Joseph



By Josh Stucki

*“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.” – Genesis 50:20*

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Introduction

Good day, friend! This book took about three months to research and almost as long to put together. Joseph’s life is basically the back quarter of the book of Genesis, which more than being just a lot of material to cover, shows Joseph’s importance to the Biblical story.

Yet, Joseph was not in the line of Christ. He was much more a John the Baptist character who prepared the way for Israel to survive a coming famine, preserving Jesus’ lineage.

I hope you enjoy this character study of Joseph as much as I have. Think of this one fact: not a single error of Joseph is ever recorded. Sounds like someone to learn from, I think!

* Josh Stucki

For those who studied Joseph with me on Wednesday nights…

New research and commentary are included in this book from when those classes were taught, some of which came from you! Thank you for studying with me and providing your insight. I will always be limited in my understanding, so the counsel of many faithful people increases wisdom.

Chapter I – Who Joseph Was and Was Not

1. Joseph is not in the line of Christ:
   1. This is interesting since Joseph and Christ have so many parallels.
   2. Instead, God would use Joseph as a forerunner for his family to carry on the line of Christ, much like John the Baptist was a forerunner.
      1. Christ would come through Jacob’s son, Joseph’s brother, Judah (Genesis 49:8-12).
      2. Joseph did not get his own tribe; his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh did (Genesis 48:5; Numbers 1:5-16).
         1. This is remarkable, from our flesh’s perspective, as Joseph above all “should have” received his own tribe!
            1. No error of Joseph’s was ever recorded
            2. 50+parallels with Christ,
            3. Yet Joseph does not carry on the Messiah’s lineage, and he does not even get his own tribe!
            4. Goes to show our flesh’s sense of fairness should be suspect in our own minds!
         2. God had good reason. Two, for that matter:
            1. Joseph’s permanent residence was in Egypt. He was not coming back to Canaan.
            2. Joseph’s wife was Hamitic (Egyptian), not Semitic, so he could not produce offspring in accordance with Messianic prophecy (see Genesis 9:26).
      3. There is some evidence that the twelve signs of the Chinese Zodiac are based off the original symbols of the flags of the twelve tribes of Israel:
         1. The ancient battle flags of Israel’s tribes had the same symbols.
         2. The Old Testament patriarchs either predate or were contemporaries with any other ancient society:
         3. Asians are all Japhetic, as are we (Genesis 9:27, 10:2-5):
            1. It makes sense that as commerce spread, ideas and art spread too.
            2. It was common for cultures to blend, or for another culture to adopt ideas from another (bringing a sense of validity to a new system).
         4. We (Europeans) are also Japhetic. Hamitics were Africans. Semitics were Jews and Arabs.
      4. Joseph said in Genesis 50:20, “**20**As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about [[o](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+50#fen-NASB-1527o)]this present result, to preserve many people alive.”
         1. Joseph came to understand that God had used his dire situation to preserve his family, the family whom Christ would come!
         2. Satan was certain Christ was going to come through Joseph – since the long-sleeved (or, multi-colored) coat had been given him – so who did Satan try to kill off? Joseph!
            1. This goes to show that although Satan had heard the same prophecies everyone else had, he did not understand them.
            2. This is a theme throughout the Old Testament even bleeding into the New.
            3. Satan is very intelligent but not discerning (not wise). This also shows how essential prophecy was to bringing about the Christ:

Enough so those faithful could patiently understand

Not enough so those desiring to stop Messiah could figure it out

This is also why there is so much Messianic prophecy (360+). It’s like a puzzle with that many pieces: with patience, even without the box art, it can be assembled and portray the picture it meant to portray. The individual pieces, by themselves, do not do so.

* + - 1. And just to be sure, Satan had Reuben – the first born – do the great misdeed of selling Joseph off and deceiving his father, hoping he would either be found out and killed for his betrayal or be disowned, cutting off the line of Christ either way.
      2. However, God had another plan in mind all along – Judah would be the one through whom Messiah would come! (Genesis 49:8-12)
         1. Studying Judah later, it will be clear that God did not choose him for merit. Judah was a scoundrel in his own right.
         2. No, God chose this person or that by grace, not merit. To this day, grace is how we are saved, not by our own good deeds.
      3. So, God had Joseph in Egypt to save his family from the famine – Satan’s other plan to foil Messiah’s coming.
      4. Joseph understood this, and his chosen attitude of patiently trusting God about his afflictions enabled him to not only survive, but complete God’s plan for his life, resulting in also a good life for himself!
    1. Just like John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ, Joseph prepared the way for the lineage of Christ.

1. All the above proves the *necessity* of Genesis 1-11 being true, literal stories:
   1. Without Noah and his sons being real, actual people, there would be no compulsion of God to send Joseph, preclude Reuben, and assign Judah.
   2. Without Adam and Eve, Genesis 3:15 would not have established the need for Christ from the very beginning, literally setting the stage for every story, prophecy, and genealogical choice thereafter.
   3. Without Genesis 1-11, the Bible would be a non-starter, Jesus would not have been the Messiah, and we would still be in our sins!
   4. So, thank God for Genesis 1-11 *being literally true!*
   5. Let those who consider Genesis 1-11 mythological material or not possibly true because of a presumption of evolutionary theory reconsider: there is no good end to adopting worldly thinking into Biblical narrative or a Biblical lifestyle. Just like the above, it just leads to illogical conclusions and destructive compromise.

Chapter II – Joseph’s Childhood

1. Genesis 37:1-2a – Jacob is back home. And Joseph, his 12th son, is 17.
2. Genesis 37:2, 14 – Jacob was in the regular habit of sending Joseph to bring back a report about his brothers’ work.
   1. Jacob felt the need to do this, and valid was his suspicion, finding his sons misbehaving both times in vs. 2 and vs. 17.
   2. However, Jacob did not see his lazy sons as potentially murderous. Should he have?
      1. In vs. 18ff, only Reuben wanted to spare Joseph’s life.
      2. When the remaining brothers (at the suggestion of Judah) sold Joseph into slavery, Reuben was not there (vs. 29-30).
      3. Reuben did participate in lying to Jacob, however, and kept the secret along with the rest of his brothers.
      4. So, at minimum, ten of Jacob’s sons were lazy, liars, potentially murderous, betrayers, and extortioners.
         1. These were the founding members of Israel’s tribes!
         2. If God can work with even them, it gives hope to all.[[1]](#footnote-1)
      5. It would be hard to believe that Jacob was ignorant of his sons’ horrible behavior and potential, but the high priest Eli had a similar problem (1 Samuel 2:12-17). David would too.
         1. This shows that poor fathers are not just a modern problem.
         2. Then as well as now, we need Biblical dads!
      6. This, of course, is still a problem today – parents unwilling to acknowledge their children’s ill behavior – and that ill behavior wreaks havoc far beyond the parents.
   3. Joseph brought back a bad report to his father the first time (vs. 2) but never had a chance to do so the second time (vs. 18):
      1. The story could have been very different if:
         1. When he got a report from a stranger that his brothers were once again where they were not supposed to be…
         2. He could have simply went back to his father to report that fact alone (vs. 15-17).
      2. Instead, Joseph presses onward (vs. 17b-18).
         1. Was this out of a sense of duty to his father to be thorough?
         2. Was Joseph desiring concrete evidence of his brother’s wrongdoing? Did Jacob demand that concrete evidence?
         3. Did Joseph enjoy rubbing his father’s favoritism for him in his brothers’ faces?
         4. Since the Bible never says anything negative about Joseph – not even once – it is likely answer #1 and/or #2.
3. Genesis 37:3-4 – Joseph receives a “vari-colored tunic” from his father:
   1. NASB footnote says, “or, full-length robe”
   2. Many know this tonic as, “the coat of many colors”
   3. The most literal translation is a “long-sleeved coat”
   4. Regardless, the coat signified that Jacob had made Joseph the heir:
      1. This meant that Joseph would receive 2/3’s of the inheritance, and everybody else would receive their part of the remaining 1/3.
      2. Now, this sounds unfair, but this division served a greater purpose than fairness:[[2]](#footnote-2)
         1. If the inheritance was only divided equally generation after generation:
            1. Soon everybody only gets half a goat, so to speak (endless division over finite resources).
            2. Therefore, the family farm would be inevitably liquidated into meaningless tiny chunks.
         2. Instead, to make sure the family farm at least always had the resources to continue, the heir would inherit an unusually substantial portion.
            1. So, the understanding was that the heir was obligated to continue as his parents had, but in exchange had a reasonable chance to succeed.
            2. Everybody else got a lot less, but they at least got something along with the freedom to pursue their living elsewhere.
         3. In any case, the ancients saw the continuation of the family heritage more important than individual fairness. This was true in many cultures. It is at least a reasonable question to ask if it would be in ours.[[3]](#footnote-3)
   5. What was unusual is that the tunic went to Joseph instead of Reuben, Jacob’s firstborn.
      1. Yet, Reuben is the one who tried to defend Joseph! (vs. 21, 29) So kudos to Reuben for helping keep Joseph alive.
      2. However, Reuben was far from perfect: for one, he slept with one of his other brothers’ mother, Bilhah.
      3. Jacob would also later describe him as “uncontrolled as water”:
      4. This would result in his blessing by Jacob in Genesis 49:3-4 being reduced.
         1. Reuben was noted for having “might” and for being the “beginning” of Jacob’s “strength”.
         2. Reuben was “pre-eminent” for “dignity” and “power”.
         3. Yet his lack of self-control eliminated his pre-eminence.
            1. This meant that even though he himself would not enjoy power, his tribe would still be established.
            2. More practically, and for us, it means that we too can squander our potential through carelessness, even permanently.
            3. His tribe was in the far southeastern part of Israel.
            4. It would be eliminated entirely in 722BC, when the Northern Kingdom fell.

Ironically, Reuben was mostly south of Benjamin, but Reuben was still considered part of the Northern Kingdom.

The Kingdoms were named for their majority-direction, not universal-direction.

* 1. So, Reuben was either not upset that his father had chosen another to be the heir (not likely) or at least not upset enough to kill his brother (likely).
     1. This does contrast Reuben to Cain favorably, but that’s not saying much.
     2. Just because someone chooses not to be altogether-awful, this does not make them virtuous:
        1. Harmlessness is not the same as goodness – Revelation 3:16.
        2. Truly good people must still be a force for good in the church and in the world. Sometimes this means necessary conflicts!
     3. God’s standards for good did not change with the times, just as they do not now.
  2. All references to Reuben after Genesis 49:3 are about his tribe, not him as an individual. Jewish tradition says he died at age 125.[[4]](#footnote-4)
  3. The only New Testament reference for Reuben (his tribe) is Revelation 7:5, where all twelve tribes are named in the 144,000.

1. Genesis 37:5-11 – Now onto the famous dreams of Joseph. He had two:
   1. Vs. 6-7, Vs. 9 – both are the same dream but with different imagery.
   2. It is tradition reflected many times in Scripture, even by Jesus, that any repetition means to emphasize what is being said – it is important!
   3. Vs. 8, vs. 10-11 – Both Joseph’s brothers and father were upset with him for merely sharing the dreams.
      1. The Scripture records that Joseph did indeed have these dreams, so he wasn’t lying or exaggerating.
      2. So, Joseph was merely being honest, but his brothers and father were upset with him merely because they did not like the content of the dreams!
      3. We often treat truth like that – we reject it merely because we do not like it. May we recognize this and stop it!
      4. A good question might be, “I may not like this, but is it true?”
      5. In this case, the lack of consideration on their part contributed further to Joseph’s brothers’ hatred of him.
   4. Later, these dreams would be fulfilled – Genesis 42:6
   5. Truth wins, even if the path to its fulfillment is as awful as was Joseph’s.

Chapter III – Joseph in Potiphar’s House

1. If the reader is following along chronologically in Scripture, this study skips Genesis chapter 38:
   1. It is an account about Judah and Tamar.
      1. Notably, Christ would descend from them through his earthly father Joseph (Matthew 1:3).
      2. This would happen about 1,700 years later.
   2. It is an essential story for the sake of Christ’s lineage but is not about Joseph, so it is skipped for this study.
2. Genesis 39:1-6 – Joseph is sold to Potiphar by the Ishmaelites.
   1. Remember, Ishmael was Joseph’s great uncle (Abraham’s first son, Joseph’s great-grandfather’s first boy).
   2. This means Joseph was sold by his family, to his extended family, to become a slave in Egypt![[5]](#footnote-5)
   3. Interestingly, vs. 1 is the last time Potiphar is named outright in Scripture (the only other time was Genesis 37:36). He is referred to as “Joseph’s master” from this point on in the story.
   4. The Lord, already working His plan, saw to Joseph’s success:
      1. Vs. 2-3 – It was so obvious that God was working with Joseph that even Potiphar noticed and wisely took heed.
         1. This means Potiphar was observant, paying attention.
         2. Potiphar’s wisdom shows here that paying attention to what God is doing in the world is very important:
         3. It could mean the difference between seeing a terrific opportunity or not when they rarely come along.
      2. Vs. 4-5 – Potiphar chose to put Joseph as manager of his household and God blessed him too as a result:
         1. Do we look for godly people to employ/team up with?
         2. Do we teach our kids to do the same?
         3. The concept of “unequally yoked” (2 Corinthians 6:14) is worthy of a brief discussion here:
            1. A lack of shared values destroys marriages!
            2. Top four values: religion, money, kids, family.
            3. This preacher has added one other: tragedy.
            4. Tragedy is inevitable and just like Noah, it’s important to have your ark ready for when the floods come.
            5. And the floods will come. And without an ark, you [your marriage/family] will be swept away.
      3. Vs. 6 – Potiphar was effectively able to “retire” because of Joseph! (This indicates, perhaps, Potiphar was older and looking for a manager like this all along to continue things)
      4. Vs. 7ff – This may also explain why Potiphar’s wife sought after Joseph so hard:
         1. It was very common for young women to marry much older men for the security their wealth gave them and usually their family too.
         2. Younger women were also more likely to produce an heir(s) for the older, accomplished man.
         3. “Love” was a tertiary concern but not altogether ignored:
            1. An ancient phrase from many arranged-marriage cultures discussing freely-chosen ones says, “We put cold ingredients in a hot pot. You put hot ingredients in a cold pot.”
            2. This is not an endorsement of arranged marriages. Rather, it is a genuine criticism of freely-chosen marriages.
            3. This is primarily why, even in free Western societies until very recently, parents had a major influence in the choice of a spouse:
            4. We know that love that lasts has little to do with what one values in youth.
            5. A lack of parental approval in relationships in recent times has not been good, obviously.
         4. Back to Potiphar’s wife – allowing a mix of immaturity and ingratitude to stir within her – Potiphar’s wife wanted her cake (a prosperous, secure life) and to eat it too (sleep with her husband’s handsome servant).
         5. Interestingly, the fit she threw didn’t get her what she wanted anyway – all that happened was Joseph suffered!
3. Genesis 39:7-18 – 12 verses about this run-in Joseph had with Potiphar’s wife!
   1. Interestingly, 12 verses is the length of Cain and Abel’s basic story too.
   2. There are major lessons for all young people here:
      1. Success breeds success but also great temptation.
      2. Good looks are often a liability, not just a blessing.
         1. Good looks inspire jealousy.
         2. Good looks tend to disproportionately increase expectations.
         3. Good looks make certain temptations easier to grasp.
         4. Good looks attract more people – good and bad.
         5. Good looks draw unwanted attention (especially for women).
         6. So, be careful what you wish for, and if you were not “blessed” with good looks, you were blessed with not having to deal with the above.[[6]](#footnote-6)
      3. Logic and morality (vs. 9) mean nothing to the tempter/temptress.
      4. Ignoring temptation does not always make it go away (vs. 10). What should be done then?
         1. Vs. 11 – Never be alone with the temptation/tempter/temptress. Never trust them!
         2. Vs. 12 – Flee!! (James 4:7 – “flee from the devil”)
      5. False accusations are often levied at the successful (vs. 13-19). Why?
         1. Vengeance/Revenge (in this case, over rejection)
         2. Jealousy/Envy (can’t stand to see others have more)
            1. i.e., frivolous lawsuits
            2. Many people think they want unearned gain because we have believed the lie, despite endless evidence, that it’s not dangerous.
         3. Attention (upset over being ignored)
            1. Goes along with sympathy-seeking
            2. Uses the age-old, still relevant, still awful, “oppressor/oppressed” narrative
         4. Alibi (accuse someone else unluckily also present)
         5. Regret/Relabeling (an unpleasant interaction with the accused)
            1. i.e., “Hero worship” being shattered
            2. Change mind of former consensual situation
      6. Which ones fit Potiphar’s wife? At least #1 and #3.
      7. A wise, successful man told this author in my starting business years, “People will wish you success until you are.”
      8. We underestimate jealousy’s endless plague on society (James 3:16 – jealousy produces disorder and every evil thing). It is sad to see jealousy even being encouraged in our equity-obsessed culture.

Chapter IV – Joseph in Jail

* 1. Vs. 19-20 – There was no “appeal” process for Joseph:
     1. After being falsely accused, he was immediately thrown into prison (vs. 20).
     2. This preacher’s wife was processing “inmate grievance” forms the other day at her work, the local county jail. No such thing in the jail Joseph was in!
     3. Potiphar acted on anger (vs. 19); the lesson here is that anger is a poor judge!
        1. James 1:19-20 – “This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger. The anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”
        2. Proverbs 29:11 – “A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.”
        3. Potiphar’s anger resulted in losing his manager and Joseph losing what good was in his life – all unnecessarily! (Not even Potiphar’s wife benefited!)
  2. Vs. 21-23 – Joseph prospered in jail just as he did in servanthood.
     1. Once again, God saw to Joseph’s success (vs. 21).
     2. The chief jailer did the same as Potiphar did but now the chief jailer benefited from Joseph where Potiphar did not.
     3. Vs. 22 – Joseph was responsible for the jail (vs. 22):
        1. This point cannot be stressed enough.
        2. God blessed Joseph because Joseph was responsible.
        3. God’s blessings are not welfare: they are predicated on the idea that God is in the habit of blessing hard work.
        4. The essential difference to understand is that Joseph did not earn God’s grace; rather, God freely rewards as He sees fit. God has chosen to regularly reward responsibility and hard work, not that man has or could earn His grace.[[7]](#footnote-7)
        5. Notice too that Joseph was not discontent in either of his “jobs”. He made the most of every opportunity.
     4. Vs. 23a – Again, like when Joseph worked for Potiphar, Joseph was left to get things done of his own accord in the jail under the oversight of his master:
        1. This preacher has learned in any organization that it is not useful (and often counterproductive) to micromanage self-starting/self-initiating individuals.
        2. Required oversight can be maintained and self-productive individuals can thrive with freedom to operate inside of predetermined boundaries.
        3. A good rule in any healthy organization is that the overseers determines the “what” and “why” and the staff largely determines and executes the “how”.
        4. This is also, essentially, the difference between “policy” and “procedure”.[[8]](#footnote-8)
        5. A constant conversation between the two facilitates trust and gets the job done. This also means when the “what” and “how” or other factors intermingle, the conversation is already open to work that out.
     5. Vs. 23b – “supervise” would be better translated “scrutinize”
        1. The Hebrew word is “roeh”, which means to examine critically or to look with intent to find fault.
        2. The jailer was still responsible to his authorities and undoubtedly kept tabs on what was going on (same with Potiphar).
        3. The better understanding here is that the jailer did not micromanage Joseph; he rightly trusted him to get the job done and that trust was well-placed. So, this is also true with putting the right people under your employ.

Chapter V – Joseph, the Cupbearer, and the Baker

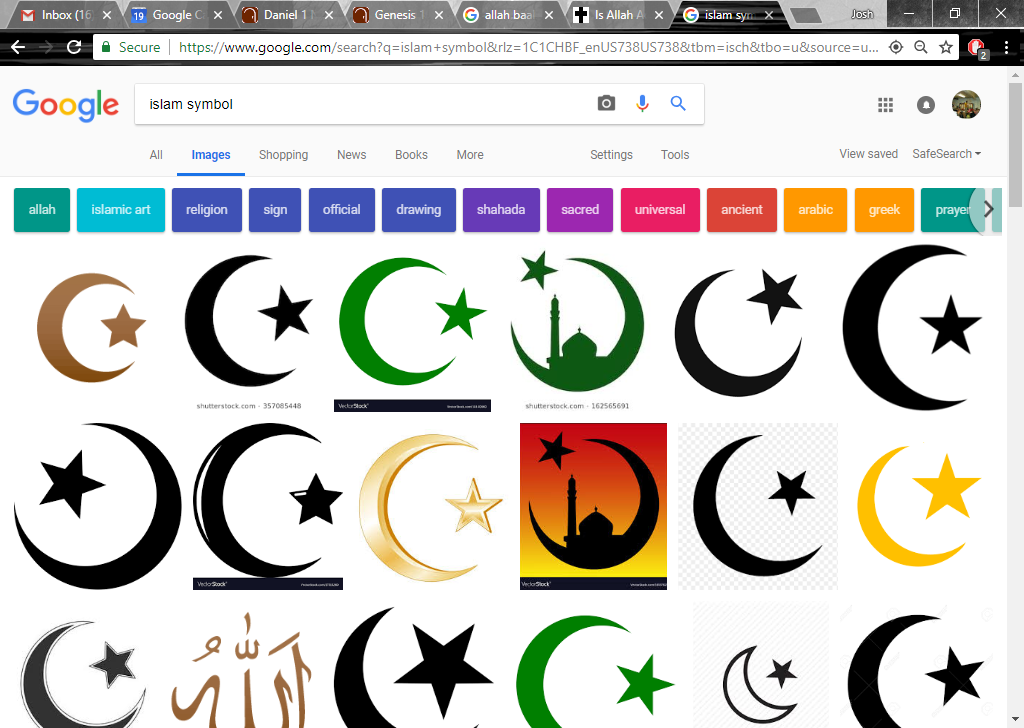
1. Genesis 40:1-4 – Pharaoh’s cupbearer and baker displeased him and were thrown into the same prison where Joseph was.
   1. “offended” is the Hebrew word “chata”, the same word for “sin”
      1. “Sin”, of course, can mean disobeying God.
      2. Sin’s root word means “to miss the mark” – its origin is an archery term.
      3. The idea here is that the cupbearer and baker displeased Pharaoh by not meeting his expectations, not necessarily that they insulted him or disobeyed God specifically.
   2. Joseph was also in the same prison, was put in charge of them, and took care of them (vs. 4).
      1. The “captain of the bodyguard” also trusted Joseph. We often talk about Potiphar and the jailer, but apparently Joseph’s reputation in the jail spread even beyond its bars!
         1. Reputation is underestimated in today’s world.
         2. Reputation is simply character known.
         3. Reputation will carry us (or sink us!) farther than any resume’ will!
      2. It is also interesting that Joseph equated “charge” and “care” – as any good overseer/shepherd does.
2. Vs. 5-8 – The cupbearer and baker each had a dream that night:
   1. Vs. 6-7 – Joseph’s question strikes this preacher as kind of funny – “Why are your faces so sad today?” They were in jail, after all!
      1. Nonetheless, “So sad” must mean that they were even more sad than usual.
      2. Joseph was observant, actively caring for those under his charge.
   2. Vs. 8a – The cupbearer and baker must have shared their dreams with each other but were unable to help one another. It stands to reason they were friends both in and out of jail.
   3. Vs. 8b – Joseph’s response is interesting – “Do not interpretations belong to God?” and then, “Tell it to me, please.”
      1. Not only did Joseph know where interpretations came from but knew he possessed, by God’s grace, the ability to give them.
      2. He is also confident to tell the cupbearer and baker this same fact.
      3. Vs. 9 and following shows they believed him.
3. Vs. 9-15 – Two very different dreams with two very different interpretations:
   1. Vs. 9-11 – The cupbearer’s dream was ultimately positive!
   2. Vs. 12-13 – He would be restored shortly; his offense must have been minor or Pharaoh preferred his service than without.
   3. Vs. 14-15 – Joseph asked the cupbearer to remember him, mention him to Pharaoh, and explained why.
   4. Joseph never ceased desiring to leave prison, but even so, did his best in his present circumstances.
4. Vs. 16-19 – Not so good for the baker…
   1. The dream was unpleasant and so was its interpretation.
   2. No further conversation was had between Joseph and the baker.
5. Vs. 20-23 – In three days there was a birthday celebration for Pharaoh:
   1. Vs. 20a – Birthdays have always been celebrated universally.
   2. Vs. 20b – The phrase, “lifted up the head of…” obviously has no necessarily positive or negative outcome!
      1. Vs. 21 – The cupbearer was restored…
      2. Vs. 22 – But the baker was hanged.
      3. The Bible makes a point to let us know Joseph was right in his interpretations.
   3. Vs. 23 – Unfortunately, the cupbearer forgot Joseph, but only temporarily: Genesis 41:9-13 speaks of the cupbearer revealing God’s working in Joseph to interpret dreams. This would be the moment God had in waiting for Joseph all this time…

Chapter VI – Joseph and Pharaoh

1. Genesis 41:1-8 – Pharaoh shared his dream but no one could interpret it.
   1. Vs. 25-36 shows us that Pharaoh sought more than a basic interpretation, but also a plan of action.
      1. The latter is probably what stopped many would-be interpreters of dreams from offering their interpretations.
      2. Being wrong was often punished severely, including death, even of one’s family too!
   2. Only Joseph with God’s help would be able to provide both the interpretation and the correct plan of action.
   3. Pharaoh called on his…
      1. Magicians: also, “soothsayers/priests”
         1. These were the pagan priests of the Egyptian gods
         2. They were not just religious leaders but also showmen for Pharaoh’s court:
            1. For Pharaoh’s entertainment
            2. To impress visitors
            3. To allegedly please the gods of Egypt
         3. Later, this same group will – on a small scale – imitate Moses’ signs and wonders in the Exodus story (i.e. Exodus 7:11-12).
      2. Wise Men: loosely, Pharaoh’s “scholars, doctors, scientists”
         1. Science, as understood today, is only ~500 years old.
         2. Nonetheless, ancient attempts at learning about the natural world occurred in Egypt and elsewhere:
            1. Some were disastrous: leeches, packing sores with excrement, drinking urine, etc.
            2. Others had at least some promise: minimally-invasive head surgery through the nose, trepanation (drilling into the head to relieve cranial pressure)
         3. These men were also trained in the literature of the time, mainly Egyptian “wisdom” and mythology.
         4. These were the most likely to be expected to interpret Pharaoh’s dream, but:
            1. They had to get it right the first time. Wrong interpretations of dreams were often punishable by death.
            2. They might have refrained from interpreting because the pain of a beating for claiming a lack of knowledge (which was then interpreted as having not studied hard enough) was better than execution.
2. Vs. 9-13 – The cupbearer bravely shares his experience with Pharaoh:
   1. Had the cupbearer been wrong about Joseph, he too would have been killed, so his bravery here is notable.
   2. He shares with Pharaoh what happened while he was in prison by Pharaoh’s own order. This was also a disguised compliment:
      1. Basically, the cupbearer was praising Pharaoh for having put him in prison or he would not have met Joseph.
      2. This also shows the cupbearer’s diplomacy skills: a clever, and yet appropriate way to get your point across is honest flattery.
   3. As a result, Pharaoh calls for Joseph…
3. Vs. 14-24 – Pharaoh has Joseph brought to him, fit for presentation:
   1. Vs. 14 – Joseph could not come as he was; they cleaned him up first.
   2. Pharaohs, like many dictatorial leaders, were obsessed with cleanliness. Hitler himself was known for his high level of disgust:
      1. In the 1930’s, he removed the vermin of the factories of Germany with Zyklon-B, the same chemical later used in his gas chambers.
      2. He bathed 2-3 times a day.
      3. When Germany started losing the war, it has been argued that he deflected resources away from the war effort and into the concentration camps, anxious to finish his “work” of ethnic-cleansing before time ran out to do so.
      4. This is, however, where Pharaoh’s and Hitler’s similarities end. Especially in comparison with the Pharaoh during the time of Moses, this Pharaoh has many admirable qualities, which resulted in both his reign being preserved as well as his country as a whole:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Leadership Qualities of Pharaohs from Genesis 40-50 and Exodus 3-15** | | | |
| # | Leadership Trait | Pharaoh of Genesis | Pharaoh of Exodus |
| 1 | Judgment | Patient (40:2-40:22) | Rash (5:5-9) |
| 2 | Discernment | Listened (41:14-41:54) | Stubborn (13 times) |
| 3 | Honesty | Kept his word (41:55) | Lied (8:15, other times) |
| 4 | Attitude | Happy for others (45:16) | Downplay/insult (5:17-18) |
| 5 | Concern | Wanted to help (45:17) | No concern (7:23) |
| 6 | Generosity | Helped others (45:21) | Left others dry (7:24) |
| 7 | Quality | Gave best (47:11) | Gave nothing (9:11) |
| 8 | Business | Traded fairly (47:20-26) | Only took/stole (1:8-14) |
| 9 | Flexibility | Gave time (50:4-6) | None (5:14-16) |
| 10 | Legacy | ~215 years (50:22-26) | None (14:28-30) |

* 1. Vs. 15 – Joseph gives credit to God when Pharaoh asks if he can interpret dreams.
     1. Joseph knows the cost if he interprets Pharaoh’s dream wrong. Yet, God gives him confidence the wise men lacked.[[9]](#footnote-9)
     2. Joseph even tells Pharaoh that God will give Pharaoh a “favorable answer”. Joseph already knew enough about Pharaoh’s dream in advance that it was to help him, not hurt him, and Egypt with him.
     3. Again, God is showing kindness not only to his own but those who even had no regard for him. The God of the Old Testament has a very misplaced modern reputation.
     4. Also, how Pharaoh would have understood “God” was different than Joseph’s:
        1. The main God of the Egyptians was “Ra”, the god of the sun.
        2. Yet, interestingly a symbol of Ra was the crescent moon and star, same as Allah’s from Islam today.
        3. This is because the ancient Egyptians believed that the sun = the moon and a star combined. They believed that Ra made the sun this way at the beginning of time.
     5. Compare the following:



By far, the most common symbol for Islam is the Crescent Moon and Star. The above is a symbol Google image search for “Islam symbol”.

An old photo of a building

Description generated with high confidence This is an ancient depiction of Baal worship which the Bible condemns extensively. Notice the sun and crescent moon symbol front and center.

 This is an 12th century BC depiction of the worship of Ishtar (Baal’s wife – also known as “Easter”), Sin (Moon worship – like Abram’s father – Joshua 24:2), and Shamash (word for “sun” or the Egyptian God “Ra”). Worshipping “Allah” is worshipping Baal, Ra, etc.

 Greek coin, ~300BC

 Another Greek coin, picturing the Greek goddess Artemis (a pagan evolution of Ishtar/Ashtar/Easter/Ashtaroth).

 Roman coin of Emperor Hadrian (AD 117-138) – Roman emperor worship was in full swing (evolution of Nimrod to Baal to Ra to emperor worship and now Allah).

The Catholics adopted this symbol under King Richard I of England (AD 1198) as a bad influence from the crusaders, who were fighting Muslims. This is the regular pattern (and danger) of Catholicism.

 The Catholic templars (secret society, mystic-pagan cult syncretism) also adopted it about a hundred years later.

A close up of a logo

Description generated with very high confidence One symbol of the US Military Muslim Chaplain corps.

A screenshot of a cell phone

Description generated with very high confidence

Flags of various Muslim countries around the world.

The conclusion is easy: Allah is simply the latest evolution of pagan religion over time, starting with Nimrod and Baal through the Babylonian, Egyptian, Persian, Greek, Roman cultures, and other foreign gods until now.

1. Genesis 41:25-32 – Joseph interprets Pharaoh’s dream
   1. The dream and its interpretation are both from God:
      1. Like Daniel, Joseph gives God the credit.
      2. Like Daniel, Joseph’s faithfulness would bear fruit.
         1. A long time coming!
         2. Sold into slavery, betrayed by Potiphar’s wife, thrown in prison, forgotten by the cupbearer…
         3. Joseph is a patterned example of perseverance, waiting on God’s plan.
         4. Stories like these are good reminders to remember God has always had a pattern He expects His people to follow (what we are to do is not a mystery):

Special Study on Patterns in Scripture

Starts with the Preacher Doing His Part:

1) 1 Timothy 5:21 – “21 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.”

2) 1 Timothy 6:13+14 – “13 I charge you in the presence of God, who [i]gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, 14 that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,”

3) 2 Timothy 3:14 – “14 I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; 15 but[k]in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how [l]one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.”

4) Jude says the same in Jude 1:3 (Jude was an evangelist – Jude 1:1 – “servant/minister”): Jude 1:3 – “3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the [c]saints.”

5) God’s Double Defense for the Church:

The Elders Defend the Flock While the Preacher Defends the Pattern:

a) Acts 20:17-35 – What Elders Do

b) 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9 – Who Elders Are

c) 1 Peter 5:1-5 – Peter’s Example of Being an Elder

The Church is Then Called to the Follow God’s Pattern:

6) “Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.” – Philippians 3:17 (NASB)

7) Greek word for “pattern” (“tupos”) used (translation in bold):

a) Translated “teaching” in Romans 16:17 – “17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and [h]hindrances contrary to the **teaching** which you learned, and turn away from them.”

b) Translated “example” in 1 Corinthians 10:11 – “11 Now these things happened to them as an **example**, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”

c) Translated “example” in 1 Thessalonians 1:7 – “7 so that you became an **example** to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.”

d) Translated “model” in 2 Thessalonians 3:9 – “9 not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a **model** for you, so that you would [m]follow our example. “

e) Translated “example” in 1 Timothy 4:12 – “12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an **example** [e]of those who believe.”

f) Translated “example” in Titus 2:7 – “7 in all things show yourself to be an **example** of good deeds, with [d]purity in doctrine, dignified,”

g) Translated as “examples” in 1 Peter 5:3 – “3 nor yet as lording it over [a]those allotted to your charge, but [b]proving to be **examples** to the flock. “

Regardless, each Scripture above all uses the same Greek word (tupos), no matter how it is translated. There is a “pattern” God has commanded and expects!

8) Also see Old Testament examples of the pattern God expects:

a) Exodus 25:9+40 – “9 According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it.”

b) Numbers 8:4 – “4 Now this was the workmanship of the lamp stand, hammered work of gold; from its base to its flowers it was hammered work; according to the pattern which the LORD had shown Moses, so he made the lamp stand.”

c) 2 Kings 16:10 – “10 Now King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and saw the altar which was at Damascus; and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the [a]pattern of the altar and its model, according to all its workmanship.”

d) 1 Chronicles 28:19 – “19 “All this,” said David, “the LORD made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, all the [g]details of this pattern.”

e) Jeremiah 33:25 – “25 Thus says the LORD, ‘If My covenant for day and night stand not, and the [l]fixed patterns of heaven and earth I have not established,”

9) And more New Testament examples:

a) Acts 7:44 – “44 “Our fathers had the tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness, just as He who spoke to Moses directed him to make it according to the pattern which he had seen.”

b) Hebrews 8:5 – “5 who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses [a]waswarned by God when he was about to erect the [b]tabernacle; for, “SEE,” He says, “THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN.”

10) God Has an Established Pattern for the Church

a) God has always been a God of order:

i) In creation (Genesis 1)

ii) In the family (Ephesians 5:22-31)

b) In the Old Testament Worship (Exodus 25:9+40; Numbers 8:4; 2 Kings 16:10; 1 Chronicles 28:19; Jeremiah 33:25)

c) In How He has Revealed His Nature, Word, and Will:

i) Through creation (Romans 1:20; Psalms 14:1)

ii) Through the patriarchs (Hebrews 1:1)

iii) Through the prophets (Hebrews 1:2a)

iv) Through His Son (Hebrews 1:2b; John 14:7-9)

d) Hebrews 1:1+2 – “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 [a]in these last days has spoken to us [b]in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the [c]world.”

e) Through the Apostles (John 17:20) – “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;“

f) Through His Revealed Word (1 Corinthians 2:10; 2 Timothy 3:16)

g) God’s character never changes (Hebrews 13:8)

11) Therefore, it makes sense that God would continue expecting us to follow the patterns set by him: Philippians 3:17; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 10:11; 1 Thessalonians 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 3:9; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7; 1 Peter 5:3.

* 1. Both dreams are the same:
     1. Seven good cows/stalks are seven years of plenty
     2. Seven bad cows/stalks are seven years of famine
  2. Repeating the dream twice means both “important” and “urgent”
     1. Immediate repetition in Scripture always means these things – it is crucial we pay attention to those things repeated.
     2. God puts a lot of emphasis on patterns in Scripture:
     3. Jesus often says in the Gospels – “Verily, Verily” – same idea

1. Genesis 41:33-37 – Joseph also provides a plan of action
   1. Appoint a wise and discerning man over Egypt (like Nebuchadnezzar would do with Daniel)
   2. Appoint overseers to see that a fifth of the produce in every province is stored for distribution during the famine
   3. Make sure the grain is guarded during this time
   4. Pharaoh approves and so does all his court

Chapter VII – God’s Plan for Joseph and Egypt

1. Genesis 41:33-37 – God’s plan for Pharaoh through Joseph is revealed:
   1. It is helpful to break down God’s plan here, so we will do so step by step.
   2. Pharaoh – God trusted Pharaoh’s judgment here.[[10]](#footnote-10)
   3. To appoint – It was up to Pharaoh alone.
   4. A wise and discerning man – Up to Pharaoh to determine what wisdom and discernment meant (God apparently trusted his instinct here too).
   5. Over the land of Egypt –
      1. Much in the way Potiphar left Joseph to his affairs…
      2. And the warden left Joseph to administrate the jail…
      3. So was a man to be appointed who would do the same with all of Egypt!
      4. Notice the ascent of opportunity for Joseph here:
         1. Joseph was faithful on his own
            1. Even when things went horribly wrong
            2. Which they did multiple times!
         2. Then faithful with a household
            1. Even when betrayed!
            2. Did not discourage him, he kept hope
         3. Then faithful with an organization (the jail)
            1. Even when forgotten
            2. Even when there was no known end
         4. Soon to be faithful with all of Egypt!
            1. Even reaching the top, would stay the course
            2. Even reaching the top, still forgave and saw God’s purposes
      5. A great lesson learned, especially for young people: opportunity begins with you and builds in time with faith, patience, consistency, competence, and hard work.
   6. Pharaoh would also appoint overseers. The hierarchy would be:
      1. Pharaoh, the final say and figurehead of authority
      2. Joseph, 2nd in command, oversight of all, responsibility for management of the coming famine
      3. Overseers over each province of land, responsible for saving the correct amount of produce for the coming famine:
         1. They were to take a fifth from each year to save.
         2. There would be seven years of abundance.
         3. The produce would be stored in the cities, under guard.
   7. Pharaoh and his court all approved of the plan.
2. Genesis 41:38-41 – Pharaoh appoints Joseph:
   1. Pharaoh’s bases his decision on Joseph’s relationship to God!
   2. Pharaoh recognizes Joseph’s wisdom and discernment comes from God![[11]](#footnote-11)
   3. Joseph would be over:
      1. Pharaoh’s house (like Potiphar’s house)
      2. The people of Egypt
      3. The land of Egypt
   4. Like Daniel, a foreigner put 2nd in command of a kingdom:
      1. Similar stories are repeated in the Bible for emphasis: God’s way of saying, “Pay attention! These things are important!”
      2. 1 Corinthians 10:6; Romans 15:14 – all these stories are for our example.
3. Genesis 41:42-45 – Pharaoh celebrates Joseph’s appointment:
   1. He gave Joseph his signet ring (a symbol of authority, also used to seal official documents with wax pressed against it).
   2. He gave Joseph fine garments of linen and a gold necklace.
      1. Same garments the high priests of Egypt wore, signifying his special relationship with God.
      2. The gold necklace signified his access to the royal treasury.
      3. Effectively, Joseph was adopted into Pharaoh’s family, much like Moses would be later in Exodus.
   3. A parade was put on by Pharaoh for Joseph:
      1. The second chariot signified those whom Pharaoh honored.
      2. “Bow the knee!” – during a parade like this was the custom of Egypt (and many ancient civilizations) to inform the people of a new authority figure they were to obey.
      3. Joseph was given a foreign name, just like Daniel was.
      4. “Zaphenath-paneah” means “God speaks”, which was fitting.
   4. Asenath was given to Joseph as his wife:
      * 1. She was the daughter of the high priest of the city of Heliopolis (“City of the Sun”)
        2. This is where Ra was thought to spiritually dwell.
        3. The monument to Ra, called the “Al-Masalla Obelisk”, was the design inspiration for the Washington Monument in 1884.
           1. Technically, the Washington Monument is not an obelisk, as it is not made from a single stone (impossible, being it is 555 feet tall!).
           2. The Al-Masalla Obelisk is only 69 feet tall.
        4. The city existed until medieval times when it was largely scavenged by Muslims to build Cairo, the modern-day Capital of Egypt.
        5. Asenath bore two sons to Joseph: Ephraim and Manasseh, each of whom would lead a tribe of Israel.
4. Genesis 41:46-49 – Joseph begins his work:
   1. Joseph did not rest on his laurels – he went to work!
   2. Just like Christ, Joseph was 30 at the beginning of his God-appointed work.
   3. God blessed his work, and abundant crops came as a result:
      1. Eventually, the saved food was beyond measure.
      2. God’s blessings exceed even our imagination – “my cup overflows” (Psalm 23:5; Ephesians 3:20).
   4. Every city kept their own food store:
      1. The people knew the food they would get depended on their own hard work.
      2. They did not have to trust a province they had no regular contact with; instead, Joseph had them building trust with their fellow-beneficiaries. Smart!

Chapter VIII – The Famine

* 1. Genesis 42:1-8 – The famine spread, just as God had prophesied through Joseph, affecting both Egypt and Jacob’s family too.
  2. Jacob sent all but Benjamin, Joseph’s full brother born after him, to buy food from Egypt.
  3. When Joseph’s brothers arrive in Egypt, Joseph recognizes them, but they do not recognize him.
     1. Joseph speaks to them harshly, immediately testing their character (i.e. proper humility for their situation).
     2. He will test their honesty multiple times (and rightfully so!).
     3. This is not a matter of forgiveness, but trust:
        1. Joseph never demonstrates bitterness towards his brothers.
        2. Joseph showed them mercy from their arrival forward, sending them back with grain without cost.
        3. When he reveals his identity, he reconciles with them, never seeking revenge.
        4. He will invite them to come live with him, them and their families (along with their father, of course).
        5. Instead, these tests were to see if they could be trusted with scarce and valuable resources: food, shelter, and a new home (many others were in need too).

1. Genesis 42:9-38 – Joseph gives instructions to his brothers.
   1. Joseph remembers his dreams: the sheaves and the stars bowing.
      1. His life was really all about this moment – Genesis 50:20.
         1. Saving his family (and, subsequently, all of Israel).
         2. Saving the seed of the Messiah (through Judah).
         3. Saving Egypt – but why?
            1. The nation of Israel would begin in Egypt.
            2. Suffering there illustrated the need for God.
            3. It would be the most oft-repeated illustration of God’s love and authority in the OT.
            4. We are rescued from the slavery of sin through Christ (Exodus was first allusion to that in OT).[[12]](#footnote-12)
      2. Both his brothers and father had chided him wrongly:
         1. They assumed Joseph was being proud.
         2. Instead, Joseph was merely honest for their sake.
         3. Are we mature enough to accept harsh truths that are good for us?
   2. Vs. 9-16 – Joseph rails some accusations against his brothers to see how they would respond:
      1. His brothers tell the truth as best they know it.
      2. They did not know Joseph survived.
      3. Knowing their father had a relationship with God, they likely came to believe their father’s position that Joseph had died.
   3. A good test was given by Joseph, both of honesty and courage: they would bring this “Benjamin”, the brother Joseph did not know existed.
      1. Joseph was the only son of Rachel when he left.
      2. Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin (Genesis 35:16-18).
      3. This unknown brother was Joseph’s only full brother.
      4. This test would also let him meet Benjamin personally:
         1. Benjamin would be the only brother not to betray him or ever show him spite – an opportunity to start out right.
         2. Nonetheless, Joseph had in mind to reconcile with his older brothers if possible.
   4. Vs. 17 – Joseph imprisons his brothers to have them think over his proposal:
      1. A bit of irony, considering Joseph spent years in prison.
      2. At first (vs. 16), the plan was to send one brother and imprison the rest but instead he sent all but one (Simeon) at the end of three days (vs. 19).
      3. His brothers self-examine and recognize their guilt (vs. 21-22).
      4. Joseph weeps, realizing they are truly repentant (vs. 24).
         1. Why was there an interpreter? (vs. 23)
         2. This officer’s function was obviously not disclosed to his brothers.
         3. Joseph may not have spoken his native tongue in decades (so would have been rusty) or wanted to have a second set of ears to listen to be sure what they were discussing amongst themselves.
         4. Either way, Joseph is greatly moved by their penitent attitude.
            1. Joseph had a LOT to forgive:
            2. Betrayal/direct harm
            3. Loss of connection to father, mother, family
            4. Absent from his mother’s death/burial
            5. Years as a slave
            6. Years behind bars
            7. And yet, he found a way. What an example!
   5. Vs. 36 – Joseph keeps Simeon imprisoned and lets the others go to get Benjamin, allowing them to take grain and keep their money.
      1. They were unpleasantly surprised about the money.
      2. They feared the judgment of God – vs. 28
      3. Jacob also feared the return of the money – vs. 35-38
      4. They collectively feared it would make them look like thieves, considering how scarce (and valuable) food was, to receive it for free would be highly suspect by any who knew.
   6. Vs. 36 – Jacob did not want to send Benjamin; who could blame him?
      1. Reuben offers his two sons as assurance.
      2. His offer seems crude, but demonstrates high sincerity (plus what else could equal a life but another life?).
      3. Jacob did not trust Reuben after he slept with Bilhah (Genesis 35:22 – Jacob’s third wife – the mother of some of Reuben’s brothers).
      4. Reuben’s blessing was reduced as a result (Genesis 49:3-4).
      5. What a family God worked with:
         1. Regular scandal/misbehavior
         2. Multiple lies
         3. Polygamy
         4. Adultery
         5. Betrayal
         6. Demonstrates the breadth of God’s love!

Chapter IX – Joseph Meets Benjamin

1. Genesis 43:1-14 – Jacob reluctantly sends his sons back to Egypt with Benjamin.
2. Genesis 43:15-34 – Joseph meets Benjamin for the first time.
   1. Vs. 16-17 – Joseph is obviously pleased with his brothers’ return:
      1. His brothers lived up to their word
         1. Proving their honesty
         2. At least in part – more tests to come
      2. Joseph discovers that he really has a younger brother!
      3. And, he will get to meet him shortly!
      4. Joseph tells his household servant to prepare a feast:
         1. Lunch (noon) is going to be a luxury feast.
         2. Joseph’s brothers must have arrived early.
         3. Did they travel overnight? Stayed somewhere nearby?
            1. We don’t often think about ancient travel but:
            2. There were inns and “restaurants” (often connected or the same establishment, like is seen sometimes even today).
            3. They were usually combined in that time.
            4. A night’s stay usually included the evening meal.
            5. Only the very wealthiest would eat elsewhere.
            6. Like today, festivals/holidays increased demand:

This is what happened to Mary & Joseph.

They had to go to their hometown to register for the census/tax (Luke 2:4).

* + 1. We will find out shortly that as kind of an invitation as this seems on the surface, Joseph’s brothers were continually concerned for their safety, especially Benjamin’s (yet, ultimately, this concern was unfounded).
  1. Vs. 18-23 – Joseph’s brothers are upfront about the money:
     1. Vs. 18 – They spoke among themselves, concerned this was a trap.
        1. Nonetheless, what option did they have?
        2. They couldn’t run – and anyway run to what? Starvation?
        3. They couldn’t fight.
        4. So, they had nowhere else to go but “in”:
           1. The best strategy is always honesty, integrity, and humility.
           2. This is what Joseph was looking for and he would ultimately see.
     2. Vs. 19-22 – Joseph’s brothers explain themselves.
        1. They explain things to Joseph’s servant:
           1. They did not demand a “higher” audience.
           2. They were not able to do so but nonetheless, even they knew their place was below the servant’s!
           3. Matthew 20:16 – “So the last shall be first…”
           4. Luke 14:10 – “…go and sit in the last place…”
        2. Vs. 20 – They did not enter the house on their own:
           1. This was not so they could run, but out of respect.
           2. They were to be invited in, not barge in.
           3. They were showing humility and respect.
           4. These are timeless ideas, precious wisdom for all people everywhere.
        3. Vs. 20-22 – Lots of good lessons here…
           1. They called even Joseph’s servant “lord”, rightly acknowledging even the servant’s position above their own.
           2. They stated their honest intentions:

Not to get freebies

But pay for food

This was still their intention.

* + - * 1. They desired to return the money in full:

To pay for the food they already received

Since they were not told it was free

* + - * 1. They brought more money to buy more food.
        2. Their attitude was, “We don’t know what happened but regardless, we want to be honest”.
        3. Lessons: be humble (towards anyone), pay/work for what you eat, always intend to, never take what isn’t yours, don’t assume anything else is yours that isn’t, and of course – be honest.
      1. Vs. 23-25 – All is well
         1. Just like angels, the servant tells them not to be afraid.
         2. Angels are servants, interestingly – Hebrews 1:14
         3. The servant gives God the glory!

Who do you think told him about God? 😊

Joseph clearly taught him all good gifts come from God (James 1:17).

The servant himself admits restoring their money and it was on purpose.

Joseph and the servant both believed this was God’s will (Genesis 50:20).

* + - * 1. Simeon, the brother kept under guard while they were absent, is restored to them.

Did Simeon meet characters like the cupbearer and baker in prison?

Did he hear their stories or others like them?

He did not know his fate; no guarantees or rights!

The relief all of them would have felt would naturally have been tremendous.

He would have been in prison at least for some time – 43:1 – his brothers did not return until they ran out of food again.

* + - * 1. The servant who they had shown humility to gave them water, washed their feet, and fed their donkeys.

Naturally reminiscent of Jesus’ washing the disciples’ feet (John 13:1-17).

Yet another way Joseph and Jesus match.

Again, Joseph is a ‘type’ of Christ (model/foreshadowing).

* + - * 1. Joseph’s brothers brought him a present.
        2. Joseph was on his way to the feast.
        3. His brothers were told they were going to eat a meal there:

Not just a courtesy but an unexpected honor.

Joseph was 2nd in command in Egypt.

They knew he was 2nd in command, but not yet that he was Joseph.

The brothers’ assumptions were wrong: the food and money returned really were a gift!

It was a test, but not a malevolent one, and they were welcomed again. From their perspective, this was unbelievable!

* + - 1. Vs. 26-28 – Joseph arrives to meet his brothers:
         1. Vs. 26 – Joseph receives the gift from his brothers.

This was a custom courtesy to the host of a meal in ancient times.

This is still practiced, for example, in Japan today, usually in the form of a gift of fruit:

Fruit is considered far more than a food in Japan – it is an intricate part of their culture.

Gift-giving is huge in Japan; it is almost as common as hand-shaking in Western countries.

Recently, a pair of the “highest quality” cantaloupe sold for $27,000 at auction.

The higher the price you paid, the more it says you value your host.

Also, you are expected to denigrate your gift in speech, regardless of its quality or price. Example: “I’m sorry this fruit is not of higher quality” (even if it is the best!).

What we may think of as silly or strange is very serious in Japan. So, to any missionaries thinking of going to Japan, take note!

* + - * 1. Joseph’s brothers bow to him again – just like in his dreams.
        2. Vs. 27 – His first questions are about their welfare and their father’s.

Genuine sign of concern but also regular custom:

In many foreign cultures even today, it is customary to ask how every individual in the family is doing – by name. Asking about the family as a whole is seen as rude and rushed.

Joseph is interested in his father’s well-being – now that he knows his little brother is real – he feels he can trust his brother’s update on their father.

* + - * 1. Vs. 28 – Their report is good, and they bow again.
      1. Vs. 29-31 – Joseph is moved by his brother Benjamin’s presence:
         1. Not only because he is there, but he was once him (the youngest brother to his brothers), and here they have learned to treat such a one well.
         2. Joseph had always hoped for reconciliation instead of revenge! Do we?

Chapter XI – Joseph Tests His Brothers (Again)

1. Joseph’s final test for his brothers is undeniably brutal – Genesis 44:1-12
   1. Joseph has already tested his brothers:
      1. By questioning them multiple times (testing their humility)
         1. Multiples times, by him specifically
         2. Twice by his servants
      2. By putting their money back in their sacks (testing their honesty)
      3. By sending them home for Benjamin (testing their honesty)
      4. By accusations (testing their humility and honesty)
      5. Now, he will test if they really understand loyalty/love…
   2. Vs. 1-2 – Joseph instructs his servant to stuff their sacks with food, their money, and to put his silver cup in Benjamin’s sack.
      1. The servant obeys.
      2. This must have been done covertly and he must have hid everything well.
   3. Vs. 3 – You would think Joseph’s brothers would have thought twice about not checking their sacks again…
      1. Perhaps their donkeys were loaded for them.
      2. It also would have been very difficult to sort through sacks of grain with the sacks already tied to the donkeys.
      3. They might have been in a rush or rushed by others.
      4. They might have just been that foolish…
      5. Lesson learned: No matter how inconvenient, if previously, falsely accused, never even give the appearance of the same crime again!
   4. Vs. 4-6 – Joseph sent his servant/steward after them, as he planned:
      1. Not wanting to waste time, he sends his steward shortly after they left.
      2. It is easy for one man to catch 12 loaded with grain and other goods.
      3. Joseph’s instructions for the cup include the quote, “[the cup] he indeed uses for divination”.
         1. We already established in a previous lesson that Joseph was made part of the priesthood in his appointment by Pharaoh.
         2. Divination was the pagan practice of telling the future or the will of the gods:
            1. In this case, through looking at the patterns of liquid in a cup.
            2. This is similar to reading tea leaves today (“Tasseography”).
         3. Did Joseph practice this in reality?
            1. It is highly unlikely:
            2. Divination was obviously not of the religion of the one true God Joseph worshipped and obeyed continually.
            3. Joseph not only worshipped the one true God but even taught others about Him (Genesis 43:23 among others).
            4. It only makes sense to interpret this along with Joseph’s other tests like from Genesis 42:8 (“You are spies”): they were tests, not actualities.
            5. Just like Joseph knew his brothers really were not spies, so Joseph also did not actually practice divination.
            6. If “tests” like this are not moral, it would have to be conceded that police “stings” and undercover operations are immoral. No one makes this case, as the point then or now with these kinds of tests is not maliciousness, but to find out the truth.
      4. Vs. 7-9 – Joseph’s brothers acted surprised and responded foolishly…
         1. In vs. 9a, they state that any brother who stole the cup should “…die…” – they themselves are opening the possibility of a death sentence over a potentially-stolen cup?
         2. Of course, even the remote possibility it would be Benjamin among the 11 should have stayed their words!
            1. Benjamin wasn’t around the first time.
            2. How did they know for sure that he or another did not steal the cup? They clearly did not know that for a fact.
            3. Benjamin was the youngest and most naïve – maybe he did steal the cup – but didn’t understand the significance.
            4. Benjamin was prized by his father and they knew it (Genesis 43:6).
            5. Regardless, these were foolish words!
         3. They knew Joseph’s threats were real – Simeon had just been kept in prison during their last leave!
         4. Lesson learned: the 5th amendment! Let whatever form of due process that is available take place, don’t assume or even worst, create the condemnation/worst scenario possible for yourself. Trust the Lord.
         5. Vs. 9b – “…we also will be my lord’s slaves.”
            1. Again, it is one thing to show sincerity and humility, but another thing altogether to put oneself and others in an unnecessarily terrible predicament!
            2. Lesson learned: even if we are sure of our innocence, don’t be the catalyst to things becoming potentially worse.
         6. Vs. 10 – The steward agrees to their terms:
            1. Not a good thing!
            2. Be careful what you present/agree to!
         7. Vs. 11-12 – The brothers hurried, hoping to get moving again as soon as possible…
            1. Even though each brother lowered his own bag from his own donkey, it was the steward who searched.
            2. It must have been one thing “being sure” of your innocence, and yet looking over your accuser’s shoulder, hoping they don’t find anything!
            3. The steward started with the oldest…

With each bag I’m certain there was silent relief…

But it only takes one bag with one cup.

* + - * 1. Benjamin’s sack had the cup…

According to the brothers’ own words, Benjamin was now to die – fairly!

And the brothers themselves to be slaves – fairly!

Lesson learned: what is fair is not always right, and what is right is not always fair.

* + - 1. Vs. 13 – The brothers immediately grieve:
         1. Benjamin was to die…
         2. And they were to become slaves.
         3. They accepted their lot, loaded back their donkeys, and were now on their way – so they thought – to the same fate that befell Joseph originally!
         4. Such a result would have been just/fair. Let us be glad that God does not see justice/fairness as the highest value!
         5. The silent irony is just dripping here:

Joseph was first left to die.

Then, he was sold into slavery.

Now, Benjamin was to die.

And his brothers were to be slaves.

ALL by their own hand!

* + - 1. Vs. 14 – Approaching Joseph, again the brothers bow before him:
         1. Genesis 42:6, 43:26, 28, and now 44:14 – Joseph’s brothers have bowed to him at least four times now!
         2. They did not speak initially. They came – and to their credit – to honor their word.
         3. There was hardly a more honest thing they could have done:

They did not run.

They did not fight.

They did not take back their word.

They did not “claim the 5th!”

Not that any of this would have mattered but it is honorable nonetheless.

Knowing that no harm was going to come to Joseph’s brothers, a lesson here is to be honest and humble regardless if that means the circumstances may be worse because of it.

* + - 1. Vs. 15 – Joseph, for the last time, tests his brothers with an accusation – stealing the cup.
         1. A false accusation but with evidence! A setup.
         2. The point was NOT malevolence but a test:

Under incredible pressure, even the threat of death and slavery:

Will they be honest?

Will they be humble?

Can their word be trusted?

Will we they be honest, humble, and trustworthy?

* + - 1. Vs. 16 – Judah recognizes his impossible position:
         1. He is humble.
         2. He takes on guilt though undeserving (Christ-like).
         3. Accepts his lot openly.
         4. Hopes Benjamin can be a slave with them, and not die.
      2. Vs. 17 – Joseph shows mercy, even in the test!
         1. He removes the death penalty from Benjamin.
         2. Removes slavery from all but Benjamin.
         3. A potential best-case scenario considering!
         4. Joseph is nearing satisfaction with his brothers.
      3. Vs. 18-34 – Judah tries to swap Benjamin’s slave status with himself (vs. 33).
         1. THIS is what moves Joseph so much (45:1ff).
         2. It was Judah’s idea to sell Joseph into slavery to begin with (Genesis 37:26).
         3. Judah was more concerned with everyone’s life more than his own.
         4. Repentance was evident with Judah – his actions now truly backed up his sorrow over wrongdoing

Chapter XI – Joseph Reconciles with His Brothers

1. Genesis 45:1-2 – Joseph is deeply moved by Judah’s request:
   1. He called for all but his brothers to leave.
   2. Yet, he wept so loudly that all heard him anyway.
   3. Now, what was thought to be impossible will happen:
      1. Joseph will trust his brothers again!
      2. His brothers will learn their first little brother is still alive!
      3. They will learn their little brother is also 2nd in Egypt!
      4. They will reconcile!
      5. They learn that God had a plan all along!
      6. They learn that Joseph has been trusting in that plan the whole time, far more than they.
      7. Joseph will re-unite with his father!
      8. Their father will not seek revenge for his older sons’ actions!
      9. They will all be saved from the famine.
      10. They will remain free.
      11. They will have a new home.
      12. God’s plan is just beginning for Israel, unbeknownst to them:
          1. As much as this tragedy has come full circle…
          2. It is the beginning of the next: the slavery of all Israel (which is how Exodus chapter 1 begins).
          3. Yet, that will set the stage for the rest of the Gospel story 🡪
          4. The idea that God sets us free has its origin in the Exodus.
          5. The idea that God defines true freedom and the best of it has its origin in the Exodus.
          6. The idea that the coming Messiah will set us free eternally has its origin in the Exodus.
          7. Tragedy, when handled in a godly manner, has the potential for not only:
             1. Reconciliation, but also…
             2. Opportunity
             3. Progress
             4. Character
             5. Hope (Essentially, a summary of Romans 5:3-4)
             6. How to handle suffering/tragedy is a reoccurring theme in the Scripture, where handling God’s way gives the above results, and handling things according to the flesh/world/devil results in more suffering/tragedy, even hell.
2. At the peak of emotion, surprised by Judah’s complete turnaround, Joseph reveals his identity:
   1. “I am Joseph!”
   2. They *could* not answer him…
      1. Same Hebrew word for “unable” or “incapable”.
      2. There was no answer and no way to answer him.
      3. What does one say? Perhaps listening and waiting is best. It demonstrates humility and the ability to pay attention.
   3. “Dismayed” is the same word in the Hebrew for “terrified”:
      1. Why would great fear strike them?
      2. Fear of revenge (and rightfully so, at least according to the world).
      3. Unbelievable surprise!
      4. Unanticipated response!
      5. Joseph’s immediately preceding action commanding all to leave except his brothers (Silently thinking, “What did Judah say?”)
      6. Unknown what even the next moment would bring:
      7. “We have changed but we do not know Joseph’s character.”
         1. Such experiences often embitter, understandably so.
         2. Generic faith in God does not always translate to “faith in God in the unknown/uncertain/terrifying”.
         3. Joseph had maintained that faith; his brothers were getting there.
   4. “Is my father alive?”
      1. Joseph had asked his before but unlike seeing Benjamin, this was one bit of evidence Joseph did not have yet.
      2. He had no reason to distrust his brothers at this point but nonetheless, emotions and facts do not necessarily correlate. In fact, they often do not.
3. Genesis 45:4-13 – Joseph explains further:
   1. Vs. 4a – “Please come closer to me. And they came closer.”
   2. He might be little brother, but he’s still 2nd in command in Egypt!
   3. Also, they are still in shock and awe, and don’t know what else to do.
   4. Undeniably, getting closer may be fatal, but they do so anyway:
   5. Antithetically reminiscent of the circumstances behind Julius Caesar’s assassination on the Ides of March, 44BC:
      1. Caesar did not see it coming.
      2. Surprise, but instead resulting in his death.
      3. Betrayed by a man he considered closer than a brother, Marcus Brutus.
      4. Caesar’s famous last words of, “Et tu Brute?” are not historical, but derived from Shakespeare’s famous play.
   6. Notably, God’s plan brought about reconciliation and salvation (from the famine), instead of revenge and death, like the above.
   7. Vs. 4b – He’s not just a guy named “Joseph” but truly “Joseph”, their brother, the very one THEY sold into slavery.
      1. Yet, his very next words are specifically for their relief:
      2. “Do not be grieved or angry with yourselves because…”
      3. Reminiscent of the common phrase, “Do not be afraid”, found many times in the Bible spoken in similarly frightening circumstances.
      4. “For God sent me here…”
         1. God sent him.
         2. This is *the way* God sent him.
         3. Joseph trusted that, without knowing that, but knowing God well enough to know that!
         4. Lessons learned: God’s *way* may be very unpleasant for a time, but knowing God well enough going in gives us the understanding/faith and tools we need to see His plan through to the end, to our saving and others.
      5. “…to preserve life.”
         1. God’s purpose was everybody’s salvation from the famine.
         2. God would later save their progeny from slavery, and eventually all who obey from their condemnation in sin.
         3. “Preserving life”, in all its multiple dimensions, is a good summary of God’s primary mission through all time.
         4. Therefore, “destroying life” is Satan’s.
   8. Vs. 6-8 – Joseph continues to give God the glory, as He always has:
      1. “God sent me” x3 (vs. 5, 7, 8)
      2. “God… to keep you alive” (vs. 7)
      3. “[God] has made me a father to Pharaoh” (vs. 8)
      4. “[God] and lord to all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt.” (vs. 8)
      5. The repetition of “God sent me” is there for emphasis, as all repetition in Scripture is:
         1. God was in control the whole time.
         2. God worked through the evil present to bring about good anyway.
         3. Each of us have this same opportunity regularly!

Chapter XII – God Preserves Joseph’s Family & Israel’s Future

1. Genesis 45:13-15 – After reconciling with his brothers, Joseph gives them instructions:
   1. Vs. 13 – “Tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt”
      1. To finish fulfilling the dreams he told his father [and brothers] (Genesis 37:10):
      2. To make his father glad:
         1. All good fathers want to see their children succeed them.
         2. Jacob’s life was troubled (Genesis 47:9) and had hoped better for Joseph, whom he had now thought dead for so long.
         3. To enjoy a mutually joyful reunion as soon as possible
      3. To encourage him to make the long journey:
         1. To believe his brothers as now-honorable men
         2. Jacob was now elderly
         3. Ancient travel was already difficult and potentially dangerous.
      4. To end his father’s grief (Genesis 37:34-35):
         1. Judah told Joseph in Genesis 44:28 how his father still grieved for him.
         2. Joseph still loved his father (it was the first thing he asked about after revealing his identity – Genesis 45:3) and desired not only his own healing but his father’s healing too.
   2. “…and all that you have seen”
      1. Joseph wants his father to know there is plenty in Egypt for all – for not only him but the whole family.
      2. Joseph wants his father to know he will be safe in Egypt (though his progeny will not be, but this is unknown/unrevealed at this point).
      3. Joseph wants his father to know Joseph has the authority to secure these things.
      4. Joseph wants his father to know his brothers and him have reconciled:
         1. All of this must have contributed to Jacob deciding not to retaliate against his other sons’ treachery.
         2. Although Jacob will criticize some of his sons for other sins they have committed, in the blessings he gives on his deathbed (Genesis 49:1ff), he does not bring up this great sin (every sin stands on its own de-merit).
         3. These blessings are Jacob’s dying words so, again, it is impressive that he completely forgives even to the grave.
   3. “…you must hurry”
      1. The famine was severe (Genesis 41:54, 56, 57).
      2. Jacob had waited until they were basically out of food before sending his sons again to Egypt (Genesis 43:1-2).
      3. The famine was inevitably attracting desperate people from all over, and Jacob would have been a target for his wealth.
      4. Joseph apparently could not leave to escort his father himself:
         1. Even being 2nd in command did not grant him this.
         2. The sooner Jacob and family were in Egypt, the quicker everyone would feel relief.
   4. “…and bring my father down here.”
      1. Joseph exercised authority over his brothers and they did not question it.
      2. Whether or not they remembered the dreams was irrelevant at this point.
      3. Joseph was in command and they were his subjects!
      4. Nonetheless, Joseph speaks kindly to them.
      5. Vs. 14 – Joseph inevitably saw himself in Benjamin
         1. Youngest brothers together, but Benjamin treated as he, Joseph, should have been.
         2. Yet, Joseph understands his story was God’s plan all along (Genesis 50:20) and does not hold contempt for anyone (including God) for things as they have turned out.
      6. Vs. 15 – Joseph showed the same affection to all his brothers
         1. Can you imagine the conversation?
         2. It had to be cut short due to the urgency of retrieving their father.
         3. It inevitably continued later, many times over.
         4. There was so much to tell, from both sides.
         5. Based on what we have seen from his brothers at this point, the apologies were likely endless along with the endless grace given.
2. Vs. 16-20 – Egypt prepares for Jacob’s arrival:
   1. Vs. 16 – Pharaoh and his court were pleased for Joseph.
   2. There is every indication Joseph and Pharaoh enjoyed a perpetually positive relationship.
   3. Vs. 17-20 – Pharaoh generously provided to Joseph all his brothers would need for their trip home and back.
   4. This Pharaoh is wise from the beginning; such a contrast to the Pharaoh we will meet in Exodus!
3. Vs. 21-23 – Pharaoh provided Joseph much for his brothers’ journey:
   * 1. Clothing (Benjamin 5x more)
        1. There was no practical reason for this, just love.
        2. There is no indication that this “favoritism” was the same kind of favoritism long practiced in his family:
           1. It was more like catching up all the love Joseph would have given him over the years.
           2. His brothers never objected and understood Joseph’s reaction.
           3. Ultimately, Benjamin was given some nice things, but not given an actual higher status.
        3. Most people wore the clothing they had for days at a time.
        4. The arid climate kept/keeps odor to a minimum.
     2. Money (to Benjamin specifically, 300 pieces of silver)
        1. Joseph was entrusting Benjamin to make any purchases they needed to make on their journey.
        2. Or any inn they needed to stay in
        3. The amount was in the ballpark of $5,000.
        4. That is a lot until one considers:
           1. The cost of potentially housing 11 people on the way there, and dozens on the way back.
           2. Feeding them on the way, to and from
           3. Any other needs that came up along the way
        5. It is also likely that Benjamin was the best educated of the bunch, perhaps the only one able to keep a ledger.
        6. This would have been a skill Joseph would have been trained in as the original chosen heir (Genesis 37:3).
     3. Many gifts of the best things of Egypt:
        1. The best things of Egypt were still likely limited to small, relatively-easy-to-travel items.
        2. Jewelry, gemstones, precious metals, etc.
        3. This was also a way of letting Jacob know that Pharaoh himself had sent back his sons with his blessings:
        4. This is the only way they could have accumulated such a wide variety of valuable things.
     4. Twenty donkeys
        1. Greatly increased their ability to travel swiftly, with less on each beast of burden to carry.
        2. Donkeys are stubborn but strong, durable creatures.
        3. Traveling by donkey is still done today, but mostly for the experience, not the necessity.
        4. “Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes” (pub. 1879) by Robert Louis Stevenson is considered one of the early classics in pioneer/outdoor literature for adventure’s sake instead of only survival.
     5. Grain, Bread, other Necessities
        1. This is what Jacob sent them for originally (Genesis 43:1-2).
        2. Grain was one of the few foods that could be stored safely for long periods at the time.
        3. The arid climate contributed to this long-lasting staple’s perpetual condition.
        4. To this day, the earliest Bible manuscripts have been found in these dry parts of the world.

Chapter XIII – Israel Settles in Goshen

1. Genesis 45:24 – Why would his brothers quarrel along the journey?
   1. Their guilty conscience never quite left them – Genesis 50:15-17
   2. But Joseph was gracious continually – Genesis 50:19-21
   3. Joseph either intuitively knew their uneasiness or potential to blame one another or overheard it; either way, he did not want the past dictating their present and future relationships, including with each other.
2. Genesis 45:25-28 – Going back to get their father Jacob
   1. The sons told their father Joseph was still alive AND ruler over all Egypt!
      1. Their words alone were not enough to persuade Jacob.
      2. This is understandable: outlandish claims require proof!
         1. The burden of proof is always on the one making a claim (otherwise, you must prove, not I disprove).
         2. Joseph anticipated this – vs. 27
      3. Joseph believed the words with evidence – vs. 27
         1. This is the first use of the word “revive” in Scripture.
         2. Used 29 times total in the Bible, always serious in scope.
         3. Revival from deep discouragement/depression (like this), revival from the dead (resurrection), revival from the near dead (a hopeless medical case), revival from a drought of God’s Word among His people.
      4. Notice how Jacob believed the lie that Joseph was dead years ago and did not believe the truth that he was alive!
         1. We cannot count on our intuition or gut feelings alone.
         2. We could be wrong for decades and never know it! Jacob was!
         3. Absolute truth comes from the Word of God; any other “truth” must be backed by facts, reason, and evidence or it is simply claiming and nothing more.
   2. Vs. 28 – Jacob agrees to go because Joseph is there.
      1. They are also out of food – Genesis 43:1ff
      2. Jacob was clearly in a hopeless state – vs. 27 – food alone wasn’t enough to make the difficult journey across the desert as an old man.
      3. What was “enough” was Joseph – it was Jacob’s last desire to see his long-lost son before his death.
   3. Genesis 46:1-27 – Jacob and family goes to Egypt, with God speaking to him in his sleep, assuring him this was the right thing to do.
      1. God also promises Jacob the future of the Israelite nation.
      2. And that Joseph would bury him.
      3. This dream is the epilogue to Jacob’s ladder so long ago – God’s promises march on.
3. Genesis 46:28-34 – Jacob and Joseph re-unite!
   1. Vs. 28 – Jacob sent Judah ahead to lead the way:
      1. It is very difficult to navigate in the desert.
      2. There are a lack of landmarks.
      3. There are regular sandstorms.
      4. Interesting fact: Jesus is from the tribe of Judah – it is He who leads us through the fog/sandstorms of life as Judah did for Jacob and the rest of his family.
   2. Vs. 29a – Joseph went as fast as possible to meet his father:
      1. Again, apparently, he could not leave the province itself.
      2. But he met his father at the border as soon as possible.
   3. Vs. 29b – A very emotional re-union, just like Joseph and his brothers:
      1. God’s grace expressed through Joseph was behind all of this.
      2. Vs. 30 – Jacob’s decades-long, forlorn hope was met!
4. Genesis 46:31-34 – Joseph gives instructions to the whole family:
   1. Vs. 31-32 – Joseph has things he will tell Pharaoh.
   2. Vs. 33-34 – Joseph has things for his family to tell Pharaoh.
   3. This was to protect the Messianic line:
      1. The Egyptians saw shepherds as undesirable (vs. 34); this would make the children (and grandchildren) of Jacob undesirable to Egyptian suitors
      2. The prohibition of intermarrying between people groups in the Old Testament was not racist but served a specific divine purpose of preserving the prophesied lineage until Christ would come (then, notice how lineages no longer matter in the New Testament).
      3. “Unequally-yoked” in 2 Corinthians 6:14 is not referring to race but whether both people to be married are faithful Christians.
5. Genesis 47:1-6 – Pharaoh gives them Goshen, the best of the land:
   1. Fertile, and good for building homes
   2. Goshen would also, therefore, eventually become the home of their enslaved progeny.
   3. Abundant food and plenty supply allowed for the nation of Israel to go grow to several hundred thousand to potentially up to two million in a little over 200 years in preparation for the Exodus.

Chapter XIV – Joseph Reunites with His Father and the Next 17 Years

1. Genesis 47:7-10 – Jacob speaks to and blesses Pharaoh:
   1. Jacob admits his life’s difficulty, mostly self-inflicted, and that his prosperity has not measured up to his forefathers.
   2. Jacob then blesses Pharaoh. Remember, this is a good Pharaoh, as Pharaohs go in the Bible, as he had been good to both Joseph and his family, as well as wise in listening to wisdom in order to save his own country and reign.
2. Genesis 47:11-26 – Joseph deals prudently and provides for all.
   1. Many scholars accuse Joseph of taking advantage of the people:
   2. Joseph bargains with the people first for their livestock and then their land in order to buy food after they run out of money.
      1. First, the people did not see it that way! (vs. 25)
      2. They were grateful! They even volunteered to be slaves in exchange, but all Joseph asked for was an effective 20% tax when they could grow food again.
      3. This would allow them, over time, to buy back their land and gain new livestock, all along without incentivizing laziness or enslaving the people cruelly.
      4. Goes to demonstrate people do not expect or need handouts if they are never offered to begin with and there is a reasonable path forward instead.
3. Genesis 47:27-28 – Jacob’s family prospers, the nation of Israel is born, and the stage for the coming story of the Exodus is setup:
   1. Vs. 27 – Israel lived in Goshen, acquired property, were fruitful, and multiplied.
   2. Vs. 28a – Jacob was able to live in Goshen with Joseph for 17 years.
   3. Vs. 28b – Jacob’s life was 147 years in total.
4. Genesis 47:29-31 – Jacob makes his wishes in death known to Joseph:
   1. Jacob told Joseph his death wishes because Joseph had the authority in Egypt to see them carried out.
   2. Had Jacob chosen to give this information to Reuben, he may not have had that authority. Remember, Jacob and his family are now Egyptian subjects.
   3. It is interesting that Jacob desires more than Joseph’s word and “testimony[[13]](#footnote-13)” – he has Joseph swear to him.
      1. These final desires are clearly very important to Jacob.
      2. “Swearing” does not have negative connotation here that it does now – Matthew 5:37; James 5:12
      3. This does not necessarily indicate a lack of trust on Jacob’s part. Rather, he is letting Joseph know how serious he is.
   4. Did Jacob bow “in worship”? The words “in worship” are not in the original.
      1. It is possible that Jacob bowed to Joseph:
      2. As Joseph willingly submitted to Jacob’s request, so Jacob recognizes that Joseph alone has the authority to carry them out.
      3. As parents advanced into old age, it is common for children in all cultures to assume some authority in their parents’ lives. Naturally, it is best if this can be done as mutually as possible as we see here.
      4. This bow might have also just been in appreciation for Joseph listening and promising to Jacob’s satisfaction.
5. Genesis 48:1-22 – Jacob’s deathbed
   1. Almost all of the last three chapters of Genesis is Jacob on his deathbed with much to say and do before he dies.
   2. He will talk with all of his sons, Joseph most of all.
   3. He begins with telling Joseph about God’s continuing promises.
   4. Then he deals with family matters – Joseph’s sons, his brothers, blessings, and inheritances.
   5. Interestingly (and this is a regular pattern in Genesis), Jacob blesses the younger of Joseph’s sons as greater than the elder.
      1. You can go back as far as: Abel > Cain
      2. Then Isaac > Ishmael
      3. Jacob > Esau
      4. Joseph > Reuben
      5. Now, Ephraim > Manasseh
      6. This illustrates that God may override culture, and not only can he, but it is best for all when He so chooses to do so.
6. Genesis 49:1-27 – Jacob blesses each of his sons
   1. When we think of blessings, we often think of only positive things.
   2. However, Jacob mixes the honest bad with the honest good and blesses accordingly.
   3. For example, Reuben’s sin is discussed in Genesis 49:3-4. Good and bad are spoken, and consequences followed both.
   4. Again, it is worth mentioning Genesis 49:10 specifically, as it is one of the most important Messianic prophecies in Scripture.
7. Genesis 49:28-32 – Jacob now gives his burial instructions to all his sons.
8. Genesis 49:33 – Jacob dies.
   1. Jacob got to live in Egypt with all his family, including Joseph, for seventeen years in safety and prosperity.
   2. He now passes like we all hope to one day – family is in order, business is settled – peacefully passing away in our sleep.
   3. Jacob’s life was difficult (Genesis 47:9) and this was largely self-inflicted. God gave him a great ending, however.
9. Genesis 50:1-14 – Joseph gives his father a proper burial:
   1. This passage gives a Scriptural example that there is nothing wrong with an elaborate funeral if the family desires it and can pay for it.
   2. Joseph and all the family mourned Jacob for months.
   3. The very end of Genesis, just the last half-chapter, deals with Joseph’s remaining years and death.
   4. Much happened of course, and all good things. A happy ending in many ways to a book that began with perfection and then deal with the consequences of the fall ever since.
10. Genesis 50:14-21 – Joseph reassures his nervous brothers:
    1. When Jacob died, Joseph’s brothers feared Joseph’s revenge may have just laid latent until their father had passed.
    2. Joseph reassures them this is not the case, and all had been forgiven to the great relief of his brothers:
       1. It is interesting how Joseph had forgiven, Jacob had forgiven, but the brothers struggled all this time to forgive themselves.
       2. Young people, heed this: the consequences of sin can last a lifetime, and the burden of conscience can linger even if everything works out OK. It is sincerely best to avoid going there at all!
       3. Genesis 50:20 is a great way to end this study – “What you meant for evil, God meant for good, to the saving of many lives.”

Joseph trusted in God’s perspective before he knew it and embraced it when he did. Joseph is a type of Christ for good reason. He is worth studying, emulating, and referencing back to again and again (1 Corinthians 10:6; Romans 15:4). May we do so!

1. Including this author. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In our equity-obsessed culture, it’s hard to believe there is a higher value, but there is – actually, lots of them. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Specifically, the tying of inheritance to responsibility. That just cannot be a bad idea. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. It is important for any to remember that Jewish tradition is not Scripture. Any “fact” like this should be taken with a grain of salt. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. If you are experiencing family problems (as many do), it is probably not this bad, and if God had a solution for Joseph and his family, he has a solution for yours as well (if we will trust and obey as Joseph did!). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. This not-so-hot author is more thankful for his average looks as age has come. Who really wants that kind of pressure? [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Perhaps the most important element in this difference is our attitude concerning it: if we think God \*owes\* us, we will behave very differently than if we always recognize it is grace – by definition not owed – that we are rewarded/saved. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Specific words have specific, useful meanings – something modern culture has forgotten to its own peril. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Obedience to God seems to breed confidence as a consistent pattern in Scripture. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See chart in previous chapter as to why: this Pharaoh had – surprisingly – many good character traits. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Again, is this not remarkable coming from Pharaoh? [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Criticism of the Exodus has moved from “Did the Exodus happen?” to “When and how did the Exodus occur?” Archeology and “science” has finally acknowledge the truth of Biblical antiquity in this case. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. “Testimony” comes from the word “testes”, which is why a man would put his hand underneath another man’s thigh to make a vow. He was literally swearing not only to the man he was making the promise to, but on behalf of that man’s descendants as well. Otherwise, there was no expiration on the promise made. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)