



*Discovering the
Book of
Genesis*

Part 2

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Forward

The book of Genesis falls into two sections. The first section begins with the chapters 1 and goes through chapter 11. The second section begins with chapter 12 and goes through chapter 50.

The first section focuses upon the ruin of man, who has fallen from his created perfection and it is coming under the judgment of the creator.

Chapters 12 – 50 describes God's program of man's redemption. The first division could be summarized in the following way:

1. Chapters 1 - 2 The creation
2. Chapters 3 – 5 the fall of man.
3. Chapter 6 – 9 the events of the flood.
4. Chapters 10 – 11 The confusion of languages

The second division of Genesis can be summarized in the four main characters:

1. Chapters 12 – 25 Abraham
2. Chapters 25 – 26 Isaac
3. Chapters 27 – 36 Jacob
4. Chapters 37 – 50 Joseph

The incidences in this book point our way to understanding how man first learned to deal with God and his environment in which he was placed. Study and relate to these Bible happenings

Genesis 26

Isaac and Abimelech

1. Isaac, because of famine, sojourns in Gerar, and the Lord blesses him.

Genesis 26:1

And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar.

Isaac had been trained up in a believing dependence upon the Divine grant of the land of Canaan to him and his heirs; and now that there is a famine in the land, Isaac still cleaves to the covenant. The real worth of God's promises cannot be lessened to a believer by any cross providences that may befall him.

If God engage to be with us, and we are where he would have us to be, nothing but our own unbelief and distrust can prevent our comfort. The obedience of Abraham to the Divine command, was evidence of that faith, whereby, as a sinner, he was justified before God, and the effect of that love whereby true faith works. God testifies that he approved this obedience, to encourage others, especially Isaac.

7. He is reproved by Abimelech for denying his wife.

Genesis 26:7

And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, she is my sister: for he feared to say, she is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon.

There is nothing in Isaac's denial of his wife to be imitated, nor even excused. The temptation of Isaac is the same as that which overcame his father, and that in two instances. This rendered his conduct the greater sin.

12. He grows rich, and the Philistines envy his prosperity.

Genesis 26:12

Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year a hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him.

God blessed Isaac. Be it observed, for the encouragement of poor tenants who occupy other people's lands, and are honest and industrious, that God blessed him with a great increase. The Philistines envied Isaac. It is an instance of the vanity of the world; for the more men have of it, the more they are envied, and exposed to censure and injury. Also of the corruption of nature; for that is an ill principle indeed, which makes men grieve at the good of others.

They made Isaac go out of their country. That wisdom which is from above, will teach us to give up our right, and to draw back from contentions. If we are wrongfully driven from one place, the Lord will make room for us in another.

18. He digs wells.

Genesis 26:18

And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them.

Isaac met with much opposition in digging wells. Two were called Contention and Hatred. See the nature of worldly things; they make quarrels, and are occasions of strife; and what the lot of the most quiet and peaceable is often; those who avoid striving, yet cannot avoid being striven with.

And what a mercy it is to have plenty of water; to have it without striving for it! The more common this mercy is, the more reason to be thankful for it. At length Isaac digged a well, for which they strove not. Those that study to be quiet, seldom fail of being so. When men are false and unkind, still God is faithful and gracious; and his time to show himself so is, when we are most disappointed by men.

The same night that Isaac came weary and uneasy to Beer-sheba, God brought comforts to his soul. Those may remove with comfort who are sure of God's presence.

23. God appears to him at Beersheba, and blesses him;

Genesis 26:23

And he went up from thence to Beer-sheba.

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26. Abimelech makes a covenant with him.

Genesis 26:26

Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phichol the chief captain of his army.

When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him, Proverbs 16:7.

Kings' hearts are in his hands, and when he pleases, he can turn them to favour his people. It is not wrong to stand upon our guard in dealing with those who have acted unfairly. But Isaac did not insist on the unkindnesses they had done him; he freely entered into friendship with them.

Religion teaches us to be neighbourly, and, as much as in us lies, to live peaceable with all men. Providence smiled upon what Isaac did; God blessed his labours.

34. Esau's wives.

Genesis 26:34

And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beerli the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite:

Esau was foolish in marrying two wives together, and still more in marrying Canaanites, strangers to the blessing of Abraham, and subject to the curse of Noah. It grieved his parents that he married without their advice and consent. It grieved them that he married among those who had no religion. Children have little reason to expect God's blessing who do that which is a grief of mind to good parents.

Genesis 27

Jacob Gets Isaac's Blessing

1. Isaac sends Esau for venison.

Genesis 27:1

And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, my son: and he said unto him, Behold, here am I.

The promises of the Messiah, and of the land of Canaan, had come down to Isaac. Isaac being now about 135 years of age, and his sons about 75, and not duly considering the Divine word concerning his two sons, that the elder should serve the younger, resolved to put all the honour and power that were in the promise, upon Esau his eldest son.

We are very apt to take measures rather from our own reason than from Divine revelation, and thereby often miss our way.
Matthew Henry Concise Bible Commentary.

6. Rebekah instructs Jacob to obtain the blessing.

Genesis 27:6

And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying.

Rebekah knew that the blessing was intended for Jacob, and expected he would have it. But she wronged Isaac by putting a cheat on him; she wronged Jacob by tempting him to wickedness. She put a stumbling-block in Esau's way, and gave him a pretext for hatred to Jacob and to religion. All were to be blamed; It was one of those crooked measures often adopted to further the Divine promises; as if the end would justify, or excuse wrong means.

14. Jacob, feigning to be Esau, obtains it.

Genesis 27:14

And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savory meat, such as his father loved.

Rebekah knew that the blessing was intended for Jacob, and expected he would have it. But she wronged Isaac by putting a cheat on him; she wronged Jacob by tempting him to wickedness. She put a stumbling-block in Esau's way, and gave him a pretext for hatred to Jacob and to religion.

All were to be blamed. It was one of those crooked measures often adopted to further the Divine promises; as if the end would justify, or excuse wrong means.

30. Esau brings venison.

Genesis 27:30

And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

When Esau understood that Jacob had got the blessing, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry. The day is coming, when those that now make light of the blessings of the covenant, and sell their title to spiritual blessings for that which is of no value, will, in vain, ask urgently for them.

Isaac trembles.

Genesis 27:33

And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, who? Where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou calmest, and have blessed him? Yea, and he shall be blessed.

Isaac, when made sensible of the deceit practiced on him, trembled exceedingly. Those who follow the choice of their own affections, rather than the Divine will,

get themselves into perplexity. But he soon recovers, and confirms the blessing he had given to Jacob, saying, I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed.

34. Esau complains, and by importunity obtains a blessing.

Genesis 27:34

And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, bless me, even me also, O my father.

A common blessing was bestowed upon Esau. This he desired. Faint desires of happiness, without right choice of the end, and right use of the means, deceive many unto their own ruin. Multitudes go to hell with their mouths full of good wishes. The great difference is, that there is nothing in Esau's blessing which points at Christ; and without that, the fatness of the earth, and the plunder of the field, will stand in little stead. Thus Isaac, by faith, blessed both his sons, according as their lot should be.

Esau threatens Jacob's life.

Genesis 27:41

And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, the days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.

Esau bore malice to Jacob on account of the blessing he had obtained. Thus he went in the way of Cain, who slew his brother, because he gained that acceptance with God of which he had rendered himself unworthy. Esau aimed to prevent Jacob or his seed from having the dominion, by taking away his life.

42. Rebekah disappoints him, by sending Jacob away.

Genesis 27:42

And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee.

Esau aimed to prevent Jacob or his seed from having the dominion, by taking away his life. Men may fret at God's counsels, but cannot change them. To prevent mischief, Rebekah warned Jacob of his danger, and advised him to withdraw for his safety. We must not presume too far upon the wisdom and resolution, even of the most hopeful and promising children; but care must be taken to keep them out of the way of evil.

When reading this chapter, we should not fail to observe, that we must not follow even the best of men further than they act according to the law of God. We must not do evil that good may come. And though God overruled the bad actions recorded in this chapter, to fulfil his purposes, yet we see his judgment of them, in the painful consequences to all the parties concerned. It was the peculiar privilege and advantage of Jacob to convey these spiritual blessings to all nations.

Genesis 28

Jacob's Flight to Laban and Vision of a ladder

1. Isaac blesses Jacob, and sends him to Padan-aram.

Genesis 28:1

And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

Jacob had blessings promised both as to this world and that which is to come; yet goes out to a hard service. This corrected him for the fraud on his father. The blessing shall be conferred on him, yet he shall smart for the indirect course taken to obtain it. Jacob is dismissed by his father with a solemn charge. He must not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan: those who profess religion, should not marry with those that care not for religion. Also with a solemn blessing. Isaac had before blessed him unwittingly; now he does it designedly. This blessing is fuller than the former; it is a gospel blessing. This promise looks as high as heaven, of which Canaan was a type. That was the better country which Jacob and the other patriarchs had in view.

6. Esau marries Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael.

Genesis 28:6

When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan;

Good examples impress even the profane and malicious. But Esau thought, by pleasing his parents in one thing, to atone for other wrong doings. Carnal hearts are apt to think themselves as good as they should be, because in some one matter they are not as bad as they have been.

10. Jacob journeys, and has a vision of a ladder.

Genesis 28:10

And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran.

Jacob's conduct hitherto, as recorded, was not that of one who simply feared and trusted in God. But now in trouble, obliged to flee, he looked only to God to make him to dwell in safety, and he could lie down and sleep in the open air with his head upon a stone.

Any true believer would be willing to take up with Jacob's pillow, provided he might have Jacob's vision. God's time to visit his people with his comforts, is, when they are most destitute of other comforts, and other comforters. Jacob saw a ladder which reached from earth to heaven, the angels going up and coming down, and God himself at the head of it.

This represents, 1. The providence of God, by which there is a constant intercourse kept up between heaven and earth. This let Jacob know that he had both a good guide and a good guard. 2. The mediation of Christ.

He is this ladder; the foot on earth in his human nature, the top in heaven in his Divine nature. Christ is the Way; all God's favors come to us, and all our services go to him, by Christ

18. The stone of Bethel.

Genesis 28:18

And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

God manifested himself and his favour, to Jacob, when he was asleep. The Spirit, like the wind, blows when and where it listeth, and God's grace, like the dew, tarrieth not for the sons of men. Jacob sought to improve the visit God had made him.

Wherever we are, in the city or in the desert, in the house or in the field, in the shop or in the street, we may keep up our intercourse with Heaven, if it is not our own fault. But the more we see of God, the more cause we see for holy trembling before him.

20. **Jacob's vow.**

Genesis 28:20

And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

Jacob made a solemn vow on this occasion. In this observe, 1. Jacob's faith. He trusts that God will be with him, and will keep him; he depends upon it. 2. Jacob's moderation in his desires. He asks not for soft clothing and dainty meat.

If God give us much, we are bound to be thankful, and to use it for him; if he gives us but little, we are bound to be content, and cheerfully to enjoy him in it. 3. Jacob's piety, and his regard to God, appear in what he desired, that God would be with him, and keep him.

We need desire no more to make us easy and happy. Also his resolution is, to cleave to the Lord, as his God in covenant. When we receive more than common mercy from God, we should abound in gratitude to him.

Chapter 29

Jacob Meets Rachel, Serves Laban, Marries Rachel and Leah

1. Jacob comes to the well of Haran.

Genesis 29:1

Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east.

Jacob made a solemn vow on this occasion. In this observe”

1. Jacob's faith. He trusts that God will be with him, and will keep him; he depends upon it.
2. Jacob's moderation in his desires. He asks not for soft clothing and dainty meat. If God give us much, we are bound to be thankful, and to use it for him; if he gives us but little, we are bound to be content, and cheerfully to enjoy him in it.
3. Jacob's piety, and his regard to God, appear in what he desired, that God would be with him, and keep him. We need desire no more to make us easy and happy. Also his resolution is, to cleave to the Lord, as his God in covenant. When we receive more than common mercy from God, we should abound in gratitude to him.

9. He becomes acquainted with Rachel.

Genesis 29:9

And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them.

See Rachel's humility and industry. Nobody needs to be ashamed of honest, useful labour, nor ought it to hinder any one's preferment. When Jacob understood that this was his kinswoman, he was very ready to serve her. Laban, though not the best humoured, bade him welcome, and was satisfied with the account Jacob gave of himself. While we avoid being foolishly ready to believe everything which is told us, we must take heed of being uncharitably suspicious

18. Jacob covenants for Rachel.

Genesis 29:18

And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.

During the month that Jacob spent as a guest, he was not idle. Wherever we are, it is good to employ ourselves in some useful business. Laban was desirous that Jacob should continue with him.

Inferior relations must not be imposed upon; it is our duty to reward them. Jacob made known to Laban the affection he had for his daughter Rachel. And having no wordly goods with which to endow her, he promises seven years' service Love makes long and hard services short and easy; hence we read of the labour of love.

23. He is deceived by Laban with Leah.

Genesis 29:23

And it came to pass in the evening that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her.

Having no Wordly goods with which to endow her, he promises seven years' service Love makes long and hard services short and easy; hence we read of the labour of love. If we know how to value the happiness of heaven, the sufferings of this present time will be as nothing to us. An age of work will be but as a few days to those that love God, and long for Christ's appearing. Jacob, who had imposed upon his father, is imposed upon by Laban, his father-in-law, by a like deception.

28. He marries also Rachel, and serves for her seven years more.

Genesis 29:28

And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave her Rachel his daughter to wife also.

As yet there was no express command against marrying more than one wife. It was in the patriarchs a sin of ignorance; but it will not justify the like practice now, when God's will is plainly made known by the Divine law, Lev 18:18

32. Leah bears Reuben;

Genesis 29:32

And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, surely the Lord hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me.

The names Leah gave her children, expressed her respect and regard, both to God and to her husband. Reuben, or See a son, with this thought, Now will my husband love me; Levi, or joined, expecting, Now will my husband be joined unto me

Simeon is born.

Genesis 29:33

And she conceived again, and bares a son; and said, because the Lord hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also: and she called his name Simeon.

Levi is born.

Genesis 29:34-35

And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi. And she conceived again, and bares a son: and she said, Now will I praise the Lord: therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing.

She thankfully acknowledges the kind providence of God in hearing her. Whatever supports and comforts us under afflictions, or tends to our deliverance from them, God must be owned in it. Her fourth son she called Judah, or praise, saying, Now will I praise the Lord.

This was he, of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came. Whatever is the matter of our rejoicing, ought to be the matter of our thanksgiving. Fresh favours should quicken us to praise God for former favours; now will I praise the Lord more and better than I have done. All our praises must center in Christ, both as the matter of them, and as the Mediator of them.

Genesis 30

Jacob and His Sons Prosper

1. Rachel, in grief for her barrenness, gives Bilhah her maid unto Jacob.

Genesis 30:1

And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.

Rachel envied her sister: envy is grieving at the good of another, than which no sin is more hateful to God, or more hurtful to our neighbours and ourselves. She considered not that God made the difference, and that in other things she had the advantage.

5. Bilhah bears Dan and Naphtali.

Genesis 30:5

And Bilhah conceived, and bares Jacob a son.

Jacob loved Rachel, and therefore reprov'd her for what she said amiss. Faithful reproofs show true affection. God may be to us instead of any creature; but it is sin and folly to place any creature in God's stead, and to place that confidence in any creature, which should be placed in God only

9. Leah gives Zilpah her maid, who bears Gad and Asher.

Genesis 30:9

When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife.

Jacob loved Rachel, and therefore reprov'd her for what she said amiss. Faithful reproofs show true affection. God may be to us instead of any creature; but it is sin and folly to place any creature in God's stead, and to place that confidence in any

creature, which should be placed in God only

14. Reuben finds mandrakes,

Genesis 30:14

And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me; I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes.

The desire, good in itself, but often too great and irregular, of being the mother of the promised Seed, with the honour of having many children, and the reproach of being barren, were causes of this unbecoming contest between the sisters.

15. With which Leah buys her husband's company of Rachel.

Genesis 30:15

And she said unto her, is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? And wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to night for thy son's mandrakes.

17. Leah bears Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah.

Genesis 30:17

And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bares Jacob the fifth son.

22. Rachel bears Joseph.

Genesis 30:22

And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.

The truth appears to be, that they were influenced by the promises of God to Abraham; whose posterity were promised the richest blessings, and from whom the Messiah was to descend.

25. Jacob desires to depart.

Genesis 30:25

And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country.

27. Laban detains him on a new agreement.

Genesis 30:27

And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake.

37. Jacob's policy, whereby he becomes rich.

The fourteen years being gone, Jacob was willing to depart without any provision, except God's promise. But he had in many ways a just claim on Laban's substance, and it was the will of God that he should be provided for from it

Genesis 30:37

And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chestnut tree; and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods.

Jacob's course after this agreement has been considered an instance of his policy and management. But it was done by intimation from God, and as a token of his power.

Genesis 31

Jacob Leaves for Canaan; Laban Pursues

1. Jacob, displeased with the envy of Laban and his sons, departs secretly.

Genesis 31:1

And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our fathers; and of that which was our fathers hath he gotten all this glory.

The affairs of these families are related very minutely, while (what are called) the great events of states and kingdoms at that period, are not mentioned.

19. Rachel steals her father's household gods.

Genesis 31:19

And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's.

The Bible teaches people the common duties of life, how to serve God, how to enjoy the blessings he bestows, and to do good in the various stations and duties of life. Selfish men consider themselves robbed of all that goes past them, and covetousness will even swallow up natural affection.

22. Laban pursues after him, and complains of the wrong.

Genesis 31:22

And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled.

God can put a bridle in the mouth of wicked men, to restrain their malice, though he do not change their hearts.

Though they have no love to God's people, they will pretend to it, and try to make a merit of necessity.

34. Rachel's planned to hide the images.

Genesis 31:34

Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched the entire tent, but found them not.

When a man gives himself up to covetousness, like Laban, the world is his god; and he has only to reside among gross idolaters in order to become one, or at least a favourer of their abominations.

36. Jacob's complaint of Laban.

Genesis 31:36

And Jacob was wroth, and chide with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass? What is my sin that thou hast so hotly pursued after me?

If Jacob were willingly consumed with heat in the day, and frost by night, to become the son-in-law of Laban, what should we refuse to endure, to become the sons of God?

43. The covenant of Laban and Jacob at Galeed.

Genesis 31:43

And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou sees is mine: and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have born? Laban could neither justify himself nor condemn Jacob, therefore desires to hear no more of that matter. He is not willing to own himself in fault, as he ought to have done.

Genesis 32

Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau, Wrestles with God

1. Jacob's vision at Mahanaim.

Genesis 32:1

And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

The angels of God appeared to Jacob, to encourage him with the assurance of the Divine protection.

3. His message to Esau.

Genesis 32:3

And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

Jacob sent a message, showing that he did not insist upon the birth-right. Yielding pacifies great offences, Eccl 10:4. We must not refuse to speak respectfully, even to those unjustly angry with us.

6. He is afraid of Esau's coming.

Genesis 32:6

And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, we came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.

Jacob received an account of Esau's warlike preparations against him, and was greatly afraid.

A lively sense of danger, and quickening fear arising from it, may be found united with humble confidence in God's power and promise.

9. He prays for deliverance.

Genesis 32:9

And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord that said unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:

Times of fear should be times of prayer: whatever causes fear, should drive us to our knees, to our God.

13. He sends a present to Esau, and passes the brook Jabbok.

Genesis 32:13

And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother;

There cannot be a better pattern for true prayer than this. Here is a thankful acknowledgement of former undeserved favours; a humble confession of unworthiness; a plain statement of his fears and distress; a full reference of the whole affair to the Lord, and resting all his hopes on him.

24. He wrestles with an angel at Peniel, where he is called Israel.

Genesis 32:24

And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

A great while before day, Jacob being alone, more fully spread his fears before God in prayer.

31. He halts.

Genesis 32:31

And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.

Jacob halted on his thigh. It might serve to keep him from being lifted up with the abundance of the revelations. The sun rose on Jacob: it is sun-rise with that soul, which has had communion with God.

Genesis 33

Jacob Meets Esau, Settles in Shechem

1. Jacob and Esau's meeting; and Esau's departure.

Genesis 33:1

And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids.

Jacob, having by prayer committed his case to God, went on his way. Come what will, nothing can come amiss to him whose heart is fixed, trusting in God.

17. Jacob comes to Succoth.

Genesis 33:13

And he said unto him, my lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me: and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die.

It is not desirable to be too intimate with superior ungodly relations, who will expect us to join in their vanities, or at least to wink at them, though they blame, and perhaps mock at, our religion. Such will either be a snare to us, or offended with us.

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18. At Shechem he buys a field, and builds an altar, called El Elohim Israel.

Genesis 33:18

And Jacob came to Shalom, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-aram; and pitched his tent before the city.

Genesis 34

Shechem Defiles Dinah and is avenged by Jacob

1. Dinah is ravished by Shechem.

Genesis 34:1

And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.

Shechem may have been a victim of “love at first sight,” but his actions were impulsive and evil. Not only did he sin against Dinah; he sinned against the entire family (Genesis 34:6-7).

4. He requests to marry her.

Genesis 34:4

And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife.

The consequences of his deed were severe both for his family and for Jacob’s (Genesis 34:25-31). Even Shechem’s declared love for Dinah could not excuse the evil he did by raping her. Don’t allow sexual passion to boil over into evil actions. Passion must be controlled.

13. The sons of Jacob offer the condition of circumcision to the Shechemites.

Genesis 34:13

And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister:

20. Hamor and Shechem persuade them to accept it.

Genesis 34:20

And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying,

Why did Simeon and Levi take such harsh action against the city of Shechem? Jacob's family saw themselves as set apart from others. God wanted them to remain separate from their pagan neighbors. But the brothers wrongly thought that being set apart also meant being better. This arrogant attitude led to the terrible slaughter of innocent people.

25. The sons of Jacob upon that advantage slay them, and spoil their city.

Genesis 34:25

But three days later, when their wounds were still sore, two of Dinah's brothers, Simeon and Levi, took their swords, entered the town without opposition, and slaughtered every man there,

When Shechem raped Dinah, the consequences were far greater than he could have imagined. Dinah's brothers were outraged and took revenge. Pain, deceit, and murder followed. Sexual sin is devastating because its consequences are so far reaching.

30. Jacob reproves Simeon and Levi.

Genesis 24:30

And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well.

In seeking revenge against Shechem, Simeon and Levi lied, stole, and murdered. Their desire for justice was right, but their ways of achieving it were wrong. Because of their sin, their father cursed them with his dying breath (Genesis 49:5-7). Generations later, their descendants lost the part of the Promised Land allotted to them. When tempted to return evil for evil, leave revenge to God and spare yourself the dreadful consequences of sin.

Genesis 35

Jacob Returns to Bethel; Jacob Named Israel; Deaths of Rachel and Isaac

1. God commands Jacob to go to Bethel.

Genesis 35:1

And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou flattest from the face of Esau thy brother.

2. He purges his house of idols.

Genesis 35:2

Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments:

Why did the people have these idols (“foreign gods”)? Idols were sometimes seen more as good luck charms than as gods. Some Israelites, even though they worshiped God, had idols in their homes, just as some Christians today own good luck trinkets. Jacob believed that idols should have no place in his household. He wanted nothing to divert his family’s spiritual focus.

Jacob ordered his household to get rid of their gods. Unless we remove idols from our lives, they can ruin our faith.

What idols do we have? An idol is anything we put before God. Idols don’t have to be physical objects; they can be thoughts or desires. Like Jacob, we should get rid of anything that could stand between us and God.

6. He builds an altar at Bethel.

Genesis 35:6

So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him.

8. Deborah dies at Allon Bacuth.

Genesis 35:8

But Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak: and the name of it was called Allon-bachuth.

9. God blesses Jacob at Bethel.

Genesis 35:9

And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him.

10. Jacob Named Israel.

Genesis 35:10

And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel.

God reminded Jacob of his new name, Israel, which meant “he struggles with God.” Although Jacob’s life was littered with difficulties and trials, his new name was a tribute to his desire to stay close to God despite life’s disappointments.

Many people believe that Christianity should offer a problem-free life. Consequently, as life gets tough, they draw back disappointed. Instead, they should determine to prevail with God through life’s storm.

Problems and difficulties are painful but inevitable; you might as well see them as opportunities for growth. You can't prevail with God unless you have troubles to prevail over.

This oil used to anoint the pillar was olive oil of the finest grade of purity. It was expensive, so using it showed the high value placed on the anointed object. Jacob was showing the greatest respect for the place where he met with God..

16. Rachel travails of Benjamin, and dies in the way to Edar.

Genesis 35:16

And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour.

22. Reuben lies with Bilhah.

Genesis 35:22

And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:

Reuben's sin was costly, although not right away. As the oldest son, he stood to receive a double portion of the family inheritance and a place of leadership among his people. Reuben may have thought he got away with his sin.

No more is mentioned of it until Jacob, on his deathbed, assembled his family for the final blessing. Suddenly Jacob took away Reuben's double portion and gave it to someone else. The reason? "You went up onto your father's bed, onto my couch and defiled it" (Genesis 49:4).

Sin's consequences can plague us long after the sin is committed. When we do something wrong, we may think we can escape unnoticed, only to discover later that the sin has been quietly breeding serious consequences.

23. The sons of Jacob.

Genesis 35:23

The sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun:

27. Jacob comes to Isaac at Hebron.

Genesis 35:27

And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned.

28. The age, death, and burial of Isaac.

Genesis 35:28

And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years.

Genesis 36

Descendants of Esau; Kings of Edom

1. Esau's three wives.

Genesis 36:1

Now these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom.

6. His removal to mount Seir.

Genesis 36:6

And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance, which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob.

9. His sons.

Genesis 36:9

And these are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in mount Seir:

The Edomites were descendants of Esau who lived south and east of the Dead Sea. The country featured rugged mountains and desolate desert. Several major roads led through Edom because it was rich in natural resources. During the exodus, God told Israel to leave the Edomites alone (Deut. 2:4-5) because they were “brothers.” But Edom refused to let them enter the land, and later they became bitter enemies of King David.

The nations of Edom and Israel shared the same ancestor, Isaac, and the same border. Israel looked down on the Edomites because they intermarried with the Canaanites.

15. The dukes, which descended of his sons.

Genesis 36:15

These were dukes of the sons of Esau: the sons of Eliphaz the firstborn son of Esau; duke Teman, duke Omar, duke Zepho, duke Kenaz,

The title “chief” is equivalent to “head of the clan.”

20. The sons and dukes of Seir the Horite.

Genesis 36:20

These are the sons of Seir the Horite, who inhabited the land; Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah,

24. Anah finds mules.

Genesis 36:24

And these are the children of Zibeon; both Ajah, and Anah: this was that Anah that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the Asses of Zibeon his father.

31. The kings of Edom.

Genesis 36:31

And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.

40. The dukes that descended of Esau.

Genesis 36:40

And these are the names of the dukes that came of Esau, according to their families, after their places, by their names; duke Timnah, duke Alvah, duke Jetheth,

Genesis 37

Joseph's Dreams and Betrayal by His Brothers

1. Joseph is loved by Jacob, but hated by his brothers.

Genesis 37:1

And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

In Joseph's day, everyone had a robe or cloak. Robes were used to warm oneself, to bundle up belongings for a trip, to wrap babies, to sit on, or even to serve as security for a loan.

Most robes were knee length, short sleeved, and plain. In contrast, Joseph's robe was probably of the kind worn by royalty—long sleeved, ankle length, and colorful. The robe became a symbol of Jacob's favoritism toward Joseph, and it aggravated the already strained relations between Joseph and his brothers.

Favoritism in families may be unavoidable, but its divisive effects should be minimized. Parents may not be able to change their feelings toward a favorite child, but they can change their actions toward the others.

5. His dreams and the interpretation.

Genesis 37:5

And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

Joseph, one of Jacob's 12 sons, was obviously the favorite. Hated by his brothers for this, Joseph was sold to slave traders only to emerge as ruler of all Egypt. Through Joseph, we learn how suffering, no matter how unfair, develops strong character and deep wisdom.

Joseph's brothers were already angry over the possibility of being ruled by their little brother. Joseph then fueled the fire with his immature attitude and boastful manner.

No one enjoys a braggart. Joseph learned his lesson the hard way. His angry brothers sold him into slavery to get rid of him. After several years of hardship, Joseph learned an important lesson:

Because our talents and knowledge come from God, it is more appropriate to thank him for them than to brag about them. Later, Joseph gives God the credit (Genesis 41:16).

12. Jacob sends him to his brothers, who counsel to slay him.

Genesis 37:12

And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.

21. At Reuben's desire they cast him into a pit;

Genesis 37:21

And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.

Could jealousy ever make you feel like killing someone? Before saying, "Of course not," look at what happened in this story.

Ten men were willing to kill their younger brother over a robe and a few reported dreams. Their deep jealousy had grown into ugly rage, completely blinding them to what was right. Jealousy can be difficult to recognize because our reasons for it seem to make sense.

But left unchecked, jealousy grows quickly and leads to serious sins. The longer you cultivate jealous feelings, the harder it is to uproot them. The time to deal with jealousy is when you notice yourself keeping score of what others have.

25. and afterwards sell him to the Ishmaelites;

Genesis 37:25

And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.

The brothers were worried about bearing the guilt of Joseph's death. Judah suggested an option that was not right but would leave them guiltless of murder. Sometimes we jump at a solution because it is the lesser of two evils, but it still is not the right action to take. When someone proposes a seemingly workable solution, first ask, "Is it right?"

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Although Joseph's brothers didn't kill him outright, they wouldn't expect him to survive for long as a slave. They were quite willing to let cruel slave traders do their dirty work for them.

Joseph faced a 30-day journey through the desert, probably chained and on foot. He would be treated like baggage, and once in Egypt, would be sold as a piece of merchandise. His brothers thought they would never see him again. But God was in control of Joseph's life.

29. While Ruben grieves at not finding him.

Genesis 37:29

And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes.

Reuben returned to the pit to find Joseph, but his little brother was gone. His first response, in effect, was “What is going to happen to me?” rather than “What is going to happen to Joseph?”

In a tough situation, are you usually concerned first about yourself? Consider the person most affected by the problem, and you will be more likely to find a solution for it.

31. His coat, covered with blood, is sent to Jacob, who mourns him inordinately.

Genesis 37:31

And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood;

To cover their evil action, Jacob’s sons deceived their father into thinking Joseph was dead. Jacob himself had deceived others many times (including his own father; Genesis 27:35).

Now, though blessed by God, he still had to face the consequences of his sins. God may not have punished Jacob immediately for his deceit, but the consequences came nevertheless and stayed with him for the rest of his life.

Imagine the culture shock Joseph experienced upon arriving in Egypt. Joseph had lived as a nomad, traveling the countryside with his family, caring for sheep. Suddenly he was thrust into the world’s most advanced civilization with great pyramids, beautiful homes, sophisticated people, and a new language.

While Joseph saw Egypt’s skill and intelligence at their best, he also saw the Egyptians’ spiritual blindness. They worshiped countless gods related to every aspect of life.

36. Joseph is brought to Egypt and sold to Potiphar.

Genesis 37:36

And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard.

Genesis 38

Judah and Tamar

1. Judah begets Er, Onan, and Shelah.

Genesis 38:1

And it came to pass at that time that Judah went down from his brethren and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.

This chapter vividly contrasts the immoral character of Judah with the moral character of Joseph. Judah's lack of integrity resulted in family strife and deception.

In Genesis 39, we see how Joseph's integrity and wise choices reflect his godly character. His faithfulness was rewarded with blessings greater than he could imagine, both for himself and for his family.

6. Er's marriage with Tamar, and death.

Genesis 38:6

And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar.

8. The trespass of Onan.

Genesis 38:8

And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and rise up seed to thy brother.

This law about marrying a widow in the family is explained in Deut. 25:5-10. Its purpose was to ensure that a childless widow would have a son who would receive her late husband's inheritance and who, in turn, would care for her.

Because Judah's son (Tamar's husband) had no children, there was no family line through which the inheritance and the blessing of the covenant could continue. God killed Onan because he refused to fulfill his obligation to his brother and to Tamar.

11. Tamar is reserved for Shelah.

Genesis 38:11

Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow at thy father's house, till Shelah my son be grown: for he said, lest peradventure he die also, as his brethren did. And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

12. Judah's wife dies.

Genesis 38:12

And in process of time the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died; and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his sheepshearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.

13. Tamar deceives Judah.

Genesis 38:13

And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father in law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep.

Why does this story seem to take a light view of prostitution? Prostitutes were common in pagan cultures such as Canaan. Public prostitutes served Canaanite goddesses and were common elements of the religious cults. Fornication was encouraged to improve fertility in crops and flocks.

They were more highly respected than private prostitutes who were sometimes punished when caught. Tamar was driven to seduce Judah because of her intense desire to have children and be the matriarch of Judah's oldest line; Judah was driven by his lust. Neither case was justified.

27. She bears twins, Pharez and Zarah.

Genesis 38:27

And it came to pass in the time of her travail that, behold, twins were in her womb.

Why was Judah so open about his relations with a prostitute, yet ready to execute his daughter-in-law for being one? To understand this apparent contradiction, we must understand the place of women in Canaan. A woman's most important function was bearing children who would perpetuate the family line.

To ensure that children belonged to the husband, the bride was expected to be a virgin and the wife was expected to have relations only with him. If a wife committed adultery, she could be executed. Some women, however, did not belong to families.

They might be shrine prostitutes supported by offerings or common prostitutes supported by the men who used their services. Their children were nobody's heirs, and men who hired them adulterated nobody's bloodlines.

Judah saw no harm in hiring a prostitute for a night; after all, he was more than willing to pay. He was ready to execute Tamar, however, because if she was pregnant as a result of prostitution, his grandchild would not be part of his family line.

Apparently the question of sexual morality never entered Judah's mind; his concern was for keeping his inheritance in the family. Ironically, it was Tamar, not Judah, who acted to provide him with legal heirs. By seducing him, she acted more in the spirit of the law than he did when he refused to send his third son to her.

This story in no way implies that God winks at prostitution. Throughout Scripture, prostitution is condemned as a serious sin. If the story has a moral, it is that faithfulness to family obligations is important. Incidentally, Judah and Tamar are direct ancestors of Jesus Christ (see Matthew 1:1-6).

A seal was a form of identification used to authenticate legal documents. Usually a unique design carved in stone and worn on a ring or necklace inseparable from its owner, the seal was used by the wealthy and powerful to mark clay or wax. Because Tamar had Judah's seal, she could prove beyond a doubt that he had been with her.

When Tamar revealed she was pregnant, Judah, who unknowingly had gotten her pregnant, moved to have her killed. Judah had concealed his own sin, yet he came down harshly on Tamar. Often the sins we try to cover up are the ones that anger us most when we see them in others. If you become indignant at the sins of others, you may have a similar tendency to sin that you don't wish to face. When we admit our sins and ask God to forgive us, forgiving others becomes easier.

Genesis 39

Joseph's Success; Potiphar's Wife; Joseph Imprisoned

1. Joseph is bought by Potiphar, and preferred in the family.

Genesis 39:1

And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither.

The date of Joseph's arrival in Egypt is debatable. Many believe he arrived during the period of the Hyksos rulers, foreigners who came from the region of Canaan. They invaded Egypt and controlled the land for almost 150 years. If Joseph arrived during their rule, it is easy to see why he was rapidly promoted up the royal ladder. Because the Hyksos were foreigners themselves, they would not hold this brilliant young foreigner's ancestry against him.

Pharaoh was the general name for all the kings of Egypt. It was a title like "King" or "President" used to address the country's leader. The Pharaohs in Genesis and Exodus were different men.

Ancient Egypt was a land of great contrasts. People were either rich beyond measure or poverty stricken. There wasn't much middle ground. Joseph found himself serving Potiphar, an extremely rich officer in Pharaoh's service. Rich families like Potiphar's had elaborate homes two or three stories tall with beautiful gardens and balconies. They enjoyed live entertainment at home as they chose delicious fruit from expensive bowls. They surrounded themselves with alabaster vases, paintings, beautiful rugs, and hand-carved chairs. Dinner was served on golden tableware, and the rooms were lighted with gold lampstands. Servants, like Joseph, worked on the first floor, while the family occupied the upper stories.

7. He resists temptation by Potiphar's Wife.

Genesis 39:7

And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, lie with me.

Potiphar's wife failed to seduce Joseph, who resisted this temptation by saying it would be a sin against God. Joseph didn't say, "I'd be hurting you," or "I'd be sinning against Potiphar," or "I'd be sinning against myself." Under pressure, such excuses are easily rationalized away. Remember that sexual sin is not just between two consenting adults. It is an act of disobedience against God.

13. He is falsely accused by her.

Genesis 39:13

And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth,

Joseph avoided Potiphar's wife as much as possible. He refused her advances and finally *ran* from her. Sometimes merely trying to avoid temptation is not enough. We must turn and run, especially when the temptations seem very strong, as is often the case in sexual temptations.

20. He is cast into prison.

Genesis 39:20

And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.

Prisons were grim places with vile conditions. They were used to house forced laborers or, like Joseph, the accused who were awaiting trial. Prisoners were guilty until proven innocent, and there was no right to a speedy trial. Many prisoners never made it to court, because trials were held at the whim of the ruler. Joseph was in prison two years until he appeared before Pharaoh, and then he was called out to interpret a dream, not to stand trial.

21. God is with him there, and the keeper of prison advances him.

Genesis 39:21

But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

As a prisoner and slave, Joseph could have seen his situation as hopeless. Instead, he did his best with each small task given him. His diligence and positive attitude were soon noticed by the warden, who promoted him to prison administrator. Are you facing a seemingly hopeless predicament? At work, at home, or at school, follow Joseph's example by taking each small task and doing your best. Remember how God turned Joseph's situation around. He will see your efforts and can reverse even overwhelming odds.

Genesis 40

Joseph Interprets the Cupbearer and the Baker's Dreams

1. The chief butler and baker of Pharaoh are also imprisoned.

Genesis 40:1

And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt.

The cupbearer and the baker were two of the most trusted men in Pharaoh's kingdom. The baker was in charge of making the Pharaoh's food, and the cupbearer tasted all of his food and drink before giving it to him, in case any of it was contaminated or poisoned. These trusted men must have been suspected of a serious wrong, perhaps of conspiring against Pharaoh. Later the cupbearer was released and the baker executed.

5. Joseph interprets their dreams.

Genesis 40:5

And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison.

When the subject of dreams came up, Joseph focused everyone's attention on God. Rather than using the situation to make himself look good, he turned it into a powerful witness for the Lord. One secret of effective witnessing is to recognize opportunities to relate God to the other person's experience. When the opportunity arises, we must have the courage to speak, as Joseph did.

20. They are accomplished according to his interpretation.

Genesis 40:20

And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants.

23. The ingratitude of the butler, in forgetting Joseph.

Genesis 40:23

Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.

When Pharaoh's cupbearer was freed from prison, he forgot about Joseph, even though he had Joseph to thank for his freedom. It was two full years before Joseph had another opportunity to be freed (Genesis 41:1). Yet Joseph's faith was deep, and he would be ready when the next chance came. When we feel passed by, overlooked, or forgotten, we shouldn't be surprised that people are often ungrateful. In similar situations, trust God as Joseph did. More opportunities may be waiting.

Genesis 41

Pharaoh's Dream; Joseph's Interpretation and Reward

1. Pharaoh has two dreams.

Genesis 41:1

And it came to pass at the end of two full years that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river.

Magicians and wise men were common in the palaces of ancient rulers. Their job description included studying sacred arts and sciences, reading the stars, interpreting dreams, predicting the future, and performing magic. These men had power (see Exodus 7:11-12), but their power was satanic. They were unable to interpret Pharaoh's dream, but God had revealed it to Joseph in prison.

9. Joseph interprets them.

Genesis 41:9

Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day:

Our most important opportunities may come when we least expect them. Joseph was brought hastily from the dungeon and pushed before Pharaoh. Did he have time to prepare? Yes and no. He had no warning that he would be suddenly pulled from prison and questioned by the king. Yet Joseph was ready for almost anything because of his right relationship with God. It was not Joseph's knowledge of dreams that helped him interpret their meaning. It was his knowledge of God. Be ready for opportunities by getting to know more about God. Then you will be ready to call on him when opportunities come your way.

Joseph made sure that he gave the credit to God. We should be careful to do the same. To take the honor for ourselves is a form of stealing God's honor. Don't be silent when you know you should be giving glory and credit to God.

33. He gives Pharaoh counsel, and is highly advanced, and married.

Genesis 41:33

Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt.

After interpreting Pharaoh's dream, Joseph gave the king a survival plan for the next 14 years. The only way to prevent starvation was through careful planning; without a famine plan Egypt would have turned from prosperity to ruin. Many find detailed planning boring and unnecessary. But planning is a responsibility, not an option. Joseph was able to save a nation by translating God's plan for Egypt into practical actions (implementation). We must take time to translate God's plan for us into practical actions too.

Pharaoh recognized that Joseph was a man "in whom is the spirit of God." You probably won't get to interpret dreams for a king, but those who know you should be able to see God in you, through your kind words, merciful acts, and wise advice. Do your relatives, neighbors, and coworkers see you as a person in whom the Spirit of God lives?

Joseph rose quickly to the top, from prison walls to Pharaoh's palace. His training for this important position involved being first a slave and then a prisoner. In each situation he learned the importance of serving God and others. Whatever your situation, no matter how undesirable, consider it part of your training program for serving God.

46. The seven years of plenty.

Genesis 41:46

And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

Pharaoh may have been trying to make Joseph more acceptable by giving him an Egyptian name and wife. He probably wanted to (1) play down the fact that Joseph was a nomadic shepherd, an occupation disliked by the Egyptians, (2) make Joseph's name easier for Egyptians to pronounce and remember, and (3) show how highly he was honored by giving him the daughter of a prominent Egyptian official.

Joseph was 30 years old when he became governor of Egypt. He was 17 when he was sold into slavery by his brothers. Thus he must have spent 11 years as an Egyptian slave and two years in prison.

50. He begets children.

Genesis 41:50

And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of on bare unto him.

53. The famine begins.

Famine was a catastrophe in ancient times, just as it still is in many parts of the world today. Almost perfect conditions were needed to produce good crops because there were no chemical fertilizers or pesticides. Any variances in rainfall or insect activity could cause crop failure and great hunger because the people relied almost exclusively on their own crops for food. Lack of storage, refrigeration, or transportation turned a moderate famine into a desperate situation. The famine Joseph prepared for was severe. Without God's intervention, the Egyptian nation would have crumbled.

Genesis 41:53

And the seven years of plenteousness that was in the land of Egypt were ended.

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Genesis 42

Joseph's Brothers Sent to Egypt, Simeon Detained

1. Jacob sends his ten sons to buy grain in Egypt.

Genesis 42:1

Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, why do ye look one upon another?

Why was grain so valuable in those days? As a food source it was universal and used in nearly everything eaten. It could be dried and stored much longer than any vegetables, milk products, or meat. It was so important that it was even used as money.

Jacob was especially fond of Benjamin because he was Joseph's only full brother and—as far as Jacob knew—the only surviving son of his beloved wife, Rachel. Benjamin was Jacob's youngest son and a child of his old age.

Joseph could have revealed his identity to his brothers at once. But Joseph's last memory of them was of staring in horror at their faces as slave traders carried him away. Were his brothers still evil and treacherous, or had they changed over the years? Joseph decided to put them through a few tests to find out.

Joseph remembered his dreams about his brothers bowing down to him (Genesis 37:6-9). Those dreams were coming true! As a young boy, Joseph was boastful about his dreams. As a man, he no longer flaunted his superior status. He did not feel the need to say "I told you so." It was not yet time to reveal his identity, so he kept quiet. Sometimes it is best for us to remain quiet, even when we would like to have the last word.

Joseph was testing his brothers to make sure they had not been as cruel to Benjamin as they had been to him. Benjamin was his only full brother, and he wanted to see him face to face.

16. They are imprisoned by Joseph as spies.

Genesis 42:16

Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies.

18. They are set at liberty, on condition to bring Benjamin.

Genesis 42:18

And Joseph said unto them the third day, this does, and lives; for I fear God:

21. They have remorse for Joseph.

Genesis 42:21

And they said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.

Reuben couldn't resist saying "I told you so." To "give an accounting for his blood" means that they thought they were being punished by God for what they had done to Joseph.

24. Simeon is kept for a pledge.

Genesis 42:24

And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

25. They return with grain, and their money.

Genesis 42:25

Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them.

29. Their relation to Jacob.

Genesis 42:29

And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them; saying,

36. Jacob refuses to send Benjamin.

Genesis 42:36

And Jacob their father said unto them, me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.

Genesis 43

The Return to Egypt with Benjamin

1. Jacob is persuaded to send Benjamin.

Genesis 43:1

And the famine was sore in the land.

Jacob and his sons had no relief from the famine. They could not see God's overall plan of sending them to Egypt to be reunited with Joseph and fed from Egypt's storehouses. If you are praying for relief from suffering or pressure and God is not bringing it as quickly as you would like, remember that God may be leading you to special treasures.

Judah accepted full responsibility for Benjamin's safety. He did not know what that might mean for him, but he was determined to do his duty. In the end it was Judah's stirring words that caused Joseph to break down with emotion and reveal himself to his brothers (Genesis 44:18-34). Accepting responsibilities is difficult, but it builds character and confidence, earns others' respect, and motivates us to complete our work. When you have been given an assignment to complete or a responsibility to fulfill, commit yourself to seeing it through.

These gifts of balm, honey, spices, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds were highly valuable specialty items not common in Egypt. Because of the famine, they were even rarer.

Joseph's brothers arrived home from Egypt only to find in their grain sacks the money they had used to pay for the grain (Genesis 42:35).

Some months later, when it was time to return to Egypt for more food, Jacob instructed them to take extra money so they could pay for the previous purchase as well as for additional grain. Jacob did not try to get away with anything. He was a man of integrity who paid for what he bought, whether he had to or not. We should follow his example and guard our integrity. A reputation for honesty is worth far more than the money we might save by compromising it.

15. Joseph entertains his brothers.

Genesis 43:15

And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

19. They discover their fears to the steward.

Genesis 43:19

And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they communed with him at the door of the house,

How did the money get into the sacks? Most likely, Joseph instructed his steward to replace the money and then explain it with this response. Note that the steward credited their God, not some Egyptian deity.

26. Joseph makes them a feast.

Genesis 43:26

And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present, which was in their hand into the house, and bowed himself to him to the earth.

Why did Joseph eat by himself? He was following the laws of the Egyptians' caste system. Egyptians considered themselves highly intelligent and sophisticated. They looked upon shepherds and nomads as uncultured and even vulgar. As a Hebrew, Joseph could not eat with Egyptians even though he outranked them. As foreigners and shepherds, his brothers were lower in rank than any Egyptian citizens, so they had to eat separately too.

Genesis 44

Benjamin and the Silver Cup

1. Joseph's policy to stay his brothers.

Genesis 44:1

And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth.

Joseph's silver cup was a symbol of his authority. It was thought to have supernatural powers, and to steal it was a serious crime. Such goblets were used for predicting the future. A person poured water into the cup and interpreted the reflections, ripples, and bubbles. Joseph wouldn't have needed his cup, since God told him everything he needed to know about the future.

6. The silver cup is found in Benjamin's sack.

Genesis 44:6

And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words.

Tearing clothes was an expression of deep sorrow, a customary manner of showing grief. The brothers were terrified that Benjamin might be harmed.

14. They are brought before Joseph.

Genesis 44:14

And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground.

When Judah was younger, he showed no regard for his brother Joseph or his father, Jacob. First he convinced his brothers to sell Joseph as a slave (Genesis 37:27); then he joined his brothers in lying to his father about Joseph's fate (Genesis 37:32). But what a change had taken place in Judah!

The man who sold one favored little brother into slavery now offered to become a slave himself to save another favored little brother. He was so concerned for his father and younger brother that he was willing to die for them. When you are ready to give up hope on yourself or others, remember that God can work a complete change in even the most selfish personality.

18. Judah's humble supplication to Joseph.

Genesis 44:18

Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh.

Judah finally could take no more and stepped forward to plead their case. This was risky because Joseph could have had him killed. But Judah courageously defended himself and his brothers and pled for mercy. And he offered to put himself in Benjamin's place.

There are times when we should be silent, but there are also times when we should speak up, even if there could be serious repercussions. When faced with a situation that needs a strong voice and courageous action, remember Judah, and speak up.

Judah had promised Jacob that he would guarantee young Benjamin's safety (Genesis 43:9). Now Judah had a chance to keep that promise. Becoming a slave was a terrible fate, but Judah was determined to keep his word to his father. He showed great courage in carrying out his promise. Accepting a responsibility means carrying it out with determination and courage, regardless of the personal sacrifice.

Joseph wanted to see if his brothers' attitudes had changed for the better, so he tested the way they treated each other. Judah, the brother who had stepped forward with the plan to sell Joseph (Genesis 37:27), now stepped forward to take

Benjamin's punishment so that Benjamin could return to their father. This courageous act convinced Joseph that his brothers had dramatically changed for the better.

Genesis 45

Benjamin and the Silver Cup

1. Joseph makes himself known to his brothers.

Genesis 45:1

Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all him that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

Although Joseph's brothers had wanted to get rid of him, God used even their evil actions to fulfill his ultimate plan. He sent Joseph ahead to preserve their lives, save Egypt, and prepare the way for the beginning of the nation of Israel. God is sovereign. His plans are not dictated by human actions. When others intend evil toward you, remember that they are only God's tools. As Joseph said to his brothers, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Genesis 50:20).

5. He comforts them in God's providence.

Genesis 45:5

Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

9. He sends for his father.

Genesis 45:9

Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not:

16. Pharaoh confirms it.

Genesis 45:16

And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants.

Joseph was rejected, kidnapped, enslaved, and imprisoned. Although his brothers had been unfaithful to him, he graciously forgave them and shared his prosperity. Joseph demonstrated how God forgives us and showers us with goodness even though we have sinned against him. The same forgiveness and blessings are ours if we ask for them.

21. Joseph furnishes then for their journey.

Genesis 45:21

And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way.

25. Jacob is revived with the news.

Genesis 45:25

And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father,

Jacob needed some evidence before he could believe the incredible news that Joseph was alive. Similarly, Thomas refused to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead until he could see and touch him (John 20:25). It is hard to change what you believe without all the facts—or sometimes even with the facts. Good news can be hard to believe. Don't ever give up hope that God has a wonderful future in store for you.

Chapter 46

Jacob and His Family Move to Egypt

1. Jacob is comforted by God at Beersheba.

Genesis 46:1

And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.

The Israelites did become a great nation, and Jacob's descendants eventually returned to Canaan. The book of Exodus recounts the story of Israel's slavery in Egypt for 400 years (fulfilling God's words to Abraham in Genesis 15:13-16), and the book of Joshua gives an exciting account of the Israelites entering and conquering Canaan, the promised land.

God told Jacob to leave his home and travel to a strange and faraway land. But God reassured him by promising to go with him and take care of him. When new situations or surroundings frighten you, recognize that experiencing fear is normal. To be paralyzed by fear, however, is an indication that you question God's ability to take care of you.

Jacob never returned to Canaan. This was a promise to his descendants that they would return. "Joseph's own hand will close your eyes" refers to Joseph attending to Jacob as he faced death. It was God's promise to Jacob that he would never know the bitterness of being lonely again.

5. Thence he with his company goes into Egypt.

Genesis 46:5

And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons, which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.

8. The number of his family that went into Egypt.

Genesis 46:8

And these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn.

28. Joseph meets Jacob.

Genesis 46:28

And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen.

31. He instructs his brothers how to answer Pharaoh.

Genesis 46:31

And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, my brethren, and my father's house, which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me;

Jacob moved his whole family to Egypt, but they wanted to live apart from the Egyptians. To ensure this, Joseph told them to let Pharaoh know they were shepherds. Although Pharaoh may have been sympathetic to shepherds (for he was probably descended from the nomadic Hyksos line), the Egyptian culture would not willingly accept shepherds among them. The strategy worked, and Jacob's family was able to benefit from Pharaoh's generosity as well as from the Egyptians' prejudice.

Genesis 47

Jacob to Goshen; Israelites Multiply; Joseph and the Famine

1. Joseph presents his father, and five of his brothers before Pharaoh.

Genesis 47:1

Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, my father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen.

The faithfulness of Joseph affected his entire family. When he was in the pit and in prison, Joseph must have wondered about his future. Instead of despairing, he faithfully obeyed God and did what was right. Here we see one of the exciting results. We may not always see the effects of our faith, but we can be sure that God will honor faithfulness.

11. He gives them habitation and maintenance.

Genesis 47:11

And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded.

13. He gets the Egyptian's money;

Genesis 47:13

And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine.

16. Their cattle;

Genesis 47:16

And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fails.

18. And their lands, except the priests', to Pharaoh.

Genesis 47:18

When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, we will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands:

23. He restores the land for a fifth.

Genesis 47:23

Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land.

28. Jacob's age.

Genesis 47:28

And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years.

29. He swears Joseph to bury him with his fathers.

Genesis 47:29

And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt:

Putting a hand under the thigh was a sign of making a promise, much like shaking hands today. Jacob had Joseph promise to bury him in his homeland. Few things were written in this culture, so a person's word then carried as much force as a written contract today. People today seem to find it easy to say, "I didn't mean that." God's people, however, are to speak the truth and live the truth. Let your words be as binding as a written contract.

Genesis 48

Jacob's Illness; Manasseh and Ephraim

1. Joseph with his sons visits his sick father.

Genesis 48:1

And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

2. Jacob strengthens himself to bless them.

Genesis 48:2

And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed.

3. He repeats God's promise.

Genesis 48:3

And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me,

5. He takes Ephraim and Manasseh as his own sons.

Genesis 48:5

And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.

7. He tells Joseph of his mother's grave.

Genesis 48:7

And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem.

8. He blesses Ephraim and Manasseh.

Genesis 48:8

And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, who are these?

Jacob gave Ephraim, instead of his older brother Manasseh, the greater blessing. When Joseph objected, Jacob refused to listen because God had told him that Ephraim would become greater. God often works in unexpected ways.

When he chooses people to fulfill his plans, he always goes deeper than appearance, tradition, or position. He sometimes surprises us by choosing the less obvious person, at least by human reasoning. God can use you to carry out his plans, even if you don't think you have all the qualification

When Joseph became a slave, Jacob thought he was dead and wept in despair (Genesis 37:30). But eventually God's plan allowed Jacob to regain not only his son, but his grandchildren as well.

Circumstances are never so bad that they are beyond God's help. Jacob regained his son. Job got a new family (Job 42:10-17). Mary regained her brother Lazarus (John 11:1-44). We need never despair because we belong to a loving God. We never know what good he will bring out of a seemingly hopeless situation.

Jacob spoke of God as his shepherd throughout his life. In his old age, he could clearly see his dependence upon God. This marks a total attitude change from that of his scheming and dishonest youth. To develop an attitude like Jacob's, let God shepherd you as you trust in his provision and care. When you realize that every good thing comes from God, you can quit trying to grab them for yourself.

17. He prefers the younger before the elder.

Genesis 48:17

And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head.

Jacob spoke of God as his shepherd throughout his life. In his old age, he could clearly see his dependence upon God. This marks a total attitude change from that of his scheming and dishonest youth. To develop an attitude like Jacob's, let God shepherd you as you trust in his provision and care. When you realize that every good thing comes from God, you can quit trying to grab them for yourself.

Jacob was giving these young boys land occupied by the Philistines and Canaanites. His gift became reality when the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh occupied the east and west sides of the Jordan River (Joshua 16).

21. He prophesies their return to Canaan.

Genesis 48:21

And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

Jacob was giving these young boys land occupied by the Philistines and Canaanites. His gift became reality when the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh occupied the east and west sides of the Jordan River (Joshua 16).

Genesis 49

Jacob's Blessing to His Sons; Jacob's Death

1. Jacob calls his sons to bless them.

Genesis 49:1

And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.

3. They're blessing in particular.

Genesis 49:3

Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the Excellency of dignity, and the Excellency of power:

The oldest son was supposed to receive a double inheritance, but Reuben lost his special honor. Unstable and untrustworthy, especially in his younger days, he had gone so far as to sleep with one of his father's concubines. Jacob could not give the birthright blessing to such a dishonorable son.

Why was Judah—known for selling Joseph into slavery and trying to defraud his daughter-in-law—so greatly blessed? God had chosen Judah to be the ancestor of Israel's line of kings (that is the meaning of "the scepter will not depart from Judah"). This may have been due to Judah's dramatic change of character (Genesis 44:33-34). Judah's line would produce the promised Messiah, Jesus.

"Until he comes to whom it belongs" may also be translated, "until Shiloh comes." What is *Shiloh*? The meaning of this difficult passage is disputed. Shiloh may be another name for the Messiah, because its literal meaning is "sent." Shiloh might also refer to the Tent of Meeting set up at the city of Shiloh (Joshua 18:1).

In the middle of his prophecy to Dan, Jacob exclaimed, "I look for your deliverance, O LORD." He was emphasizing to Dan that he would be a strong leader only if his trust was in God, not in his natural strength or ability. Those who

are strong, attractive, or talented often find it easier to trust in themselves than in God who gave them their gifts. Remember to thank God for what you are and have so your trust does not become misplaced.

Joseph was indeed fruitful, with some heroic descendants. Among them were Joshua, who would lead the Israelites into the Promised Land (Joshua 1:10-11); Deborah, Gideon, and Jephthah, judges of Israel (Judges 4:4; Judges 6:11-12; Judges 11:11); and Samuel, a great prophet (1 Samuel 3:19).

These verses celebrate the times God rescued Joseph when his enemies attacked him. So often we struggle by ourselves, forgetting that God is able to help us fight our battles, whether they are against men with weapons or against spiritual forces. Joseph was able to draw closer to God as adversity mounted. To trust God to rescue you shows great faith. Can you trust him when injury or persecution is directed at you? Such spiritual battles require teamwork between courageous, faithful people and a mighty God.

29. He charges them about his burial.

Genesis 49:29

And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite,

33. He dies.

Genesis 49:33

And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

Genesis 50

Burial of Jacob; Death of Joseph

1. The mourning for Jacob.

Genesis 50:1

And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him.

When Jacob died at the age of 147, Joseph wept and mourned for months. When someone close to us dies, we need a long period of time to work through our grief. Crying and sharing our feelings with others helps us recover and go on with life. Allow yourself and others the freedom to grieve over the loss of a loved one, and give yourself time enough to complete your grieving process.

Embalming was typical for Egyptians but unusual for nomadic shepherds. Believing that the dead went to the next world in their physical bodies, the Egyptians embalmed bodies to preserve them so they could function in the world to come. Jacob's family allowed him to be embalmed as a sign of courtesy and respect to the Egyptians.

4. Joseph gets leave of Pharaoh to go to bury him.

Genesis 50:4

And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, if now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying,

Joseph had proven himself trustworthy as Pharaoh's adviser. Because of his good record, Pharaoh had little doubt that he would return to Egypt as promised after burying his father in Canaan. Privileges and freedom often result when we have demonstrated our trustworthiness. Since trust must be built gradually over time, take every opportunity to prove your reliability even in minor matters.

7. The funeral.

Genesis 50:7

And Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt,

Abraham had purchased the cave in the field of Machpelah as a burial place for his wife, Sarah (Genesis 23:1-9). It was to be a burial place for his entire family. Jacob was Abraham's grandson, and Jacob's sons returned to Canaan to bury him in this cave along with Abraham and Isaac. Their desire to be buried in this cave expressed their faith in God's promise to give their descendants the land of Canaan.

15. Joseph comforts his brothers, who crave his pardon.

Genesis 50:15

And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil, which we did unto him.

Now that Jacob (or Israel) was dead, the brothers feared revenge from Joseph. Could he really have forgiven them for selling him into slavery? But to their surprise, Joseph not only forgave them but reassured them, offering to care for them and their families. Joseph's forgiveness was complete. He demonstrated how God graciously accepts us even though we don't deserve it. Because God forgives us even when we have ignored or rejected him, we should graciously forgive others.

God brought good from the brothers' evil deed, Potiphar's wife's false accusation, the cupbearer's neglect, and seven years of famine. The experiences in Joseph's life taught him that God brings good from evil for those who trust him. Do you trust God enough to wait patiently for him to bring good out of bad situations? You can trust him because, as Joseph learned, God can overrule people's evil intentions to bring about his intended results.

22. His age.

Genesis 50:22

And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years.

23. He sees the third generation of his sons.

Genesis 50:23

And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son Manasseh was brought up upon Joseph's knees.

24. He prophesies unto his brothers of their return.

Genesis 50:24

And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Joseph was ready to die. He had no doubts that God would keep his promise and one day bring the Israelites back to their homeland. What a tremendous example! The secret of that kind of faith is a lifetime of trusting God. Your faith is like a muscle—it grows with exercise, gaining strength over time. After a lifetime of exercising trust, your faith can be as strong as Joseph's. Then at your death, you can be confident that God will fulfill all his promises to you and to all those faithful to him who may live after you.

This verse sets the stage for what would begin to happen in Exodus and come to completion in Joshua. God was going to make Jacob's family into a great nation, lead them out of Egypt, and bring them into the land he had promised them. The nation would rely heavily on this promise, and Joseph emphasized his belief that God would do what he had promised.

25. He takes an oath of them concerning his bones.

Genesis 50:25

And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

26. He dies, and is put into a coffin.

Genesis 50:26

So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

The book of Genesis gives us rich descriptions of the lives of many great men and women who walked with God. They sometimes succeeded and often failed. Yet we learn much by reading the biographies of these people. Where did they get their motivation and courage? They got it by realizing God was with them despite their inadequacies. Knowing this should encourage us to be faithful to God, to rely on him for guidance, and to utilize the potential he has given us.

Matthew 11:28
Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.



To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

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Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print