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A STUDY OF THE WHOLE BIBLE

THE BOOK OF GENESIS

JOSEPH'S RECONCILIATION (42:1-47:31)

The Place of the Passage

Stories of reconciliation dominate the book of Genesis. We have already seen the story of Jacob's reconciliation with Esau. In Genesis 42-47 we see Joseph's reconciliation with his brothers and reunion with his father. This story shows the end result of Joseph's experience in the dungeon and the fruit of the ongoing activity of God's grace in Joseph's life. Overall, the journey to Egypt in this section fulfills God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:12-16, and sets the stage for the exodus.

Gospel Glimpses

TRANSFORMATION

God's work in Jacob's life is ongoing. In Genesis 42:4, Jacob is gripped by fear once again. Like his fear in meeting Esau (Genesis 32:7), he is afraid to send his son Benjamin to buy grain in Egypt (Genesis 42:4). Only after much convincing does he send Benjamin to Egypt, trusting in God's mercy (Genesis 43:14). Jacob's fear does not, however, exempt him from God's purposes. God continually pursues Jacob, and God himself assures Jacob about the patriarch's own trip to Egypt: "I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation" (Genesis 46:3). God's goodness to his children is all out of proportion to what they deserve.

GOD IN EGYPT

God's work is not limited to the land of Canaan; he saves the family of Israel in Egypt through Joseph. Before Stephen's martyrdom in Acts 7, he recounts a summary of gracious salvation history to demonstrate that God's presence was not limited to the temple in Jerusalem. God appeared to Abraham in Mesopotamia (Acts 7:2), to Joseph in Egypt (Acts 7:9-10), to Moses in the wilderness (Acts 7:30-34), and to Israel at Mount Sinai (Acts 7:38). God cannot be limited to any one location, traveling as he did in the "tent of witness in the wilderness" (Acts 7:44). Even Solomon's temple could not contain him (Acts 7:48-50). This summary of salvation history provides the theological foundation for the gospel to expand outward from Jerusalem into Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1). We must not limit God to any one location, but recognize that he is Lord over all and in all places.

Theological Considerations

GOD'S STEADFAST LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS

God's character, and especially his persevering steadfast love, is continually shown to Jacob. He recognizes that "I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faith-

fulness that you have shown to your servant” (Genesis 32:10). God’s mercy, not Jacob’s merit, is the basis of God’s blessing. Even when Jacob waits too long at Shechem and reverts to the old Jacob, God renews his call to him to go to Bethel, and reaffirms his promises to him (Genesis 35:1, 9-12). God’s steadfast love is not fickle or easily offended. It reflects who he is.

GOD’S PROTECTION

When God commanded Jacob to return to the land of his fathers, he promised, “I will be with you” (Genesis 31:3). As Jacob goes on his way, the angels of God meet him and he declares, “This is God’s camp!” (Genesis 32:1-2). Jacob recognizes God’s gracious protection and provision (Genesis 33:5,11). When Jacob is terrified of the Canaanites and Perizzites after the slaughter in the city of Shechem (Genesis 34:30), God sends forth “a terror from God” upon the cities that surround him as he moves forward in obedience. As Jacob moves forward in God’s purposes, he experiences God’s powerful protection. God is the ever-present protector of his people.

LOVING OUR NEIGHBORS

Are there outstanding relationships of brokenness that need to be healed? Jesus instructed us, “First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift [to God]” (Matthew 5:24). The gospel propels us into healed and reconciled relationships with one another — for “by this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).

Glossary of Terms

TEMPLE

A place set aside as holy because of God’s presence there. Solomon built the first temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, to replace the portable tabernacle.

PROVIDENCE

God’s good, wise, and sovereign guidance and control of all things, by which he supplies all our needs and accomplishes his holy will.

GENESIS 42 ASSIGNMENTS

Discussion Question:

Joseph clearly struggles with conflicted emotions toward his brothers throughout chapters 42-44. How do we see this?

Please answer the following questions:

1. What did Jacob tell his sons to do, and why — 42:1-4? Why didn't Benjamin go?
2. When the brothers bought grain, what prediction did they fulfill — 42:5-8?
3. How did Joseph treat his brothers, and what accusation did he make — 42:9-16?
4. What information did the brothers give about their family? What did Joseph do to them — 42:17?
5. What course of action did he finally settle on — 42:18-20?
6. What did the brothers confess? How did Reuben explain the situation — 42:21,22?
7. How was Joseph affected by this discussion — 42:23,24?
8. Who stayed in Egypt? What did Joseph do for the other brothers — 42:25-28?

9. What report did Jacob's sons bring to him — 42:29-34.
10. What did the brothers discover? How did this affect them and Jacob — 42:35?
11. What did Jacob say about the plan to take Benjamin to Egypt? Why — 42:36?
12. How did Reuben try to reassure Jacob — 42:37,38?

GENESIS 43 ASSIGNMENTS

Please answer the following questions:

1. What did Jacob request? Why? Who responded, and what did he say — 43:1-5?
2. What complaint did Jacob raise, and how did the brothers respond — 43:6,7?
3. What assurance did Judah give Jacob? What reason did he give — 43:8-10?
4. What decision did Jacob make, and what advice did he give — 43:11-15?
5. Explain 43:14 in your own words.
6. What did Joseph invite his brothers to do, and what did they think — 43:16-18?

7. What did they tell the steward? How did he answer — 43:19-23? Explain the answer.
8. Who joined them, and how did they prepare to meet Joseph — 43:23-26?
9. What was Joseph's first question, and how did they respond — 43:27,28?
10. What did he say to Benjamin, and how did he react to meeting him — 43:29,30?
11. Explain the seating — 43:31,32.
12. Explain the seating of Joseph's brothers and how this affected them — 43:33.
13. How did Benjamin's meal differ from that of his brothers — 43:34?

GENESIS 44 ASSIGNMENTS

Please answer the following questions:

1. What instructions did Joseph give his servant in 44:1,2?
2. What accusation did the steward make against the men — 44:3-6?
3. What response did the brothers give to the accusation — 44:7-9?

4. What consequences did the servant say he would demand — 44:10?
5. Who was considered guilty, and what did the brothers do — 44:11-13?
6. What did Judah confess? What punishment did Joseph require — 44:14-17?
7. Summarize the story as Judah told it — 44:18-29.
8. What problem did Judah fear — 44:30,31?
9. Why did Judah feel especially responsible for Benjamin?
10. What alternative did Judah propose, and what reason did he give — 44:33,34?

GENESIS 45 ASSIGNMENTS

Discussion Question:

Genesis 45 provides the climax to the whole Joseph story (Genesis 37-50). Imagine the feelings of the brothers at Joseph's declaration, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" (Genesis 45:3). He does not explode in vindictive anger but is gracious and compassionate. Read Genesis 45:4-8 carefully. How does Joseph interpret his many years of affliction?

Please answer the following questions:

1. How was Joseph affected by Judah's speech, and what did he do — 45:1,2?
2. What did he tell his brothers, and how did they react — 45:3?
3. Was Joseph angry with his brothers? What was his explanation for what had happened — 45:4-8?
4. Explain how 45:5-8 gives a good explanation of providence.
5. What did Joseph say the brothers should do next — 45:9-13? Why?
6. How did he then greet the brothers — 45:14,15?
7. Who heard about Joseph's brothers, and what did he say to do — 45:16-20?
8. What did Joseph give his brothers — 45:21-24.
9. What did Jacob first think when his sons told him the news — 45:25,26?
10. What convinced Jacob, and what did he conclude — 45:27,28?

GENESIS 46 ASSIGNMENTS

Discussion Question:

In Genesis 45:16-46:34, we read the moving account of the restoration of Joseph to his father Jacob, who thought that his son was dead. Once Jacob hears the news that Joseph is alive and sees the wagons that Joseph has sent, his spirit revives. The narrator begins to call him Israel consistently from this point forward. What characteristics of Israel, the overcomer, do you see in this section? How is God's blessing seen in his life?

Please answer the following questions:

1. Where did Israel stop in his journey (see map), and what did he do there — 46:1?
2. What did God promise Jacob — 46:2-4?
3. Describe who and what Jacob took to Egypt — 46:5-7.
4. List the sons and daughter of Leah. Name Levi's sons — 46:8-25.
5. Name the sons of the following:
 - Zilpah:
 - Rachel:
 - Bilhah:
6. How many altogether went to Egypt — 46:26,27.
7. Who preceded Jacob? Why — 46:28?

8. Into what land did they move?

9. Who went to meet Jacob? Describe the meeting — 46:29,30.

10. Whom did Joseph want to tell about his family's arrival? What were the brothers to say was their occupation? Why — 46:31-34?

GENESIS 47 ASSIGNMENTS

Discussion Questions:

In Genesis 47:1-12, Jacob's family settles in Goshen as shepherds in that land. God had earlier promised Abraham, "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). How does Jacob advance this prophecy as he appears before Pharaoh?

While Adam and Eve were commanded to "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (Genesis 1:28), the Israelites "were fruitful and multiplied greatly" (Genesis 47:27) — but in Egypt, rather than in the Promised Land of Canaan! In light of God's promise to bless all the families on the earth in Abraham's offspring (Genesis 12:3), how should we put together Israel's multiplying in Egypt with God's desire to bring blessing to all nations?

Please answer the following questions:

1. To whom did Joseph present some of his brothers, and what request did they make — 47:1-4?

2. What decision did Pharaoh make about arrangements for Joseph's family — 47:5,6?

3. What work did Pharaoh request Josephs' family to do for him?
4. What did Jacob do for Pharaoh — 47:7?
5. What did Pharaoh ask Jacob, and what did Jacob answer — 47:8,9?
6. What did the people do at first to obtain grain — 47:13,14?
7. What did the people do next to obtain grain — 47:15-17?
8. How did the people next obtain grain — 47:18-20? Whose idea was this?
9. Where did Joseph put the Egyptian people — 47:21?
10. Whose land was not taken? Why not — 47:22?
11. What arrangement did Joseph establish with the people in 47:23-26?
12. How did the people react?
13. How long did Jacob live in Egypt?

14. How old was he when he died — 47:27,28?

15. What promise did Jacob require Joseph to make — 47:29-31?