

GENESIS

F O U N D A T I O N S

Chapter 42 - 45 Study Guide

August 15, 2004

GENESIS

F O U N D A T I O N S

Genesis 42

1. BACKGROUND, CULTURE & EXEGESIS

SOUL-WINNER SO WHAT

What has God revealed to you? How much do you remember?
Know this for certain: God is not in a hurry! His plans will come to pass in His time.

Habakkuk 2

² Then the LORD answered me and said:
"Write the vision
And make it plain on tablets,
That he may run who reads it.
³For the vision is yet for an appointed time;
But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie.
Though it tarries, wait for it;
Because it will surely come,
It will not tarry.

Many years have passed since Joseph first had his dream as a teenager, but now that he finally sees his brothers bowing down to him, he must remember!

As we read this narrative, remember the bottom line: God is going to get Jacob (Israel) down to Egypt. God has a plan and it will come to pass. One of the reasons is messianic (remember Hosea 11:1 "*When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.*")

Some further notes:

It would make sense to the brothers that Joseph accused them of being spies since they came from the only border where Egypt was vulnerable.

Joseph put his brothers into prison for three days. Again, we have this three day thing! Maybe Joseph is giving a little payback here for his brothers who had him thrown into that cistern . . . can you remember for how long?

Small Group Question

What other "three day" things can you find in the Bible?



GENESIS

F O U N D A T I O N S

Notice in verse 21 that even though time had passed (12-13 years), the brothers still carried with them the guilt of their action.

Small Group Question

Un-confessed sin is like cold grease on your hands like a greasy pan in cold dishwater. How can you get clean?

Why Simeon? Tradition has it that Simeon was the cruelest of all the sons of Jacob.

Our chapter ends with Jacob unwilling to go, but remember, God is not in a hurry. His plan will prevail. Stay tuned!

All of the above was only the prelude. Are you ready for the main event?

We are only two years into what we know through Pharaoh's dreams to be a seven year famine. With food running out, Jacob relents and prepares a plan (see v.11). Is this the old Jacob scheming? It is interesting to note that despite a severe famine, there still are some "luxuries" available (see Revelation).

Small Group Question

Have you ever wondered why we must come to the end of our resources before God can bless us?

Back to the story . . .

Are you ready for this? Remember that old dream that Joseph had? In 43:26ff, the first of the two dreams is fulfilled!

Back in the land of Egypt, Joseph is overwhelmed and his actions reveal that he still is unsure of what his brothers have learned over the years, so he hatches a plan that will reveal their character. The good news is that they pass – especially Judah. Earlier in our story, Judah hatched the plan to do away with Joe, so it is quite impressive that he is willing to trade places with Ben and become a slave (See 44:33).

Joseph cannot keep the charade up any longer, so he reveals himself to his brothers. Imagine the terror, trauma, and the sheer excitement! As our narrative concludes, it is noteworthy to realize that God's ways are not our ways and his thoughts not our thoughts! However he does it, God always accomplishes His will! Remember Joseph in the pit? Now he is second in command. Imagine also, years later, when God arranges a census to get another Joseph (with his new wife) to travel 30 miles so that the Bread of Life can be born in the House of Bread!



GENESIS

F O U N D A T I O N S

2. THEME & AUTHORSHIP

Themes

A couple of predominate themes are found in Genesis. First is that this is a Book of Beginnings, the great introduction to the drama of redemption.

Second, God is preparing a people. He chooses and tests them. Whether it is Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or Noah, God chooses, winnows and purges. Remember, His goal is to create a people who would fulfill Genesis 3:15. This is the initial step for man's redemption by a divine covenant made with a chosen race whose early history is here portrayed.

Author – Moses / **Date** - 1450 – 1410 BC

3. Theology

If harm should happen to him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol. Genesis 42:38b

When we read the Old Testament we notice that Heaven and Hell are virtually never discussed. If they are, the terminology is unfamiliar. The Hebrew *Sheol* does not have a direct English counterpart, so it is left in its Hebrew form, but the meaning is frequently 'pit' or 'hell,' such as in Job 21:13 and Matthew 11:23, where it means a place of final existence or judgment. In this passage, however, Jacob the patriarch uses the term as a final resting place for all men and women, or the state of being dead.

Soul-Winner So What

The Bible is clear about Hell and it needs to be communicated as reality (rightly presented, of course) when we share our faith with others.

Small Groups Question

If someone were to ask you how the Bible defines Heaven or Hell, what would you say? See Revelation 19 and 21 and Genesis 2.

4. WORD STUDIES

Vs. 9 *And he remembered the dreams he had many years before.*

Joseph did not forget what God had shown him. He had his watchful eye on God's promise to him, which was now unfolding before him.

Soul-Winner So What

Keep watch for the unfolding promises of God!



GENESIS

F O U N D A T I O N S

Small Groups Question

1. Do you keep a journal or log of the prayers God has answered in your life?
Why may this be a good idea to practice?
2. Why may writing down the things God tell you be beneficial for your spiritual growth?

5. Gospel/ Prophecy/ Pictures of Christ

Read Genesis 42.

God's plan is now set in motion as Jacob hears that there is grain in Egypt and sends his sons to retrieve food. Let's consider the first of their two visits to Egypt.

Note how many men bow down to Joseph. (v. 3, 6)

What did Joseph's dream of twenty years prior depict? (Gen 37:9-10)

Why do you suppose Joseph was so hard on his brothers? (v. 7-17)

If we excuse people who are not sincerely repentant, what will be the result?
According to 2 Corinthians 7:8-11, what two types of sorrow are there? What is the result of each?

What is the end result of Joseph's harshness to his brothers? (v. 21-24)

According to Luke 17:3-4 what is the Christians duty to a brother or sister in sin?

Why do you suppose Church discipline is lacking in today's body?

What is the clear responsibility of the Church as described in Matthew 18:15-17?

How can you apply these passages of scripture to your life as a purifying agent to the body of Christ?

Soul-Winner So What

How has learning about Joseph's life of discouragement, testing and forgiveness equipped you to better communicate the love of Christ?

6. BIBLE DIFFICULTIES / PROBLEM PASSAGES

Why was grain so valuable in those days?

As a food source, grain was universal and used in nearly everything eaten. It could be dried and stored much longer than any vegetables, produce or meat. It was sometimes even used as money.

Soul-Winner So What

What does not produce the righteousness of God?



GENESIS

F O U N D A T I O N S

Joseph remembers his dreams about his brothers, and now they are coming true. As a boy he boasted about them, but as a man he has learned self control and doesn't succumb to the fleshly urge to say, "I told you so." As we develop in our faith in Christ, one of the most beneficial tools we can use is knowing the appropriate time to speak, which pleases God (James 1:19-20).

Small Groups Question

Why does Joseph lie to his brothers?

This is a test to see if his brothers' character had changed. Secondly, he is testing to make sure the others hadn't been cruel to Benjamin as they had been to him. They were the only two of the same mother and his father cherished them.

7. Additional Questions

Soul-Winner So What

Reconciliation, where hurt has been given and received, calls for confession by the offender, but the person hurt must also be willing to forgive. This story shows how Joseph and his brothers were all prepared by the Lord for a reconciliation that would unite the family of Israel as one.

Small Groups Question

Discuss how God has changed your heart and/or the hearts of others against whom you have sinned or who have sinned against you.

GENESIS

F O U N D A T I O N S

Genesis 43

1. THEME & AUTHORSHIP

Themes

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2. Theology

Then Joseph hurried out, for his compassion grew warm for his brother, and he sought a place to weep. Genesis 43:1

Throughout the life of Joseph, the same characteristics are attributed to him as are attributed to Christ in the Gospels. For example, as we see in this passage, Joseph is filled with compassion for his younger brother Benjamin. In the Gospels, this becomes a defining characteristic of Jesus (Matthew 9:36, 14:14, 15:32, 18:27, 20:34; Mark 1:41, 6:34, 8:2; Luke 7:13, 10:33, 15:20). This word *compassion*, written so many times in the New Testament, often loses the depth of its true meaning when translated to English. Compassion, while containing the component of mercy, also includes a much deeper, “gut wrenching” element, as the root of the Greek word means *bowels*.

Soul-Winner So What

Compassion is the primary force behind the Gospel as well as one of the foundational characteristics of God. It should therefore also be a distinctive attribute of those who follow Him.

Small Group Question

How can we actively show compassion as Joseph did in this passage?

3. Gospel/ Prophecy/ Pictures of Christ

Read: Genesis 43 and 44



GENESIS

F O U N D A T I O N S

Here we see that God made Jacob's family hungry, and like the prodigal son of Luke 15, these men had to go to Egypt or starve to death. We also see indications of changed hearts among the brothers:

- What does Judah offer in 43:8-9 and 25-26?

We can see in this entire episode the way God deals with the lost sinner. God controls circumstances to bring the sinner to the end of himself and unto *Himself*.

- What two devices did Joseph use to bring the brothers to a place of confession? See 43:16, 32-34; and 44:12.
- What *secret test* may Joseph have implemented, according to 43:34?
- After they were brought back and accused, what was revealed about their hearts according to the words of Judah?

What a beautiful spiritual lesson we see here. Judah thought that Joseph was actually dead (44:20), and that he himself was guilty of murder. What he did not realize was that Joseph was alive and was his *savior* (remember, Joseph is the greatest *type of Christ* in the OT). Jesus Christ is alive, and because He is alive, He is able to save to the utmost. Christ does not expect us to be *surety* for our sins (See 43:9) or for the sins of another because He stands as our _____ before God the Father (see Hebrews 7:22).

It was not the gifts, sacrifices, or confession of guilt that brought *salvation* to the brothers; it was the gracious forgiveness of Joseph – a forgiveness purchased by his own suffering on their behalf.

Remember: The cross of Christ is the *centerpiece of time* as those believers born prior to His work look forward by faith, whereas believers born after that work look back by faith.

Soul-Winner So What

How does the study of Joseph's life enable you to see God's redemptive plan of forgiveness and sacrifice prior to the cross of Jesus Christ?

4. BIBLE DIFFICULTIES / PROBLEM PASSAGES

Why did Joseph eat by himself?

Joseph was following the laws of the Egyptians' caste system. Egyptians considered themselves highly intelligent and sophisticated. They looked at shepherds as uncultured and sometimes vulgar. As a Hebrew, Joseph could not eat with them, even though he outranked them.

Between the Lines



GENESIS

F O U N D A T I O N S

Judah takes responsibility for the protection of his brother. This shows that his heart was changing and that his respect for his father has grown as well.

Soul-Winner So What

Accepting responsibilities can be difficult, but if your goal is to become a true servant of Jesus, no matter how difficult it may be, you should find a way to make it happen. This also builds character and confidence, earns respect, and can motivate us to complete our work.

GENESIS

F O U N D A T I O N S

Genesis 44

1. THEME & AUTHORSHIP

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2. Theology

Then he commanded the steward of his house... Genesis 44:1

In chapter 44, we see the drama escalate between Joseph and his brothers. We feel the tension as Joseph runs his brothers through a series of trials before revealing his identity. One can almost imagine this story being told around a series of campfires in a small village in the Judean countryside, as it would have been before being recorded on paper.

Soul-Winner So What

Many times when people hear the Gospel, they may argue that Genesis is myth or legend. In reality, Genesis is historical narrative and needs to be presented.

3. BIBLE DIFFICULTIES / PROBLEM PASSAGES

Why did Joseph tear his clothes?

This was an expression of deep sorrow, customary in showing grief.

What was the significance of the cup?

Joseph's silver cup was a symbol of his authority. It was thought to have supernatural powers, and to steal it was a serious crime. Goblets were used to predict the future.

Did Joseph practice divination?



GENESIS

F O U N D A T I O N S

No. Joseph would have had no desire or need to practice divination. God was his source of interpretation. This was probably part of the test to emphasize how important the cup was.

Between the Lines

Judah had truly changed and the proof was in the heart. He once was the brother whose idea it was to sell the favored Joseph, and now is the brother willing to give his life for the other favored son of his father (v. 32-33).

Soul-Winner So What

When you are ready to give up hope on yourself or others, remember that God can work a complete change in even the most selfish person. That's what he does best.

Small Groups Question

Are you ready to give up on someone? Stop right now and pray for that person. Tell God you don't know what else to do and you are ready to give up. Just remember, you can give up, but God never will. He did not give up on you!

GENESIS

F O U N D A T I O N S

Genesis 45

1. THEME & AUTHORSHIP

Themes

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2. Theology

And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. After that his brothers talked with him. Genesis 45:16

Forgiveness is a major theological theme throughout the Bible. Both the Hebrew and Greek words for forgiveness (*calach* and *aphesis*) mean to completely cancel something. The act of forgiveness is supposed to define us as true believers and imitators of Jesus Christ. Not only does God forgive us, but also, as a sign of our gratitude to Him, we are to forgive others. Joseph had been seriously wronged by his brothers, physically abused, abandoned and sold into slavery, yet through God's power he was able to forgive his brothers completely.

Soul-Winner So What

Forgiveness can be a powerful witnessing tool. Not only will our forgiveness of others possibly help to bring them closer to Christ, but seeking the forgiveness of others will demonstrate the work God has done in our own lives.

Small Groups Question

From whom do you need to ask for forgiveness in your life and more importantly, whom do you need to forgive? Pray about doing this in person.

3. WORD STUDIES

v.7 Remnant/Posterity=  sha'ar {shaw-ar'}: to be left over, be left alive, survive, to leave (as a gift). Remnant meets Thursday nights at Calvary Chapel!



GENESIS

F O U N D A T I O N S

v. 12 Benjamin **בְּיַמִּין** Binyamiyn {bin-yaw-mene'}: son of the right hand, Jacob's and Rachel's youngest son, Joseph's full brother.

v.5 Joseph demonstrates mature Christian behavior. Not only does he show love and affection to his family, he forgives them completely without harboring bitterness or need for an explanation. He identifies the bigger picture: God's Sovereign plan of choosing a people (a remnant) for His use. Joseph truly is a picture of Jesus. This raises a few applicable questions for us. What does forgiveness look like in your life? Do you need an explanation for wrongdoing? Do you need to seek vengeance, or do you see God's sovereign hand upon your life and all that you experience? This is Romans 8:28 at hand; Joseph's brothers experienced freedom from Joseph's possible anger, but more importantly, Joseph was free to love and invest into an even stronger relationship with his brothers.

Soul-Winner So What

There is freedom in the Love of Jesus. Demonstrate true forgiveness and you'll be a better soul winner!

Small Groups Question

1. Have you claimed to forgive anyone, yet harbor bitterness and the details of the wrongdoing in your heart?
2. Can you explain the relationship between freedom and forgiveness?
3. Why would God want us forgive those who hurt us?
4. It is often those who are closest to us that we most need to forgive. Do you need to forgive someone close to you and live in freedom? Seek some godly advice in this area today.

4. Gospel/ Prophecy/ Pictures of Christ

Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. Genesis 45:3-4

It is now time for Joseph to reveal himself and the purpose for which God has sent him. Joseph's revelation of himself brought terror to his brothers. They fully expected him to judge them for their past sins, but Joseph has seen their repentance as we noted in last week's study.

Acts 7 contains the first and last recorded message in the NT that Stephen the martyr would give before his death. See if any parallels exist between the lives of Joseph, Moses, and Jesus Christ.



GENESIS

F O U N D A T I O N S

- What parallel do you see in Acts 7:9 and Matthew 27:18?
- What does Acts 7:13 describe regarding Joseph's revelation of himself to his brothers?
- What was the heart of Moses as described in Acts 7:25?
- What was the response of his brethren in 7:27?
- Which time did they receive Moses, according to 7:35?
- What do Zechariah 12:10, Revelation 7:1-8; and 14:1-5 define for us?

The chosen people Israel have always rejected their saviors the first time and received them the second time. They will do the same with Jesus Christ.

Soul-Winner So What

What does it mean to you when people reject your presentation of the Gospel?

5. BIBLE DIFFICULTIES / PROBLEM PASSAGES

Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. Moreover, he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him. (v. 14-15)

Joseph reacted to his brothers with love, even after all they had done to him. Can you think of something harmful that someone has done to you? What is your response? Reconciliation was accomplished with much emotion, which clearly showed that Joseph held no grudges and had forgiven them. Yet we need to remember that many years had passed since the brothers sold Joseph into slavery. Sometimes it takes time to heal wounds and bring about spiritual maturity.

Our hope is in Genesis 50:20. Joseph, through his maturity and history unfolding, later saw that God meant his hardship for good to save many. This shows God's sovereignty over the affairs of our lives.

Soul-Winner So What

Many of our unsaved friends can look at our trials and look toward God or away from God depending on our reaction to them. How are you reacting to those situations in your life where others have wronged you?

Small Groups Question

- 1) Read Mark 11:25 and Romans 12:19. Through these scriptures, what does God command us regarding forgiveness?
- 2) In Luke 23:34, what was Jesus' response to those that persecuted him? After looking at this, what should our response be? We responsible for our actions!

