

“Joseph and the Flow of Redemptive History” - Class 6

A Walk Through the Old Testament

Genesis 37-50

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September 13, 2019

Jeff: Our heavenly Father, we thank You and praise You for this day, for the time that You've granted to us. Lord, we are so thankful for the night of rest that You gave. We recognize that sleep is a good gift from Your hand, and so we appreciate it, thank You for it, and look forward to the day that You've provided, that You've made for us, that we might go into it and be Your servants. Father, as we do, we pray that You'll give us opportunities wherein we might live according to what we believe, that we might not only strengthen our own faith by the Holy Spirit working in us, but also that You might give us opportunities to share the gospel of Christ through our actions and words. Father, we pray and ask that You will minister to us throughout. And Father, as You do, we pray that the gospel would go forth. And we pray, Father, that as it does that others would find hope in the kingdom of the Son of Your love.

Father, we also bow before You, asking that You will be with those who are close to our hearts. And Father, we think about Bruce. And we think about him because of our friendship with him, but also because of the impact that he's made for the gospel. And we recognize that to greater or lesser degrees that we are partners with him in the gospel and are thankful for his leadership, and we pray for his health. We pray that You'll strengthen him and encourage him. And yet we also recognize that the way in which this world works, the eschatological position, is that we will get old and die, and that we will be resurrected and glorified on that wonderful day of Your appointing. And so, Father, we pray that as Bruce struggles with old age and some of the effects that come with it, we pray that he would struggle with grace. And we pray that he would look to You and find his strength.

Father, we also pray for Sandy and ask that You will minister to her. Bless her and strengthen her by Your grace in this difficult time of struggle.

And Father, we also pray for our children. We think of our children and our grandchildren. We think of them especially, knowing how dear You've made those young people to our hearts. We pray, Father, for their profession of faith, for their life in Christ. We ask for it and know that You are good and so seek it from You. But Father, we pray not only for them, but we also pray for each one of us as we go into the day and minister not only to our own children, but to others and to others' children and to those we don't know. Father, help us to remember that the interactions that we have with people may be interactions that we have with people who have been prayed for, though we know them very little. And so help us to speak into their lives some gospel good.

Father, as we bow ourselves before Your word this morning, for indeed it is Your word. We ask that You'll lead us by Your Holy Spirit in the study of it. Father, bless us and strengthen us by Your grace, for we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

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Jeff: All right. Well, today we are going to continue on through. And we’re going to be looking at our topic. As you can see, it’s “Joseph and the Flow of Redemptive History.” And today we’re going to be looking at this particular idea. I want us to be thinking about why it is that Joseph is in the Bible. I mean, that’s the kind of question that you have. It’s a great story. Everybody loves it. It takes up a lot of space, 37-50 of Genesis. And again, it’s one of those stories we all love. It’s one of those stories that appeals to us at many different levels.

And yet the question that you have to ask about this story, like almost any other story in the bible, is why is it included? I mean, I want you to think about it for just a minute. They didn’t have word processors to plunk away at this story. Paper was hard to come by; in fact, it wasn’t paper yet. Ink was hard to come by. And so when someone like Moses includes a story this long in the Scriptures, you have to ask yourself, well why did he do that?

And so what I want us to focus on today is why Joseph? And we’re going to answer that question. But we’re going to answer it only after we look at the story itself. When you look at the story of Joseph, it is a delightful story. It does take up much of Genesis. You find a lot of wonderful things in it that help us to understand what the answer will be that we will give as we move on.

I want us to think about four points today: *a very brief introduction*. And the introduction is going to be brief because the second point is going to be rather long. We’re going to look at the life of Joseph this morning, and we’re going to look at all of it. We’re really going to skate over it. We have to because it’s so long and detailed. And yet we’ll try to hit some of the salient points. And then we’re going to look at some of the implications of Joseph’s life. And then finally we’re just going to cap off with some lessons from Genesis, as we’ll be finishing up the book of Genesis today and moving on to the book of Exodus next time.

I think I left off your reading for next week. But if you have it there, I think that if memory serves me it’s Exodus 15-20. And then I believe it’s 32-33 and then 40. Did I miss anything? It’s on your handout so you have it. And so that’s the reading.

So let me get to the introduction. Just a few points. I want you to remember that the patriarchal family, the ruling family, is a regular family. I mean, if you think about the patriarchal family as some supernatural family that is gifted beyond belief in child rearing and parenting, and so on, then you’ve missed the boat, because they’re not. This is a regular family with regular struggles. And the regular struggle that this family has is the sin of favoritism. And that’s the besetting sin of the patriarchal family.

You see it, for instance, in Isaac and Rebekah’s relationship. We already noticed that Isaac loved Esau and Rebekah loved Jacob. And remember that Jacob loves Leah.

Brave Man: Rachel.

Jeff: Rachel. He loves Rachel. And Leah is not loved. And yet Leah is his first wife. Leah is his rightful wife through whom Judah is born. And Judah is the line of Christ. And so hold onto that until we get to the end. But the point is that you find favoritism running through the way people think about children, and the way people think about multiple wives, which is something a little foreign to us. But you still see the sin of

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favoritism. It’s the besetting sin of this patriarchal family, not to mention multiple wives. So keep your eye on this sin.

Now let’s turn now to *the life of Joseph*, okay? And as we do, let’s think about something. Now this story begins in Genesis 37 with the phrase “*the genealogy of*” not Joseph, but “*Jacob.*” Now this is one of the ways in which the book of Genesis is divided up. For instance, you’ll find a number of these—“*the genealogy of.*” In 2:4 you find “*the genealogy of the heavens and the earth.*” In 5:1 you find “*the genealogy of Adam.*” And then in 6:9 it’s “*Noah.*” Did I give 10:1?

Brave Man: No.

Jeff: In 10:1 it’s “*Noah.*” I just can’t read my own writing. In 11:10 it’s somebody with an sh at the beginning of his name. (*Laughter*) In 11:27 it’s “*Terah.*” In 25:12 it’s “*Ishmael.*” In 25:19 it’s “*Isaac.*” In 26:1 and 9 it’s “*Esau.*” And in 37:2 it’s “*Jacob.*” 37:2 is the last of these genealogies. And “*this is the genealogy of Jacob.*”

Now I find this to be incredibly ironic, because 37-50 is not necessarily about Jacob. It’s about Joseph, or at least we think of it as the Joseph story.

Now one of the things that I want you to remember is that there are a number of things that I’ll say to you. If you really want to look you can hold onto this as we go through the story. But this is one of those. Why? Because God through Joseph is dealing with Jacob, the man who wrestled with God. And you’ll see the way in which he’s dealing with him throughout this story. It’s a really wonderful thing, not so wonderful at the moment of it. But it certainly is there.

So in Genesis 37:3 what do you find? Well, not surprisingly, you find more favoritism. I’m going to have you look in your Bibles more today than normal. Usually I throw stuff up on the screen. But there would be a lot to throw up on the screen. So I want you to just catch 37:3. What does it say? It says very clearly that Israel, or “*Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he was the son of his old age.*” So he loves him more than any other son. This is more of the same besetting sin.

Now you see, when you look at this family, that this particular sin and others create problems. For instance, there’s the coat that was given to Joseph, the “*coat of many colors.*”

The interesting thing is that this same word is used in 2 Samuel 13. And it’s not described as a coat of many colors. It’s described as “*a royal robe with long sleeves.*” So what the coat actually looked like is up for some debate. But what is not up for debate is the fact that Jacob, Israel, gave Joseph this coat in order to show him amongst his brothers that this son had prominence. It is interesting, isn’t it, that the father gives him a coat that would later be designated as a royal robe. So that’s first.

We also have other problems in this family. For instance, you remember that Reuben slept with one of Jacob’s concubines. You’ll also remember the story about Levi and Simeon, and how they slew an entire city that was circumcised because the city wanted to intermarry with the family of Jacob. And those boys had some problems.

But we also know that Joseph had some problems. The Scriptures tell us that he was a tail bearer. He would tell things about his brothers to his father.

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Now at least on the surface of it, when you look at the Scriptures, that’s a family with some problems. Now the reader reading the story is going to pick those things up. And when you pick those things up, well, something else is interesting. (*Laughter*) Look at Genesis 37:4. “*They,*” the brothers, “*hated Joseph and could not speak peacefully to him.*”

Now just the fact that his father loved him more than the others is enough to say why. But when you think about these other problems in the family, you realize that there is no peace in this family. Now I want you to keep that in mind when you see the next slide.

In the next slide we find that Jacob says to his son, his favorite son, “Son, I want you to go and find your brothers, and this is what I want you to tell me when you return to me. Go and see if it is well with your brothers.”

Now remember what we said “*They hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.*” And the question is “Go and see if all is well.” Or the word is *peaceful*. That’s the same word. “Go and see if all is peaceful with your brothers.”

Now any fool (*laughter*) would know that all is not peaceful in this family.

Don Nemit: Amen.

Jeff: Look! So this is one of those practical points, where 1 Corinthians says that we can learn something from the Old Testament Scriptures about how to live the life of faith. And I think this is one of those points where as fathers we have to just take a step back and say to ourselves, “You know what? If I can’t make the signs of the times in my own family, if I don’t know the disturbing signs in my own family, then I’m a fool.”

Tom Hansz: Yeah.

Jeff: I’m not an innocent victim. I’m a man who’s had blinders on. Do you understand what I’m saying? This man should have understood that his favoritism was creating problems.

Brave Man: Amen.

Jeff: And he should have rectified it rather than exacerbating it. Now you know, the neat thing is that we can focus. And what we have a tendency to do is that we have a tendency to do this. And I want to pre-empt this right away. We have a way of looking at the Scriptures like this.

So Joseph is going to have a dream. And that dream is going to be that his brothers will bow down to him at some point. And we have a tendency to look at that and then run back to this moment when Jacob gives his son a royal robe and say, “Wow! This man didn’t even know this dream, but gave him a royal robe before the dream even happened! Look what God is doing!” And God may be doing that, but it wasn’t Jacob’s business to do that. Do you understand that? It was Jacob’s business to love his sons, those that God had given him, and not to show favoritism to one over the other, because Jacob did not give him the royal robe because he had insight into a dream that was coming. He gave him the robe out of selfish motives, despite the fact that in some ways it foreshadows the dream.

So hear me out. In some ways we could find Jacob justifying his behavior, couldn’t we. In the end he says, “Well, I only did that because.” You know what I mean? Telling

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that little white lie, right? “I only did this because I had an inkling.” No, you didn’t. You just loved him more than you loved them.

So I think this is instructive for us as fathers. I think it’s instructive for us as fathers to take the spiritual and the regular temperature of our families and ask the questions, the hard questions. What’s going on in the lives of my children? And am I showing favoritism to one wife over the other? (*Laughter*) Rick, that was a joke. I didn’t mean that. (*Laughter*) Don’t carry any of that back to my wife, all right? (*Laughter*) All right. (*Laughter*) Don, if you’re thinking I’m calling on you at the end of that scenario,-- (*Laughter*) Go ahead. Here it comes.

Don Maurer: With what Joseph did, and with what some people say, do you believe that Joseph was arrogant when he told these dreams, or was he prophesying?

Jeff: Okay. So there’s a sense in which in the telling of his dream that he was telling a revelation. And I’m going to get to that. But there is also the sense, as the bishop said to me earlier today, that this man is extremely immature in terms of his handling of relationships.

Brave Man: Amen.

Jeff: I agree. I mean, think about it, right? He already knows they hate him. They can’t speak peaceably to him. And he comes downstairs with his robe on, his royal robe, and says, “Hey, guess what!” (*Laughter*) “You are all gonna bow to me!” You know, that’s got to endear him. (*Laughter*) You know what I mean? They’re all going to say, “Oh, this is of God!” (*Laughter*) No, that’s not what they say.

Okay. So Dad sends the favorite son to the wolves. And Joseph approaches. And Don has this wonderful lead-in for me. The brothers see him coming and they say, “Here comes the dreamer.” And then they devise a plan. They say, “What are we going to do?”

Some of them want to kill him. Reuben wants to save him by throwing him into a pit and coming back and retreating him later.

Now you know why Reuben wants to do this. Reuben wants to do this because “I slept with Dad’s concubine and I’ve got to get back into his good graces,” right? It’s not really because “I want to save Joseph. It’s because I’ve got to get into Dad’s good graces.”

Now here’s the thing. They talk like this. “Let’s kill him and then see what happens to his dreams.” And I want you to think about something for just a minute. I have “the brothers and God” up here because I want you to think about this.

These men knew that dreams were of God. They were in the patriarchal family. They’d been raised to understand this. So they weren’t just speaking against their brother. They were speaking against God’s revealed plan. And so what they are saying is, “not only are we going to thwart Joseph’s future, but we’ll see what happens to God’s plan then.”

Here’s another one of those things. I’ve said this to you men before. I’ve said this. You know, if the thing that we see when we see others is not Christ in them, if we see something other than that first, then we’re not looking at others the way that God would have us look at them in the church. I’m talking in the church now. Because God would have us to see Christ in each other first, rather than their faults and their failures. If we see faults and failures first, then we’re seeing wrongly.

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And see, this is the very point. These brothers did not recognize Christ in their brother first, and then his faults and failures. They saw his faults and failures and said, “We don’t care about Christ in him. We’re going to kill him.” And so I think you have to keep that in mind. It’s not just about the brothers. It’s about God.

And so they throw him into the pit. They’re trying to decide what to do with him. Reuben wants to come back and get him later, as I already mentioned. But they see these slave traders coming by, and they decide that they’re going to sell them. That way his blood won’t be on their hands and he’ll be out of their hair. So they sell him. And the slave traders take him down into Egypt, and that’s where he goes.

But the next question is “But what do we tell Dad? What do we tell Dad, because Dad loves this guy. So we’ll tell him. We’ll take his coat, rip it up, put blood on it, and tell him that an animal must have devoured him.” And they tell him that.

And the man is grief-stricken. The man is literally heart-broken.

Now I want to just say this to you, because this is important for you to hang on to this idea. This is the genealogy of Jacob and not necessarily Joseph. You remember that this is the man who struggles with God. *“I will not let You go until You bless me.”* You remember this. This is wrestling with God on the Jabbok. And God blesses him.

He says to him, “What’s your name?” God says to him, “What’s your name?”

Do you remember? The last time he was asked what his name was, he said, “My name is Esau.” This time he’s forced to say, “My name is Supplanter. My name is Jacob.”

And God says, “No longer will you be called Jacob. From now on you will be called Israel, one who strives with God.” And he blesses him.

And now we find that this is a man who allows himself to be distracted. Do you remember this? Remember, he was supposed to go all the way to Bethel and he didn’t. He stopped short. And that’s why Levi and Simeon got into the mess they got into. And then in 35:1 he was told, *“Arise and go to Bethel.”* And he does. This is a man who has shortcomings. He’s like us. And so here is a man who has now released God who is the Giver of blessing. And he has laid hold of the blessing with a grip that will not let go.

Do you see the way he’s grieving for Joseph? He is grieving for Joseph in a way that says, “I am not going to let this blessing that You gave to me go.”

Now I want you to know something. If you know somebody who is close to you who has lost a son or a daughter, you know how difficult it is to lose a son or daughter. It’s not easy. And it takes years of recovery. But this is a man who never recovered. This is a man who had released his grip on the Giver and had a death grip on the gift. Okay?

All right. Then you get this interlude, chapter 38. What in the world is chapter 38 all about? This is Judah. And this is Judah sowing his wild oats apparently, or something like that, right? It’s a little more than that because the man gets married. And he marries a Canaanite.

Now I want you to catch this. You know this because we went through Jonah together. You know that in the Scriptures, special descriptions of one’s spiritual life are really important. You remember how Jonah went down, down, down, down, down. That was the way that word continued to be described over and over and over again.

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Notice this. This is really interesting. Genesis 38:1: “*Judah went down and turned aside.*” I’m not saying that’s definitive. I just kind of wonder if it isn’t a special description describing his spiritual condition. Some translations have it that he departs from his brothers and turns aside to this Canaanite woman. I don’t know if that’s definitive or not. But it sure does look descriptive to me of a man who is on his way down.

Now if you think about this story, the story is kind of an interesting one. He has three sons. He has Er, Onan and Shelah. And Tamar is married to Er. And Er is a wicked man; God strikes him dead. And Levirate law says that this man needs a son. Er needs a son in order to perpetuate the inheritance and to sustain the widow, and so on.

And so what does Judah do? Judah gives Onan to Tamar. And Onan is a wicked man in and of himself. You can read the story of what he did. And he is struck dead.

And Judah says, “Whoa! I am not going to give Shelah to this woman, because I don’t want to lose my son.” So he says, “Let’s just wait until Shelah gets a little older.”

And Tamar knows that she’s being played. So she dresses up as a harlot and she sleeps with Judah. Do you know the story? If you don’t know the story, Judah has kind of a besetting sin here, apparently sleeping with prostitutes. (*Laughter*) And Tamar is dressed as a prostitute. And she takes his staff and his signet ring. And all of a sudden the prostitute disappears and Tamar shows up. And Judah says, “We’re going to have to kill her.”

And she says, “Well, I’ll tell you what. I can tell you who the father is. The father is the man who owns these things.” And Judah says upon seeing them, “*She is more righteous than am I.*”

Now that’s significant. You’re looking like that.

Ted Wood: No, I’m just contemplating.

Jeff: Okay. That is significant. I like faces that are thinking, but you were like—

Ted: I’m wrestling with this.

Jeff: Okay, got it. “You are more righteous than I.” Now you have to keep Genesis 38 in mind as we move forward, because Genesis 38 becomes a lesson for us as we interpret a later event in the Joseph story.

So then, let’s jump to Joseph. And Joseph is sold into Potiphar’s house. Now here is the thing you’ve got to remember. In Potiphar’s house, we find that this man is blessed. Look at this. In six verses the Lord is mentioned five times, and *all* is mentioned five times. And what we are being told is that the Lord put everything, or all things, into Joseph’s care, because the Lord is blessing this man. This man is enjoying prosperity. And someone else, a Gentile, is getting the benefit of it.

Now here’s what we need to see, because this happens over and over again in the Scriptures, and I won’t remember every time to say it to you. This is the Abrahamic covenant being fulfilled in small ways, before it’s fulfilled as a nation. In small ways we see the people of Abraham being blessed so as to be a blessing, because that’s the Abrahamic blessing. So we find that here in this text. And Joseph in captivity is being blessed.

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Now Potiphar’s wife is a real drag, because Potiphar’s wife puts a monkey wrench in everything, right? Doesn’t she? So she likes this young man. He’s quite a handsome fellow, apparently. And she wants to lie with him.

And he’s like “No, I can’t do this.” Let’s just pause here. I want you to know this because again the Scriptures are for our learning.

How do you handle temptation?

Don Nemit: Flee.

Jeff: Well, not yet! (*Laughter*)

Brave Man: Don’t argue with him. Rewind! (*Laughter*)

Jeff: How does Joseph handle this temptation? He’s got this woman saying, “Let’s do this.” And he says, “Wait a minute!” And he doesn’t tell us. This is something I’m telling you.

You have to prepare yourself before the moment of temptation arrives, right?

Don Nemit: Amen.

Jeff: You cannot be a faithless man and head into this. Look, if you’re a faithful man, temptation is going to be hard enough, right? But you’re better off if you’re prepared and you’re a faithful man who heads into temptation. So I would say that your preparation has to be key.

Second, *he talks to her*. He tells her that this would be abuse of authority. “This would be an offense to your husband. And this would be a sin against God.” He’s talking to her! He’s trying to be rational with her. “Let’s think about this.”

And she’s like “I don’t care about any of those things.” And then you have to flee, right?

He tries to talk to her first. He tries to have this discussion. It doesn’t work. He’s thrown into prison.

I want you to notice something. Look at 39:1. It says that “*Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites.*” The slave traders brought him into his home, and he was blessed.

Now go to 40 verse 3. This is after he is thrown into prison. Notice this. Verse 2: “*And Pharaoh was angry with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker.*” Verse 3: “*And he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined.*”

Do you know what that looks like? It looks like he’s in Potiphar’s prison. Now I’ll tell you what I’ve found. This can’t be definitive, but I heard Sinclair Ferguson say this one time. Sinclair Ferguson said, “*That says to me that Potiphar didn’t believe his wife. Otherwise, he would have killed him.*”

Don Maurer: Oh, yes.

Jeff: And so he took this man and he put him in prison, in his own prison. And how does he work up to be the head over the prison? He’s known by the man whose prison it is, the man over whose house he ruled. And so I think that’s an interesting thing. It may be the case, it may not be.

Don Maurer: R. C. Sproul and David Jeremiah say the same thing.

Jeff: Oh, is that right?

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Don: Yes.

Jeff: Oh, I’m sure they got it from Sinclair. *(Laughter)*

Ted: Well, one R. C. Sproul trumps two Sinclair Fergusons. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: Don’t record that. *(Laughter)* Don’t record that! Yes, in the back?

Rich Clark: I heard he was the head executioner too. Is that correct? And so he could have executed Joseph.

Jeff: Well,-- Go ahead.

Rich: Adultery in Egypt was a capital offense.

Jeff: Yes. That’s why it seems that he was in this home. And now he’s in this prison over whom this man is the head. The fact that he’s not killed is striking. Okay.

Ted: I mean, this is a lot of speculation without text. But it’s almost as if Potiphar has to do something socially. His wife is screaming bloody murder. She’s probably telling her friends. To work this out he has to do something.

Jeff: Yes, I think you’re right.

Ted: So he knows he has a problem wife. So if I can just say this, now you’re making me think that maybe Joseph had a lot of other privileges in the prison. Maybe it wasn’t such a hard stint.

Jeff: Well, you know, I’ve thought about that. And so think about how we can be in a job that we really like, that we really enjoy. And the smallest thing can make us discontent. And Joseph is an individual, right? He’s a real person. And I thought about him. And I thought, you know, he obviously wants out of prison. So the thing that is discouraging for him is that he’s in prison. But there could be more.

Ted: My mind is going 60. And maybe I’m just thinking back that maybe it’s a good thing that he’s in prison, because he’s now under Potiphar’s foresight. And out of prison he would be away from that. And who knows what the wife might do or have done to him? So basically he’s being protected by Potiphar.

Jeff: Yes, I agree. But you know that if you were in prison, even if you were being well taken care of, you would want out.

Ted: Sure. We might say, “I want out.” But this is really the best place for me. We say that about a lot of things.

Jeff: Yes, no doubt about it. Well, let’s move on. You know the story of the cupbearer and the baker. The cupbearer and the baker are both thrown into prison. They both make Pharaoh angry. And they both have dreams. And Joseph says to them, “God is the interpreter of dreams. So let’s hear your dreams and maybe I can help you.” This is the first time we find some maturity in him.

And so he tells the baker that his dream indicates that he is going to be killed in three days and that the cupbearer is going to be restored to his position. And Joseph says, “Remember me when you are restored.”

Now I put these verses up here because in 40:14 Joseph says to the cupbearer, “*Show me chesed. Show me kindness.*” And the man forgets him. But in 39:21 we were told that the Lord showed Joseph *chesed*. When you bring those two into contrast or comparison one to another, you realize that the narrator, Moses, is telling us that it is God who

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remembers us and shows us *chesed* even when it doesn't feel like He is. But people will not. They will fail us.

And so two years later Pharaoh has a dream. And the cupbearer says, “Ah! I just remembered!” (*Laughter*) “There is someone. Well, you know, when I was in prison, I kind of blocked that out of my head, you know.” And he got a tattoo. (*Laughter*) He wore long sleeves over it. (*Laughter*) Anyway, two years later Pharaoh has a dream. And the cupbearer says, “I know a man.”

It's two years. He's restored. He tells Pharaoh the dream. “Here's the dream, Pharaoh. It happened twice, which means that God is going to bring it to pass. There will be seven years of prosperity and seven years of leanness. Here's what I recommend. I recommend that you save up during the seven years of prosperity, because when the seven years of leanness comes, you're going to need it.”

So Pharaoh says, “Hey! I can't think of a better guy to help me than you. So let's make you second in command.” He makes him second in command and Joseph gets to work.

He marries and he has two children. The names of those children are instructive. They're Hebrew names. He remembers the Hebrew language. We are told what those names were in Egyptian, but we're told that they're Hebrew names.

And Manasseh is *Forget*. “God has made me forget about the pain.” Now Ephraim is “God has made me fruitful.” The second one reminds us of the Abrahamic covenant. The first one brings a contrast, a contrast with his father.

Look at the contrast. Look in chapter 42. This is when the brothers go down to Egypt and they have to bring Benjamin back with them in order to get more food. This is the initial visit. But verse 4 of 42 says, “*But Jacob did not send Benjamin.*”

Now look at verse 36. “*But he said, 'My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead.'*” In other words, the first visit is enclosed by Jacob having a death grip on the gift.

Isn't it striking that Joseph says, “I've let go of all that. I've been able to forget all that pain of leaving my father's house.” But now the story shifts to Jacob. And Jacob has a death grip on the gift. Now it's Benjamin.

Now the striking thing is that God pries Bennie free from Jacob's hand. How does he do it? Through Joseph. God uses Joseph to pry Jacob's fingers off of Benjamin. Isn't that interesting? You know, when you think about this story and how it unfolds, it's like oh wow! This is still God wrestling with Jacob, isn't it?

Brave Man: Amen.

Jeff: What is Joseph doing? When the brothers come down that second time and they bring Bennie with them, he sets up the table in order of the brothers. And then he gives Benjamin a double portion.

And he watches. What is he watching for?

Brave Man: The jealousy of the brothers.

Jeff: He's watching for the jealousy, for the favoritism that has existed in this family. He knows; he's a smart man. He knows that this family has been racked with favoritism and jealousy as a result, and he's looking for it. Yes?

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Don Maurer: It makes you wonder what was going through the brothers’ minds. “Wait a minute! Why is he doing that?” They didn’t know who he was.

Jeff: Yes, that’s exactly what they’re asking, right? Yes. Let me ask you a question. What causes Joseph to break in this story? In 44:33 we find what causes him to break.

Transcriber’s Note: Genesis 44:33, NKJV. *“Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers.”*

Jeff: What causes him to break is Judah. He says, “Take and let the boy go. Let Benjamin go. I know he is the one who had the cup in his bag. Let him go and take me.”

And Joseph bursts into tears and says, “Everybody out!” And he reveals himself to his brothers.

What was it that made Joseph break? It was the gospel. When Joseph saw the gospel lived right in front of his eyes, he breaks. I’ll tell you what he says. It’s almost as if he says, “Favoritism has been supplanted by the gospel in this family.”

Don Nemit: Amen.

Jeff: Because Judah is willing to give himself so that Benjamin can be set free. You see the gospel worked out. It’s the gospel.

He says to the brothers, “Go and bring my father.” Don’t you love this? God says to Jacob, “Don’t be afraid. Go down there; it’s okay. I’ve got a plan. I’m God.” *(Laughter)* “I’ve got a plan. I’m working the plan here.” *(Laughter)*

Now I want to show you this so we get to *the implications*. I’ll try to hurry. But in front of Pharaoh Jacob describes his life in an interesting way. He says, “I’m a sojourner. My years have been few but hard.” But here’s the great thing. He says, “God has been my Shepherd.”

Don Nemit: Amen.

Jeff: Man, I love that, because you know what? This is not my best life now. But this life now is a ball of crap. These are the words of Jacob. Jacob says, “You know what? I feel like a pilgrim, and life has been hard. But I’ll tell you what has been the best. God has been my Shepherd.”

Transcriber’s Note: Jeff looks at the next slide.

Jeff: Wait! I don’t get that. *(Laughter)* *Joseph did what Jacob knew.* Oh, I know! *(Laughter)* All right, this is the blessing. I’m not going to spend a lot of time on *the blessing*, but I do want to say this. Go with me to 49:31. This is interesting. Despite the fact that Jacob is hard-headed and holds on to the blessing, you notice what he did. He’s running down through the whole idea of where the burial plot is. And there in verse 31 he’s telling his sons, *“There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife. There they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife. And there I buried Leah.”*

And all of a sudden you go, “Ah! You knew that Leah was the true patriarchal wife who would give birth to the true heir. And you buried her in the patriarchal grave at Mach-Pelah.

“Why didn’t you act better than you knew?” I mean, that’s a lesson, isn’t it? And we want to say, “Why didn’t you act better than you knew?” And then all of a sudden we have to answer that question by saying, “Oh, yes. I don’t always act better than I know.”

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I mean, this is a man who knew. Jacob knew what Joseph knew. Joseph knew enough to let go. So did Jacob. He just didn't.

And then Jacob dies. Now what? You know the story. The story is that the brothers think, *Oh no! Dad's dead! Joseph is going to wreak havoc on us!*” Because why? You know, this is almost like justification and sanctification. They've been living in a justified state. And now all of a sudden, they fear.

And Joseph says to them, “Look!” He speaks kindly to them and their families. And he says, *“You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.”* He gives them a theological lesson. This is where a theologian is always good, right? It's always good to be a theologian in your family, right? *“You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.”*

And so let me run to *the implications of Joseph's life*. What about Canaan? Go back with me to Genesis 15:16 for just a second. This is the plan that God talked about. In 15:16 notice what He said. *“God said to Abram, ‘And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.’”* In other words, “I've got to take you out of the land of Canaan.” Why? “Because I'm not ready to give them over to My wrath yet.” They still have time to accrue more wrath, or to repent. But they're accruing wrath.

So what about Canaan? This is what we need to understand. It's not just Israel that's in the plan of God. Other nations are in the plan of God. Canaan is a land that was in the plan of God. And God said, “I'm not going to do anything to Canaan yet because they're still accruing wrath in the way they're going.”

What about Egypt? Genesis 15:13-14. Look at this. *“Then the LORD said to Abraham, ‘Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.’”* That's the Exodus.

Why are they there? They are there so that they can become fruitful and multiply into the great nation of the Abrahamic covenant. Egypt is the nation incubator for Israel. And God is sovereign over the whole thing, and we'll say more about that. The Abrahamic covenant is there. I've been showing you that.

To recap, let me just do this really quickly. You see in 1-11 *the primeval history, the patriarchal saga* in 12, *Abraham* through 36, *Jacob and the Joseph story* and *the genealogy of Jacob* in 37-50. If you want to divide Genesis up into covenants, you see *the covenant of works* in 1-3. You see *the covenant of grace* initiated in chapter 3 with the giving of the covenant to Adam and Eve, and so on. But you also see *the covenant of preservation* in the *Noahic covenant* in Genesis 6-9, and then *the Abrahamic covenant* in Genesis 12 and 15.

The chosen line is there, as you can see. The reason why I put this up is because we oftentimes think about history and we say, “Wow! It was so dark in the Middle Ages. Where was the church?”, and so on and so forth. There is always a line, always, even in the darkest times. And you can see the line. There's always a line of godly ones throughout history.

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Hamartia is the Greek word for *sin*. The lesson is man is sinful, but God is faithful. That’s the lesson throughout. Man needs a Savior. He needs that Savior that was promised back in Genesis 3:15, the One who would crush the serpent’s head though He was struck on the heel. And he needs the One who Lamech names Noah, because he might be the one who gives us rest. He shows us the One in Judah’s actions, who is willing to give himself for Benjamin, and so on. The gospel is coming out more and more and more as we go along in this book. And we’ll see it as the Old Testament unfolds. Okay. Yes?

Don Maurer: I would have just loved to have heard the scenario when the brothers tell Jacob that Joseph is alive. “What do you mean Joseph is alive? How did he go down to Egypt? I thought he was killed by wild beasts.”

“Well, Dad, twenty years ago ...” You just wonder what really happened. It’s the same with Genesis 50. “Well, your father before he died said to forgive us.” Yeah, right! They were just trying to get themselves out of trouble.

Jeff: I know. Wouldn’t you have liked to have been a fly on the wall for that conversation? “Dad, you need to sit down.” (*Laughter*) And then, you know, this is what you say. “Reuben!” (*Laughter*) All right, well let’s pray. Oh, wait a minute.

Caleb Falbo: I know this is after Jacob’s name is changed to Israel. It switches back and forth between Jacob and Israel. Is that for the sake of clarity, or is there a particular significance to that?

Jeff: You know, sometimes that happens. I think, if memory serves me correctly, that it happens even with Saul and Paul in the book of Acts. There’s just a brief time where it switches back and forth before it actually remains Paul. So I don’t know if that’s stylistic or if there’s a theological message there, that this man who struggles with God is still struggling with supplanting the plan of God. I don’t know. I can’t answer that definitively, though it’s certainly suggestive.

Okay, let’s pray. Father, thank You for this day and the time You’ve given. Lord, we do thank You for a story like this one, one that fills in redemptive history for us in such a wonderful way, but also one that teaches us so much about how to live. Father, we pray that You will bless us with the lessons of faith that You teach. But we pray most of all that You would bless us with the gospel that we see in Judah’s life, and the gospel that came from his loins in the Savior. And so we pray in the Savior’s name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen. (*Applause*)