joseph into slavery
  - Willing to recognize his faults in story of Tamar and Judah
  - Now willing to give up his life to save Benjamin
  - Real growth shown by Judah

## Summary

- V.16 Judah meets Joseph and does not claim to offer any proof of their innocence
  - Not a confession of stealing the cup, but confessing to the much greater crime of their maltreatment of Joseph (42:21-23 which was talked about earlier)
  - Judah offers himself up as a slave, but Joseph tells him the guilty should be servant, offers Judah to take the rest of his brothers home
    - Again, seeing if they would abandon their brother
- Judah takes initiative and explains the entire situation to Joseph
  - Reviews past events
  - Likely consequence if Benjamin does not return
  - Let me be a slave, and let my Benjamin go
- Joseph reveals his identity
  - Can no longer hide his identity and reveals his identity

*What do these emotional outbursts for his family tell us about Joseph?*

## Joseph Reveals Himself

*Read Genesis 45:1-28*

### Summary:

- Consoles brothers to not worry about what they did
- Puts it into perspective as to how God has used him
- He put me here to preserve life
- Joseph now takes care of his family
  - You will be given a land – Goshen
  - Joseph promises will provide for them
- Wept his brother over their reunion
- Jacob comes to see Joseph

### Lesson:

- Judah's confession and repentance
  - Reversal in Judah, sold Joseph into slavery, however, now will be a slave so that Benjamin can go home
  - Much like how Christ will take our place
  - Full forgiveness and reconciliation only become possible after Judah has demonstrated in his words and in his willingness to take Benjamin's place
- God's overruling affairs of mankind
  - No actions fall outside of God's control
  - Another purpose in God's story is God's saving the world
- Joseph is a Saviour
  - Preserving life
  - Like Christ
  - Salvation of many people v.7

*How can we see in this story that God is sovereign and that people still responsible for their actions, and what can we take away from this?*

- *As for you, you meant evil against me, but iGod meant it for good, to bring it about that many people2 should be kept alive, as they are today. 21 So do not fear; jI will provide for you and your little ones.” Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. ~Genesis 50:20*

*What lessons can we take away from Joseph's attitude in the face of adversity?*

### Third Visit of Joseph's family to Egypt

#### Summary

- Jacob offers sacrifices, and God appears to Jacob
- Jacob is told

*"I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again, and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes."*
- Significance:
  - Canaan was the promised land
  - Will God go with us?
  - Foreshadow that God will bring them out again

#### Summary:

- The family has an emotional reunion, and they meet Pharaoh
- People responded, "You have saved our lives; may it please my lord, we will be servants to Pharaoh."
- Jacob prepares to die

#### Lesson:

- Israel is brought out of Canaan, the land of promise, to Egypt
  - God's will is for them to go to Egypt
  - God will be with them
  - God will bring them back to Canaan
- However time in Egypt is temporary, Canaan is their ultimate goal

### The last Days of Jacob and Joseph

*Genesis 48:1-22 and 49:1-12*

#### *48:1-22 (Do not read)*

- Jacob states he wants to be buried in the patriarchal tomb in Canaan
- Joseph has two sons Ephraim and Manasseh
  - Which Jacob states they are his, like Reuben and Simeon are
  - Ephraim, who is younger is blessed more than Manasseh, the older
  - Will appear in future passages

#### *Read 49:1-12*

#### Summary:

- Each child is given a "blessing," and these blessings will affect their destiny and posterity
- What they did in life has been taken into account in this blessing. E.g. Reuben

#### Judah

- Judah's supremacy, lion, and scepter v.8-10
  - Judah is being praised by his brothers for being a leader
  - The postexilic writer of 1 Chronicles, probably Ezra, wrote, "Yet Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him came a ruler, although the birthright was Joseph's" (1 Chronicles 5:2).
  - How did Judah prevail? Powerful warriors: during the time of Moses, the tribe of Judah became the stronger tribe and "prevailed over his brothers." The census in Numbers 1 shows that Judah was the leading tribe in population and in men who could go to war (Numbers 1:2-3, 27).

- Jesus Christ: Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has triumphed to open the scroll and its seven seals."~ Revelation 5:5

Summary and Lesson:

- Jacob dies, and buried in Canaan
- Joseph dies, buried in Egypt but makes Israel promise to bring his bones back to Canaan
  - Both knew that because of the covenant God had made with the Patriarchs that this would not be their resting place. They were headed eventually - back to Canaan.

*What is Joseph's attitude towards forgiveness? If someone doesn't want to be forgiven what should our attitude be? How does forgiveness look like?*

*What can we learn about reconciliation from this story?*

- 1) It is a process
- 2) We need to seek it out, not natural
  - a. Pride can get in the way
- 3) The Reconciliation we have in Christ
- 4) There are tangible changes

*Are there family situations you would like to reconcile what would it take on their part, and what would it take on yours?*

*Read through the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 12:1-3, in what ways have the promises been fulfilled, and what is not fulfilled*

**Conclusion to Genesis**

- Estranged family situations all have hope of being repaired and renewed
- The choices of people have real consequences and blessings
- God's sovereignty conquers everything in its path
- God's plan of fulfillment is blossoming but is unfinished

**Final Comments:** God's sovereign plan has been at work since the beginning of Genesis, and nothing can thwart His purposes. This is most evident in the life of Joseph, where God's will comes to fruition against the schemes of the brothers. The brothers also know that they are responsible for their actions, even though God makes something amazing happen from their crime, their wicked actions have a cost, and throughout Genesis we see how the sins of people impact the future. God, however, amazingly ensures that our wickedness cannot spoil his fulfillment, and Genesis ends on a positive note, but God is not finished. The Abrahamic promises have yet to be fully fulfilled, as it looks to the ultimate fulfillment in Christ. Lastly, Jacob's family has many woeful qualities, but their family's restoration gives any of us who are in similar family situations hope, because God can make reconciliation of any relationship.