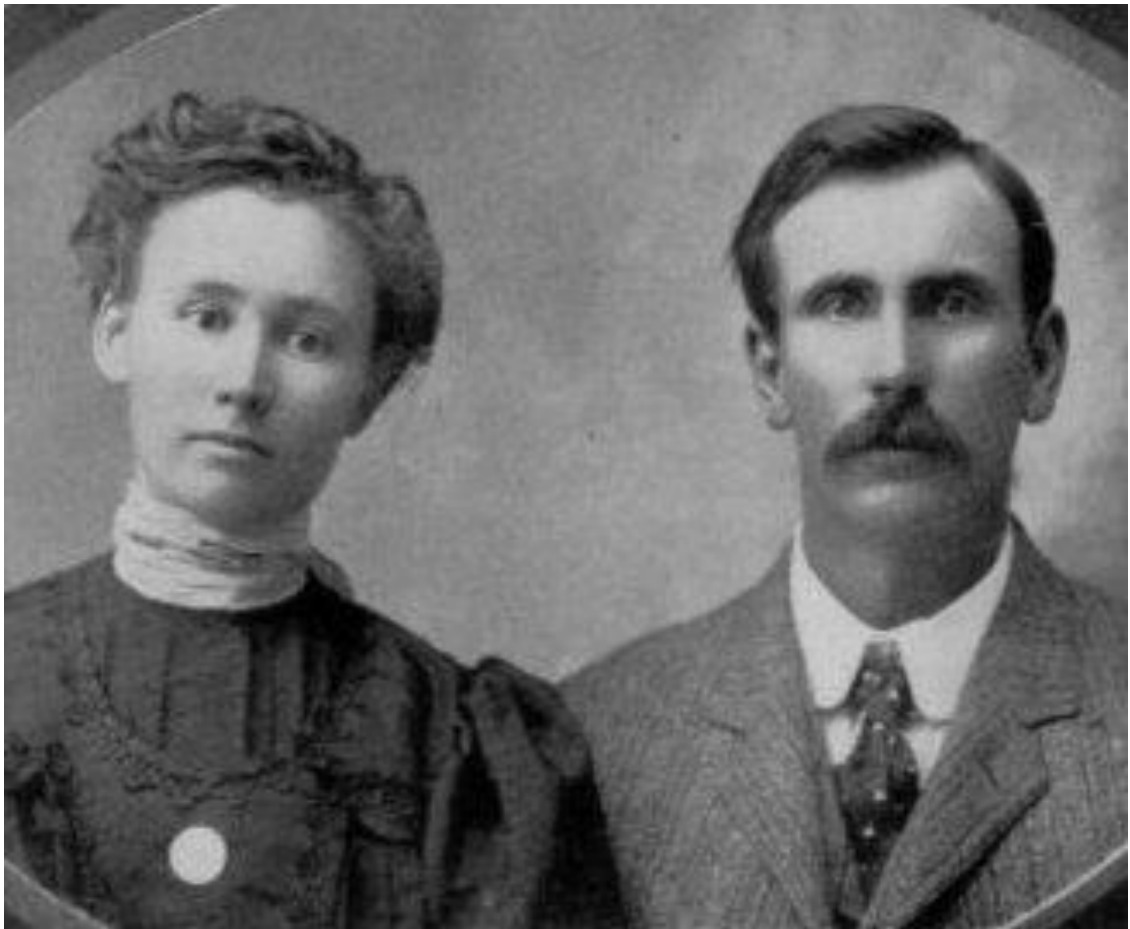


Meet the Parents



Genesis 28-50

Bible Studies for Ashfield Presbyterian Church

ashfieldpresbyterian.org.au

Courtesy of Mitchelton Presbyterian Church

Genesis 28-33: Stairway to Heaven

Introduction

According to the Encyclopaedia of Judaism (G. Wigoder, Ed, New York University Press, p403), living in the land of Israel is equal to all of the other commandments. It's the very best thing you can do. To Jews throughout the ages the Promised Land has been the place to meet God. Even today, for the many Jews scattered around the world, it's traditional to be buried with a small bag of dirt from the Promised Land... the place where heaven and earth connect. And apparently, you have to be Jewish to enjoy the connection.

As you read the next exciting episode in the life of Jacob, you'll see why. The land is full of promise; full of blessing. And yet last time, we saw Jacob on the run from the land, because of the way he's shamefully swindled his brother. But no matter how far and how wide Jacob roams, he still calls the Promised Land home. In this section, we'll see Jacob meeting God in a dream, meeting his dream wife, and being swindled by his father-in-law in a switch that seems like very fitting payback for his own deception of Esau. We'll see his family grow, his flocks grow – and finally, we'll see Jacob on the run again, heading home.

Connecting with God – Think About it...

1. You might have noticed that we live in a very spiritual age. People are always looking for ways to “connect with God.” Can you think of some examples?

How do you think a person can best connect with God?

Let's dip in to Genesis and see what's happening.

Stairway to Heaven

Jacob has cheated his slightly older twin brother out of his birthright, and his father's blessing. Esau is furious. So Jacob hits the road – he's going back to his ancestral land to find a bride, and to give Esau's temper time to cool off. It's going to be a longer journey than he expects!

Read Gen 28:10-22.

2. After a long day on the road, Jacob stops for the night and rests his head on a cosy rock. During the night he has a remarkable dream. Draw the dream. (It doesn't have to be artistic!) Note the footnote to verse 13, which is arguably a better translation. (Draw both options.)
3. Note the words God says to Jacob in the dream. Where have you seen similar words before? (Look for an example involving his grandfather Abraham, and his father Isaac.)
 - a. What does God promise about the land?
 - b. What does God promise about the world?
 - c. What confidence can Jacob have for his own future?

4. Jacob wakes from his rocky night of sleep in awe. How does he describe the place where he lay?

God promises Jacob that he and his descendants will be given the land where he lies, as well as the land in every direction around it. He'll travel safely and return safely to this "promised land." Bethel, as Jacob re-names the site, becomes one of Israel's holiest places. Jacob sees it as the "gate of heaven" in the heart of the promised land – the man-hole into the ceiling of heaven, with the stairway that the angels travel up and down. Here's the place where man and God connect, the meeting place between heaven and earth. (In fact, if the footnote reading of verse 13 is correct, even God himself has traveled down to earth to stand beside him!)

5. As someone once said, it's hard to tell the difference between the man who dreamed that God spoke to him, and the man God spoke to in a dream. By verse 20, Jacob doesn't seem so sure himself! How would you describe Jacob's "faith" in verse 20-22?

Advantage Deceiver?

Read Genesis 29:1-18. Jacob arrives in Paddan Aram, his ancestral home, and, like his dad before him, finds his perfect bride by the well. It's love at first sight! But it won't necessarily be smooth sailing. Grasping Jacob is about to be deceived.

Read Gen 29:19-30.

6. We've already seen in past chapters that Jacob was a master deceiver. It must run in the family! Look at the conversation in verse 19. How should Laban's words have been a warning to a swindler like Jacob?

Jacob works seven years for Rachel's hand in marriage, and wakes up on the first morning of his honeymoon with Leah instead! Aargh!

7. How do Laban's words in verse 26 highlight the fitting "payback" for Jacob's earlier deception of Esau? (Can you see the parallel?)

Read the account of the birth of Jacob's children from **Gen 29:31 - 30:24**. The sons you'll read about ultimately give their names to the famous 12 tribes of Israel (with the exception of Joseph – but more of that later.) For the original Israelite readers, these pages spell out the very origins of their nation. Shockingly, though, as the story unfolds many of them disgrace themselves. But God is in control... and as the story unfolds, we'll see a great line of kings descending from Judah, son of Leah, and a great saviour, Joseph, from Rachel. (Ultimately, in the New Testament, we'll meet Jesus, a Saviour-King who brings together the best of both!)

There should be a law against it!

More immediately, though, Jacob's double marriage ultimately brings nothing but jealousy and disaster.

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29:30 – Jacob lay with Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah.

29:32 – Leah named him Reuben, for she said "It is because the Lord has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now."

30:15 – "Wasn't it enough that you took away my husband..."

Read the later law given by Moses in Leviticus 18:18. Good idea!

Homeward Bound

Read Gen 30:25-27.

8. How does this brief conversation demonstrate God's promise-keeping at work? (Compare with Gen 28:14-15)

9. Now read the rest of the account of Jacob's growing prosperity, and his departure, from **Gen 30:28-31:21**. How many "deceptions" can you identify in the exchanges between Laban and Jacob?

10. Look back at Gen 27:43. Comparing it with 31:21, what can you say about Jacob's "progress" in the last 20 years or so? (What similarity is there between his arrival and departure?)

Read the rest of the story, from Gen 31:22-55.

11. How do you see God's protective promise (28:15) at work in 31:22-30?

Notice that Rachel seems quite at home in this family of deceivers. She uses her feminine wiles to keep her dad from discovering her theft of the family idols. Laban, who has taken advantage of Jacob for the last 20 years, is now the victim. The swindler of the swindler has been swindled.

12. In spite of all this, to whom does Jacob attribute his success to? (Gen 31:42)

Do you see something slightly impersonal about the way Jacob describes God? (Look for a change in this by the end of chapter 33.)

Jacob and Laban part on (reasonably) good terms. They set up a pile of stones, and make a covenant agreement. Laban kisses his grandchildren, blesses his daughters, and heads for home.

Brothers in Arms

Read Gen 32:1-21. With good cause, even after 20 years away, Jacob is still nervous about meeting Esau again.

13. What's Jacob's plan?

14. What do you notice about the way Jacob continually refers to Esau, and to himself, in this chapter?

15. What indication is there that Jacob is growing in his reliance on the God of his forefathers?

End of the Running

Read Gen 32:22-32. It's a weird incident, loaded with more questions than answers. Who is the spooky "man" Jacob wrestles through the night? Who really wins? Why does the stranger need to leave by daybreak? (Don't worry – those were rhetorical questions!)

16. From verse 25 and 31, what impact has this encounter had on Jacob's lifestyle? (Recall the comparison between 27:43 and 31:21, above.)

17. Is Jacob's new name a compliment, or an insult?

Surprising Reconciliation

Read Gen 33:1-20. The meeting with Esau goes surprisingly well. While Jacob expected battle, or at the very least a humiliating appeasement, Esau is full of grace. (There are echoes here of a story Jesus told about a runaway brother and the brother who stayed at home – particularly in verse 4! God specialises in reconciliation of runaways!)

18. Verses 18-20 act as a summary of Jacob's travels. (Or, Israel's travels, as he's now been re-named.) Maybe it's been a personal journey as well. How does the name he gives the altar in verse 20 hint at a change of attitude? (Compare with 31:42.)

Why is his "land purchase" something to celebrate?

Looking forward:

Centuries fly by. In the time of Jesus, the very spot where we leave Jacob standing has become a famous tourist spot. There's a well here, known even after so many years as "Jacob's well." Jacob has become the father of a mighty nation called "Israel," who through the years have certainly "contended with God" like their forefather. John's gospel makes a number of connections with Jacob's life story.

19. **Read John 1:45-51.** Focus on verse 51. Recalling Jacob's vision of angels going up and down a ladder between heaven and earth, what is Jesus saying about himself here? (What part of your picture in q1 does Jesus replace?)
20. What is this saying about Jesus, and about "how we can connect with God"?
21. The special "meeting places with God" that Jacob marks with piles of rocks are later replaced by Israel's TEMPLE. In John 2:1-22, Jesus says that even the temple has been superseded as the place to meet with God. By what?

Read John 4:1-12. Jesus is standing – it seems – almost exactly where we left Jacob in Genesis 31. It's a fascinating exchange. Remember, Jacob, renamed "Israel", was the forefather of the nation that took his name. (Samaritans – like this woman – were a despised "sub-branch" of the family.)

22. What is the answer to the woman's question in verse 12?

Jacob was a swindler, a con-man and a thief. Even so, because of God's gracious promise, he stopped running, and became the father of the nation of blessing. Now, at last, the final fulfillment of that promise to bless all the nations has come in the person of Jesus. The Promised Land, or even the temple, is no longer the place to find God's blessing – God is meeting with his world in the person of his one and only Son. And, in verses 13-14, Jesus promises to provide the sort of water Jacob never could – by pouring out God's heart-changing Spirit. There's no more "wrestling with God" for a blessing. And there's no more need to search out "holy places" to meet with God. Jesus says to the woman at the well, "A time is coming, and has NOW COME, when (instead of worshipping on this mountain or Jerusalem) true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth... for they are the kind of worshippers God seeks."

23. From John 4:25-26, how can people like us "connect with God"?

Prayer Points:

Genesis 34-36: Family Matters

Modern horror or suspense movies look like a Disney cartoon compared with the violence, deception and corruption in Genesis 34. As usual, it's hard to know who to side with. Everyone looks bad. That's how it usually is with the ancestors of the nation of Israel! But let's see what lessons the passage holds. Jacob has been reconciled with his brother Esau, and now makes himself comfortable in Shechem. But trouble is brewing!

Read the disturbing account of Dinah and the Shechemites in **Genesis 34:1-12**.

1. What does Dinah do, and what's the tragic result?
2. How do things look from the point of view of Shechem and Hamor in verses 1-4?
3. How do things look from the point of view of Jacob and his sons? (v5-7)

Is Jacob's reaction surprising? How?

4. Hamor, father of Shechem, is (in one sense at least) doing the honourable thing in verses 8-12. What is his offer?

What is the down-side of the deal proposed in verses 9 and 10?

Jacob's sons have inherited the family talent for trickery. Read about their devious plan in **Gen 34:13-19**. (It's not immediately obvious that it's devious!)

5. Look back at God's covenant with Abraham in Genesis 17:1-14. Notice especially verses 7 and 8. Whose land will Canaan be?

Who will the "Father of many nations" be?

What will circumcision signify?

6. What counter-deal do Jacob's sons (deceitfully) propose?

The cost of commitment! Young Shechem does exactly what they ask, because he's so smitten by Jacob's delightful daughter (v19). As usual, though, there's double dealing behind the scenes. In fact, it's double-double dealing. **Read Gen 34:20-24**.

7. What's Hamor's devious underlying plan?

What effect will the proposed intermarriage have on God's promise to Abraham?

The men of Hamor's town have unwittingly put themselves in a very vulnerable situation. **Read verses 25-29.**

8. Who is involved in verse 25, and what do they do?
9. Who is involved in the second phase, and what do they do?

Read about Jacob's reaction in verses 30 and 31.

10. What is Jacob's reaction, and why?
11. What reason do Simeon and Levi give for their actions?

Nothing more is said at this point. But memories of this event are stored away for later. Make a note of the names of these disgraced sons:

DISGRACED SONS [] []

It seems that the punishment handed out by Simeon and Levi far exceeds the crime. On the other hand, a huge danger has been averted... Hamor the Hivite had been planning "genocide by integration," which would have surely brought Jacob's family line to an end. Strangely, though, Jacob, Simeon and Levi all seem totally oblivious to the issue. For Jacob's sons, it's all about revenge. For Jacob, it's all about getting on with the neighbours. He can see the danger of a full-on attack from the Canaanites and Perizzites but not the danger of compromise.

Think It Through...

Can you think of ways we face the same danger as Christians today? (ie, are there subtle threats that we don't see?)

Back to Bethel

Remember Bethel? That's the place where Jacob stopped off on his way to Haran, and encountered God in a dream. Go back to Gen 28:20, and recall Jacob's promise. He has some unfinished business! **Read Gen 35:1-8.**

12. What surprising thing does Jacob have to make his household do before they go to Bethel?
13. What is Jacob's assessment of God's dealings with him to this point?

Jacob builds the altar, and calls the place "God of Bethel," because it was the place God had revealed himself to him when he fled from his brother in the past. The account ends on the somber note of the death of Deborah, an old servant of his mother.

Verses 9 to 14 seem to serve as a summary of everything that has happened to this point. In a few short verses, the events of the last six chapters are pulled together the appearance of God on his way home, Jacob's renaming as "Israel", the promise of a community of nations and the land.... Read through these verses as a reminder of the ground we've covered.

Saying goodbye

Read the sad account of the death of Rachel in childbirth in **Gen 35:16-20**.

14. What other child had Rachel borne?

From your Bible's footnotes, what is the significance of the baby's two names?

The birth of Benjamin completes the full set of Jacob's offspring. He's the youngest, and the tragic circumstances of his birth almost guarantee his position as one of his dad's favourites. We'll see more of that later.

Read the tacky little episode described in Gen 35:21-22. Although Israel (Jacob) heard of what happened, apparently he did nothing. But the memory of this event is stored away for the future... as we'll see.

15. Make a note of this disgraced son's name []

16. List all the sons of Jacob in the order they're presented in verses 23-26

1

2

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12

Read the account of the death of Isaac in verses 27-29. Esau and Jacob are on friendly enough terms to bury their dad together. Scan through chapter 36 to see the unfolding of the family line of Esau (Edom). Through Israel's history, the Edomites are tough neighbours. But in the story we're being told here in Genesis, the Edomites now fade from view. Our interest is in the family of promise... but among the 12 sons of Jacob, there's some re-arranging to do.

Take a fast flip forward to Genesis 49, where Jacob passes on a deathbed blessing to all his sons. You'll notice there are consequences for the three disgraced sons...

17. From verses 1-4, what does the future hold for Reuben?

18. From verses 5-7, what does the future hold for Simeon and Levi?

19. In contrast, from verses 8-12, what does the future hold for son Judah?

Surprisingly, among all the brothers, it's Judah who is destined for future glory. Kings will come from his line. The Old Testament follows his family tree to the great King David. The New Testament goes further!

20. **Turn to Revelation 5:5-6.** Who is this (much later) Lion of Judah? What has he done to claim the throne?

Through all the twists and turns, through disgraceful acts and wrong motives, God's blessing moves down the line to Jacob, the father of a line of Kings. But the ultimate "Lion of Judah" is Jesus Christ himself, who goes to the throne by going to the cross. His death as a sacrifice for the sins of his people takes centre stage in heaven.

While the early part of the narrative does not make any immediate value judgments on the sins of Reuben, Simeon and Levi, chapter 49 assures us that lust, vengeance, anger and cruelty have no place among God's people. There are consequences. But that doesn't change God's plan to bring blessing.

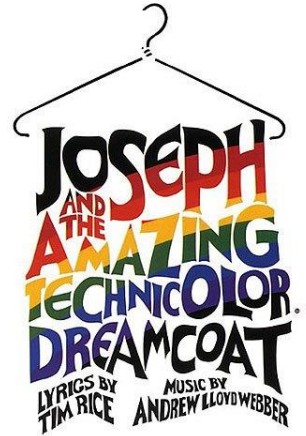
21. Do you have to get "everything right" to be included in God's plans?

22. Why can you be confident that your sins are forgivable? (Think back to the image of the Lion and the Lamb from Revelation 5. What does the "lamb" have to do with it?)

Prayer Points:

Genesis 37-42: Tell Him He's Dreaming

If you've ever seen the musical Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, you'll know what's coming. The Joseph narrative, which runs all the way from Genesis 37-42, is a gripping story and quite well known. (If you're not familiar with it, why not read it through in a single sitting?) After a shaky start, Joseph, the second youngest son of Jacob (born to his beloved wife Rachel) distinguishes himself as a man of honour and integrity. He also has a huge part to play in securing the future of God's people. **Read Genesis 37:1-11.**



1. What examples of “dysfunctional parenting” do you notice?
2. What two examples of baby-brother stupidity do you notice?
3. Look carefully at the details of Joseph's dreams. How do his brothers and his father interpret them?

How would you account for the different reactions of his brothers and his dad in v11?

Read Genesis 37:12-36.

4. What is Jacob (who you'll notice is now consistently called Israel) asking Joseph to do in verses 12-14? (Compare with verse 2).
5. How pleased are his brothers to see him coming?
What two things have clearly made the brothers mad? (v19, 23)
6. Who is the one “good guy” among the brothers at this point?
7. By verse 24, the brothers have thrown Joseph in a pit. Now a better plan comes along. Is Judah a good guy or a bad guy at this point? (v26-27)
8. Where does Joseph end up?

Remember the way Jacob deceived his own dad with a dead goat? Ironically, once again, he's going to face what looks like fair payback for his own past deception. The brothers smear the blood of a goat over Joseph's ornate robe, and take it to their father. In an act of immense cruelty to both their brother and their dad, they convince Jacob that Joseph has been torn to pieces. In reality though, he's been sold to Potiphar, the captain of the Egyptian Pharaoh's guard

Desperate Housewives

Skim through chapter 38, and notice the incredible hypocrisy of Judah, who is tricked into sleeping with his widowed daughter-in-law to continue the family line. There are so many ancient customs at work here that it's easy to be dumbfounded by the mess. It's almost like an episode of Desperate Housewives. Here are some key points...

- Judah's family line must continue but he has stopped it by not providing his son Shelah to further the family line.
- Judah thinks nothing of sleeping with a prostitute, then saying she should be burnt to death.
- Judah is caught red handed as the perpetrator.
- Twin sons are born from this desperately unrighteous union. Perez, the firstborn twin, becomes the forefather of Boaz (see Ruth 4), the forefather of King David!

Now read Genesis 39, and note the contrast between Judah and Joseph when it comes to bedroom behaviour. While Judah is busy messing up his family, Joseph is prospering in the home of Potiphar. The Lord is with him (v2) and gives him success in everything he does. Recognising this, Potiphar puts him in charge of his household, which also prospers because of Joseph (v5). All Potiphar had to do was eat!

But Joseph is handsome... and attracts the attention of Potiphar's wife.

9. Consider Joseph's answer to her proposition in verses 8 and 9. Note the things we learn about...

- marriage
- loyalty
- who would be sinned against in this situation

10. This housewife is desperate and relentless. What is Joseph's reaction in verse 12?

It's not fair! Potiphar's wife spins a web of deceit, and shows Joseph's left-behind cloak as evidence of his intention to make sport of her. (Interesting - this is the second time a garment has been used to lie about Joseph!) By the end of Genesis 39, Joseph finds himself in prison.

11. What happens in prison (v21-23)? Can you see a trend developing here?

Dream Reader

Read chapter 40. Joseph's time in prison is not wasted. In fact, he connects with two fellow prisoners from the household of Pharaoh and they've both had dreams. Joseph has been a bit of dreamer himself... more than that, in verse 8, he says that he knows the God who can interpret dreams. The cupbearer's dream brings good news of freedom. The baker is not so fortunate.

12. Joseph makes one request in verse 14. What is it?

13. What's the outcome of Joseph's dream-reading? (v20-23)

14. **Read Genesis 41:1-40.** Joseph spends two more long years in jail. It's only when Pharaoh has a pair of confusing dreams that the cupbearer remembers the young Hebrew named Joseph. 14. In verse 16, who does Joseph credit for his success as a dream reader?

Briefly revise and describe the dreams.

How does Joseph explain the dreams in verses 28-32?

Joseph doesn't only interpret the dream he also has a plan for managing the Egyptian economy through the upcoming recession.

15. Who does Pharaoh put in charge, and why? (v37-40)

Notice the trend? Because of the way God has blessed Joseph, he's risen to the top of the heap where-ever he has been Potiphar's house, the prison, and now the whole land of Egypt. He's on the fast track to the top! Read the account of Joseph's famine management program in Genesis 41:41-57. Everything unfolds exactly as he said it would because the spirit of God has been in him like nobody else. (v38). In a very real sense, he is God's "Spirit anointed saviour" and he's been put in this position for a purpose.

16. During this time, Joseph has two sons. What does he name them, and why? (This gives a good insight into how Joseph understands what he's been going through!)

What Comes Around Goes Around

Remember Joseph's brothers? Resenting his dreams of glory, they sold him into slavery and told their dad he was dead. At the start of chapter 42, the scene shifts back to Canaan, where the famine has hit hard. The scales of justice are going to be re-balanced, much to everybody's surprise.

Read Genesis 42:1-6.

17. Jacob has heard that there's plenty of grain in Egypt, and orders ten of Joseph's brothers to go and buy some. Why is there plenty of grain in Egypt?

18. Why didn't Benjamin go along? What does this highlight about Jacob's loss?

19. The stage is set for a strange re-union. Think back to Joseph's original dream about the sheaves of wheat that so offended his brothers. What happens in verse 6?

This is the moment we've been waiting for... the dream is fulfilled, and the stage is set for Joseph to turn the tables on his brothers! But there's still some sorting out to do before we come to the happy re-union. For now, it's enough to notice that through many twists and turns, God is working out a plan. And it all depends on providing a wise, righteous, Spirit-filled Saviour!

Think it over...

20. Look back at examples of Joseph's righteousness. What can you learn from his sexual fidelity when confronted with Potiphar's wife?

21. What can you learn from Joseph's attitude, even when treated unjustly?

22. **Read I Peter 2:13-25.** How should followers of Jesus behave when treated unjustly? How is Jesus our example in this?

Prayer Points:

Genesis 42-50: Longing for Home

Read Genesis 42.

1. Joseph has recognised his brothers, but they haven't recognised him. What do you think Joseph's motive is in his dealings with his brothers?
2. What do the brothers' words in 42:21-22 reveal?
3. What do Jacob's words reveal in 42:36?

To test his brothers, Joseph has insisted that they bring his younger brother Benjamin back with them on their next trip to Egypt. Simeon is held prisoner until they return. But Jacob has lost one son already and refuses to part with Benjamin. Eventually, however, the food runs out and a tough decision must be made.

4. What guarantee does Judah give his dad in 43:8-10?

The decision is made to return to Egypt. **Read 43:15-34.**

5. Joseph seems quite calculating in the way he deals with his brothers. But what do you see behind the scenes in 43:30?

Joseph prepares a further test for his brothers. **Read 44:1-16.**

6. Benjamin is trapped. But which brother comes to the forefront?
7. What 'guilt' do you think has really been uncovered (44:16)?
8. **Read Judah's speech in 44:17-33.** How has his attitude changed towards his father? What offer does he make?
9. As Ch 49 will reveal, Judah will be the father of a line of kings. How does Judah's offer to give himself in place of his brother make him fit to be the father of kings? Which future king does the same thing in a much great way?
10. **Read 45:1-7.** Joseph finally reveals his identity. How does Judah react?

How do the brothers respond?

What has been God's intention all along?

Joseph sends his brothers home with the great news that he's alive. Jacob sets out for the safe haven of Egypt in Ch 46 – and, in a reminder of a previous trip long ago (Gen 28), God speaks to him in a vision during the night.

11. What does God promise in 46:3-4? Which part of the promise to Abraham in Gen 12 is highlighted? What promise is there for the future?
12. Although Joseph takes care of his family in Egypt (Gen 46-47), the hearts of the family are always tied to the Promised Land, Canaan. Which part of God's promise is being fulfilled in 47:27? (cf 46:26)

Where does Jacob want to be buried? (47:29b-30)

13. **Read Ch 48.** Joseph's sons are blessed by Jacob, who 'adopts' them as his own sons, giving them inheritance rights. What earlier 'blessing story' comes to mind as you read v9-21?

What key difference is there between this and the earlier story of Jacob and Esau? (v19-20)

From v21, what promise is brought to mind?

The promise – and the prospect – of returning to the Promised Land is constantly repeated. We're just a few chapters from the start of the book of Exodus, which will tell of the great trouble Israel's descendants have breaking free from Egypt. During those later years of captivity, promises like these may well have been their only glimmer of hope!

Quickly look over ch 49 again. Reuben, Simeon and Levi lose their blessings because of their past foolishness. Judah rises to the top. **Read his blessing from v8-12.**

14. We have already noted that Judah's family line (through his shady liaison with Tamar) ultimately leads to the great King David... and finally (Mt 1) the ruler's staff is passed to the one to whom it belongs, Jesus Christ. Who will this ultimate king rule over?

Thinking back over the development we've seen in Judah's character – and the final act that brought about Joseph's unveiling – what place should self-sacrifice play in the character of God's ideal leader?

15. **Read 49:29-50:12.** Where is Jacob buried. What does his lavish 'state funeral' say about God's oversight of this family?

16. **Read 50:15-21.** Summarise Joseph's words in v20 in your own words.

How many instances can you think of where God has turned bad circumstances into good results for his family line?

17. God is relentlessly bring about his promise to bless the world through the descendants of Abraham. Read the closing words of Genesis in 50:22-26. What is Joseph's final request?

What is his final confidence?

There are hard times ahead for the Israelites... as the book of Exodus will reveal. But Joseph remains confident in God's promises to give his people a land of their own, and to ultimately bless the world through them. Further, through the line of Judah, God has promised a king who will one day call on people from all nations to live under his rule. Both Judah and Joseph show something of the character of God as he deals with his people. God can bring good results from bad circumstances – even crucifixion. God will provide the Saviour his people need, at just the right time. And God's rule over his people will ultimately be by a king who is prepared to give himself for his brothers.

Think back

Think back over these chapters. How does God's faithfulness to his promises to bless the world through Jesus in the past help you to trust Jesus for the future?

Prayer Points: