Exegetical Lessons 401–500 on Genesis

When I exegete a book, I tend to get very bogged down in the details and so, I decided to develop a series of a few short lessons on various chapters of the Bible, where I attempt to simply deal with the primary points of each verse without getting too detail-oriented. Each lesson is 4–5 pages long and designed to be read at one sitting. Although it is always nice to have a Bible open when studying this, I have included the actual Scripture within the text.

I began this study with a general introduction, followed by introductory lessons to studying the Bible, followed by some introductory lessons to the book of Genesis. These 21 lessons precede the lessons lined to below.

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Lesson 401: Genesis 38:27–30 — Tamar Gives Birth to Judah's Children

We are studying Judah and how much he had been affected by the culture in which he lived. He was a brutal man with very little empathy. He married a Canaanite woman and he fathered three children, two of whom died the sin unto death—suggesting that neither child was brought up well.

Some people perceive the world only as it applies and interacts with them. *Good* is defined as what is good for that person; and *bad* is whatever is harmful to that person. So, what is good one day might be bad the next, depending upon how that affects the individual. Some pass this on to their children, where the child begins thinking of himself as the center of the universe, and the parent never disabuses the child of that notion.

This is an important study because the line of the Messiah will go through Judah. The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are all Hebrews; but that particular line will be narrowed even further to lead us to Jesus Christ.

He had given his first son in marriage to Tamar, and that son died the sin unto death. He gave his 2nd son to her and he also died the sin unto death. The problem was not Tamar;

the problem was the actions of Judah's sons. Judah promised that he would give his 3rd son to her, but he did not, apparently worried that Tamar was the problem.

We studied this and understood it to be a levirate marriage, which both continued the name of the son who prematurely died, also protected and provided for the wife of the man who has died. Because Israel was a patriarchal society, many things are viewed from the point of view of the male, which things can be misunderstood today.

At first, Judah had promised to give his 3rd son to Tamar, but the son was not yet old enough at that time to become her husband/kinsman redeemer. Judah sends Tamar packing to her father's house, telling her to wait until his 3rd son became of age. As we have studied, Judah had no intention of letting this son marry Tamar.

Time passes, and it became clear that his 3rd son was old enough, but not given to Tamar. Therefore, Tamar put off her widow's clothing and dressed like a prostitute, wearing a veil to cover her face. She waited for Judah at a city where he would travel through to get to his sheep, and he stopped, saw her veiled face, and propositioned her, supposing Tamar to be a prostitute (which is the look she was going for). They decided on a price for her services, and they had sex and she was impregnated by him. Since he did not have a young goat to give her, he gave her some personal items, to be exchanged for a goat at a later date (so Judah thought). As we will see, Tamar wanted those personal items.

Time passes. Judah, by means of his friend Hirah, cannot locate the prostitute (not realizing that it is Tamar) but, around that time, he also finds out that Tamar is pregnant. He brings his case before whatever legal council existed at that time, and recommends that she be executed (burned) for her outrageous behavior. She immediately proves that he was the man who impregnated her. This pretty much takes the wind out of Judah's sails. Furthermore, all of this is very public, so this time, Judah cannot just send Tamar back to her father anymore. He cannot ignore that her pregnancy was caused by him. He is now responsible for her and for her children (she will give birth to twins).

Now, she is pregnant by Judah and she will give birth to twin sons, one of whom would continue the line of Judah that would lead to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Genesis 38:27 And it happened, in the time of her travail, behold, twins were in her womb.

The *time of travail* refers to her giving birth. Tamar has twins in her womb by Judah.

Genesis 38:28 And when she travailed, it happened that one put out a hand. And the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This one came out first.

The firstborn was always an important consideration in the ancient world, even when dealing with twins. Therefore, steps were taken in order to identify which child this is, until the children could be more easily distinguished. The first child who put his hand out had a string tied around it. But then he withdrew his hand and the other son came out first instead.

I have no idea whether this is possible or not. I have read some commentators who claim this is a miracle. This is outside my own field of expertise to say one way or the other. If I were to guess, I would think that something like this is possible apart from a miracle.

Genesis 38:29 And it happened as he drew back his hand, behold, his brother came out. And she said, “How have you broken a break for yourself?” And his name was called Pharez.

Interestingly enough, the child who was thought to be the firstborn, actually took back his hand, and the other child, Pharez, was born first instead.

The son who comes out first is named Perets (פֶּרֶץ) [pronounced *PEH-rets*], which means, *a bursting forth, a breach, a break, a rupture [in a wall], gap; an outburst;* which is transliterated *Perez, Pharez*. Strong’s #6557 BDB #829. He broke out of the womb first, even though it appeared at first that his younger brother, Zarah, would be born first.

Genesis 38:30 And afterwards his brother came out, on whose hand was the scarlet thread. And his name was called Zarah.

The second son born, who was thought to be the firstborn, still had the scarlet thread on his wrist. He is named Zarah (which may be equivalent to *Zerah*).

The second son, who, for a short while, appeared that he would emerge first, is named Zerach (זֶרַח) [pronounced *ZEH-rahkh*], which means *dawning; shining; rising; sunrise; scattering;* transliterated *Zerah, Zarah*. Strong’s #2226 BDB #280.

Gen. 38:27–30 When the time of her labor came, there were twins in her womb. And when she was in labor, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." But as he drew back his hand, behold, his brother came out. And she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" Therefore his name was called Perez. Afterward his brother came out with the scarlet thread on his hand, and his name was called Zerah.

This seems like an odd postscript to this unusual narrative (and without having it explained, the whole narrative seems pretty odd). This is what is going on. Onan tried to protect his double-portion inheritance by not impregnating his wife, Tamar. By not giving Tamar a child to be raised in Er’s name, Onan was the one to receive the benefits of being the firstborn. He has fought—somewhat like that baby in the womb who stuck out his hand—to come out ahead. However, he died the sin unto death, and the infant who stuck out his hand, as if to try to grab the benefits of being firstborn, would not be the firstborn.

We understand, by virtue of the Scripture and hindsight, that the two sons of Judah did not die because of Tamar, but because they were evil and God killed them (the sin unto death). However, Judah believed that Tamar was the problem (Gen. 38:11), so he did not allow his 3rd son, Shelah, to marry her.

Ironically, Judah has relations with Tamar, not knowing that she is his daughter-in-law, and the result is two healthy boys; but then Judah does not have relations with her again (although, it seems reasonable to assume that he finds her to be attractive). No doubt, he was trying to preserve his own life. No doubt, she no longer viewed him with any respect, as he tried to have her executed. It does not appear that their relationship was viewed as incestuous.

Judah tried to preserve his son Shelah by not giving him to Tamar; so she outsmarted him. You might say, she was like Perez, fighting to come out of the womb first. And Judah, who had given in to sexual temptation in the past, fell prey to it one more time with Tamar; and then stopped having sex altogether out of fear (when it would have been legitimate and safe for him to continue having relations with Tamar, but he did not—if he knew some doctrine, then he could have correctly understood this).

Furthermore, if Tamar understood Bible doctrine and forgiveness, than she may have been able to make their relationship work as husband and wife.

Just as Tamar found a way to be taken in to the Judah household and to be given a child; so Perez, who is in the line of Jesus, found a way to break out of the womb first.

Closing Points on Genesis 38 from Robert Dean

1) God brings about justice. He utilizes the principle of an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. He brings about the principle that you will reap what you sow. So in the life of Judah, what has happened? Judah has been bitter against Joseph because Joseph the younger was going to rule over the older brothers. So what do we have in Judah's own family? There was competition over inheritance. Now the younger is going to rule over the elder in terms of the twins that are born to him. God uses the same weaknesses and sins to bring about justice. The lesson here is that those who pursue their life for their own gratification will ultimately deal with the justice of God.
2) God's plans are never thwarted by man's sins. God is going to bring about what He desires to bring about and human sinfulness is never going to be great enough to destroy or end the plan of God. Man's failures cannot even subvert the plan of God.
3) God turns human failures into triumphs of His grace, because when this story ends with Pharez, it doesn't end there, it ends at the cross; because this family, then becomes a critical link in the whole line down to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

From Robby Dean's Notes; accessed June 14, 2016 (slightly appended).

Interestingly enough, the sons that Tamar bears bypass the Canaanite wife of Judah's. Judah's Canaanite wife contributes nothing genetically to Tamar and Judah's twin sons. However, by the actions taken by both Judah and Tamar, it is clear that the culture and morality of the Canaanites had infected the sons of Jacob. This is why God will move them all to Egypt.

There are 4 women named in the line of Jesus: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Mary. In every case, the woman is unique in history. It is very rare for a woman to be named in any ancient genealogy, let alone the genealogy of the Messiah.

This all goes back to the Revealed God promising redemption through the *Seed of the Woman* in Gen. 3:15.

This helps us to understand the purpose of Gen. 38.

The Context of Genesis 38 (Robert Dean)

1) First of all, it is here to remind the reader [which would be people of Israel] again of the assimilation of Israel with the Canaanite culture, which is spiritually problematic. Judah who is the fourth-born son to Leah leaves the family and he goes down to a Canaanite city and takes a Canaanite wife. He is the first one openly to assimilate completely with Canaanite culture. This is problematic because, they are supposed to live separately from the Canaanites. So that puts the promise, the seed, and the family in danger.
2) Secondly, this episode illustrates the paganism and the carnality in Jacob's family in contrast to the obedience and the chasteness of Joseph. In the next chapter we see how Potiphar's wife tries to seduce Joseph and he flees from her, but in this chapter we see the seduction of Judah by a roadside prostitute. Joseph flees from Potiphar's wife; Judah runs toward the prostitute.
3) Third, the story in chapter 38 reveals the background of the plan of Pharez. Judah is going to have twins through Tamar. There are only two sets of twins in all of the Bible-Esau and Jacob and the twins born to Tamar. So when we look down the road the divine viewpoint interpretation from Scripture of the birth of Pharez is that this is a line of blessing. When we look at what goes on in this chapter it is like, *What is going on here? These people are really messed up*. But this is going to be the line of blessing as we shall see. God is able to take sinful man, his wrong-headed decisions, and still bring His Own will to pass.
4) This is here to record for us the inauspicious beginnings of the tribe of Judah, from which the Lord Jesus Christ will eventually come.
5) It magnifies the immeasurable grace of the God whom we serve. God is working here and He turns the judgment into blessing. God takes a lot of confused human actions and uses them to glorify Himself.
6) The absence of any mention of God in the story does not mean that God is not involved. On the contrary, what we see again and again is the unseen hand of God in divine guidance. God's plan and purposes never really gets jeopardized in history despite human failures. We have to realize that much of history is

The Context of Genesis 38 (Robert Dean)

directed by God in a covert manner. He is not appearing on every mountain top in history telling people what they are supposed to do, He is working behind the scenes in terms of what is called divine providence. In the same way much of the guidance for the believer is given mediately through the Scripture and not immediately through dreams and visions or through direct revelation. Very few Old Testament saints ever got direct revelation, and those that did didn't get it all the time.

7) God's hand is just as involved in the line of Judah as it is in the life of Joseph (which will become our primary focus throughout the remainder of Genesis).

8) The end result of this narrative is: (1) separation from the line of Canaan; (2) an honorable resolution for the person of Tamar (she will bear sons and she will be taken care of); and (3) an established line of the Messiah, despite a myriad of problems.

9) The lesson to take from all this: God's plan cannot be derailed by man's sins and failures. God's plan is always greater than man's failures and confused plans.

From http://phrasearch.com/Trans/DBM/setup/Genesis/Gen145.htm accessed April 26, 2016 (edited and appended).

The organization of this chapter is quite unusual and complex. Notice that we have a chiasmos within each overall topic, which is a chiasmos as well. Because of its complex nature, I have placed it at the end of this chapter, so that we can look back at what we have already studied with a better understanding.

William Ramey Organizes the Chiasmi of Genesis 38:1–30

Introduction: Judah leaves his father's homestead and fathers three sons (1-5)

A The childless widow (6-11)

B a Tamar exchanges her widow's garb for that of a prostitute (14)
b Judah's proposition to Tamar (15-16b)
x Exchange of pledges (16c-18b)
b' Judah's consummation with Tamar (18c)
a' Tamar exchanges her prostitute's garb for that of a widow (19)

X a The kid is sent for the pledge; Tamar is not found (20)
b The Adullamite's inquiry about the prostitute (21a)
x The town people's response (21b)
b' The Adullamite's report to Judah (22)
a' The pledge is forfeited; Tamar is not found (23)

B' a Judah is informed that Tamar has a child by harlotry (24a-b)
b Judah's edict that Tamar should be burned (24c)

William Ramey Organizes the Chiasmi of Genesis 38:1–30

x Judah recognizes the items of his pledge (25-26a)
b' Judah's edict that Tamar is more righteous than he (26b)
a' Judah does not have relations with Tamar again (26c)

A' The birth of twins to a widow (27-30)

From https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html accessed September 19, 2015.

This is simply a suggestion; these are not exact dates nor are they exact time periods.

Ron Snider's Timeline for Genesis 38

1. Judah moves away and marries. 1682 B.C.
2. His unnamed wife gives birth to two sons in quick succession. 1681-1680 B.C.
3. She gives birth to Shelah 3 or 4 years later. 1676 B.C.
4. Er is married off at early age say, 14. 1667 B.C.
5. Er is killed at age 15. 1666 B.C.
6. Onan sins and dies the sin unto death within a year. 1665 B.C.
7. 3 or 4 years pass while Tamar waits. vs 12. 1661 B.C.
8. Tamar tricks Judah and gives birth to twins. 1661 B.C.

There are some things which ought to be considered. It appears that Judah separating from his family and marrying a Canaanite woman happen pretty close to the same time. Bear in mind that, he must separate from his family, marry, have 3 male children, have them all grow to adults (which could mean *young adults, teens*), lose a wife, and impregnate Tamar all within 20–25 years.[1] Obviously, given all that happens, this reasonably requires at least 20 years for all of these things to take place.

After all of this takes place, then Judah must return to his father and family, as 10 of the sons will go down to Egypt for grain. It would not be unlikely that most or all of the brothers have their own separate families and households within, say, 10 miles of one another.

From Makarios Bible Church; accessed May 17, 2016 (Word document will open in Word or WP on your computer); with some editing.

We have been studying Judah and his daughter-in-law, Tamar in Gen. 38. The *big picture* question about this chapter was, *why is this chapter in the Joseph narrative and, more*

[1] You may recall that Ron Snider guesses approximately 22 years for these various things to take place with Joseph in Egypt.

importantly, why is this chapter found in the Word of God? I hope that our study has answered these questions.

We have just studied one of the most unusual narratives in all of Scripture. Judah, who would become the ruling tribe (concerning which he was totally unaware), seems to have separated from his family, and we can certainly understand that. He was instrumental in selling his half-brother, Joseph, into slavery; and he was complicit in the lie that Joseph had been killed by some wild animal. This would have broken the heart of their father, Jacob, who loved Joseph more than his other sons. After all of this took place, Judah appears to have put some distance between himself and his brothers.

Gen. 38:1 It happened at that time that Judah **went down from his brothers** and **turned aside** to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. (ESV)

He probably could not bear to look his father in the eye; and he probably could not interact normally with his own brothers, as they were all involved in this lie about Joseph. His father's heart was broken; his brothers had to keep up this big lie, and Judah probably could not take it any more.

Judah began to hang out with an Adullamite named Hirah, and Judah's decisions in life were less than stellar. First mistake, he marries a Canaanite woman. This appears to be such a wrong move that God the Holy Spirit does not even include her name in Scripture. Furthermore, 2 of their 3 sons will die the sin unto death and their mother appears to die early in life as well.

No doubt Judah told himself a number of things to justify his own behavior with his father and half-brother. "If my father would have simply treated us as equals, all of this would not have happened." People tell themselves a great many things to justify their lives. But now, it is Judah who is married, and he fathers 3 sons, and, apparently, he does not do a very good job as a father himself. Judah may have come from a messed up family, but he messed up his own family even more.

Was his marriage to a Canaanite a mistake? That appears to be the case, because Judah arranges a marriage for his first son, Er; and Er marries Tamar. All of this occurs at a very young age because, as we had studied, we are dealing with a very limited time frame here. No doubt, Judah spent more time evaluating and choosing Tamar than he did his own wife.

His son Er dies—again, at a very young age—and it is customary for Tamar to remain a part of the family, even though she does not have any children by Er. The tradition is, Er's younger brother, Onan, will marry Tamar and their first son will be considered to be Er's son.

Even though Onan married Tamar, he was careful not to have children by her. In my opinion, this was all about inheritance. If Onan has a son by Tamar, he will continue Er's line, and, presumably, receive Er's share of the inheritance (a double portion for the

firstborn), thus cutting deeply into Onan's share of the inheritance (who, if he has no children, supplants Er as the firstborn). God removes Onan from this life as well.

Tamar is still Judah's responsibility, but he shirks this responsibility. As the older brother of Joseph, Joseph was Judah's responsibility, and he shirked that responsibility as well. Joseph promises his 3rd son to Tamar, and he sends her back to her father. Judah had not intended to give his 3rd son to her, but to let her live her life out as a childless widow.

In the ancient world, a woman married into a family. She became a part of that family. This approach to marriage and family is found throughout much of the world today, and as recently as the 1950's in the United States. As a part of this new family, the patriarch of that family is responsible for this young woman. Tamar became Judah's responsibility, not her father's. But Judah sends her packing back to her father, with no intention of giving his 3rd son to her. That is Judah's plan; but it is not God's plan. In God's plan, Tamar is still Judah's responsibility, and the line of the humanity of Jesus is going to go through Judah and Tamar. Now, Judah does not know this, nor does Tamar.

A couple of years pass and Shelah, Judah's 3rd son, is old enough to be given to Tamar, but Judah won't do it, fearing that Tamar is some kind of black widow and that Shelah will die if he marries her. Judah is unable to recognize that his sons are dead because they lived their lives in opposition to God, possibly as a result, to some extent, of their training.

About the time that Shelah is old enough to be given to Tamar, Judah's wife dies. Judah mourns, but not for a great deal of time, and he goes back to his business.

No doubt, there were people in Judah' household, servants probably, who understood that Tamar is a part of his family now, and that he ought to be responsible for her. When Tamar contacted them and asked them to provide her with information about any future movements of Judah, she found a sympathetic ear who was more than willing to help her out. When Judah was going for an out-of-town trip, Tamar was told right away, and she apparently had a plan in place already (she is probably not that different from Rebekah, Jacob's mother).

Judah, when traveling through a very small town, comes across a prostitute and he propositions her. Because she is wearing a veil, Judah does not realize that this is Tamar, his daughter-in-law. They have relations and, because he does not have the proper, agreed-upon payment with him, Judah gives Tamar some personal items. This was Tamar's actual intention, to get these personal items.

3 or 4 months later, Tamar is known to be pregnant, and Judah calls for her to be executed (by burning). It is cold-hearted, but Judah tells himself, "She is guilty; she must pay the price!"

The most natural question put to Tamar, as she is being taken out of her home to be burned is, "Who is the father?" She says, "I have some of his personal items right here. Judah can identify to whom they belong." And she sends these personal items (his staff,

seal and cord) via messenger to Judah to be identified. Judah admits that these are his things, and thus, it becomes known that she is pregnant by Judah.

Judah is the patriarch of his very small and dwindling family, and raising up a child by Tamar to Er is his responsibility (not directly). He is to find a kinsman-redeemer for Tamar, and she would rejoin his family (he should have never forced her out). Now, Judah himself has impregnated Tamar, so she and her sons (she had twins) are his responsibility—he cannot put that on anyone else. We know that he assumed this responsibility, because they will go with him into Egypt (Gen. 46:12).

In a very unusual postscript, we find out that Judah no longer had relations with Tamar, even though he apparently provides for her and her sons from thereon out.

It was difficult to ignore the O'Henry quality of this narrative. Judah, a man who too often gave in to his baser urges, is given another responsibility by God. He failed in his responsibility to Joseph; so he is now given Tamar. He nearly fails with her. However, the very man who married a Canaanite and sought the company of a prostitute, now provides for a woman whom he chooses not to enjoy conjugal relations with. By today's standards, we do not appreciate how much Judah was obsessed with sex; and yet, by his own choosing, lived out much of his life without it.

We hypothesized that, Judah is concerned that he might die if he had relations with Tamar; and that Tamar was none to pleased that Judah was so willing to have her executed. However, Judah would have been publically shamed to take care of Tamar and their children.

Tamar, who is trying to find her way back into a proper relationship with Judah's family, by her scheming, revealed Judah's nature, which is less than pleasant. He was willing to see her executed. Now, these two remain united by their sons, for the rest of their days; but not by love and mutual respect.

Judah and Tamar: A postscript.

Tamar will only be named in Scripture three more times, but her sons and her presence continue to be found in several passages.

Gen. 46 names most of the 70 people descended from Jacob who would move into the land of Egypt. Genesis 46:5–8 Then Jacob set out from Beersheba. The sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him. They also took their livestock and their goods, which they had gained in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him, his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters. Now these are the names of the descendants of Israel, who came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons. All his offspring he brought with him into Egypt. Genesis 46:12 describes those of Judah's family who went into the land of Egypt with him: The sons of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelah, **Perez**, and

Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan); and the sons of **Perez** were **Hezron** and **Hamul**. (All ESV) Their respective wives are not named. Tamar is not named.

Tamar and her two sons will go with Judah into Egypt, indicating that Judah has taken responsibility for Tamar and these sons. Although Tamar is not named in Gen. 46 (nor are the other wives of Jacob's sons), there is no reason to exclude her.

Gen. 46:12 is the last time the line of the Messiah is followed out in the book of Genesis. The book of Ruth will pick up with this line and take us all the way to King David (Ruth 4:18–22).

This particular portion of the Messianic line will lead us to another important marriage between another widow and her kinsman redeemer, where Boaz will marry Ruth, a Moabite. Their relationship is almost the polar opposite of the relationship between Judah and Tamar.

Ruth 4:9–10 Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon. Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day."

Boaz has purchased (*redeemed*) Ruth from her mother-in-law Naomi. Ruth's Israelite husband, Mahlon, had died before giving her children. Boaz has unselfishly perpetuated Mahlon's name forever (although in Scripture, we understand the line to go through Boaz and Ruth).

Ruth 4:11–12 Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem, and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the LORD will give you by this young woman." (ESV)

Notice that Tamar is mentioned in the same breath with sisters Rachel and Leah, the two wives of Jacob, from whom came the Jewish race (with the help of their personal servants). These women call upon Ruth to enjoy the same fruits of motherhood as did Rachel, Leah and Tamar; and the line of Jesus Christ would go through Leah, Tamar and Ruth.

The nature of Tamar's relationship to Judah is not alluded to.

In the genealogies of 1Chronicles, the two sons are named:

1Chron. 2:3–5 The sons of Judah: Er, Onan and Shelah; these three Bath-shua the Canaanite bore to him. Now Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the sight of the LORD, and

he put him to death. His daughter-in-law **Tamar** also bore him **Perez** and **Zerah**. Judah had five sons in all. The sons of **Perez**: Hezron and Hamul.

Bath-shua is not the name of Judah's Canaanite wife; that is a transliteration rather than a translation. What it means is, *daughter of Shua,* which is exactly how she is described in Genesis.

The line of the humanity of Jesus would go through Pharez (Perez). Perez will have a son Hezron and Hezron's 3rd son is Ram, and the line of David comes through Ram (Ruth 4:13–22 1Chron. 2:1–12). Or see **1Chron. 2** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Perez is also named in Num. 26:20–21 1Chron. 27:3 Neh. 11:4, 6 Luke 3:33.

When the entire Jewish line of Jesus is given, Tamar will be named for the final time:
Matt. 1:1–3 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and **Judah** the father of **Perez** and **Zerah** by **Tamar**, and **Perez** the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram,... (ESV)

Lesson 403: Genesis 39 introduction — Introduction to Genesis 39

At this point in the book of Genesis, we return to Joseph, who is in Egypt, in slavery. We have seen Joseph's brothers place him into a pit; and then Midianite traders took him out of the pit (it is possible that his brothers took him out of the pit), and sold him to some Ishmaelite traders, who then sold him to Potiphar, and officer of the Pharaoh of Egypt (we have also dealt with the alleged contradiction of this passage as well). That was Gen. 37. In Gen. 38, we spent time primarily with Judah, an older half-brother of Joseph, and we examined his very peculiar genealogical line, which leads us to King David and eventually to Jesus. With Gen. 39, we return to Egypt and will spend the rest of Genesis (for the most part) studying Joseph's life in Egypt.

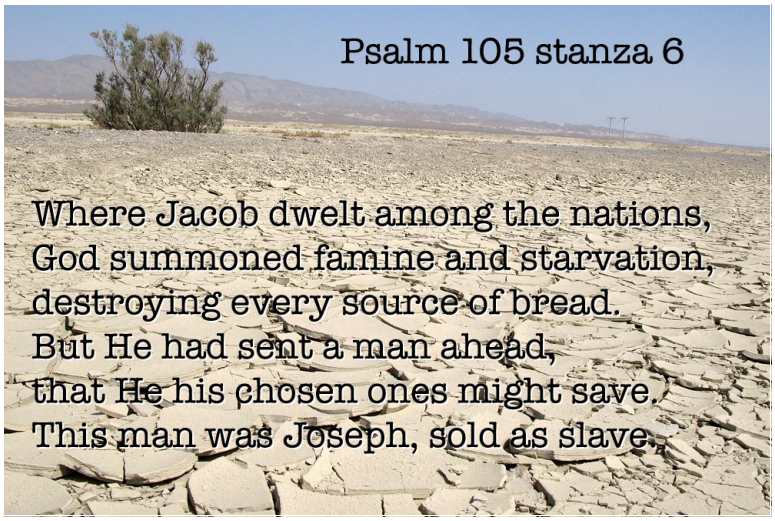
It is because of the incidents in Gen. 38 (and elsewhere) that requires the Hebrews to move away from the Land of Promise and away from the corrupting influence of the Canaanites. You will recall that Lot lived among great corruption, and it certainly distorted the thinking of his wife and two daughters. The actions of Judah, Levi and Simeon suggest that they had all become corrupted in their thinking. At some point, God will have the sons of Israel destroy most of the Canaanites, because of their great degeneracy.

You will note that the narratives that we have studied have centered upon Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah. This is because Reuben should have been the chosen line, but he never fully embraced his position as the leader of his younger brothers. The other 3 brothers would have been next in line, and it appears, from what we have studied so far, that none of them have the proper leadership skills. When the younger brothers wanted to sell Joseph into slavery, rather than put his foot down and tell them that was not going to happen, Reuben placated the brothers, intending to rescue Joseph later.

Levi and Simeon killed a number of innocent males, seeking revenge for the rape of their sister, Diana. And we just studied Judah who, was such a lousy father, that two of his sons died the sin unto death; and he failed in his responsibility to his daughter-in-law. Because of his own immoral behavior, Judah actually had relations with his daughter-in-law, and became her levirate husband (after almost having her executed).

Of the sons of Jacob, when it comes to the line of promise, the 4 eldest sons seem to have eliminated themselves by their own actions (unless, of course, one of them redeems himself); and the only person who seems to have any character at all is now acting as a slave in Egypt.

Psalm 105 Graphic; from Children's Bible School lessons; accessed March 15, 2016 (the graphic is a summary of stanza 6, not a recitation of it).



Psalm 105:16–23 gives us an overview of the next 11 chapters of Genesis.

When He [God] summoned a famine on the land and broke all supply of bread,
He had sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave.
His feet were hurt with fetters; his neck was put in a collar of iron;
until what he had said came to pass, the word of the LORD tested him.
The king sent and released him; the ruler of the peoples set him free;
he made him lord of his house and ruler of all his possessions,
to bind his princes at his pleasure and to teach his elders wisdom.
Then Israel came to Egypt; Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. (Psalm 105:16–23; ESV; capitalized)

God's plan called for the sons of Jacob to be moved to Egypt, away from the degeneracy of the Canaanites, which degeneracy was affecting his Jacob's sons. They were beginning to accept the morality of the Canaanites. Judah, as we have seen, even married a Canaanite woman, and raised two sons who died the sin unto death as a result.

Application: You can be affected by your environment; you can absorb and take societal norms as your own, and believe that they are true and correct. I write this in 2016, and a huge number of millennials believe strongly that there is nothing wrong or immoral about homosexual actions; and that gay marriage ought to be viewed just like a normal marriage. Furthermore, many of them support laws allowing trans-gendered types to sue private

businesses if they have the wrong bathroom policy. There has been a concerted effort in television programming and in our schools to convey these pro-deviant messages (more so with homosexuals than with transgendered-types) and several generations have now been corrupted with this false morality. These generations believe very strongly that, if you do not accept homosexuality as normal and the gay agenda as the 21st century civil rights issue, that you are a bigot and a homophobe; and in their minds, you are no different than a racist lynch mob of the 1920's and 30's. The self-righteousness of these confused people can be so strong that they will refuse to associate with people who think differently than they do and express it (which is not a great loss).

Application: Another example of a confused morality recently assimilated by the millennials: Smoking is terrible, it is a bad habit; but there is little wrong with smoking marijuana. There seem to be very few judgments placed upon those who use harder drugs as well.

It is fascinating that, in much of what occurs in Gen. 37–38, God's name is barely mentioned, and then just to judge and execute the sons of Judah. In Gen. 39, it will become clear the Joseph is favored by God. Further near the end of Genesis, Joseph acknowledges God's overarching will in his life, despite the evil intentions of his brothers.

Dean: *When we look at Joseph and Joseph is stuck in a people test, one of the toughest people tests, rejection, we need to talk about rejection: how it takes place and what the dynamics of rejection are. We all have to deal with it in its various manifestations. Rejection is one of those complex things because rejection can be either real or imagined. Everybody in life faces injustice; we are all victims. So that means that since we are all in the same boat nobody has the right top emphasize their problems over somebody else's. We are all in a fallen situation. And to one degree or another every one of us is going to go through the negative aspects of living in a fallen world. The Scripture gives us the solution to these problems. The solution comes from the Word of God and we have to learn how to use the Word of God in order to solve these problems. That comes from claiming promises and being in Bible class and learning how to think about things that are biblical*.

Doctrine of Rejection in the Life of Joseph (Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.)

1) The brothers have all rejected Joseph. They have attempted to kill him and they have sold him into slavery. How would we respond to that? If we are believers and we say we need to respond to this situation within the framework of divine viewpoint, what is our mental attitude going to be? How is that going to affect what I say and what I do? So we have to think about this.
2) Rejection comes in many forms: forsaken in a marriage, being attacked by friends or foes (foes we expect; friends we don't; that makes it more difficult), being ignored by those we wish to impact or impress. We may be openly persecuted, ridiculed, physically attacked, bullied, repudiated, or set aside.
3) The natural reaction from the sin nature is to react to these things in terms of emotion, and instantly we are focusing on the fact that we are hurt. This is the first

Doctrine of Rejection in the Life of Joseph (Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.)

arrogance skill—self-absorption. That is quickly followed by self-indulgence: we are going to keep thinking about it, pull it out of the closet of our memory, and we are going to mull it over. Next thing we know we are just angry all over again. We are not moving through the rejection and solving it, we are just making it worse.

4) At this point we have entered into sin nature control. We are converting the outside pressure from the adversity of rejection into the inside pressure of stress in the soul. Now we are poised for self-fragmentation and spiritual self-destruction. We are beginning to spiral out of control inside of our own soul.

5) We have to remember that as the sin nature dominates we tend to react initially from the emotion in our soul. We move into the third arrogance skill of self-justification, we have all kinds of reasons why it is valid for us to respond the way we do to that person.

6) We have to understand that rejection is very complex; it can be real or imagined.

7) Rejection is often a matter of individual perception of reality. It is one of the greatest pressures in life because you have to have both objectivity and maturity to handle rejection or it will wipe you out. The only source of true objectivity, of course, is from Bible doctrine.

From Robby Dean's Notes; accessed April 12, 2016 (slightly edited).

Joseph's writings are filled with carefully structured chiasmi. Notice how the first section corresponds to the last, the second section corresponds to the second-to-the-last; etc.

William Ramey's Chiasmos of Genesis 39:1–23

Recapitulation: Joseph is sold into Egypt by the Ishmaelites to Potiphar (1)

A Joseph's success in Potiphar's house (2-6a)
B Author's editorial remark: Joseph was handsome in appearance (6b)
C Potiphar's wife's desire (7a)
D Potiphar's wife's request: "Lie with me!" (7b)
X Joseph's refusal to commit sin (8-9)
D' Potiphar's wife's request: "Lie with me!" (10-12)
C' Potiphar's wife is spurned (13-18)
B' Author's editorial remark: Joseph was confined to the king's jail (19-20a)
A' Joseph's success in Potiphar's prison (21-23)

A chiasmic structure is not difficult to develop, and most of us could structure a single day of our lives into such a structure. We get up, we go to bed; we have breakfast, we have dinner; we go to work, we come home from work; in the middle, we have lunch. So, I have given you an A/A', B/B', etc. structure. What happens in the middle of the structure is often the most important thing (I could have written, *and we do our work* rather than, *and we have lunch,* indicating that work is the most important thing). What this structure does is allow for several narratives to be easily remembered, even word-for-word.

From https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html accessed September 19, 2015.

Gen. 39 picks right up where Gen. 37 left off. Gen. 38 briefly followed Judah and his line; but we go back to the same time frame and actions of Gen. 37. Appropriate transition language is added in order to indicate a change of place. There is no reason to think that we have different traditional narratives woven together hundreds of years later (although, if Joseph is the author of these final chapters, then he would have himself woven together narratives which he experienced with the narratives that he heard from his brothers or father).

Interestingly enough, Joseph does not follow out some incident in the lives of each of his 11 brothers/half-brothers. He only diverges to tell a story about Judah, because Judah will do something quite remarkable later on (which will help to explain why the line of Christ will come through Judah).

Joseph overhears his brothers and their discussions while he is in a pit (until they move further away from him). He may have filled in some details in this narrative after speaking to his brothers later (Reuben will be guilt-ridden over this event). I am assuming that the events beginning with Gen. 37:1 were recorded by Joseph. He appears to have integrated his own memories with those of his father and other brothers (Gen. 38 being a chief example of that).

God does not present this material so that we all feel sufficiently sorry for Joseph. What God is doing is, molding him for a leadership role. We have studied enough about his 4 oldest half-brothers to recognize that they abuse their leadership when they have it.

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: God Trains Joseph to be a Leader

One of the things that is going on in Joseph's life that should be emphasized is that God is training Joseph to be a leader; but not just any leader. God's plan is for Joseph to be the number two leader in the Egyptian empire, and at this time in history Egypt was fabulously wealthy and the Pharaoh is incredibly powerful and viewed as the incarnation of God Himself. So to be the number two to Pharaoh is to be in a position of wealth and power and prestige that we can't even fathom. God had to prepare Joseph in a special way for this kind of leadership because it would be a position that would be open to incredible abuse, and Joseph could not do that. God had to take him through a number of training sessions in order to prepare him for that leadership.

One of the things that has to be realized as a leader is that it is not a popularity contest. It is not about polls, not about what people think about what you do, it is about doing the right things. To do the right things you have to know the right things. And to know the right things there has to be something built into the soul of the individual that produces character. If we look at the Scriptures that is what God is focusing on in believers. The emphasis on the concept of fruit in the Bible is not actions, it is not Christian service, it is not evangelism, it is character. It is changed character, it is not recognizing that there

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: God Trains Joseph to be a Leader

is grace and I can keep on sinning, it is a recognition that we are supposed to apply doctrine and there needs to be a transformational process that takes place. It is not legalism. Legalism comes along and tries to change things externally, and it emphasizes the cleaning up of sin to the exclusion of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. But the focus that we see in the Bible is that we become so occupied with God in the Old Testament, with Christ in the New Testament (the church age), that that which is sinful becomes disdained and irrelevant, it is viewed as a distraction. It is not that our focus is on going out and trying to clean up all the sin in our life but to get so focused on who Christ is and our relationship with Him that that controls the decision-making and the priorities in our won life.

So Joseph has to go through this training process. When he gets to that point at the end of the tunnel when he is about 35 or 36 years old and the Egyptians have finished their seven years of prosperity and go into those seven years of famine the pressure that goes on him means that the person who handles it has to be a man of integrity, a man who is above reproach. It is not about being liked or favored but about doing what is right based on a clear set of standards. He first had to learn the lesson of humility. Humility is the key to being a good leader.

Let me append Dean's remarks about Joseph's wealth as the #2 man in Egypt. Comparatively speaking, Joseph was very wealthy; he was much more wealthy than the subjects of Egypt. However, compared to the wealth that we enjoy today in the United States (in the middle class), Joseph's life would not seem to be that impressive.

From Dean's Notes; accessed July 5, 2016.

What we see in this narrative is God's will being done (just as we have seen it throughout the book of Genesis.

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr. on the Providence of God

1) God is sovereign, He rules the universe, and He is directing history according to His plan. He is the ultimate authority as the creator over everything that happens in human history. He guides and directs history towards His planned end.
2) God oversees the outworking of His plan and He provides protection for His people. So even though there is instability in the world because of evil, because of Satan, because of sin natures, because there are 6-1/2 billion people running around who all want to be god, God never loses His control, and in His omnipotence He oversees the progress in human history and brings about that which is for His glory.
3) Despite human failures and flaws, despite all the chaos of sin, God works all things together for good. Romans 8:28.

We will observe these facts in the lives of Joseph, Judah and Jacob's family overall. Believers tend to overemphasize the miracles done by God at the hand of Moses; or the miracles done by the Lord Jesus Christ. God's will is every bit as impressive when there are no miracles, no signs and no miraculous healings. For most of the rest of the book of Genesis, we will observe God's plan at work, but without the miracles, signs and wonders.

From Dean's Notes; accessed July 5, 2016.

Joseph will face numerous ups and downs in his life—two times, he might have reasonably assumed that his life was all over (when he was first put into slavery; and later, when he will be put into jail). Yet, God always was working everything for the good of Joseph and so that God could preserve and bless his entire family.

Lesson 404: Genesis 37:28, 36 39:1–2 — Joseph, Slave of Potiphar

Reviewing the end of Genesis 37: Let's look at a few verses from Gen. 37 that tell us how Joseph got to this place of slavery in Egypt.

Genesis 37:28 And men, Midianites traders, came by. And they drew up Joseph and took him out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they brought Joseph into Egypt.

Joseph's brothers, out of jealousy, threw him into a dry well, and were going to sell him as a slave. Midianite traders sold him to Ishmaelite traders, and they brought him to Potiphar in Egypt.

Although the description seems to indicate that the Midianites simply found Joseph and took him, this does not eliminate the possibility that he was sold to the Midianites by his brothers and then retrieved from the pit by the Midianites.

Genesis 37:36 And the Midianites sold him [Joseph] into Egypt to Potiphar, a eunuch [official] of Pharaoh, the chief of the executioners.

This is one of the many contradictions touted by critics of the Bible; and it is not really a contradiction.

Explanation #1: Potiphar contracted some Ishmaelite traders to purchase a slave (or slaves) for him. They meet up with the Midianites, purchase Joseph and deliver him to Potiphar. Note that they do not *sell* Joseph to Potiphar but they *bring* Joseph to Potiphar.

Explanation #2 could simply be that the Midianites sell Joseph to Ishmaelites, who then sell Joseph to Potiphar. Ultimately, it was the Midianites who sold Joseph to Potiphar. This

is not quite as smooth and artful as the first explanation, where the Ishmaelites act as agents for Potiphar.

In order to remove something from being a contradiction, all of the verses related to this narrative must make sense, reading them in the light of the explanation. The explanation is not necessarily what happened; but all it takes is one explanation to eliminate the apparent contradiction.

The Contradiction that Wasn't: Let me give you an example of a contradiction that could have been, but wasn't, due to a couple of extra verses. Joseph had originally been sent to Shechem to find his brothers (Gen. 37:14). Let's say that the next verse was: So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan. (Gen. 37:17b). This would have been an apparent contradiction, as Joseph went to Shechem for his brothers, but he finds his brothers in Dothan. What clears this possible contradiction up is the fact that Joseph went first the Shechem, was told his brothers were not there, and then told that they were in Dothan. Had Joseph left Gen. 37:15–17a out of his narrative, then nearly every website which enumerates "Bible contradictions" would have added the Shechem-Dothan contradiction is to their list.

The very human authors were not always concerned with making certain that their words could not be misunderstood. Most of them were not writers by trade, and therefore, would not view their own writings with that sort of critical perspective. Jacob, when reciting human history to his sons, and adding in his own history, is probably doing this verbally, and he is not thinking, "Now, is there any way that this could be misunderstood or twisted?"

Those who have rejected Jesus Christ as their Savior will sometimes search out these types of websites in order to support their own thinking. Some will even post things themselves. However, it is the negative volition which generally comes first. The thinking of a person's soul is key.

Although I believe that the contents of Genesis were repeated millions of times throughout many generations, when someone added historical material to further the narrative, I don't know that they understood this to be the Word of God as we understand it to be. Certainly, all of this history was important and revealed God's hand in man's affairs, but I don't think that we can find the verbal-plenary interpretation of Scripture among the writings of the religious Jews in ancient times. They may have tried to "clarify" the laws on observing the Sabbath (essentially appending the Bible with hundreds of additional legalistic laws), but they did not spend this same amount of time describing what it meant for the Scriptures to be Scriptures. Geisler and Nix, in their outstanding *A General Introduction to the Bible,* provide at least 8 different ways that people understand the Scriptures to be inspired of God.

One of the fascinating historical aspects of the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, is that the canon was determined first, and then *after* the canon had been established, then

the concepts of divine inspiration were fully developed. So, first, the Word of God was established as the Word of God (properly speaking, it was recognized or identified), and then, hundreds of years later, people began to discuss, "Okay, we have the Word of God; now, just exactly what does that mean?"

Most critics of Scripture have it completely backwards. They think that some authoritarian group existed, wanted to exercise power over others, so they gathered up a bunch of existing books (or even modified some existing books) so that they had something that they called the Word of God, to which they could subject everyone else to. Somehow, they seemed to know what it was that they needed to have, and that they got that thing (the Bible) and somehow convinced millions of people to subject themselves to it. And, more amazingly, this is all done without any historical record referring to such actions!

Admittedly, this is not too different from the approach of Joseph Smith or of Mohammed. They happened to be very charismatic figures and they developed their authority hand-in-hand with their *scriptures,* so that the end result was very self-serving. However, this approach is not at all the model for the Old Testament canon, which was completed at the same time the Israel was destroyed as an independent nation and then reconstituted under the authority of other nations. This is also not the model for the New Testament, which is clearly centered on the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is never said to write anything down (apart from a disputed passage where he writes something in the dirt). The disciples, who had some authority after the Lord died and was risen, went to the Old Testament for their authority—and they wrote the various books of the New Testament, already having their authority established. And, interestingly enough, based upon Biblical and extra-Biblical sources, the disciples, for the most part, were not charismatic leaders (possibly with the exception of Peter).

Back to Genesis:

God's hand in the life of Joseph: What follows in Gen. 39–47 is one of the most amazing narratives in *the History of God and Man*. And, interestingly enough, though God's hand is apparent, we have no surfeit of miracles. God will not rain down locusts; Joseph will not see great visions, time will not stop—God's hand in all of this will be very subtle but real and undeniable.

We will also see one of the great transformations of character in the person of Judah. We have seen him in connection with Shechem, in connection with Joseph, and, most recently, in connection with providing protection and provision for his widowed daughter-in-law. There is very little to recommend this man; but in the narrative that follows, Judah will do and say the right thing, and it will be a spectacular and important change.

In case you wonder, why does the line of Messiah go through Judah, rather than through Reuben, Simeon or Levi, this extended narrative will explain why.

Joseph, as the historian, brings forth a very important narrative, one which is filled with the guidance of God, along with the foibles and faithfulness of man. As a young believer in Jesus Christ, this is one of the first portions of the Bible I was taught, and it has stayed with me over a period of 40+ years.

One of the reasons I decided to send out Bible lessons on Genesis was because of my fond memories of this portion of the Word of God.

Finally, the way that God acts in the life of Joseph is much more akin to our lives in the Church Age. God's will in our lives is subtle, but unmistakable.

Now, let's start Gen. 39. We will leave Canaan and the odd occurrences with the family of Jacob, and return to Egypt, where Joseph has been placed into slavery, purchased by Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's:

Genesis 39:1 And Joseph was brought down to Egypt. And Potiphar, a eunuch of Pharaoh, the chief of the executioners, an Egyptian man, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there.

Potiphar is call a çârîyç (סִירֵס) [pronounced *saw-REECE*], which means, *official, minister of the court; prince; eunuch*. Given the narrative, we can probably omit *eunuch* in our passage. Strong's #5631 BDB #710. I used the MKJV here, but the ESV, VW and WEB read *officer;* the TLV reads *official;* the ISV and LEB read *court official*.

Is it possible that Potiphar was an actual eunuch? It is possible; and perhaps some more information about the hierarchy in Egypt would help us in this regard. I don't know that this aspect is important to the context of the narrative. At most, it would give some justification (in the minds of some people) to his wife for pursuing Joseph; but it would still be adultery. Furthermore, Potiphar's actions are what they are, which is what will place Joseph into prison. Potiphar's actions are related to his position as an official of Pharaoh's.

Genesis 39:2 And Jehovah was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man. And he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

God is mentioned on occasion in this narrative, but not in regards to doing some amazing miracle. God's hand is clearly involved, and yet God allows everyone the function of their volition.

Gen. 39 is in stark contrast with Gen. 38. God's hand is in both chapters (as it is found in all chapters of Scripture), but Joseph's life is clearly in conformity with the will of God; whereas, Judah's was not. Yet, God's hand is found in the lives of both men. God's will will be done, whether we try to stand in the way of it or go along with it (which is one of the great lessons of Gen. 27).

We are dealing with slavery in this passage, and an unjust form of slavery at that—but we cannot let our own history dictate to us how to feel about slavery.

Slavery could be an awful existence, but this was not always the case. All slaves *had* to be paid a living wage (which is a big political issue to some today). If slaves died, then the slave owner's investment was gone. That was just bad business sense. Therefore, the slaves needed to have a place to stay and food to eat, which is, in essence, a living wage. Generally speaking, all slaves in the ancient world were paid a living wage. They got a place to stay and food to eat. This is better than working for minimum wage in today's American society, *if* you are willing to trade freedom for security (which is often the big trade-off in the world today).

The promise of many governments today is, *give us more power and more money, and we will fix all of the problems in your lives*. During one of the elections of Barack Obama, one of the selling points was expressed by an interactive webpage known as *The Life of Julia*. Every few years, Julia's life would have a need, and government would quickly step in the meet that need. This was a wonderful example of an exchange of freedom for slavery (although, of course, that sort of language was not used on that webpage)[2]. The ultimate in this approach is socialism, where the government owns and/or controls everything—and, ostensibly, provides everything.

Socialism is a form of slavery; and ironically enough, those who feel that they must talk about the damaging affects of slavery on America today most often support politicians who will lead us into political slavery (= socialism), where most of our earnings are confiscated so that the government can use these funds to "make our lives better".

Throughout history, most slaves could marry and have children (the Hebrews will become slaves to the Egyptians in Ex. 1–2 and they will enjoy a population explosion). They could even live independently from their masters, as did the Jewish slaves in Egypt (they lived in Goshen, which was apparently Jewish slave suburb).

Obviously, they did not have idyllic lives. That is not the point; but the position of a slave was not necessarily the worst thing in the world. Your life as a slave depended a great deal upon your master and how your master feels about you.

On the other hand, I am not saying that slavery is the greatest institution in the world and that we ought to return to it (although I would not be against some form of voluntary slavery rather than bankruptcy). Joseph had great personal ability, he worked hard, and God was with him. As a result, he began as an Egyptian slave, but he will rise to the 2nd highest post in the kingdom of Egypt. Under the right master, there was no level to which a slave could not attain.

Furthermore, many people began as slaves, and yet some of them reached very high positions of authority. The owner or their overseer was able to recognize potential and was able to exploit their talents (I mean this in a the most positive way possible). Obviously,

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[2] Unfortunately, I can only find a spoof of this approach by the president. There is still a great deal of discussion about this approach to be found on the internet. *The Life of Julia* has since been removed from his website.

if you were able to find a slave who could keep the other slaves in line, that was a good thing. That meant less headaches for the master. The whole purpose of slavery is to free up the master from his responsibilities.

Joseph revealed that he was intelligent, that he worked hard, that he could take direction, and that he was able to work with all kinds of people. A master did not want to waste this talent, particularly when what a slave was able to do could greatly benefit the master.

The Bible accepted slavery as an institution that was not going away. Slavery still exists today throughout the world, although it is outlawed in many countries. The Bible simply set up guidelines to protect slaves from cruel and abusive treatment. The Bible does not tout slavery as some great institution. In the New Testament, a Christian slave-owner was to take consideration of his Christian slaves to the point of freeing them, if possible (this was a request made by Paul to Philemon, not a command).

You may recall that Abraham's most trusted servant (= *slave*) had control over Abraham's wealth. Abraham sent him east to find a wife for Isaac, and gave him a great deal of wealth to take with him. If the life of this slave was so terrible, why didn't he get to Haran and then keep going east, since he had all of that wealth? He was certainly an intelligent man who, with all the wealth that he was carrying, could have had a very good start in life as a free man. He obeyed his master Abraham instead and he returned to Abraham, just as he had promised to do.

It is a fascinating thing that, today in American society, those who repudiate our historic slavery with the greatest vehemence, are often those who support a more intrusive and controlling government. They reject the tyranny of slavery on the one hand, and yet, want to place themselves under an increasing more powerful government, which is simply, another kind of slavery. The more money that a government takes from individuals, the more the people become enslaved to that government.

In Joseph's case, God was with him; and God has a plan for Joseph, which would save the lives of his family, as well as reunite them. There was no reason for Joseph to reject the plan of God, even though God's plan included a long period of time during which Joseph was a slave and then another period of time when he was unjustly placed in prison.

Lesson 405: Genesis 39:1–8 — Joseph in Potiphar's Home

In Gen. 37, Joseph's own half-brothers place him into slavery, which included Reuben's half-hearted attempt to preserve Joseph's life and freedom. In Gen. 38, we observe great dysfunction of the family of Judah (one of Joseph's half-brothers). In chapters previous to those, we have seen snippets of the lives of Simeon and Levi. In Gen. 39, we begin to

study Joseph's life as a slave in Egypt. Through one of these men will come the line of the Messiah, and we learn in Genesis why that line goes through the 4th brother, Judah.[3]

Genesis 39:1 And Joseph was brought down to Egypt. And Potiphar, a eunuch of Pharaoh, the chief of the executioners, an Egyptian man, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there.

The Ishmaelites, possibly acting as agents for Potiphar, took possession of one Joseph and delivered him to Potiphar as a young and healthy slave.

Genesis 39:2 And Jehovah was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man. And he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

Joseph enjoyed the relative comforts of working primarily in the home of Potiphar, who was high up in the Egyptian hierarchy. Because of his own character and intelligence, and because God is with him, Joseph will rise up to a highest position in his household.

Genesis 39:3 And his master saw that Jehovah was with him, and that Jehovah made all he did to prosper in his hand.

Now this is an interesting statement. Joseph's master observed that God was with Joseph. Many people in many areas of the world believed in the Revealed God. This verse indicates that and more. Joseph's master observed that Joseph was smart and competent and that God was with him.

This tells us that many in Egypt in this era believed in the Revealed God (God has always revealed Himself to mankind in all historical eras[4]). This man also had the discernment to observe Joseph and to recognize that God was with him, and that Joseph prospered because of his association with God. As we have studied on previous occasions, because Joseph prospered, his master and his master's house prospered as well.

A national entity is smart to recognize and appreciate the Christians who live within it. Both China and Russia stopped killing massive number of Christians and Jews (or putting them into reeducation or labor camps) and have begun to allowing them some limited religious freedom. As a result, both Russian and China have become much more prosperous as nations.

Similarly, if a country supports nation Israel or treats the Jews fairly within its borders, they will receive divine blessing. In fact, it is actually okay for a national leader to favor the sons of Abraham simply so that his nation receives blessing. Furthermore, a nation which recognizes the importance of Scripture and makes it a part of their educational curriculum (even just as literature or as history), will be blessed.

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[3] As an aside, Joseph, the likely author of the final section of Genesis, has no idea himself through whom the line of the Messiah will go—nor does anyone else in this narrative.

[4] Otherwise, our God would not be a just God.

On a national level, if a nation (1) allows for the religious freedom of Christians; (2) allows or even encourages the study of the Bible; and (3) is welcoming to Jews and is allied with nation Israel, then that nation will enjoy great blessing. The further that we move away from these things, the worse our nation will become. No national program of social justice or wealth redistribution can reverse the negative affects of a nation being hostile to Christians or to Jews. No matter how a government micro-manages the economy, it cannot overcome the cursing of God; similarly, they cannot frustrate the blessing of God.

Genesis 39:4 And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him. And he made him overseer over his house, and he put into his hand all he had.

Abraham had a servant who was in charge of all that Abraham had. Such a position was a great position of authority; and a slave that reached that pinnacle of success recognized it. Joseph also arose to a high position at a relatively young age in the Potiphar household.

The sin nature being what it is, no doubt some slaves tried to steal from their masters; however, a weak character like this would have been discovered very early on. A slave who is honored with a high position is usually a man whose character (and potential) has been observed over a lengthy period of time and recognized and rewarded.

For some individuals, slavery, in the end, could be a great blessing. People who were dirt poor, people who had suffered great setbacks in life, people who were unjustly made slaves, and people whose country had been defeated in war—slavery actually provided for them a way to dig themselves out of the deep hole that they were in.

God is able to even take the form of slavery called *man-stealing* in the KJV (which is outlawed by the Mosaic Law) and use it to bless mankind. Millions upon millions of African Americans live today in the United States, the greatest nation on earth, because of slavery. Their brothers in Africa would trade places with them in a second, because most people in the world recognize how blessed the United States of America is (interestingly enough, there are many Americans who live in the United States and do not realize this).

The master who does not recognize the potential in his slaves will have a less successful household or business than the master who recognizes intelligence and character in his slaves. The same thing is true of businesses today. Those at the top of a business or those who own a business must always have their eye open for industriousness, intelligence, diligence, potential and character. Good employees make for a successful company.

Genesis 39:5 And it happened from the time he had made him overseer in his house, and over all he had, that Jehovah blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake. And the blessing of Jehovah was upon all that he had, in the house and in the field.

> Paraphrasing and expanding upon the thoughts of Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *Joseph's life is clearly a continuation of the Abrahamic covenant, which speaks of the land, the seed, and God's blessing. Joseph is the great*

> *grandson of Abraham (the seed) and God is going to bless all of Egypt and all of the Mediterranean world through Joseph (the blessing of God by association). And Joseph will be returned to the Land of Promise, as he will not allow his bones to be buried in Egypt but he will require them to be taken to Canaan and buried there. All of this is the outworking of the Abrahamic covenant*.[5]

This is the overflowing blessing that the Bible often speaks of. God pours out blessing upon Joseph, and this blessing overflows to all those with whom Joseph associates—particularly to the house of his master. This experience of blessing by association is found throughout the Bible. We studied this back in Lesson #112, which is **Genesis 13** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Application: There are some companies where the janitor is a growing believer in Jesus Christ; and that company is blessed because the man scrubbing their toilets and mopping their floors apprehends the grace of God.

Application: It is very common for families, businesses, schools, cities, counties and even states to enjoy great blessing due to one or more growing believers within that institution or place. You can follow world history, and some of the great countries and empires have a number of believers and growing believers within them. The British empire brought both law and order and the gospel to all corners of the earth (law and order is essentially the laws of divine establishment). In previous lessons, I have shown maps of tiny Britain and the massive amount of land that they controlled at their peak. The United States does that same thing today, but without assimilating other countries into a massive empire (however, our world standing may change, as we are sending out fewer and fewer missionaries and our government has become less and less respectful of American missionaries). With great power comes great responsibility, and when we abdicate our responsibility, God will reduce our great power (which appears to be taking place before our very eyes).

Application: Even if we elect a president who can make great deals, if the spiritual factor of our nation decreases, then our nation will decline. Economically, the United States has been flatlining for nearly two decades, despite the rising stock market. During those two decades, our national debt has exploded, but without having anything to show for it. What was the problem? We have had decreased evangelization and a decrease of the number of believers who are growing. Whereas our nation used to encourage Christian missionaries (for instance, General MacArthur in Japan in the late 1940's), the official national policy under George Bush, continued by Barack Obama, was to discourage the spread of the gospel into Muslim nations where the United States has a presence. President Bush, who should have known better,[6] believed the key to a better world was more democracies and that, if he could plant two democracies in the Middle East, he could change the trajectory of that region. Had he included the gospel of Jesus Christ in his approach, these campaigns would have enjoyed greater success. So, despite the initial

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[5] Paraphrased and expanded from Lesson #146 (Providential Preparation); accessed August 2, 2016.

[6] I saw this because President George Bush was a great student of history.

successes of the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan, we know that those countries would be doomed to fail because we did not accompany our military power with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Had the gospel gained a foothold in those countries, they would have been on a different trajectory today (you may recall when the entire middle east began to blow up under the so-called *Arab Spring,* Iraq and Afghanistan, for a time, were two countries which did not). The stability factor could have been the gospel and spiritual growth; but, due to official policy, it was not. This was the result of a great miscalculation on the part of President Bush, followed by the bumbling of the next president, who seemed to think that, he could end a war by withdrawing troops.

Back to Joseph:

Genesis 39:6a And he [Potiphar] left all that he had in Joseph's hand. And he did not know anything that he had, except the bread which he ate.

At some point, the master realized that he did not need to worry about anything; that Joseph was capable of overseeing everything, and taking care of everything. If Joseph is doing as good a job as the master could, then there is no reason for the master to do that work. The master's only care in any given day is, what will he have for his meals.

Genesis 39:6b And Joseph was beautiful in form and beautiful in appearance.

The MKJV reads *beautiful;* the ESV reads *handsome in form and appearance*. I understand that we ought not to put too great an emphasis upon external appearance (the Bible specifically speaks to that), but the Bible *does* tell us, on occasion, when various men or women are very attractive in appearance.

Joseph's attractiveness is essential to the narrative; and Joseph appears to be one of the most adept ancient writers of narrative.

Genesis 39:7 And after these things it happened that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph. And she said, "Lie with me."

Unfortunately, because Joseph was both so competent and intelligent and attractive, the master's wife noticed him, and desired him. Although Joseph is clearly an attractive man, his competence and leadership ability no doubt influenced the wife of Potiphar. Most women appreciate a man who is able to take charge and to show leadership potential. This is even true of men who have no particular desire to lead anything. A man's confidence and leadership qualities are often very attractive to women—as much as their physical appearance (if most men had to rely on their physical appearance alone to attract a woman, we would never find a mate).

This is the only thing which suggests that perhaps Potiphar was a eunuch; because his wife is chasing after Joseph. But, bear in mind, Joseph is a very handsome, strong, and competent young man. Most women would have been attracted to him, no matter what their husbands are like (and, again, we have no idea if Potiphar is a eunuch or not). What

a woman did about her attraction to Joseph depended more upon the character of the woman (Potiphar's wife will turn out to have little character).

Genesis 39:8 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, my master does not know what is in the house with me, and he has given all that he has into my hand.

Potiphar does not know what goes on inside his own house, apart from Joseph. He has entrusted Joseph with that kind of responsibility. Joseph took that responsibility very seriously (and, no doubt, he could possibly be executed for committing adultery).

Joseph has great character and does not give in to the temptation of this woman. His master has given him great responsibility, and Joseph respects his master.

Notice how Joseph no longer appears to be upset that he was thrown into slavery by his brothers. It was not the best existence, but he has made the best of it; and God is with him. So it does not matter where you are in life, doing whatever kind of job you do—if God is with you, then you enjoy your life and you do an honest and honorable job.

Application: There will be times that you are forced to change jobs or you do not receive that promotion that you think that you deserve, or that you end up having to take a lesser job or lower position. All of that is irrelevant to your attitude toward your job, your boss and your work. You always do your work as *unto the Lord*. Whether you have the position that you believe that you deserve, or whether you are doing work that you would rather not do, you still work honestly, with integrity; putting in a full day's work (or more). Your superiors ought to recognize from the beginning your hard work and dedication. And, if they don't, then that will be their loss.

No doubt that, Joseph's attitude is one of the reasons that he advanced in his position as he did.

One would expect that Joseph enjoyed good working conditions as well as acceptable food and shelter, even as a slave. This does not mean that all slaves were treated well; it simply means that, Joseph, because he acted with great integrity, enjoyed great reward.

Application: This should not be rocket science: if you do a good job wherever you work, then you will be rewarded for it. If you do a lousy job wherever you work, you will either be stagnant in your position or you will suffer demotion.

Lesson 406: Genesis 39:1–18 Potiphar's Wife Tries to Seduce Joseph

At this point in Joseph's life, he is a slave to Potiphar, a chief officer under Pharaoh, and had become Potiphar's head servant. Over the next few chapters, Joseph will be put into jail and then he will be restored and given a position of authority under the Pharaoh. Knowing this, you may wonder, *why does God give Joseph this interim position? If Joseph is going to have this great position of authority, why does God mess him around first, place*

him in Potiphar's home and then later allow him to be thrown into prison? Let me suggest several things which are accomplished: (1) Joseph learns the Egyptian language and Egyptian customs, making himself suitable to serve under Pharaoh; (2) Joseph learns the proper protocol as a slave; (3) Joseph would have some exposure to Egyptian royalty in this position; and (4) Joseph himself is tested. God knows what is coming next in the life of Joseph. God knows the skills and mental attitude that Joseph needs to learn in order to take on the great responsibility that God has for him. In his future position, Joseph must be able to make good decisions and be beyond reproach. Although we will not read about any recorded examples, it seems very likely that Joseph, a non-Egyptian who will later be in charge of the stored grain during a famine, will face great scrutiny by Egyptians, who would no doubt want to find reason to complain about a non-Egyptian in charge of the granaries. With such a position, Joseph must be above reproach. Therefore, God trains him for this position. Based upon Joseph's decisions, men, women and children will live or die. With power and authority also comes great responsibility.

Application: Do not resent the training that God gives you (which comes in the form of teaching in church or discipline in life). Every believer in the Church Age has a spiritual gift and a function in the plan of God. God prepares us to use that gift.

Sometimes, the believer is tested, hopefully with a good result. As a former teacher, I subjected my students to a great many tests. What I wanted as a teacher was to see them do well, to have a class where the grades were all strong—that was certainly my preference. This is God's preference. When He places us in circumstances where we are tested, He is not testing us in hopes that we fail and get knocked down a couple of notches. When God tests us, His desire is that we succeed. Therefore, we can be assured that God gives us the training necessary in life to succeed in His plan.

The purpose of knowing the Word of God is so that we can begin to think like God thinks, and, therefore, succeed when we are tested.

Joseph will not only do well with this challenge, but he will immediately face great injustice after passing this test with Potiphar's wife.

A Summary of Genesis 39:1–8: So far, we have studied the first 8 verses of Gen. 39:

Gen. 39:1–4 Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. His master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD caused all that he did to succeed in his hands. So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. (ESV)

Joseph, as a slave to Potiphar, rose up in the ranks of his slaves.

Gen 39:5–6 From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had, in house and field. So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. (ESV)

Potiphar essentially turned over all household control to Joseph. Joseph was competent, efficient and trustworthy.

Gen 39:7–8 And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. (ESV)

Potiphar's wife found Joseph to be desirable, so she pursued him to have an affair.

Genesis 39:9 There is none greater in this house than I. Neither has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

As a slave, Joseph has risen to the highest position of his master's household. Potiphar recognized Joseph's competence, and gave him a position commensurate with his abilities. I can guarantee you that, if Joseph began working for Potiphar and had a negative attitude from the start, that he would not have done as well. Joseph was where he was as a result of injustice—his brothers allowed him to be taken as a slave. For many people, this would mark the end of their lives—they would no longer have any hope.

Potiphar has placed great trust in Joseph and has given him great responsibilities. Joseph recognizes that an illicit relationship would betray his master and it would be a sin against God. Obviously, Potiphar's wife would be kept back from Joseph; and taking her would show great evil on Joseph's part. Furthermore, this would be a sin against God, Who has placed Joseph where he is. All sin is against God.

The fact that this is a sin against God leaves the woman unfazed.

Genesis 39:10 And it happened as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not listen to her to lie with her, or to be with her.

This suggests that the woman tried several different approaches in speaking to Joseph. Perhaps one day she was coy and another she was aggressive. She was trying to find the way to get to Joseph.

Based upon the passage before us, my guess is, Potiphar's wife was seductive but without being too overt. She was subtle, giving out clues to Joseph, which were unmistakable.

This woman was persistent; she continued to pursue him. Joseph continued to refuse her.

Very often, there were apparently other slaves about; and other workmen.

Genesis 39:11 And it happened about this time that he came into the house to do his work. And none of the men of the house were inside.

Perhaps the woman planned this out; perhaps she saw to it that there would be no one else in the house beside Joseph and herself. Perhaps she recognized this as her great opportunity.

At this point, she could say and do anything; there were no witnesses. There was no reason for her to be coy and subtle anymore.

Genesis 39:12 And she caught him by his robe, saying, "Lie with me." And he left his robe in her hand and fled, and got out.

She grabbed his robe. Joseph appears to be reading the New Testament passage that reads, "Flee fornication."

Few things are as destructive as adultery. This is why it is found among the Ten Commandments. Our society is built upon marriage and family (it is *not* built upon diversity or equal incomes; it is not even built upon free enterprise). Adultery can often destroy the family unit—very few things are more destructive to the marriage than adultery. The more disrupted the marriage bond is, the more disrupted a society becomes.

We have done hundreds if not thousands of studies. We know that children from single mothers are inferior in all respects to those raised by two parents; we know that children from divorced couples are often damaged by the divorce. There is no other bond like marriage and family in society—in all societies.

All of these other things which find their way into popular culture (like it takes a village to raise a child; or families headed by homosexual couples; or preschool and public school) are far inferior to the training that a child receives from two natural two parents.

Genesis 39:13 And it happened when she saw that he had left his robe in her hand, and had fled,...

At this point, the master's wife realizes that Joseph will not have sex with her, and she decides to plot revenge against him. They had the perfect opportunity—there were no witnesses, they had the house to themselves—and Joseph did a runner. She is embarrassed and humiliated.

Genesis 39:14 ...she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, "See, he has brought in a Hebrew to us to sport with us. He came in to me, to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice.

The woman claims that Joseph is the one who made passes toward her, and she lies about what happened.

Many would find it hard to believe that Joseph rejected her advances. But, it is clear that she is a spiteful, angry woman. Despite how tempting sexual relations can be, with a woman like this, they are a snare and a trap. The Bible has many warnings against such a woman.

If a woman lacks the character to remain faithful to her husband, then that suggests a great many defects in her soul.

There is something else which is quite interesting in this verse. Joseph is called a *Hebrew*. This is only the second time that this descriptor is used in the book of Genesis (Abraham is called a *Hebrew* back in Gen. 14:13). This would lead me to the possible theory that *Hebrew* is originally an Egyptian term (or a term used princeapply by the Egyptians which they picked up elsewhere); and it originally referred to foreigners (but not specifically to the people of Abraham because the Egyptians would not have had a word to designate such a small family of 70+ people). At some point in time, in Egypt, this word became more closely associated with the people of Abraham (see Exodus 1–2), to a point where the Jews adopted this term themselves (Ex. 3:18[7] 5:3 Deut. 15:12 Jonah 1:9). If my theory is correct, then the reference to Abraham as a Hebrew back in Gen. 14:13 would have been a gloss (meaning that someone added the word *Hebrew* hundreds of years later). Glosses never change the meaning of a passage; they simply provide updated information for the reader (for instance, a gloss may note that a city has a new name[8]).

Interestingly enough, the word *Hebrew* in the New Testament is used almost exclusively to refer to the language of the Jews (John 19:13, 17, 20 Rev. 9:11 16:16); the exceptions being 2Cor. 11:22 Philip. 3:5.

Genesis 39:15 And it happened when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his robe with me, and fled, and got out."

She held onto Joseph's robe as *proof* of his moves against her. We know her total lack of character by this action. Surely she understood that her lies would put Joseph into prison or worse.

Genesis 39:16 And she laid up his robe beside her until his lord came home.

We do not know where her husband was—most likely attending to his responsibilities in the kingdom—but we do know that he entrusted the administration of his house to Joseph. His wife holds on to Joseph's robe.

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[7] God first applies this term specifically to the Jews in Ex. 3:18.

[8] An American history book may refer back to the early settlement of New Amsterdam, and then include in a footnote, *that is, New York City*. The reader now has a modern frame of reference for the history that he is studying.

Genesis 39:17 And she spoke to him according to these words, saying, "The Hebrew servant which you have brought to us came in to me to sport with me.

Since she was unable to seduce her Hebrew slave, she decided to take revenge upon him. He was no longer of any use to her. Perhaps she might have better luck with another slave. So, she will have her husband get rid of this one and bring another one in. Therefore, she lies about him and about what happened.

Even though it is possible that this woman worried that Joseph might tell on her, I don't think that was her major concern. In any case, she tells on Joseph first.

We discussed earlier whether or not Potiphar was a eunuch (based upon some translations). Although that is a possibility, that is not necessarily the case. Nor does this justify the actions of this woman.

Genesis 39:18 And it happened as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his robe with me and ran out."

Her story has problems. All she has is Joseph's robe. What exactly was he wearing when he ran out of their home? Did this not look peculiar to others? Most importantly, if Joseph was able to overpower her, then why was he unable to get his robe back?

However, the testimony of a woman is often powerful enough to sway others. Furthermore, she is the master's wife and it is her word against that of a slave.

Perhaps this is the passage William Congreve was thinking of when he wrote *Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned*.[9] Luckily for Joseph, the crime of attempted rape in Egypt was apparently not punishable by death (which is all a part of God's plan and His omniscience).

Joseph has faced many unjust events in his life, as we all do. Part of our lives are determined by how we respond to injustice. Do we spend days and weeks and months fighting injustice against us? Or, are we able to accept it in our lives and move on, without bitterness? Injustice is certainly a very real part of every person's life. You will be accused of something that you have done which you did not do; you will be demoted or fired because of something someone said that was not true; someone will be promoted over you for completely superficial reasons (such as, the color of their/your skin). You will be pulled over by the police when you have done nothing wrong. Or, you will be given grief out of proportion to what it is you have done. How you react, what you do, all of this reveals your character. Most of the time when you are on the receiving end of injustice, you accept it, and you move forward with your life. If you are particularly bothered by it, then you double up in your intake of Bible doctrine. What you do not do is spend your life being bitter, thinking about whatever revenge that you might take against those who have wronged you.

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[9] Or words to that effect.

Lesson 407: Genesis 39:19–23 — Joseph in Prison

Joseph had become a slave for Potiphar, a man of high rank in the Egyptian government. His wife took a liking to Joseph and pursued him. When she caught him alone in their house, she propositioned him, but Joseph ran out of there, leaving his robe behind (which she had grabbed). The woman then accused him of rape, first to the other servants around the outside of the house and then to her husband.

Genesis 39:19 And it happened when his master heard the words of his wife which she spoke to him, saying, "Your servant did this to me," his wrath was kindled.

Potiphar believed his wife. He assumed that Joseph tried to take advantage of her, and he was quite angry about it. We may reasonably assume that his wife was quite attractive for that day and time; that she would be desired by others supports her lies.

Under Mosaic Law, an adulterer would be executed. However, apparently under Egyptian law, they are simply put into prison. It is likely that Joseph is accused of attempted rape, which would not have carried as stiff of a sentence as rape would.

Genesis 39:20 And Joseph's master took him and put him in the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound. And he was there in the prison.

Joseph's master was quite upset over what he thought had transpired, and put Joseph into prison. However, this is exactly where God wanted Joseph. Despite the injustice and the lying involved, this is where God wants Joseph. At some point, Joseph will recognize that.

Notice that this is called the *place where the king's prisoners were kept*. Those close to the king who had transgressed him in any way would be placed into this particular prison. Based upon this narrative, this is where anyone would go who had transgressed against a high-ranking official in Egypt.

Bear in mind that, no matter what changes occur in your life, God is there, helping to guide the events of your life (in accordance with your volition and actions). We may suffer injustice and we may end up in places where we don't think we ought to be, due to injustice, but the key is, it is all about God's will and God's plan. If you are a growing believer and if you remain in fellowship, then what transpires in your life is God's directive will. Which one of us has not thought, *this is wrong! I am being mistreated! I am being cheated!* Joseph was wronged, and yet, he is still in the geographical will of God. He is exactly where God wants him to be.

Genesis 39:21 But Jehovah was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor [= *grace*] in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

God is with us, in all circumstances. Just because Joseph was no longer the highest ranking person in his master's home, this does not mean that God somehow deserted him.

God is with Joseph in all circumstances. Furthermore, where God places Joseph indicates great purpose.

It is important to recognize that God does not miraculously bust open the prison, and let Joseph walk through doors held aloft by angels. In fact, the only *signs* performed by Joseph will be words that he says.

Furthermore, Joseph had reached the highest position that he could reach in Potiphar's household. God wanted Joseph to occupy and even higher position in Egypt—*second-in-command*.

The key will be, Joseph will remain oriented to God's grace and God's plan; and he will not allow bitterness a place to spring up in his soul. He does not ruminate on being made an Egyptian slave by his heartless brothers; he does not fill himself with rancor toward Potiphar or towards his wife; he does not burn with anger and revenge motivation (unlike Esau, who, when Jacob had usurped Isaac's end-of-life blessing, seethed with bitterness which likely remained in his soul for years).

American at a Crossroads: Americans are living in a nation where a third of the country is willing to abandon our great freedoms and the great blessings that we have enjoyed for a European-style socialism. Because they have rejected God, they have replaced Him with government, somehow believing that government is a benevolent force for good that we may trust it to take care of all our needs. So, we as believers may actually view the gradual descent and destruction of the greatest nation in the history of man—the United States of America. Is bitterness our solution? Of course not. Faith in the will of God is our solution. Spiritual growth and our eyes upon God is our solution. Our country may crumble all around us, people in government may become tyrannical, thinking they can and should control everything (as happens with socialistic governments). We may find ourselves faced with repressive taxes, repressive gun laws, and even political and religious persecution. This could happen within a very short span of time. However, this does not mean that God's plan for our lives has suddenly ended.

And so that there is no misunderstanding, God has not called us to take up arms against our government, even if we morph from a freedom-loving republic to a full-on socialist state. This move towards socialism has been a step-by-step process, starting with the establishment of a government-run social security system all the way to Obamacare. As Americans begin to trust more in our leaders than in God, our nation will move further and further away from God.

Historically, our government was established as a necessary evil, as a force to be watched and monitored, in case it moved toward tyranny (a natural movement for most governments—because those with power-lust desire more and more power). Checks and balances were put into place in order to spread power around and the Bill of Rights were established *to limit the power and scope of government*. The idea was to establish a nation of free people who would use their freedom for righteousness. However, when we use our freedom to commit unrighteous acts, that freedom will be curtailed.

Despite the marvelous beginnings of client nation U.S.A., and despite the wrong direction our country is heading, God's plan is not for rebellion or revolution. We are to evangelize; we are to learn the Word of God, and we are to teach the Word of God.

We learn from Joseph's life, and from his lack of bitterness, despite his being treated unfairly, first being placed into slavery and then being placed into an Egyptian prison.

> Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *We often get thrown these curves in life. Things come out completely different from the way we hoped for, the way we intended, and we go from the pit to the prison, and the Lord was with Joseph even in prison. The Lord is still guiding and directing; He is still in control. Joseph possibly even thought that things are out of control. "But the LORD was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison." The emphasis there is on grace. Then in verse 23, ".the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper." This is the behind-the-scenes work of God in the life of the believer to bring about that which is intended in the plan of God. So the doctrine of the providence of God runs behind all of these chapters, everything in the story of Joseph*.[10]

We actually do not know the inner workings of Joseph's soul when he was initially enslaved or initially placed into prison. However, it is clear that, after the dust settled, he adapted to the new circumstance and trusted God. He did not dwell upon bitterness or revenge. At some point in the process, probably very early on, Joseph recognized that, *this is what my life is and God is still with me*. As a result, Joseph exploited his circumstances (I mean that in a good way).

In life, we can focus our attention on ourselves, on our things, on our circumstances and/or upon other people. Or, we can focus on God and His plan (which we do through Bible doctrine). Our primary focus in life must be upon God and His plan. This is what Joseph did, consistently. He did not look upon his place in jail as being the end of his life. He did not burn with anger against Potiphar or against his wife. He did not spend his time thinking about how good life was working for Potiphar, but now his life sucks because he is in prison. The simple fact is, Joseph is in prison and God is with him. He cannot simply break out of prison; he cannot go after Potiphar and/or his wife to get revenge; he cannot magically restore his old life. See, if Joseph focuses upon the wrong things, then his life will go nowhere. Instead, he considers where he is, and he makes himself invaluable to the prison warden (called *the keeper of the prison* by the MKJV). As a prisoner, he made the prison work. Joseph took the place where he was and he functioned in grace having faith in God.

Genesis 39:22 And the keeper of the prison gave all the prisoners in the prison into Joseph's hand. And whatever they did there, he was the doer of it.

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[10] From Lesson #146 (Providential Preparation); accessed August 2, 2016 (slightly edited).

It did not take long before the warden of the prison recognized just how competent that Joseph was, and gave him great responsibilities within the prison. Joseph's life was limited quite a bit, but he had authority and the highest rank within the prison. Essentially, he was in charge of the prison; and the warden took the credit for the prison running so efficiently and on such an even keel.

For a second time, God has given Joseph a position of authority, which has come to him as a result of very unfair circumstances. God is training Joseph for his future as Prime Minister of Egypt, where he will be given a great deal of authority and responsibility. By the simple wave of his hand, families would live or die. Joseph has to learn to think about his decisions and to not act impulsively or with prejudice, or to be motivated by revenge or by frustration.

Joseph needs to abide by God's timing. There are times when He needs to allow God's plan to play out. He makes the best of his situation. God makes His purpose clear and Joseph focuses his attention upon God and God's purpose in his life. He does not look back; he does not think about revenge; he does not dwell on how he has been mistreated.

Genesis 39:23 The keeper of the prison did not look to anything under his hand, because Jehovah was with him; and whatever he did, Jehovah made it to prosper.

The MKJV sometimes uses phrases which are difficult to understand (even though it is a good translation).

Gen. 39:23 The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the LORD was with him. And whatever he did, the LORD made it succeed. (ESV)

Like Potiphar, the warden recognizes that God was with Joseph, suggesting that (1) he himself believed in the Revealed God and (2) he knew that Joseph could be trusted. How wonderful it is to be associated with someone who does not have a hidden agenda; with someone who does not have a soul filled with anger a bitterness. Now nice it is to be associated with someone who is not spending his life trying to justify himself, and to identify the injustices which he has suffered in his life.

Application: There are few things more important in a friendship than a friend who can be trusted. This is one of the most important things for the employer. There are few things greater than an employee who can be trusted.

Unlike our prisons today, the prisoners themselves in Egyptian prisons were often employed to keep order and to do various tasks within the prison. Increased benefits and security came hand-in-hand with increased responsibilities (which is true in life). We know of at least one case where this occurs.

Joseph made whatever was under his responsibility to work out. Like in the Potiphar household, Joseph showed himself to be intelligent, competent and trustworthy, free from guile and free from hidden agendas.

Joseph could have acted out in anger. He went from a wonderful position in Potiphar's household into prison, and Joseph could have responded with great bitterness. However, he did not. He could not allow himself to hold a grudge or to allow bitter feelings to fester. Heb. 12:15 See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled. (ESV)

Think about this. Let's just say that Joseph was faced with a decision: (1) go along with the adulterous notions of Potiphar's wife and continue in his position of great authority; or (2) Reject the wife's advances and get thrown into prison for doing the right thing. If I knew how these two approaches could play out, I guarantee that I would struggle with this decision. Joseph did not. He simply did the right thing. At first, doing the right thing seemed to backfire on him and work against him; but we will find out that, doing the right thing was exactly what Joseph should have done. Doing the right thing led to the best possible results, even though, at first, it did not seem like it would.

Joseph's narrative spoke to the Jews in slavery to Egypt. He was, in a sense, representative of the Jewish people. He was in slavery in Egypt; the Jewish people were in slavery to the people in Egypt. God has a greater plan for Joseph; God has a greater plan for the people of Israel. God's will will triumph over slavery in the life of Joseph; God's will will triumph over slavery in the lives of the people of Israel.[11] Joseph would also spend a time in Egypt, but he would want his bones buried in Canaan, because he wanted to rise up in the resurrection in the land given the Jewish people by God. God's plan for Joseph was greater than the life that he spent in Egypt; God's plan for the sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was greater than their time spent in Egypt.

This speaks to believers as well. We are born in the slave market of sin. We are slaves to our sin nature. Despite our weaknesses, God is able to find a way out; God is able to make His will prevail in our lives. The first step is salvation, then, when we fall out of fellowship, we get back in through the naming of our sins. And to give us momentum and direction, we learn the Word of God through a well-qualified pastor-teacher.

God's will marches forward, even when no one appears to understand the plan of God (the example of Joseph and Tamar in Gen. 38); and obviously when one man understands the plan of God and operates within His plan (Joseph in Gen. 39 and following).

Lesson 408 Genesis 39:21–23 40:1–3 The Cupbearer and the Baker

[11] Credit Dr. Robert Dean, Jr. for seeing this parallel in Providential Preparation (lesson #146); accessed August 2, 2016.

We began Gen. 39 with Joseph becoming the servant of Potiphar, who was an officer of Pharaoh's; and Joseph rose to the highest ranking in that house, overseeing and handling everything that needed to be done in Potiphar's house. However, Potiphar's wife took a liking to Joseph and she pursued him to have an affair with her. When he continued to refuse her, she finally accused him of attempted rape. This got Joseph thrown into the king's prison, called in Scripture, *the Sohar House* or *the house of the round*.

Even in the king's prison, Joseph prospered and advanced.

Gen. 39:21–23 But Jehovah was with Joseph and extended mercy to him, and He gave him favor [= *grace*] in the eyes of the warden of the prison house. And the warden of the prison house entrusted into Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison house; whatever they did there, it was his doing. The warden of the prison house did not oversee anything that was under his hand, because Jehovah was with him; and whatever he did, Jehovah made it prosper. (VW)

With this lesson, we begin Gen. 40. There appears to have been a conspiracy in the Pharaoh's government and there were two men suspected of plotting against the Pharaoh. They will be placed into jail while the Pharaoh investigates them.[12] Meanwhile, these men will find themselves in *Joseph's prison,* as Joseph is placed in the prison where *the king's prisoners are held*.

Furthermore, the chief warden has put Joseph in charge of the prisoners, as he could tell that Joseph was competent and trustworthy.

These two men will have very troubling dreams, both on the same night, but dreams very similar in their nature. Joseph will interpret these dreams accurately, thus predicting their immediate futures, even before Pharaoh knows what their immediate futures will be.

You will note just how carefully these chapters are constructed. I believe that this is done as an aid to memory. The organization of the text allows for these chapters to be more easily memorized and repeated.

Furthermore, Joseph is a master at story-telling. I don't mean that these events are made up, but simply that he knows, much more than his father (or grandfather or great grandfather) about how to write a smooth and seamless narrative. Furthermore, Joseph carefully structures his narratives, so that they are easy to memorize and recall.

William Ramey's Chiasmos of Genesis 40:1–23

A Joseph's meeting of the cupbearer and baker (1-4)
B The cupbearer and baker have dreams in the same night (5-8)
C The chief cupbearer's dream narrated and explained (9-13)
X Joseph's request for intercession (14-15)

[12] Some of these details are a matter of reasonable deduction rather than the explicit explanation of Scripture.

William Ramey's Chiasmos of Genesis 40:1–23

C'	The chief baker's dream narrated and explained (16-19)
B'	The cupbearer's and baker's dreams are fulfilled in the same day (20-22)
A'	The cupbearer forgets Joseph [the chief baker is dead] (23)

From https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html accessed September 19, 2015.

We begin this chapter with Joseph in jail. However, he has a high position in jail with great responsibilities.

Genesis 40:1 And after these things it happened that the cupbearer of the king of Egypt, and his baker, had offended their lord the king of Egypt.

The MKJV has the word *offended* above, which is the Hebrew word châṭâʾ (אָטָח) [pronounced *khaw-TAW*], which means, *to sin, to miss, to miss the mark, to violate the law, to err; to do wrong, to commit a transgression*. Strong's #2398 BDB #306.

We do not know at this point in the narrative exactly what happened, but it appears that the king of Egypt has uncovered a plot of some sort, perhaps a plot which potentially threatened to overthrow him. He was unsure about who was to blame, so he took the two men closest to him and put them into prison. The king of Egypt may have known enough, at this point, to recognize that one or both of these men were plotting against him (I am inserting some logical details into the text).

Recall that Joseph is just not thrown into any jail; he is placed into a jail where the king's prisoners are kept (Gen. 39:20). Joseph had reached a rank of great responsibility while in that jail. This is God's planning and His timing. God had to first put Joseph in a specific jail (which required that someone of some rank had to put him into jail); and then Joseph had to rise up in the ranks to where he was running the prison; and then he was given two prisoners, one of whom would put Joseph before the Pharaoh of Egypt.

As an aside, we probably see more of God's design and plan in the life of Joseph, than with even his father or grandfather; and yet, Joseph appears to have no direct contact with God. Furthermore, this is nothing by way of signs or miracles. However, each step of Joseph's life appears to have been carefully determined, with a grand end in mind. This is not determinism; because everyone acts according to their free will throughout.

Genesis 40:2 And Pharaoh was angry against two of his eunuchs [or, *officials*], against the chief of the cupbearers and against the chief of the bakers.

Recall that the word translated *eunuchs* can also mean *officer* or *official*. I have used the MKJV throughout (unless otherwise indicated), and, although it updates the KJV, it does have its faults.

The Pharaoh has apparently determined that what happened came down to two of his top officials. Palace intrigue is not uncommon in this era.

When a person has power, there are also those around him who want his power; therefore, nearly every king had to worry about plots to overthrow him. That is as much of a threat to a king, as attacks from without. When a plot is uncovered, then the king has to determine who is guilty, how deep the plot is, and how to deal with them. Obviously, the intention is to make an example of the revolutionaries but without destroying too many people who are loyal (a king may never know the entire range of any plot against him).

Here, the circumstance is not that unusual. This plot has come down to two close associates of the king, and so, he throws them both in jail, with the intention of investigating the matter more thoroughly. Apparently, Pharaoh believes one or both of them to be guilty.

Interestingly enough, Pharaoh does not simply execute both of them as an example to all; but he is concerned with their guilt or innocence. I am making this assumption based upon one of these men being executed and the other one being restored. It is equally possible that the king was never certain if these men were guilty, but he executed one of them, and that may have been enough to thwart future rebellions (I opt for the option that the king investigated the plot and killed the correct man, simply based upon his later association with Joseph—he appears to be an honorable man).

Now, throughout, I assume that one of these men is innocent and one is guilty, and who is freed and who is executed reflects their guilt or innocence being accurately ascertained. However, that is not the only possibility for the details that we are not given.

Genesis 40:3 And he put them under guard in the house of the chief of the executioners, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound.

The word *bound* is actually the Qal passive participle of ʾâçar (אָסַר) [pronounced *aw-SAWHR*], which means, *bound, tied [up, together, to]; imprisoned, confined, captive, captivity; restrained*. Strong's #631 BDB #63. So Joseph is *confined* but he is not necessarily *tied up*. The Voice of the Wilderness Bible translates this:

Gen. 40:3 And he put them into custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison house, the place where Joseph was confined. (VW)

God puts all of the relevant characters in the same place to accomplish His purpose. There are no accidents in the plan of God. As stated before, God is able to carry out His purposes, despite the sins and failings of man. God is able to take injustice and use it within His plan.

Throughout these chapters, we have men and women behaving in a variety of ways, with Joseph generally exhibiting integrity. God is able to take all of their behaviors together and move His plan ahead. From one vantage point, it appears as if God is moving chess pieces around a board (God's sovereignty) but, from the view of the people, their free will

is quite intact, and they are acting based upon their human volition (some adhering to the plan of God but most are not).

It is always fascinating that, in Scripture, there is often little difference between men who have face-to-face interaction with God, and those where God works behind the scenes. You may recall that God appeared to Jacob on many occasions, and Jacob is not considered a spiritual giant by any means. Jacob saw things that would blow our minds if we saw them. Many of us would think that we have hallucinated. He saw some amazing things and was taken care of by God in some amazing ways. Yet, Jacob never appears to reach any level of spiritual maturity. Throughout our association with him, he seems embittered, angry, and saddened by all that has befallen him. Yet, he has seen things that we ourselves will never see.

Joseph, on the other hand, may make a mistake here and there, but his faith in God and his ability to make the right decision is quite remarkable. Furthermore, he recognizes God's hand in everything; he knows that God is working behind the scenes on his behalf. What Joseph does not know is, just how much God plans to accomplish through him.

Application: In the Church Age, every single one of us has a spiritual gift (or 2 or 3); and no matter how your circumstances appear to confine you in every way, God is able to work within those circumstances and to be of great blessing to many through your life. You may be known to others; you may be obscure. You may understand your gifts completely; you may not. I would think that, the more Bible doctrine that you know, the better chance there is that you understand and utilize your spiritual gift.

I do not know anything about Billy Graham's younger years; I just know that God used him powerfully to evangelize much of the United States in the 1940's through the 1960's. Like all of us, Graham began as a child, and who knows the powerful influences in his life as a child? Who knows who prayed for him? Who knows who gave Graham the gospel or helped to guide him away from a teaching ministry to an evangelistic ministry? Certainly, some of these things are known, but God worked all of this out, to best guide and prepare Billy Graham for a ministry in the United States which was one of the great spiritual restorations which has occurred in our history. These eras in our history are known as *Great Awakenings,* the first occurring between 1730–1760, which literally changed the shape and direction of United States history. The second great spiritual awakening occurred in the United States between 1800–1870 (when our spiritual life began to clearly wain). Because our school textbooks have moved far to the left, they leave out the 3rd great spiritual awakening, which would have occurred between the mid-1940's to the early 1970's. These crusades continue even until today, but without the great response that they once received. I recall some of Graham's crusades being shown on network television, live, during prime time. We are not surprised today to see some political event occur on network television during prime time (like a debate or a presidential address), but if we saw an evangelist speaking on network television during prime time today, no doubt, many would be shocked.

As an aside, some may fault, in some way, Graham's son, Franklin Graham, for not carrying on the same evangelistic ministry of his father. Franklin Graham has a different set of spiritual gifts and a different purpose on this earth and for a different time. He is an evangelist, but he is involved in other things as well (such as, gift boxes which are sent all over the world, as an evangelical outreach as a demonstration of God's love). The many times I have seen Franklin Graham on television, he has been a powerful voice for truth. His ministry within the United States is very different from his father's, in part, because the people of the United States today would not respond to the gospel en masse as they did in the 1950's. God has a precise ministry for Franklin Graham just as He had for his father, Billy Graham.

Our own ministry might seem to be small; it may seem to be negligible, but God does not see our lives in that way. Every part of the body of Christ has a purpose. The eyes cannot denigrate the function of the hands. The number of people who are affected by the exercise of our spiritual gift might not be apparent to us, and that is immaterial. God has a place and a ministry for each of us (which does *not* mean that everyone reading this will be an evangelist, a pastor or a missionary). What God has for us is every bit as important as the ministry of any other believer.

Back to our text. God places Joseph in the correct jail at the correct time for a very specific purpose. He will encounter there in jail two men that, anywhere else, would not see him as an equal whose counsel is to be sought and valued. However, here, in jail, where either or both of these men could be executed at any time, Joseph is clearly their equal and he will become their confidant as well.

God places all 3 men in the same place at the same time, where, amazingly enough, it is Joseph who actually has the authority over them in the prison. All of this required precise timing. (1) Joseph is thrown into prison; (2) Joseph rises up in the ranks of the prisoners to become the highest authority within the prison; and then (3) these two officials of Pharaoh are thrown into the Sohar House. These things all have to occur in just this order, according to God's perfect timing. And, very importantly, everyone's free will functions normally throughout, even though God has a perfect plan which is constantly in motion.

Lesson 409 Genesis 40:1–8 The Cupbearer and the Baker in Prison

Genesis 40:1 And after these things it happened that the cupbearer of the king of Egypt, and his baker, had offended their lord the king of Egypt. (MKJV; which I have used throughout almost this entire study).

Gen. 40:2–3 And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined. (ESV)

You will notice that, just as God does not come to Joseph in the form of the burning bush to talk with him, nor does the text read, *And God worked it out so that his two chief officers*

were placed into jail with Joseph. But, that is, in fact, what God did, and Joseph, later on, will testify to that reality.

There are times in human history when God's intervention is miraculous and spectacular; but most of the time in human history, God's intervention in history is subtle and without fanfare. We are studying one of the longest, cohesive narratives in the Old Testament, and there will be no miracles; there will be no mystical appearances of God.

Although there are times during which God's miraculous power is clearly made manifest (such as, when Israel is established as a nation; or when Jesus reveals Himself as the Son of God); there are very, very long periods of time in human history where very little by way of spectacular occurrences actually occurs.

Since God created our world and the universe, and has set all of the physical laws into motion, He is able to overrule those laws (or act within those laws) to perform a sign or a miracle. However, this does not mean that God spends every single day performing millions of miracles. When there are a series of spectacular miracles, they occur for specific reasons to a specific audience at a specific time. What we do not find is, a series of miracles on each and every page of the Bible.

People who think that we need to pray for a miracle; or that no one will believe without seeing miracles—do not understand the power of the Word of God or the plan of God. They do not understand miracles.

Furthermore, there are many believers in the Bible who have never seen God, some form of God, or have heard the voice of God or have witnessed a miracle of God. Joseph and David and Solomon are 3 who come quickly to mind. God spoke to them through intermediaries or not at all. We do not have God speaking to Joseph, periodically, saying, "Buck up, Joseph. Things seem difficult, but I am in charge, so don't worry about a thing." Joseph will reveal an awareness of all this. As believers, we all go through difficult circumstances, and life throws us curves; but God does not contact us directly or through a prophet or speak to us audibly, telling us that everything is okay.

God does not assume some visage and speak to believers in the Church Age, encouraging and guiding them. God does not come to us in our dreams and tell us what we need to do the next day. No one in the Church Age has a breastplate which will light up in order to guide them about in life. What we have is the Word of God; and God's Word is so brilliant that, if it is in our soul, then we are going to know what to do. It is God's Word which orients us to life and to God's plan.

I have been a believer for over 40 years, and I have been quite imperfect throughout every single one of those 40 years. However, there have only been a few instances where I struggled with God's will. Most of the time, I took my circumstances, mixed in the Bible doctrine that I knew, and then was able to determine what should be done (now, that does not mean I always did the right thing; but most of the time, I knew what the right thing to do was). At no time did I see some miraculous apparition pointing to the right rather than

to the left, and guiding me on which way to turn. There are very few decisions over which I agonized, wondering if I should have done this rather than that.

This is Joseph's life, and this is why it is so important that you, as a believer in the Church Age, to pay attention to his life and what is happening in it. Apart from the fact that he understands God's meaning in specific dreams, everything else which occurs appears, on the surface, to be fairly commonplace and unextraordinary.

Gen. 40:1–3 Some time after this, the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker committed an offense against their lord the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined. (ESV)

Joseph is in a specific prison, and, one day, two new inmates arrive, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, both of whom had been high up in the kingdom of Egypt, both of whom were suspected of plotting against the king. God places these men in Joseph's path. There is nothing magical or mysterious about it. There are a series of events in Joseph's life that leads him into this prison and there are a series of events which leads these two men into the very same prison, perhaps months or even years after Joseph is placed there.

There are no mysterious or magical incidents involved in the process; yet God's will and purpose are clearly a part of this process. This is true of our lives, whether we are in fellowship or not, whether we advance spiritually or not. If we are in fellowship and if we are growing believers, then we are able to enjoy the ride; if not, then most of the time, we have no idea what is going on all around us, apart from random and difficult events.

Genesis 40:4 And the chief of the executioners charged Joseph with them, and he served them. And they continued for a time under guard.

God places Joseph in this place and for a reason; and these two prisoners are a part of God's grand, complex plan.

These men were more or less under Joseph's control, who ran the prison from the inside. The chief of the executioners had found that Joseph was a trustworthy, competent man. Knowing that he has the position and watching his actions from day-to-day, both of the new prisoners would also come to trust Joseph and even to confide in him.

God has placed Joseph in the right place at the right time. People who do not understand God might cry out, "It is unjust! He should not be in jail!" Joseph appears to understand that this is where God wants him at this point in his life. Since God wanted Joseph to be in jail, interacting with these two prisoners, the means of getting Joseph into that jail are immaterial. Of course he suffered injustice. Pharaoh's wife continually pursued him and, when she realized that she could not have him, she accuses him of attempted rape! That is great injustice.

There was nothing nefarious, insofar as Pharaoh is concerned, going on here. Joseph was in charge of the prisoners, and he simply had two more prisoners (until the time when Pharaoh could work things out). Although we find out a little about the plot later in this chapter, it is likely that the Pharaoh suspected both of these men. Pharaoh will do some investigation and come to a conclusion about the guilt of innocence of each man, and that will coincide perfectly with the dreams that they have.[13] All of these events intermingle with a perfect timing.

Genesis 40:5 And they dreamed a dream, both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were bound in the prison.

Or, a slightly better translation:

Gen. 40:5 And the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison, had a dream, both of them, each man's dream in one night and each man's dream with its own interpretation. (VW)

Or:

Gen. 40:5 Then the two of them each had a dream. They both had their dreams the same night, and there were separate interpretations for each dream—the senior security advisor and the head chef to the king of Egypt, who had confined them in prison. (ISV)

God, because there was no complete canon of Scripture, sometimes spoke to man through dreams. This time, God will speak to them in such a way that they will not understand what He is saying, but a man of God will understand. You will note that both dreams will sound very similar.

Because we have the complete canon of Scripture, God is not going to speak to you or me in a dream; nor are there mediums of God out there able to read your dreams. Our dreams have limited meaning now, and possibly, for some mentally damaged individuals, they may hold some keys to their mental health. But, we cannot look to our dreams for divine revelation. We do not look to our dreams for guidance or to learn the will of God; we look to the Bible for that.

In that era, a time when there was possibly no written divine revelation apart from two-thirds of the book of Genesis and possibly the book of Job (all of which was possibly memorized and not necessarily written down), revelation from God came in a variety of forms. God speaks to these two prisoners of pharaoh not to necessarily guide them in their lives, but to glorify Himself. They will have the dreams, they will not understand their dreams, and Joseph will interpret them; but none of this is really about the prisoners; it is all about God's will and God's glory.

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[13] Although there are other options for what is going on behind the scenes, I choose the options which put Pharaoh in the better light, given his behavior later in this chapter.

In fact, this is not even about Joseph. Joseph will make a fatal mistake—he will place his faith in man—and God will set him on the sidelines for a time.

Genesis 40:6 And Joseph came in to them in the morning, and looked upon them, and behold, they were sad.

Apparently, there were individual cells—it is not clear how many men shared a cell—and Joseph came in to where they were the next morning. Their faces indicated that both men were quite *troubled* or *perplexed*.

The word translated *sad* (by the MKJV) is zâʿaph (זָעַף) [pronounced *zaw-ĢAHF*], which means, *fretting, being sad, being wroth (angry enraged), being vexed, being out of humour; appearing perplexed (troubled, sad-looking)*. Strong's #2196 BDB #277. So, even though a great many translations use the word *sad,* I believe that *fretting* or *being perplexed* might better describe their states of mind. The ESV and VW both use the word *troubled;* the CEV uses the word *upset*.

These are two men who once held very high positions in government and now they are in jail. So, their being *sad* seems like a pretty normal emotion for them to have all of the time. Their dreams, which they recognize as informative, are simply beyond their grasp. They seem to understand that these dreams are significant, but do not understand their meanings.

Both men had dreams that affected them emotionally. They were both emotionally moved by their dreams. It is unclear about the interplay of God, their dreams and their emotions. My guess is, each man understood that his dream was significant and meaningful; but was unable to apprehend the meaning of it.

Genesis 40:7 And he asked Pharaoh's eunuchs [= officers] who were with him under guard in his lord's house, saying, "Why are your faces sad today?"

Again, recall that the word for *eunuchs* can mean, *official, minister of the court; prince; eunuch*. I have certainly heard stories of men being made eunuchs in order to serve this or that king; but I have no idea if this is the case here. The ESV translates this verse:

Gen. 40:7 So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house, "Why are your faces downcast today?"

Interestingly enough, there are a different set of words used for v. 7 than were used in v. 6. There is a direct reference to their *faces* and their faces are said to be raʿ (עַר) [pronounced *rahģ*], which means, *evil, bad, wicked; evil in appearance, deformed; misery, distress, injury; that which is displeasing [disagreeable, unhappy, unfortunate, sad]*. Strong's #7451 BDB #948. Both men look *distressed* or *unhappy*.

When faced with a life-changing event in our personal history, we often go through a state of denial, where we might think that, we will wake up the next morning and that event will

be different. No doubt, at first, both men hoped to be returned to their positions of power. However, with these dreams, they seem to come to the realization that, they are in difficult circumstances and they might, as a result, be executed.

Joseph notices that these two men, in his charge, seem very melancholic—more so than normal—and he inquires why.

These very specific circumstances allow for this situation to occur, where Joseph, first a slave and then a prisoner as a result of unjust circumstances, is speaking to two men formerly of two very high offices in the land. On the social scale in Egypt, these men could not be much more different. Furthermore, Joseph is probably quite young compared to these men, and, originally, he was a foreigner.

There are very few circumstances in life where these 3 men might be thrown together with one another where the two officials might actually listen to what Joseph has to say. This is one of those few circumstances where these men might be willing to confide in Joseph and then to hear him out.

Genesis 40:8 And they said to him, "We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it." And Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Now tell it to me."

It appears that both men discussed this with each other first, and when Joseph asked them, they responded with, "We have dreamed a dream." These dreams are very similar, and to them, it may seem as though they dreamed the same dream.

Joseph focuses their attention on God. However, in asking to be told their dreams, he suggests that he might be able to, with God's help, interpret their dreams.

Both men clearly are concerned over their dreams. This may be in part because of the dream and the fact that they are in prison, which could result in their execution.

The man who is innocent knows that he is innocent, and the man who is guilty knows that he is guilty;[14] but both men fear being put to death over whatever plot was uncovered, and both men realize that an execution may take place, despite their guilt or innocence. Their immediate future was a great concern to both men. They seemed to understand that these dreams possessed great meaning about their future.

Lesson 410 Genesis 40:9–15 — The Dream of the Chief Cupbearer

At this point in the narrative, Joseph is in prison, but he is also in charge of the prison. Two new prisoners have been brought in—the chief cupbearer and the chief baker—both men are suspected of sedition.

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[14] I have made the assumption that one man is guilty and the other one is not.

After a time, both men had a dream on the same night, a dream which affects them deeply, and Joseph encourages the men to tell the dreams to him.

Both men agree to Joseph's proposal, to tell him their dreams. Bear in mind, one man is innocent and the other man is not[15]; and they themselves know who is who (although, it is possible that the innocent man does not know for certain that the other man is guilty). The innocent man goes first.

Genesis 40:9 And the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "In my dream, behold, a vine was before me.

Joseph has the confidence of both the jailer and his prisoners. Few people would be able to gain such confidence from both sides of the fence like this. This places him in a unique position. In our lives, because of will of God, we will, on occasion, find ourselves in unique positions as well, sometimes there are incidents that we are aware of, that no one else is, that God wants us to pray about; sometimes, we are interacting with some people, having a unique relationship with them. Don't ever view the evangelist or pastor-teacher or missionary with disdain or with envy. Every person has a unique and important part to play in the plan of God with our unique relationships. Whether you enjoy any sort of notoriety in the Christian world or not is immaterial.

Joseph is one of the most important Biblical figures, and he has been a slave and now he is in jail for an indeterminable amount of time; and yet, God uses him—in fact, God uses him far more than God uses any of his brothers, who are all free men.

The chief cupbearer tells Joseph his dream.

Genesis 40:10 And in the vine were three branches. And it was as if it budded, and its blossom shot up. And the clusters of it brought forth ripe grapes.

There are 3 branches which come off this vine, and there are ripe grapes on the vine.

Genesis 40:11 And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand. And I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand."

The pharaoh apparently likes grape juice, and the chief cupbearer makes him some fresh grape juice (which I see as being one of the great delicacies of this life).

Genesis 40:12 And Joseph said to him, "This is the interpretation of it. The three branches are three days.

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[15] The narrative does not actually specify which man is innocent and which is guilty; it simply gives their final disposition under the law, so I have made the assumption that their judicial end indicates their guilt or innocence.

Joseph does not appear to Mickey Mouse around. He does not throw dust into the air and speak in a low voice. He appears to immediately interpret the dream, without any dramatics or fanfare.

Ron Snider pointed out that several commentators (which I have not read yet) say that Joseph went off and prayed somewhere. There is no indication that Joseph went off and prayed anywhere (which Snider also recognizes).

What is going to come to pass occurs fairly soon after the dreams. A prophet in the Old Testament was given credence by the near fulfillment of his words. Sometimes we are made aware of these prophecies and sometimes we are not.

We think of prophecies as being long term, hundreds of years into the future. But prophets also spoke of things that would be fulfilled soon, so that those who heard the prophecy would see with their own eyes the fulfillment of same. This way, they had credibility.

We have seen just the opposite with the global warming prophets of our day. Those who have made prophecies for the short-term (like kids in Washington D.C. would never know what snow is like) have all been proven wrong. Many have found it to be better to make dire predictions of what will happen long after they are dead in order to influence public opinion. There are those in the public who fervently believe their warnings despite the fact that, what they have already warned about has never come to pass.

The difference between these prophets and Joseph is, Joseph speaks the truth.

Joseph tells his fellow inmate what will happen in 3 days. And he will be right.

Genesis 40:13 Yet within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place. And you will deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, just as you did when you were his cupbearer.

The chief cupbearer would be restored to his position of trust and responsibility.

What did a chief cupbearer do? Stand around with a cup in his hand just in case Pharaoh needed one? "Got your cup right here, Big P."

The Chief Cupbearer (from ISBE)

1) The chief cupbearer was an officer of high rank at ancient oriental courts, whose duty it was to serve the wine at the king's table.
2) The Hebrew noun is, mash^{e}qeh (מַשְׁקֶה) [pronounced *mahsh-KEH*], which means, *butlership (office of butler); butler, cup-bearer* (among other things). Strong's #4945 BDB #1052.
3) On account of the constant fear of plots and intrigues, a person must be regarded as thoroughly trustworthy to hold this position. He must guard against poison in the king's cup, and was sometimes required to swallow some of the wine before

The Chief Cupbearer (from ISBE)

serving it.

4) His confidential relations with the king often endeared him to his sovereign and also gave him a position of great influence. This officer is first mentioned in Scripture in Gen. 40:1, where the Hebrew word elsewhere translated "cupbearer" is rendered "butler."

5) The phrase "chief of the butlers" (Gen. 40:2) accords with the fact that there were often a number of such officials under one as chief.

6) Nehemiah (compare Neh. 1:11) was cupbearer to Artaxerxes Longimanus, and was held in high esteem by him, as the record shows. His financial ability (Neh. 5:8, Neh. 5:10, Neh. 5:14, Neh. 5:17) would indicate that the office was a lucrative one.

7) Cupbearers are mentioned further in 1Kings 10:5; 2Chron. 9:4, where they, among other evidences of royal splendor, are stated to have impressed the queen of Sheba with Solomon's glory.

8) The title Rabshakeh (Isa. 36:2), once thought to mean "chief of the cupbearers," is now given a different derivation and explained as "chief of the officers," or "princes" (BDB under the word).

Mostly from *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia;* James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; ℗ by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: *cupbearer*. Some editing and some additions.

R. B. Thieme, Jr., who was a brilliant ancient historian, suggested that the chief cupbearer was also in charge of telling Pharaoh who he was meeting and would give him a brief biography. Most high-level politicians have a man like this (often the chief-of-staff) who keeps the politician informed on the person he is currently meeting with. That the chief cupbearer would later forget Joseph's name and request makes his position all the more ironic, as Joseph will depend on this man's memory of names and faces for the clearing of his name.

Genesis 40:14 But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me, and make mention of me to Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house."

This is Joseph's mistake—and he does not make many mistakes. He depends upon this man to see to his freedom. At this point, Joseph should focusing this man's attention upon God, Who placed all of these men together, and Who gave them their dreams, and Who gave Joseph the wisdom to interpret these dreams. Joseph's circumstances are *not* the issue. His relationship with God is the issue.

At this point, Joseph should not be saying, "Remember me when you are freed." He should be saying, "The LORD God has revealed these things to me and therefore, He has revealed them to you as well." Or he should have thanked God audibly in a prayer before the chief cupbearers. He should not have said, "Look, dude, I have been stuck in this hole unfairly, and I need *you* to get me out of here." Joseph's faith is misplaced, momentarily, and that will mean that Joseph himself will be set aside for a time to get his mind right.

Joseph's God is not just able to interpret dreams; Joseph's God can free Joseph anytime that He wants to. Joseph is not in jail simply over a false allegation—Joseph is in jail because *that* is where God has placed him. If God wanted to, He could remove the doors of the prison and let Joseph walk right out of there.

Instead of pleading his case to God, Joseph pleads his case before the chief cupbearer. The chief cupbearer is to remember, "There is a man of God in prison." God does not mean for him to recall, "There is a man who claims to be unjustly charged in prison." Joseph is giving the chief cupbearer the wrong information to remember. Joseph's eyes are momentarily off God and on himself and his own circumstances. When he ought to speak of his God's providence ("Remember how God placed you here to hear His truth"), Joseph starts talking about himself instead.

Genesis 40:15a For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews,...

It is quite interesting that Joseph speaks of Canaan as the land of the Hebrews. The family of Abraham had become quite well-known; and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all quite wealthy. They were the Hebrews—they were the ones who crossed over. Numerically, they were very few (apart from their slaves and employees); but Joseph's words here suggest one of two things: (1) Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were known to the royalty of Egypt (not personally known, but they were known of); or (2) the land where Joseph had lived became known to Egyptians as the land of the Hebrews. There is a third option. Joseph thinks that they are well-known but they are not.

I think that, men who came out of the land of Canaan and came down to Egypt were known as *Hebrews,* which was somewhat of a catch-all term to begin with, but one which began, at some point, to be applied specifically to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who lived in Egypt (they will spend about 400 years in the land of Egypt).

Genesis 40:15 For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon.

Joseph tells him of his history and why he is in this dungeon. It is likely that he went into far more detail than what we read here. This is all very true, but this is not the issue.

Application: There are times when you are treated unfairly or circumstances work against you. God allows all of that for a reason. Sometimes it is testing and sometimes it is putting you in a unique position. Therefore, do not spend your life fretting over this or that bad break. Do not continually bring up Charley Brown's name, who swindled you in a business deal. The God of Abraham oversees your life; and nothing happens to you apart from His choice (His plan). When you believe that you have been cheated or that circumstances and events conspired against you, then you need enough doctrine in your soul to recognize that this is all about God's will for your life. God does not make mistakes; He is not confused; He did not slip up and accidently put you into bad circumstances.

Therefore, Joseph should not be talking to the chief cupbearer and telling him that all of this is a mistake, and that he is unjustly cooling his heels in prison.

It seems reasonable that the chief cupbearer would not just know individuals and their backgrounds by name and face; but he would also have a good working knowledge of the peoples and groupings near Egypt. A country had to be aware of potential threats and potential allies.

Some believe that, one of the duties of the chief cupbearer, is to, as someone approaches Pharaoh, to whisper into his ear, who this person is, what they might want, and perhaps some personal information (the name of his wife, the number of children he has, etc.). This is the most important aspect of the chief cupbearer's job. This is so Pharaoh does not draw a blank, give Charley Brown a confused stare, and say, "And you are...?"

So, Joseph is saying, "Remember me," to a man whose job it is to remember people. But, the chief cupbearer will forget all about Joseph.

Snider gives us a good summary of the chief cupbearer's dream and its interpretation.

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 40:9–15

1. The cupbearer relates the details of his dream to Joseph, not just the general gist of it. The details are important and symbolize something, so each is important.
2. The same is true of Bible doctrine, it is not sufficient to have a general overall picture of the Word of God, one must be serious enough to study the details.
3. Boredom with the details of Scripture is a form of negative volition toward the Word of God and demonstrates lack of occupation with Christ.
4. There is no evidence that Joseph did anything other than stand there and listen to the dream and immediately relate the explanation.
5. Some interpreters have him running off to pray about it and try to figure it out.
6. There is a time for prayer and there is a time for decisive action.
7. The believer who does not have his spiritual life in order, will be unprepared for the times when he should be ready to act.
8. One never knows when they will be confronted with a situation which demands action, and there is no time to resort to prayer.
9. The adjusting believer who is ordering his life according to the dictates of doctrine may, like Joseph, here manifest a confidence that God is with them and will bless them in what they do.
10. You may offer up a quick mental prayer, acknowledging that you need wisdom, and then confidently move on.
11. The dream and its interpretation:
    1) three branches=three days.
    2) the rapid growth and production of fruit=rapid sequence of events for the cupbearer.
    3) Pharaoh's cup in his hand=royal favor.
    4) Squeezing grapes into the cup and placing cup into the hand of

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 40:9–15

Pharaoh=restoration to office and responsibilities

12. In vs 14-15 Joseph makes a request of the cupbearer which he is to remember when he is restored to his previous fortunes.
13. He knows that from time to time he will think back on his prison stint and of course he will remember Joseph when he does.
14. Joseph wants him to put in a good word to Pharaoh and get him released from
15. He informs the cupbearer that he is an unwilling inhabitant in Egypt and uses the strongest possible expression to relate how he came to be there.
16. His brothers did in fact kidnap him and sold him to the Ishmaelites.
17. Beyond that Joseph relates that he is innocent and that there is nothing he has done which deserved imprisonment.
18. The final phrase of vs 15 fills us in that this prison was not a particularly pleasant place to reside.
19. Even though it was adjacent to or on the estate of Potiphar, the prison had the qualities of an underground dungeon.
20. Joseph will be disappointed by placing his faith in the chief cupbearer/wine steward.
21. God has a time for all things in his plan, and the time for Joseph to get out of prison is still some two years away.
22. The dreams and their fulfillments should serve as an encouragement to Joseph in his difficult situation. This tells him that God is with him.
23. And while Joseph would like to get out now, the providence of God is in motion in these events, even if he can't see it.
24. This is a valuable lesson of which every believer must take note; God may be orchestrating events to His desired end even when we cannot see the big picture.
25. It is very easy to get bogged down in the day to day affairs of our niche and lose sight of the fact that God has the future well in hand.
26. Like Joseph we begin to rely on the arm or flesh to provide our deliverance or blessing, rather than trusting God and faith-resting the outcome.

From http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen40.doc (link will open up document in Word or WP); accessed August 17, 2016 (edited).

Lesson 411 Genesis 40:16–23 — The Dream of the Chief Baker

Joseph finds himself in prison, in charge of two prisoners of Pharaoh, one who appears to be innocent and the other who appears to be guilty. They will both have dreams, and then, 3 days later, Pharaoh will deal with them.

When dealing with an innocent man and a guilty man, many times the innocent man will go first, as he is, in some fashion, pleading his case. An innocent person can hardly wait to give his side of the story. The guilty one hangs back, observes what happens, and then decides how he ought to play his cards as a result.

Joseph has given the interpretation of the chief cupbearer's dream, and it is a good outcome. He would be restored to his old position of trust and influence. He would be out of prison within 3 days.

The chief baker has heard this interpretation, he likes it, and his dream is very similar. Therefore, he will also tell his dream to Joseph.

Genesis 40:16 When the chief baker saw the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, "I also saw in my dream, and three baskets of white bread were on my head.

The dreams of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker sound very similar. The chief baker knows that he has done wrong. He may or may not know about the chief cupbearer (the chief baker certainly knows that the chief cupbearer is not involved in his own plot against the Pharaoh). However, the first dream received such a favorable interpretation and the dreams were so similar, that the chief baker decides to roll the dice.

Notice how he said, "I also." This indicates that he believed his dream to be similar.

In his dream, he has three baskets of bread on his head.

Genesis 40:17 And in the top basket were all kinds of baked foods for Pharaoh. And the birds ate them out of the basket upon my head."

There are baked goods and birds are eating them. What could be wrong with that? Who doesn't like baked goods and who doesn't like birds? Who doesn't like watching birds eat?

Notice that there are similarities between the two dreams. On the surface, both dreams appear to be fairly innocuous; they both have food in them, both involve Pharaoh, there are elements of both dreams which are related to the vocation of these men, and they both have *3's* in them.

For all we know, the chief baker may have been sizing up Joseph, wondering, "What's your angle, kid?" When he hears him appeal to the chief cupbearer to be let out of prison, the chief baker may think, "That's the angle—give a good interpretation of the dream, and if you are right, parlay that into your own freedom." I am only speculating here. Criminals (and revolutionaries *are* criminals) often watch others, trying to determine their angle, just in case they might be able to use that to their own benefit.

On the other hand, the chief baker make place some stock in what Joseph tells him. We do not know what exactly these men are thinking, apart from being troubled by their dreams.

Genesis 40:18 And Joseph answered and said, "This is the interpretation of it. The three baskets are three days.

And the chief baker is thinking, “So far, so good. Maybe I am also out of here in three days.” Then Joseph delivers the bad news:

Genesis 40:19 Yet within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head from off you, and will hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat your flesh from off you.”

Obviously, this is not what the chief baker wanted to hear. He knows that he is guilty,[16] but, no one wants to be executed. Certainly, he was hoping against hope that, he may have had a dream signifying a good end as well.

Snider provides a good summary of what we have studied.

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 40:16–19

1. Encouraged by the favorable interpretation of the cupbearers dream, the head of the bakery department is anxious for the explanation of his dream.
2. He relates his dream in rapid order, not even using a verb to express the obvious action.
3. His dream was, to his mind, similar to the dream of the chief cupbearer, and he seems to expect a similar interpretation.
4. His dream was similar in that both had elements related to their official capacity in the royal court.
5. Just as Pharaoh's cup was in the hand of the cupbearer, Pharaoh's food was in baskets on top of the baker's head.
6. This was the normal method employed by Egyptian men in bearing burdens.
7. Three baskets were carried by the baker, and in the top basket, food of every sort as was consumed by the royal court.
8. The birds were eating from the uppermost basket and they were eating unabated, no one attempted to drive them off.
9. The baker himself could not drive them off due to their relative position above him.
10. Joseph interprets his dream and delivers stunning news to the baker. The dream and its interpretation:
    1) Three baskets=three days.
    2) Baked goods in baskets=cooking he did not perform.
    3) The elevated basket=decapitation.
    4) Birds eating unmolested=scavengers picking his bones.
11. The significant change in this dream is the addition of the phrase "from upon you.”
12. Pharaoh will remove his head and hang his corpse on a tree.
13. While we are told nothing of the baker's reaction, he was no doubt frightened and at the same time skeptical, hoping that Joseph had no true insight into dreams.
14. These dreams and their fulfillment are designed to encourage Joseph that God

[16] Scripture never deals with the actual guilt or innocence of these men. We simply know which man will be adjudicated as innocent and which one is adjudicated as guilty.

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 40:16–19

is faithful to his revealed plan.

15. Furthermore, the chief cupbearer would be instrumental in getting Joseph out of jail, but it would be according to God's plan and God's timing.

From http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen40.doc (link will open up document in Word or WP); accessed August 17, 2016 (edited and appended).

Genesis 40:20 And it happened on the third day, Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast to all his servants. And he lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer, and of the chief baker, among his servants.

There are odd things and bits of information, thrown into some verses, and they often make me wonder, *why is that there?* Sometimes, the explanation helps to bring meaning to the passage, or supply some interesting tidbit of information that clears up, say, time and place. However, this one has me flummoxed. *Pharaoh's birthday*. No idea why this is mentioned, apart from there being a celebration.

There will be an element of time in all of this; and two years will pass in between these chapters. Perhaps the birthday of the Pharaoh is an easy thing to remember; and it also allows Joseph and others to think in terms of years.

In any case, just as Joseph predicted, understanding the dreams as he did, 3 days passed.

You will note the clever play on words from a man (Joseph) who is naturally gifted in writing narrative[17]—*and he lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and of the chief baker*. The first man would have his office restored to him, which is lifting up the head; the second had his head lifted off his body.

Genesis 40:21 And he restored the chief cupbearer back into his cupbearer office again. And he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.

The chief cupbearer is returned to his position of trust and authority again. He resumes his duties, just as his dream had suggested and just as Joseph had interpreted.

Genesis 40:22 But he hanged the chief baker, even as Joseph had interpreted to them.

The chief baker is hanged, just as Joseph said would happen.

Genesis 40:23 Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

This is quite fascinating, because this would have been one of the primary jobs of a chief cupbearer. A leader cannot be expected to know everyone, even if they have met 2 or 3

[17] I am not sure if I have read any commentary that remarks on the literary excellence of Joseph's narrative.

times in the past. A ruler needs someone speaking into his ear telling him who this or that person is, and they have interacted, and maybe one or two things that are important for that ruler to know.

I have seen this on television shows, where a Senator or president is about to shake hands with Charley Brown, and a trusted aide whispers into his ear, "This is Charley Brown, he is the mayor of Centerville, Nebraska; and he has two sons and a wife." And the Senator might then say, "Hey, Charley; how's it going? How are the two boys? And how about those Cornhuskers this year?" This is particularly important in American politics where connections and donors have to be known and interacted with. Recognition of this sort often leads to a stronger alliance or more donation money.

It was the job of the chief cupbearer to remember these names; and yet, he did not remember Joseph's name. What happened? Joseph, for a moment, decided to depend upon the chief cupbearer for his release; Joseph became overly concerned about his own plight; and God needed Joseph to know that, all dependence should be directed toward God. Joseph should know, God has everything in His hands; it is all under control.

Application: The United States seems to be very close to a turning point in its history; even if we do not elect a Democratic president this year, a huge percentage of our population believe that socialism is the answer to all that ails us. Not just brainwashed kids but adults as well. These same people have, for the most part, rejected the God of the Bible. This does not bode well for the next few decades of America. However, believers with doctrine have to be able to accept the authority of even a tyrannical government, one which steals from its people and corporations, and does not value freedom or our Constitution. It is not up to believers to raise up arms in revolt against an increasingly intrusive federal government, despite our moving away from the principles which made the United States the greatest nation on this earth. We have to accept life as it is, and recognize that, God loves the people of the United States, and we may be under some serious discipline to straighten us out. Just as God takes care of Joseph, God will take care of us individually.

However—note Joseph's mistake: he depends upon man for his deliverance. In our democracy, it is a good thing for the believer to be aware of the political issues and be able to distinguish between the parties and platforms, as a part of our responsibility in life in the United States is to vote. This is a great blessing that few men in history have enjoyed. However, our deliverance is not going to depend upon some politician—it will depend wholly upon the God of the Universe.

Lesson 412: Genesis 41:1–8 — Pharaoh's Disturbing Dreams

In Gen. 39, Joseph was in prison for attempted rape (he had been falsely accused). This just happened to be the prison where the king's prisoners were kept (Gen. 39:20), and Joseph, because he showed great integrity and competence, was put in charge of the prison and the prisoners (Gen. 39:21–23).

In Gen. 40, what appears to have taken place is a plot against the king, and there were two of the suspected plotters placed into prison with Joseph. The Bible is never completely clear on the plot itself, on the actual guilt or innocence of these two prisoners (throughout, I took the simple position that the innocent man was freed and the guilty man executed). But they both had dreams, and these dreams disturbed them. Luckily, Joseph was there among them, and they told their dreams to Joseph and he correctly interpreted them—in 3 days, one of them would be restored to his position and the other would be executed. To the man who would be freed, Joseph plead his own case, depending upon man rather than upon God for his own freedom. Joseph did not recognize that God placed him into prison, not man; and the time of his imprisonment was dependent solely upon God.

This next chapter takes place two years later. Joseph, a master of the 3rd person, omniscient narrative, is careful to indicate the passage of time, so that we move from Gen. 40 to Gen. 41 seamlessly.

Genesis 41:1a And it happened at the end of two years of days,...

The expression *two years of days* is interesting. For Joseph, this time of two years went by slowly for him. Perhaps he is learning the hard way that, our trust should be in God, not in man. He has two years of days to contemplate this truth.

We move 2 years forward in time. God placed Joseph with the two government officials and God gave Joseph the ability to understand and interpret their dreams. However, Joseph decided that he would depend upon man, upon the chief cupbearer, to facilitate his freedom. So God leaves Joseph right where he is, because Joseph's freedom depends upon God, not upon any government official. Joseph needs to understand that.

This is Joseph's style of writing, to connect these chapters together, to let us know what is going on. In the original text, there are no chapters or even verse divisions. However, the language itself is used to express such divisions. Furthermore, much of the last portion of Genesis is chiastically organized, so chapter divisions can be recognized in that way as well.

The writings of Joseph are all carefully arranged into chiasmos.

William Ramey's Chiasmos of Genesis 41:1–57

A	Pharaoh's dreams (1-8)
B	The chief cupbearer remembers Joseph (9-13)
C	Joseph comes to Pharaoh (14)
D	Pharaoh recounts his dreams to Joseph (15-24)
E	Joseph's interpretation and advice (25-36)
X	Joseph's divine endowment (37-38)
E'	Pharaoh's recognition of Joseph's abilities (39)
D'	Pharaoh makes Joseph lord over his land (40-45)
C'	Joseph in Pharaoh's presence (46-49)

William Ramey's Chiasmos of Genesis 41:1–57

B' Joseph forgets his trouble because of God's blessing (50-52)
A' Pharaoh's dreams come to pass (53-57)

Notice what is in the exact middle of this chiasmos—vv. 37–38. Often, this is the focus of a chapter or the most important portion of the chapter.

From https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html accessed September 19, 2015.

Obviously, over a period of two years, many things happen in the Egyptian government; the Pharaoh has many things to say; and Joseph has 2 years of life in prison. However, none of these things are understood to be important to the narrative. The simplest way to understand the back story of this narrative is, Pharaoh correctly determined the guilt and innocence of his two prisoners, executing one and restoring the other. In this chapter, the Pharaoh will have 2 disturbing dreams, and, suddenly, the chief cupbearer will remember Joseph.

Two years later, Pharaoh has a dream.

Genesis 41:1 And it happened at the end of two years of days, Pharaoh dreamed. And behold, he stood by the river.

The Pharaoh has a dream, and it is quite distinct in his mind. He is standing by the river, which would be the Nile River (I am assuming; however, my guess is, there was more water and other rivers in Egypt then, more than today).

Genesis 41:2 And behold! There came up out of the river seven cows beautiful of form, and fat of flesh. And they fed in the reeds!

In the Nile River are all of these reeds, and there are 7 healthy, attractive cows (well, as attractive as cows can be) and they are coming out of the water to feed on the reeds.

I have no idea if cows in Egypt ever did anything like this. Because Egyptians would have used the water in Egypt for many reasons (including to keep oneself clean), I would think that they would have kept their cows out of the rivers. Because these cows are eating the reeds in the Nile, this would be seen as unusual, and therefore, caught Pharaoh's attention.

I think the meaning is, this prophetic dream applies to Egypt and to the waters of Egypt.

Genesis 41:3 And behold! Seven other cows came up after them out of the river, evil in appearance, and lean of flesh! And they stood by the other cows on the river bank.

However, next, there are 7 more cows, who look pretty bad, and all of these cows are standing next to one another along the river bank. Although the descriptor used here

means *evil,* about half of the translators suggest that the appearance of the cows is unattractive (most of them use the word *ugly*). This is a legitimate translation of the word.

Genesis 41:4 And the evil-appearing and lean-fleshed cows ate up the seven beautifully formed and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke. (MKJV)

At the time that I began this study of Genesis, I chose the Modern KJV, and that is what is used throughout (particularly when the translation stands unattributed). Since then, the English Standard Version came out, which is a better translation.

Genesis 41:4 And the ugly, thin cows ate up the seven attractive, plump cows. And Pharaoh awoke. (ESV)

The lean, crappy-looking cows eat up the attractive, fat cows. Then Pharaoh wakes up. This dream somehow enters into his memory, despite the fact that he falls back asleep (you may have experienced a very vivid dream, but if you fall back asleep and dream again, then the first dream usually fades from memory).

Genesis 41:5 And he slept and dreamed the second time. And behold! Seven ears of grain came up on one stock, fat and good!

Pharaoh wakes up, then falls asleep, and he has another dream. The idea is, these two dreams confirm one another. This indicates that what is about to happen is real (this does *not* mean that, if you have two similar dreams, then they are predicting your future).

He observes 7 ears of grain (or corn) come up on one stalk, and they are healthy and good looking. In an agrarian society, even Pharaoh would be able to recognize healthy grain.

Genesis 41:6 And behold! Seven thin ears, and blasted with the east wind, sprang up after them!

Then seven thin ears come up, and they look beat back by the wind. The ears of grain or corn look thin and blighted.

Genesis 41:7 And the seven thin ears devoured the seven fat and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and behold, it was a dream.

The thin ears of corn (or grain) eat up the 7 fat and healthy ears. Pharaoh wakes up, realizing that this was a dream.

This final phrase suggests a great emotional involvement by Pharaoh. We have all had dreams and wake up happy or sad or mad at someone; that somehow, these dreams affect us emotionally; and where someone that we know is in the dream, we have an emotions about that person. Pharaoh wakes up, and he realizes that it was a dream; but he has a definite emotional response to it. He is clearly disturbed by these dreams.

He also wakes up remembering both dreams, possibly because of them being so similar to one another. God is speaking to Pharaoh through these dreams. Now, how does God make one set of dreams stand out, where Pharaoh must have dreams every night—I could not tell you. Some mechanics are never given in Scripture. But these two dreams strike Pharaoh as being significant and worth discussing in his court.

Genesis 41:8 And it happened in the morning that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men of it. And Pharaoh told them his dream, but there was none who could interpret them to Pharaoh.

Pharaoh's spirit is troubled. This is the Niphal (passive) imperfect of pâʿam (פַּעָם) [pronounced *paw-ĢAHM*]. The imperfect tense often refers to action which continues. Pharaoh did not wake up and say, "Wow, those were two really weird dreams," and then goes about his day. He continued to be *agitated, disturbed, troubled*. Strong's #6470 BDB #821. These dreams stayed with him and bothered him throughout the morning. He apparently could not get them out of his thinking.

There is another thing about dreams. Most of the time, if we don't think about them, they fade from our memories. We might enjoy vivid dreams, but if we don't continue to think about them or write them down, a few hours after we have been awake, they are mostly gone. But, not these dreams that Pharaoh dreamed. He cannot get them out of his head.

Pharaoh has many people upon whom he can call. There are the magicians. *Magician* is the Hebrew word char^{e}ṭôm (חַרְטֻם) [pronounced *khahr-TOHM*]. It means, *an engraver, a writer [possessing information of the occult]; a diviner, a magician, an astrologer; mystic*. Strong's #2748 BDB #355. This set of people may have been more *out there*. Some (or all) of them could be charlatans.

Pharaoh also has *wise men* upon whom he could call. *Wise men* is the Hebrew word châkâm (חָכָם) [pronounced *khah-KAWM*], which means, *wise men, those capable of knowing [judging]; intelligent men; men who are skillful [adept, proficient; subtle, crafty]*. Strong's #2450 BDB #314. Whatever the level of their wisdom, they were not able to tell Pharaoh the meaning of his dreams.

Even though Pharaoh sent for a number of experts, none of them could interpret his two dreams. It is not clear whether some of them tried, and the Pharaoh simply rejected their goofy interpretations, or if none of them was willing to even take a stab at it. In any case, the mystics and the wise men of Egypt were of no help interpreting Pharaoh's dreams.

Lesson 413: Genesis 41:9–14 The Chief Cupbearer Remembers Joseph

Two years have passed since Joseph interpreted the dreams of the Chief Cupbearer and the Chief Baker. Even though Joseph appealed to the Chief Cupbearer to remember him, he did not. Even though it was apparently the job of the Chief Cupbearer to remember names, he forgot Joseph's.

After two years pass, Pharaoh dreams two dreams, which agitate him greatly. He first calls for the mystics and the wise men to come in, to explain his dream to him, but they are of no help to him.

Genesis 41:9 Then the chief cupbearer spoke to Pharaoh, saying, "I remember my sin this day.

After those men are unable to interpret Pharaoh's dream, the chief cupbearer realizes that he had forgotten all about Joseph. Joseph correctly interpreted his dream; and Joseph correctly interpreted the dream of the chief baker. It is the chief cupbearer who tells pharaoh who each person is; and yet, when he is freed, he forgets to tell pharaoh about Joseph.

What are the mechanics here? Did God blank out this man's memory? Or did he suddenly have to shift back into his responsibilities, and, as a result, completely forget what he should know.

The Bible is silent here. People do forget things—even important things—and sometimes, your memory is taken up by the next shiny object placed before you. What we know for certain is, the chief cupbearer realizes that he should have said something to free Joseph; but now, he knows that Joseph is the correct man to interpret pharaoh's dreams. This is, of course, in line with God's plan, as Joseph made the mistake of putting his faith in man as opposed to putting his faith in God. Joseph needed to cool his heels in jail just a little bit longer, in order to learn where to place his trust.

The chief cupbearer continues to talk, to give the background:

Genesis 41:10 Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me under guard in the chief of the executioner's house, me and the chief baker.

The chief cupbearer's memory all comes back to him. He remembers everything. There had been some plot or some impropriety against the pharaoh, but in such a way that the guilty party could not be clearly identified. So, pharaoh placed the chief cupbearer and the chief baker into jail while he investigated the matter more thoroughly.

Throughout, Pharaoh is spoken of in the 3rd person, even though the chief cupbearer is speaking to Pharaoh. This is probably protocol, but it could refer to a different Pharaoh.

Genesis 41:11 And we dreamed a dream one night, he and I. We dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream.

The chief cupbearer and the chief baker each had a dream while in custody—dreams which, on the surface, seemed to be quite similar. Their dreams were quite affecting, much like Pharaoh's dream. What both men dreamed disturbed them. Somehow, they understood that their dreams were significant.

Genesis 41:12 And there was there with us a young man, a Hebrew, a slave to the chief of the executioners. And we told him, and he interpreted our dreams to us. He interpreted to each man according to his dream.

Interestingly enough, the chief cupbearer never names Joseph by name, which suggests, even though he recalls the circumstances and could describe Joseph, he probably does not remember his name. In any case, the chief cupbearer describes him here, that he was a young man, a Hebrew (meaning, *a foreigner*), and a servant to the chief executioner, who ran the prison. Being a servant (slave) meant, Joseph was in jail for whatever crime, but actually became quite useful to the chief executioner. Therefore, he was given a great deal of responsibility within the prison, but as a prisoner.

Did this man actually forget Joseph's name? Did the man whose job it was to remember names not only forget Joseph, but forget Joseph's name as well? That appears to be the implication of the text.

Genesis 41:13 And it happened, as he interpreted to us, so it was. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him."

Joseph interpreted the dreams of both men correctly. Exactly as Joseph said, one man was freed and the other man was hanged.

The 3rd person here is applicable to *Pharaoh;* and it is not clear whether this is the way that the chief cupbearer spoke of Pharaoh (in the 3rd person) or if he was speaking to a new pharaoh. It is possible that there was a change of leadership; but that many (or even most) of the people high up retained their position (like state or federal workers do today).

Whether or not that is the case, the Bible does not include that as a part of the narrative. In life, what is actually important is the spiritual aspect; the people who are important are those who are ambassadors for Jesus Christ (like Joseph). We are the ones who make the difference in a nation.

I write this in 2016 and it looks as though we could elect a very liberal president who will change the balance of the Supreme Court, who will act using executive orders, who will be dishonest and will lie to the people, and who will change the electorate to a point where, we will have essentially a one-party system for at least the next few decades. This changes everything about the United States and it can be quite disconcerting for those of us who love America, our founding and the U.S. Constitution. However, no matter what happens in the future, the key to the direction of the United States will be the spiritual component—always. How many people believe in Jesus Christ? How many of those understand the importance of Bible doctrine and growing to spiritual maturity? How many are moving toward spiritual maturity? As these percentages decrease, so does the prosperity and greatness and freedom of our country.

I have grown up in a time when a very large percentage of American citizens believe in God; and a large percentage of them believe in Jesus Christ. This has been quite

significant for the direction of our nation. As a result, we have enjoyed great blessing, peace and prosperity (even to the point where most people accept our prosperity as normal[18]). However, during those years, I have noticed something else that was quite disconcerting. In many churches, there was a dedicated older population; but they were not being replaced by an equal number of children and young adults. In many of the churches that I have gone to, there are few 20-somethings and 30-somethings; and even fewer children. That is a great spiritual problem and explains the unfortunate direction in which our country seems to be heading.

If I tell you today, in 2016, that the future for the United States looks bleak (that is, we will face national discipline), I can do this based upon understanding Scripture and reading historical trends. I am not a prophet; but some things are obvious. When Israel pulled closer to God, God blessed Israel greatly. And when Israel pushed God away, things got rough for Israel.

The United States is also a client nation to God, and it is obvious that, despite many people believing in Jesus Christ, there are an increasing number of people who reject God, who do not believe in God, and who embrace humanism or secularism. With that approach to life comes consequences. This does not mean that we will become, say, Egypt or Libya or Syria overnight. This simply means that our prosperity will begin to wain. Our personal safety will decrease. The honesty of our government officials will decrease; while their greed for more money and power will increase. Cause and effect is how our universe works; and when we move away from God, then we are moving toward things which are anti-God.

The chief cupbearer, for the past couple years, has completely forgotten about Joseph. Did it just slip his mind? Was there a regime change? Was there a natural change of power (from father to son)? Whatever happened is not really important to this narrative; what is important is Joseph and God working through Joseph. And, at no time did God forget Joseph.

I admit that I find myself worked up over the 2016 election and how dramatically this could change the direction of America; but the key to the direction of America is entirely spiritual; and not political (neither candidate seems to have a strong faith in God or in the Bible). But one candidate could be very bad for America, and the other candidate—well, we just don't really know. But the future of our country will be determined by the pivot of mature believers. Fewer believers and fewer mature believers mean we will move further and further from God and His great blessing. Our nation, the greatest in the world and the greatest nation of all time, may become common. All the ills enjoyed by Europe right now could become a part of our daily lives. Some French teachers wear a communication bracelet, so that they can contact authorities if and when they see an act of terror. Today, there are over 80 Sharia courts operating in the UK. Apologists are quick to point out that,

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[18] I know people so blind that they can go to other countries and still be unable to recognize the great freedoms and blessings that we enjoy in the United States.

UK courts are superior to Sharia courts; but, if a matter *never* goes before a normal, legal court, the decision of the Sharia court stands.

How does this all come to pass? The people embrace humanism rather than God. They worship the earth rather than Jesus Christ. They believe in evolution rather than the Word of God. As the pendulum swings away from Jesus Christ, so does prosperity and freedom disappear in that nation.

This does not mean that the United States will become North Korea tomorrow. God gives us warning discipline, and we determine in our own hearts how we will respond to it. Could our nation go from the great country in human history to an horrendous mess? Of course. Look at Great Britain. At one time, that nation ruled over a fifth of the inhabited world. They believed in Jesus Christ and, as a result, they exported both law and order and Christianity to the many places where they ruled. Today, that great nation no longer exists.

In the United States, we still have tremendous power and prosperity; but anyone who knows anything about economics realizes that we stand on a precipice.

Let's leave that precipice and return to Joseph:

Genesis 41:14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph. And they hurried him out of the dungeon. And he shaved and changed his clothing, and came in to Pharaoh.

The verb used here is the Hiphil imperfect of rûts (רוּץ) [pronounced *roots*], which means, *to cause to run; to hastily lead up, to cause to hasten; to bring quickly*. Strong's #7323 BDB #930. But Joseph does not appear to be in a hurry himself. Pharaoh finds out about Joseph and he says, "I want this man here standing before me immediately. I need to know the meaning of this dream right now!" And those under him run to the prison and grab Joseph and they are ready to run back to Pharaoh.

Joseph, however, is not in such a hurry. Pharaoh then calls for Joseph to come at once; but Joseph does not come immediately to the Pharaoh. He shaves and requires a change of clothing. Joseph is going to speak to Pharaoh, so he is going to make a good impression on Pharaoh. Joseph knows protocol (the Egyptians are very clean people), and he is not going to appear before the Pharaoh in dirty, grimy clothing looking like a prisoner. Joseph's cleanliness is not just to make a good impression, but to show an understanding of proper protocol. Cleaning himself up shows respect for Pharaoh and for the cultural norms of the Egyptians.

Was Joseph expecting this? Did he plan out what he should do if Pharaoh ever called upon him? Probably not, but we really don't know. But, Joseph, because he had been Potiphar's slave and now in charge of Pharaoh's prison, knew the Egyptian language and he knew the proper protocol for Egyptian royalty. So he is not going to stand in front of Pharaoh stinking and wearing dirty clothing. This was a given; it did not require a lot of thought on his part.

The chief cupbearer has remembered this young man from prison, Joseph, who interpreted his dream accurately; and now Pharaoh has two disturbing dreams which he wants to have interpreted for him. He tells Pharaoh about Joseph and Pharaoh sends for Joseph, to bring him out of the prison.

Joseph cleans himself up and stands before Pharaoh.

Joseph Interpreting Pharaohs Dream, 1894 by Reginald Arthur; from FineArtAmerica.com; accessed October 4, 2016.

Genesis 41:15 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have dreamed a dream, and none can interpret it. And I have heard it about you, saying, you can understand a dream to interpret it."

Pharaoh lays out the general proposition for Joseph. "I've dreamed a dream, and I hear that you are able to interpret it." I suspect that Joseph has already been briefed by those who brought him, but he follows the proper established protocol. Pharaoh speaks and he listens.

Again, like many of the things which I speculate about, whether Joseph knows exactly why he is being called before the Pharaoh is actually immaterial. In the past two years of days, Joseph has had ample time to consider where he is and what his relationship is to God. He asked the chief cupbearer two years ago to remember him; but this time, Joseph will *not* plead his case before Pharaoh.

What is unsaid, but can be reasonably deduced, is, Joseph is *not* harboring resentment, anger and frustration from being unjustly placed in prison. He does not step before Pharaoh and say, "Listen, Pharaoh, I have been cooped up in your prison for no reason over the past 3 (or however many) years; and I did nothing wrong. What kind of a country are you running here?"

Instead, Joseph focuses on the plan of God; and time and place. He recognizes that God placed him into prison and God has taken him out of prison. People may have acted with evil intent toward Joseph, but he could not be placed anywhere apart from God's will. As Joseph will tell his own brothers, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today." (Gen. 50:20; ESV)

How many people have been wronged, and then spend the next few months or years trying to correct this wrong, expending all kinds of energy, and sometimes accomplishing something, but often accomplishing nothing? For the believer, this so-called fight for justice often leads him away from his purpose and place in life. It is not our job to clean up the devil's world.

So, Joseph goes before Pharaoh, setting aside his own injustice, knowing that God can place him anywhere. Pharaoh tells Joseph, "I have dreamed a dream, and I have heard that you are able to interpret dreams." And Joseph immediately puts the correct emphasis upon his abilities:

Genesis 41:16 And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "Not I. God will answer the welfare of Pharaoh."

the word translated *welfare* here is shâlôwm (שָׁלוֹם) or shâlôm (שָׁלֹם) [pronounced *shaw-LOHM*], which means, *completeness, soundness, health and welfare, peace, prosperity, safe, secure, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated*. Strong's #7965 BDB #1022. Although a very common word in the Hebrew, found over 200 times in the Old Testament, here, its meaning is a bit more difficult to apprehend. Both Webster and the WEB translate this *an answer of peace;* the ESV, *a favorable answer;* several render this *God will answer the welfare of Pharaoh* (MKJV, KJ3, Green's literal translation[19]).

We can reasonably assume that God will provide the answer (through Joseph) and that answer will give peace to Pharaoh (he will understand it and it will put his mind at ease).

Genesis 41:16 Joseph answered Pharaoh, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer." (ESV)

I think that we might understand that God will, through Joseph, provide an answer which will *complete* the dream of Pharaoh and provide him with some modicum of *peace*. The dream has disturbed Pharaoh, and Joseph's explanation will be calming. The explanation will make sense to Pharaoh and the content of the dreams will no longer bother him.

Joseph makes it clear that he is able to interpret the dream by the power of God and not by his own cleverness.

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[19] I believe that these translations are all done by the same man.

Two years ago, Joseph spoke to the chief cupbearer saying, “Remember me”? The emphasis should have been on God, not upon Joseph. Joseph does not make this mistake again.

Now that is established, Pharaoh tells Joseph his dreams. Although these dreams have previously been laid out in this chapter (vv. 1–7); they are repeated here in vv. 17–24.

Stanford E. Murrell’s Doctrine of Dreams

1. The purpose of dreams was to reveal God's will (Genesis 28:12; 31:24; 37:5-10; 1 Kings 3:5; Matthew 1:20; Matthew 2:13, 19, 20).
2. In the last days (which will not occur during the Church Age but *after* the Church Age), there will be apparently more revelation, some by means of dreams. Peter quotes the prophet Joel in Acts 2:17.
3. Just as there were false prophets during the Age of Israel, there were also false dreams. It is possible for dreams to be corrupted so that the will of a demon is conveyed. One ancient practice was to induce religious dreams by incubation or sleeping in some shrine where the patron god was believed to communicate secrets to the sleeper. Herodotus mentions this practice among the Egyptian sect known as the Hasamonians (Herod IV. p. 172, ed. A.D. Godley). The Lord warned against false dreamers (Jeremiah 23:25, 27; 29:8; Zechariah 10:2) and pointed out that normal desires such as hunger and thirst can produce dreams (Isa. 29:8).
4. God promised to speak to the prophets in dreams (Num. 12:6), but even they had to be tested (Deuteronomy 13:1-5).
5. The absence of dreams was considered to be a form of divine discipline. 1Sam. 28:6, 15
6. As there is a danger in the absence of dreams there is also a danger in the multitude of dreams (Ecclesiastes 5:7) for it is possible that foolish whims will be insisted upon as requirement of worshipers.
7. Thirteen people in the Bible are credited with specific dreams. Eleven people are noted in the Old Testament while two are listed in the New Testament.
    1) Abimelech in Genesis 20:3,6
    2) Jacob in Genesis 28:12; 31:10,11
    3) Laban in Genesis 31:24
    4) Joseph in Genesis 37:5-10
    5) Pharaoh's Butler (the chief cupbearer) in Genesis 40:5
    6) Pharaoh's Baker in Genesis 40:5
    7) Pharaoh in Genesis 41:7-8, 15-22
    8) A Man from Midian in Judges 7:13
    9) Solomon in 1Kings 3:5,15
    10) Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2:3; 4:5-9
    11) Daniel in Daniel 7:1
    12) Joseph in Matthew 1:20; 2:12-22

Stanford E. Murrell's Doctrine of Dreams

13) Pilate's Wife in Matthew 27:19

From https://stanmurrell.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/doctrine-of-dreams.pdf accessed September 20, 2016 and edited.

Pharaoh repeats the content of his dreams to Joseph:

Genesis 41:17 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "In my dream, behold! I stood upon the bank of the river.

Interestingly enough, we do not have the summary phrase, *and Pharaoh told his dreams to Joseph;* but the content of the dreams is repeated in the narrative.

Pharaoh will tell Joseph both dreams, one after the other. *Behold* here simply sets the scene. It is a verbal device used to pull the hearer into the picture, to try to have him see what the speaker saw. Pharaoh is standing at the bank of the Nile looking out.

The reader is reading the content of these dreams for the second time. Perhaps the idea is for these dreams to roll around in our brains for a few minutes and then they are repeated, until Joseph gives us the correct interpretation of them.

Genesis 41:18 And behold, there came up out of the river seven cows, beautiful in appearance and fat of flesh. And they fed in the reeds.

He sees 7 healthy cows come out of the river, and they feed upon the reeds. Whether this is a normal occurrence or not does not matter.

Genesis 41:19 And behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and evil of appearance [= ugly, unattractive, sickly-looking], and lean of flesh, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness.

Then he sees 7 thin cows come up, and they look bad. They are unattractive, unhealthy, and lean. These are in such poor condition that the Pharaoh has never seen such emaciated cows before.

Genesis 41:20 And the lean and the evil-appearing cows ate up the first seven fat cows.

These lean cows come up and eat the 7 fat cows (in Pharaoh's dream).

Genesis 41:21 And when they had eaten them up, it could not be seen that they had eaten them; but they were still evil of appearance, as at the beginning. And I awoke.

Eating up the fat cows does not improve the appearance of the thin, bad-looking cows. They still look bad (the word translated *evil* also means *bad*).

Pharaoh found this dream to be disturbing; the images upset him and he woke up. But then he fell asleep again.

Genesis 41:22 And I saw in my dream, and behold, seven ears came up in one stock, full and good.

Then Pharaoh had a second dream. He goes right into this second dream. He sees 7 ears of corn (or wheat) come up from one stock, and they were healthy and attractive. It is a good crop of corn (or wheat).

Genesis 41:23 And behold, seven ears, withered, thin, blasted by the east wind, sprang up after them.

Then, 7 lousy-looking ears of corn came up and they looked terrible! The east wind is the wind that would have been blown from the desert, which would be a dry wind. Wind from the north, in Egypt, would be coming off the Mediterranean, and, therefore, be a more moist wind.

Genesis 41:24a And the thin ears devoured the seven good ears.

The thin ears devoured the good ears.

With that, Pharaoh leaves his dream and he tells Joseph what he did afterwards.

Genesis 41:24b And I spoke to the magicians, but there was none that could open it to me.

Magician is the Hebrew word char^{e}ṭôm (חַרְטֻמִּים) [pronounced *khahr-TOHM*], which means, *an engraver, a writer [possessing information of the occult]; a diviner, a magician, an astrologer, mystic*. Strong's #2748 BDB #355. These would be the people that pharaoh would go to in order to get information of a mystical nature—some would incorrectly suggest that they would provide spiritual information.

Whether Pharaoh told Joseph about speaking to wise men about his dream is not in the text. Even a dream from God cannot be understood apart from a man of God.

The same thing is true of the Bible. There are certainly narratives and doctrinal information found in the Bible which we can read and understand. However, without a teacher, who has a good academic background in the Scriptures, much of what is found in the Bible is difficult to make sense of. Even entire denominations confuse Israel and the church; or try to get their congregations to observe the Sabbath; or they confound Sunday and the Sabbath day. Many Christian cults try to get their people to relive the book of Acts. This would be like Rabbis and priests attempting to get the Israelites to *relive the exodus*. That was a one-time thing and there will be great signs and wonders associated with the exodus because God is establishing His people. There were great signs and wonders which accompanied the 1st advent of our Lord; there were great signs and wonders associated

with the establishment of the church, an entity much different from nation Israel. However, once these great moments in the plan of God were gone, so were the great signs and wonders.

Lesson 415: Genesis 41:25–36 Joseph Interprets the Dreams of Pharaoh

Pharaoh has laid out his two dreams for Joseph, who stands before Pharaoh clean shaven and in clean clothing. We have heard these dreams twice in this chapter, so we will not repeat them. We will launch right into Joseph's interpretation.

Joseph Interpreting Pharaoh's Dream by Peter Cornelius; Fresco with tempera;1816-17; from the Web Gallery of Art; accessed October 4, 2016.

Genesis 41:25 And Joseph said to Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one. God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do.

Joseph will now explain the dreams, what they mean, and more importantly, what Pharaoh can do about them.

There are times in human history when the future looks bleak and there are times when God's prophecies for the future point to some bad times. However, God always has a message for those who will enter into such difficulties, no matter when they occur. This is important because, at this point in American history, we could be taking the next step in a massive downward spiral of the great America that we once knew (I write this prior to the election of 2016).

Even though Pharaoh had two dreams, Joseph tells him that this is one dream—they are *one in essence, singular in meaning*. The fact that Pharaoh had two dreams which are one in essence confirms the meaning of the two dreams. It confirms that this will certainly come to pass. This is what God would do.

Genesis 41:26 The seven good cows are seven years. And the seven good ears are seven years. The dream is one.

The first cows and the first ears—the ones that are healthy and look good—these are 7 years. Then Joseph repeats that the dreams are *one* in essence or in meaning.

Joseph repeats that these dreams are *one,* meaning they have the same interpretation.

We all have different sorts of dreams, and sometimes, they are disturbing. This passage is not telling us that we need to seek out someone to interpret our dreams so that we can know the future. The prophetical nature of these dreams is interesting, but not the point of this narrative. What is important is, God will put his man, Joseph, into Pharaoh's government, and that changes everything. This one man of God—formerly a slave and then a prisoner—will dramatically change human history. Millions of lives will be changed and preserved because of this one man, Joseph.

Up until this point, it may have even seemed like God had just cast him aside, but that has never been the case. God is training Joseph, focusing him on what is important.

At some point, those of us who have believed in Jesus Christ and have matured spiritually, will be able to observe and understand human history as well as current events. Whereas many think today that history is moved along by celebrities and politicians; we will find out that those people who had the greatest impact on history are, for the most part, unknown to the general population. Throughout the 1950's and 1960's, one man who had perhaps the greatest impact on the United States as a nation was Billy Graham, the evangelist. Millions of people came to Christ through his ministry; or as a result of being witnessed to by those saved by Graham's ministry. This led to spiritual maturity in some cases, and some of the greatest prosperity that this nation has ever known. In fact, we have enjoyed greater peace and prosperity than any other nation in the history of mankind. Much of it was because of the faithful service of Billy Graham, and the response of millions of Americans to his evangelical ministry.

The most important person in Egyptian history at that time was Joseph, a slave, sold into slavery by his jealous brothers.

In the Church Age, we may find our own dreams to be interesting (rarely does anyone else), but they are not prophetical; and they do not require interpretation. They are not messages from God. This is because we already have the full and complete revelation from God and we are the first dispensation to enjoy that privilege.

Genesis 41:27 And the seven thin and evil-appearing cows that came up after them are seven years. And the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind will be seven years of famine.

Afterwards, there would be 7 bad years, represented by the unhealthy cows and the ears of corn (or wheat) that are blasted by the east wind.

The bad years will be so bad as to completely overshadow the 7 good years which had already occurred. The previous prosperity will be completely forgotten in the bad years—that is, if no preparations are made for the bad years.

Vv. 26–27 give an overview of what is to be expected. Joseph will now go into more detail.

Genesis 41:28 This is the thing which God has spoken to Pharaoh; what God is about to do, He shows to Pharaoh.

These dreams tell the future of Egypt. When a person is actually open to the truth, they recognize the truth. So Pharaoh is transfixed; he understands and he believes the words of Joseph.

God reveals this to Pharaoh through Joseph because God has a great plans for nation Egypt and for the family of Joseph, which plans will intersect in the very near future. God will see to it that Egypt is blessed and preserved, and the wise of Egypt will perceive that this is because of Joseph. Joseph is God's man; Joseph is in the midst of Egypt; and therefore, all of Egypt will be blessed and preserved.

This could not have happened at any point in history. Egypt required a Pharaoh who believed in the Revealed God and trusted the Revealed God. In Gen. 41:16, Joseph tells Pharaoh that it is God who reveals the meaning of these dreams. Joseph tells Pharaoh that the dreams are a revelation of the Revealed God to Pharaoh in Gen. 41:25. In v. 28, Joseph says that these dreams are God telling Pharaoh what will happen in the future. By what Pharaoh says in this section of Gen. 41, it will be clear that he believes Joseph, he believes the interpretation of the dreams, and therefore, he believes the Revealed God. We do not know whether Pharaoh believed in the Revealed God prior to this time, but Joseph clearly revealed to Pharaoh God's reality and interaction with mankind, and Pharaoh clearly believes that. So, if Pharaoh was not *saved* before, he is saved now. He listens to Joseph, understands, and believes.

Genesis 41:29 Behold, there are coming seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt.

There will be 7 years of plenty in Egypt. In the ancient world, years of plenty means, they will have the right amount of rain at the right time, and crops will grow abundantly. They will have more than enough food for those 7 years. They will feed themselves and their animals. The proper amount of rain will also invigorate their animals and they will grow in number as well.

Genesis 41:30 And there will arise after them seven years of famine. And all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and the famine will consume the land.

The 7 years of plenty will be then followed by 7 years of famine. The famine will be so devastating as to overshadow the years of prosperity.

If very little grain grows, then, not only can the people not make bread, but their animals have little or nothing to eat. Consequently, they cannot depend upon their animals during this time for food.

Think of the ancient world economy like this: the grain that they grow is like a person's paycheck. As long as you get a paycheck, you have adjusted your life in order to live on

that paycheck. However, let's say, one day, those paychecks suddenly stop. Then you must depend upon your savings. What is the savings for people of the ancient world? Their animals. They are the savings accounts of all the people in an agrarian society. When we live off of savings, what do we want to be careful to do? We do not want to erode the principal; we want to live on the interest. In the ancient world, living on the interest means, you maintain the same number of animals in the same state of healthiness. Whatever number of animals you have when the paychecks stop coming in (grain stops growing), you want to maintain that number of animals for as long as you possibly can. Just as, if you run into a problem today, and your checks stop coming, then you want to reduce your savings as little as possible. You don't want your savings to simply get you through the first or second month.

Genesis 41:31 And the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following; for it will be very grievous.

The famine (aka, an economic depression) will be so severe that no one remembers the great prosperity. This, of course, will be the case if no one prepares for the famine.

Today, just like in ancient Egypt, there are economic cycles. The stock market goes up and the stock market goes down; gold prices go up and they go down; we enjoy full employment and we have periods of time where work is hard to find. There is no politician anywhere who will be able to, by tweaking this or that policy, end economic cycles.

We even elected a president who vowed that he would end these economic cycles, and, sadly enough, many people believed him. He also claimed that he would slow the rise of the oceans, and my guess is, some people believed him there as well. It is a mistake to place our trust in man. It is even worse to place our trust in a man who suffers delusions of grandeur.

Back to Pharaoh's dream:

Genesis 41:32 And since the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice, it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

The repetition of the dream indicates that this is a certain revelation of what is to come. Pharaoh is not going to be able to change his behavior; the people of Egypt cannot simply supplicate God, and expect anything to happen as a result. They will have 7 boom years and 7 bust years. There is nothing that they can do to change that future.

Now, Joseph makes a recommendation to Pharaoh of what he should do. Pharaoh did not ask for that, but Joseph offers it nonetheless. Many people can recognize the problems around them; but few have any idea how to solve them. We recently had a president who recognized that the United States was in a recession and that many jobs were lost; but his solution, for the federal government to spend gobs of borrowed money—that simply was not the solution.

Take a thousand people from the streets of American, and surely ten of them have some idea as to the kind of national precipice that we are on at this time. Whether one man out of that ten understands what ought to be done—well, that is highly unlikely. In Egypt, there was one man who recognized where Egypt was at this time; and there was one man who knew what to do about the future. That is Joseph. Even Pharaoh, his staff and the wise men and magicians of that day—they did not know. Pharaoh, to his credit, understood and believed Joseph.

Genesis 41:33 Now therefore let Pharaoh look for a man who is discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt.

Joseph has interpreted the dream; and he has told Pharaoh that these dreams are a certain predictor of the future. Now Joseph tells Pharaoh what must be done. Sometimes, a person hears something, and he just knows it is right. Pharaoh understands and accepts the meaning of his dreams; and he also accepts Joseph's solution for the future.

Pharaoh needs to find a man who is discrete and wise. *Discreet* is the Niphal participle of the Hebrew word bîyn (וִיב) [pronounced *bean*], which means *intelligent, perceptive; prudent, skillful; well-instructed*. The participle form of a verb can sometimes act as a noun or an adjective. Strong's #995 BDB #106.

The word for *wise* is châkâm (חָכָם) [pronounced *khah-KAWM*], which means, *capable of knowing [judging]; intelligent, wise; skillful, adept, proficient; subtle, crafty* (it is primarily used in a positive way). Strong's #2450 BDB #314.

Genesis 41:34 Let Pharaoh act, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years.

Joseph has an immediate solution. The wise and perceptive man is to be appointed and he will have men under him to do his bidding. This governmental agency will be in charge of setting aside the good of the first 7 years. Grains, and whatever else might be stored, is to be taken up—a 20% tax on that which can be stored up.

With the proper amount of rain, grain would grow beyond what is needed by the people, and the state would collect a fifth of that grain and store it up. The people would never miss it. In fact, they would be, during these prosperous years, building up their own savings accounts (that is, increasing their flocks and herds and some one accumulate silver as well).

Genesis 41:35 And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up grain under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities.

Because there are good years, the Pharaoh needs to oversee the collection of grain during those years. This grain which is collected will be under Pharaoh's control (*hand*).

This would not be brought to a centralized location, but it would remain with the cities where the grain is collected. All of this would require many men to build the storehouses and to take in the grain and then to guard the grain (particularly during the 7 difficult years).

During the years of plenty, there will be the financial wherewithal to make this happen.

Genesis 41:36 That food will be for a store to the land against the seven years of famine, which will be in the land of Egypt, so that the land does not perish through the famine."

This grain would be set aside and kept for the 7 years of economic depression.

This ought to be the approach of city and state governments throughout the Christian world. When we have prosperous years, the government should not look to spend money as it comes in. During the good years, the government needs to set aside a rainy-day fund; and it should be appropriate to that particular government. It does not matter that this rainy day fund sits there in the bank for a decade or so; it is simply a smart thing to do.

Lesson 416: Genesis 41:28–36 — The Bible on Fiscal Responsibility

Joseph has been called in by the Pharaoh of Egypt in order to interpret his dreams. Joseph not only told him what his dreams meant, but then told him how to deal with the future that those dreams foretold. Joseph is speaking to Pharaoh:

Gen. 41:28–32 "It is as I told Pharaoh; God has shown to Pharaoh what He is about to do. There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, but after them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt. The famine will consume the land, and the plenty will be unknown in the land by reason of the famine that will follow, for it will be very severe. And the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about. (ESV; capitalized)

Seven prosperous years followed by seven years of such grievous famine, as to obliterate the prosperous years.

Then Joseph gives Pharaoh some unsolicited advice:

Gen 41:33–36 "Now therefore let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land and take one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plentiful years. And let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that are to occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine." (ESV; capitalized)

Notice what Joseph does *not* tell Pharaoh: "When the famine comes, learn to trust God." Pharaoh's trust in God is Pharaoh seeing to it that grain is set aside during the years of plenty against the years of famine ahead. Joseph does not tell Pharaoh that, when these years of famine come, "You need to pray through, brother."

However, what Joseph describes here ought to be routine six for all national and state leaders.

I write this in 2016, during a time when we in the United States are actually enjoying some of the greatest prosperity our nation has ever enjoyed. Fracking has allowed us to be energy independent and to even supply people in the rest of the world with our oil. Rather than celebrate and utilize our resources (and then save and put aside the fruits of our labor), our nation has on an unprecedented spending spree, where money is spent much faster than it is accumulated (with virtually nothing to show for all of our spending). We have developed an enormous debt during a time when we ought to be putting aside resources for the future. We are doing the exact opposite today of what we ought to be doing.

Great leaders in the United States, during this time of prosperity (although we are not prosperous in terms of employment, we are prosperous in terms of energy production) should be putting aside gold, silver, oil and whatever else there is of value, just in case difficult times come upon us. In some states, this is actually occurring. Among some individuals, this is actually occurring.

By the way, we cannot simply blame our leaders for this. Let's say that someone suggests that we cut back on the *increase* of government. Significant numbers of people would rise up and complain vociferously.

On a personal level, we ought to do what Joseph recommends in this chapter. We have good years and bad; good decades and bad. Although we are not going to have a dream which tells us when these will happen, we can rest assured that we will enjoy good economic times and bad ones. What should we do? Set money aside. Build up a fund. Even if you never draw from that fund, keep setting money aside, using a variety of investment vehicles. You will *never* regret having emergency savings set aside. You will regret the time that you spent all your money on new furniture, a new car, a hot tub or whatever; and then the time comes, you need some emergency money, and there is nothing there to draw from.

This is not a fail-safe program and we cannot insure ourselves against all that might happen in our lives. However, this is the prudent thing to do. Doing this exhibits faith in God; because the book of Proverbs speaks of correctly handling our money. It speaks of hard work and savings; and the believer who ignores this is not believing in the truth that God has given him.

You may question, *why do we need to do this? We haven't had any dreams of lean cows and bad looking ears of corn*. Economic cycles are a reality in all life; therefore, we need

to be prepared for both good and bad years. You need to take advantage of the good years to build up your savings; and you should have plans of what to do when the bad years come.

The ESV; capitalized is used below, unless otherwise noted.

The Bible on Fiscal Responsibility

1. Ultimately, God provides for all of our needs. Philip. 4:19 reads: And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. However, this does not mean that, for every meal, we sit down at the dining table, with an empty fridge, and wait for God to serve us (this will actually be directly addressed by Paul).
2. The parents—and in particular, the husband and father—are to provide for the family. This is the duty of the husband/father as a believer in Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not provide for *his* own, and especially *his* family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1Tim. 5:8; Green's literal translation) This means work and fiscal responsibility. Notice, you are not just required to provide for your immediate family but anyone who is associated with your household (might be elderly parents or slaves in the ancient world).
3. Laziness is disparaged in Scripture:
    1) Prov. 6:6–11 Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest. How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.
    2) The Bible reproaches the slacker. Prov. 24:30-34 I passed by the field of a sluggard [a slacker], by the vineyard of a man lacking sense, and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. Then I saw and considered it; I looked and received instruction. A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man. Prov. 10:5 18:9
    3) If one refuses to work, then let him not eat. 2Thess. 3:10 For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. In the church, people able to work were not to be supported and cared for.
4. Man was designed to work; hard work is highly praised throughout Scripture.
    1) Adam and the woman worked in the garden even before they had sinned. Gen. 2:15
    2) It is God's design for all men (and women) to work hard in this life. Genesis 3:19 [God is speaking to Adam and the woman after they sinned] "By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."
    3) Colossians 3:22–24 Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly

masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. Most people have jobs where they work for someone else. You should do your job as if you are working for the Lord and not for your boss. You may have a great boss or a lousy one (I have had both). In any case, you come early, you stay late, and you do your job to the best of your ability.

4) 1Thess. 4:11 And to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you,...
5) Do not be a thief; work hard instead. Eph. 4:28
6) It is better to work than it is to talk. Prov. 14:23
7) Hard work and diligence in your work results in advancement; those without a work ethic remain at the bottom of the workforce. Prov. 12:24 The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor.
8) A man's work is tied to his labor; and it is okay to enjoy the fruits of your labor. Ecclesiastes 3:13 Also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man.
9) There is a legitimate self-satisfaction in one's work. Ecclesiastes 3:22 So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his work, for that is his lot.
10) Although it is a good thing to work and to work hard, you should always allow time for Bible doctrine. A daily dose of doctrine, perhaps an hour a day, ought to be the goal of every believer for every day.
11) There ought to be a balance in the believer's life. If you are a married man with children, you must provide for your family; but you must also provide time for your wife, for your children; and for Bible doctrine; and you must lead them spiritually. This is a difficult thing to do when you are working 60 hours a week, but that is required of the man of the house. Being the head of the house does not mean the man just gets to boss everyone around. He has great responsibilities as a father and husband.

5. The diligent worker and the slacker are contrasted in Scripture:
   1) Hard work makes a man wealthy; laziness makes a man poor. Prov. 10:4 A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.
   2) Working hard is better than get rich quick schemes. Proverbs 12:11 Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits lacks sense.
6. If we work for someone else, our work should be diligent, genuine and honorable; and we ought to work as if working for the Lord. Ephesians 6:5-8 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will

receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. Paul gives similar advice to Titus in Titus 2:9-12 Slaves are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,...

7. Our souls cannot be satisfied by the accumulation of wealth and things alone. Ecclesiastes 5:10 He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.
8. There is some security in wealth gotten by hard work. Prov. 10:15 A rich man's wealth is his strong city; the poverty of the poor is their ruin.
9. There is a balance which needs to be achieved between work and the fruits of your labor. It is possible to have all kinds of possessions and to be unhappy. Ecclesiastes 2:10-14 And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun. The key to happiness in life is not an accumulation of stuff, but a relationship with God and God's Word in your soul. 1Tim. 6:6–11 But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.
10. It ought to be pointed out that there are two kinds of debt which we accumulate: debt related to our needs and desires; and debt related to investment. These are very different.
    1) There may be that couch or that computer or an iphone which you sincerely desire, and, in order to purchase them, you put them on a credit card, to pay for month by month. This may satisfy a materialistic whim, but it is not fiscally responsible. It is not a good idea to spend all that you make; or to continually get yourself further and further into debt for things that you buy in order to make yourself happy. Heb. 13:5 Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." This is not an easy thing to do in a materialistic society. Everyone around you is buying stuff and more stuff and more stuff; and it is easy to think that, if you purchase enough stuff, that will result in happiness (of course, it does not). It is in this case that we apply Prov. 22:7 The rich rules over the poor, and the

borrower is the slave of the lender. Also Rom. 13:8 Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

2) On the other hand, there are investments that we make. One of the most common investments in this era in the United States is real estate, and it is quite normal to purchase the house that you live in and subsequent properties with a mortgage. In order for something to be an investment, it ought to be worth more than what you owe for it; and its value ought to be increasing each year. One ought to begin investing early in life, and if you are unsure of an investment vehicle (stock, bonds, metals, real estate), then simply set money aside in an interest-bearing account of some sort; and if you are young, into a mutual fund. I began placing $50 a month into a mutual fund which allowed that small investment each month. I never noticed that small amount of money being gone any given month; and the fund built up rather substantially in a fairly short period of time.

3) Business often require debt, and sometimes a great deal of it. Here, there needs be a balance—is your business plan to simply make sure that everyone else's money is at risk and not your own? That would reveal a lack of character.

4) There are other items which could be argued either way—an education, for example. One may argue that it is an investment in one's life; on the other hand, given what some people major in, it is hard to see what value their degree is in the real world. Unfortunately, this is a massive debt nowadays, which comes upon a person suddenly while they are still young and stupid (and a college education does not appear to improve on this by very much).

11. Regarding investments:

1) The implication (but not the main point) of the parable in Matthew 25:14-30 is that investing is a good and wise thing to do; just putting money under your mattress is not.

2) It is reasonable to plan out ahead and to consider what you will do with your income. Prov. 21:5

3) Wise men save; foolish men spend all that they have. Proverbs 21:20 Precious treasure and oil are in a wise man's dwelling, but a foolish man devours it.

4) Investment is a logical step-by-step process. Prov. 24:27

5) It is okay to seek advice on making investments; you are not required only to speak to Christians when it comes to making investments (although there are specifically radio programs which target Christians who invest). When you choose to invest, then consider it carefully. Luke 14:28

6) Do not become emotionally involved with your investments. Some investments will go down; some will go up. You can expend a great deal of energy worrying about your investments each and every day (unless

that has become your job; and even then, you maintain an emotional distance).

7) Do not expect to gain sudden wealth. Do not view a lottery ticket as an investment. You work hard and invest little by little. Prov. 13:11

8) It is better to die with a lot of extra money that you leave to your children and grandchildren, than to die penniless, leaving them with nothing but debt. Prov. 13:22

12. God often gives great blessings to the growing believer. Job 1:10 [Satan is complaining to God about Job] "Have You not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land." At the end of the book of Job, God gives great blessings to him, greater than he had at the beginning.

13. It is normal to sometimes work to a point of exhaustion. It is normal to work more than one 40 hours job. However, this does not mean that God is not concerned for your hard labor. Matthew 11:28 [Jesus is speaking] Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. There are two things at play here. In the ancient world, working hard all day was not unusual; and God offers His rest to such a one. This also means that, we are received by the Lord Jesus Christ apart from our works; we cannot work in order to impress God enough to save us.

14. Giving:

1) Money is a privilege and a responsibility. Luke 16:11 If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?

2) Give as God has prospered you. Up to you if you give solely to your church or it you spread the money around to include your church, mission organizations, individual ministries, radio or television ministries, etc. I would avoid giving money to ministries which spend in inordinate time asking for money.

There are individuals in our society who are unable to take care of themselves. This is a very small percentage, but they are there. I have known perhaps 100 people who were on various welfare programs. I can only think of two who really needed this sort of support. So, there are those who do need help. When God places such a person before you, then you need to consider what you are able to do for them. In the United States, as a government, we have gone way overboard on this, and now have a welfare state where millions of healthy people are paid not to work.

I drew inspiration from the following sources:
https://www.openbible.info/topics/fiscal_responsibility
https://www.openbible.info/topics/work
http://www.backtothebible.org/10-financial-principles-that-are-biblical
http://www.kcm.org/real-help/finances/apply/18-bible-verses-can-change-your-finances
https://gotquestions.org/managing-finances.html (This site in general is often helpful)

Lesson 417: Genesis 41:37–38 The Complete Word of God/Joseph is the Man

The Pharaoh of Egypt has called Joseph in to interpret his dreams. Joseph has just explained what these dreams mean, and Pharaoh understands his explanation, and all of it makes perfect sense to him. Does this mean that dreams are meaningful to us today? Do dreams tell the future to us today? Does God speak to us through dreams today?

God speaks to us in the Church Age (the period of time from Pentecost until the rapture of the church) through His Word, which was completed in the 1st century A.D. Personally, I enjoy the Old Testament very much and that is why I spend much of my time exegeting Old Testament books. However, I do this recognizing that the Old Testament does not always tell us what we ought to do. For instance, we do not observe the Sabbath day; we do not go to church carrying a lamb which is slaughtered at the front of the church; and God does not speak to us by visions or dreams; nor does He come to us in person in some manifestation (like a person or a voice from heaven or as a burning bush) and talk to us. Why not?

There is a three-fold reason. (1) We have the completed Word of God. Because the Bible is complete, we don't need any more revelation. God is able to speak to us through His complete Word—which authority is established by many wonderful proofs—and His Word gives us guidance, comfort and mechanics. (2) If God continued to speak to us through visions and dreams, then the Bible would not be complete. We would continue to add to the Scriptures, adding to it these private revelations. However, we have the full revelation of God in His Son, Jesus Christ. We have the full revelation of our lives in the Church Age from Paul and the other Apostles. (3) God the Father has sent God the Holy Spirit to indwell all of us. The Holy Spirit acts within us according to when we are in fellowship and he works hand-in-hand with God's Word. We are filled with the Spirit when in fellowship (without unconfessed sin in the life) and we are guided to the truth, if we actually desire the truth (this does not mean that we open up the Bible randomly, drop our finger, and there is the verse which helps us right now). If we have preconceived notions of the truth (driven by our upbringing, by society, by our culture) which we refuse to let go of, the Holy Spirit is not going to lead us into the truth—as we have already made that determination for ourselves. If we somehow think that we are able to open the Scriptures and understand much of it on our own, then we are rejecting the concept of the pastor-teacher and the local church, both of which are laid out for us in Scripture. God has put into place well-qualified pastor-teachers—this is a part of His design for the Church Age. If we reject this truth, we cannot expect to be led into other truths.

There have been, from time to time, various cults and religions which lay claim to direct revelation from God subsequent to the completion of the canon of Scripture. Mohammed is presented as a prophet of God and he founded a new religion that worships bloodshed and terror (this has been a constant in the history of Islam). We have the more peaceful and conservative Mormon religion where, for whatever reason, God made Himself known (according to them) through "reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics" (there is no such thing) which required someone wearing rose-colored glasses to read and interpret (the original

manuscripts in *reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics* and the rose colored glasses are long gone—if they existed at all). These extra-Biblical "revelations" gave us a religion where, at first, polygamy is allowed, then it was not, but today, maybe it is. The Bible itself is pretty clear about marriage and polygamy; I am unaware of any revelation by Joseph Smith that told us even the tiniest bit of spiritual information that has been important to us since then.

My point being, any claim to new revelation after the completion of Scripture has not resulted in a near universal recognition of the authority of those revelations; nor have they resulted in sects or religions that really have a purpose greater than the revelation of Jesus Christ. How do you upstage the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is God in the flesh, Who died for our sins? What exactly in these subsequent and false revelations that take us *beyond* Jesus? What in these revelations has been so necessary to the lives of believers that is not already found in the completed Word of God?

Jesus Christ in the New Testament fulfills all that is found in the Old. Almost all of the *types* in the Old Testament are references to our Lord and His work on the cross. He is the *Antitype;* His work on the cross is the antitype. There are many specific prophecies about Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, the first occurring as early as Gen. 3; with great specific prophecies to be found throughout, particularly in the books of Psalms and Isaiah. Jesus fulfilled those prophecies. And, God delineated the perfect law for the Jews, and Jesus kept the Mosaic Law perfectly.

All that was needed after His death on the cross was a full and proper explanation of what just happened, and then this message needed to be taken to all the peoples of the earth; and that is what the gospels, Acts and the epistles are all about. Once this was complete, and the book of Revelation added, which reveals to us the end of time. After that, there was nothing more to add.

The New Testament reveals to us that God sent His Son to die for our sins; and that our existence and our eternal salvation stand upon Him. Do you somehow think that there is any subsequent revelation that is somehow more important than this? Can you actually think of something that God forgot to tell us?

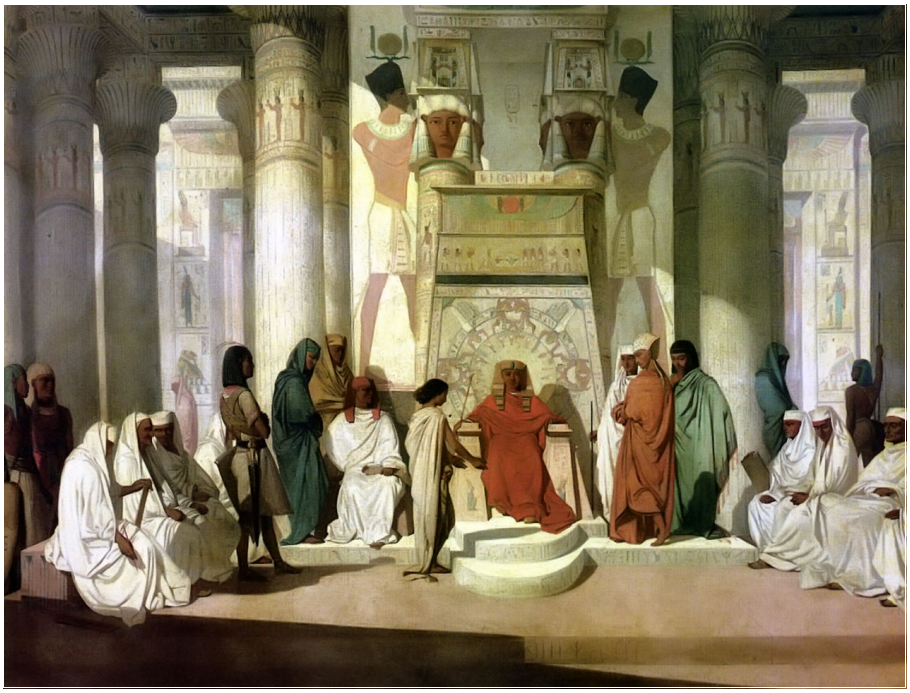
Today, if you are willing to learn how to think as God thinks—which you learn by means of a well-qualified pastor-teacher—then ascertaining God's will is not difficult. When your human spirit is filled with divine truth, then what you should be doing in life is clear.

Back to our narrative, which takes place prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture:

Joseph has interpreted the dream of Pharaoh; Pharaoh understands and accepts the meaning of his dreams as given by Joseph; and he likes Joseph's solution. Obviously, Pharaoh must believe the interpretation in order to accept Joseph's solution. Pharaoh has also believed in the God of Joseph, since he accepts Joseph's interpretation, which comes from God. Believing in the Revealed God in the Old Testament is the equivalent of believing in Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Pharaoh is saved.

Genesis 41:37 And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.

The thing refers to Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream, and his solution to the future. What Joseph explains makes sense to Pharaoh and to all those under him. The dreams are a vehicle for revelation to Pharaoh. He compares what Joseph said to what he dreamed, and it all fits together; it all makes sense.



Joseph Interprets the Dream of Pharaoh (19th Century painting by Jean-Adrien Guignet); from Wikipedia; originally from Free Christian Imagages; accessed October 26, 2016.

A person truly in search of truth will (1) find it and (2) recognize it. Jesus said, "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free." As an aside, not everyone who claims to be looking for truth really is (from the outset, some have already rejected the truth). A person may search out Buddhist monks for enlightenment, but, prior to this, rejected the claims of Jesus Christ.

Pharaoh recognizes that Joseph is speaking the truth. 400 years later, there will be another Pharaoh on the throne of Egypt, and Moses will speak the truth to him, but he will not recognize it as truth. That Pharaoh will witness great signs and wonders, and yet, harden his heart against the truth and against God. But Joseph's Pharaoh is open and receptive to the truth.

Genesis 41:38 And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find any man like this, in whom the Spirit of God is?"

Note the thinking of Pharaoh. He wants a man in whom is the Spirit of God is. This indicates that Pharaoh believes in the Revealed God. Joseph has told him that the dreams

and the interpretation of the dreams are of God (vv. 16, 25, 28, 32[20]) and Pharaoh clearly believes that.

Pharaoh understands that the key for Egypt's future is a man in whom resides the Spirit of God.

This Pharaoh seems to have a lot on the ball; and the words here appear to be a rhetorical question. He is not asking his servants to prepare a list of all the wise and intelligent men in his realm, and then they will confer on these names—remember, he already called in all of the wise men to interpret his dreams, but to no avail. Pharaoh is going to say something which is obvious to him, and this preparatory remark is to get his staff thinking as he is thinking.

This, by the way, is a great trick employed by great leaders and by excellent teachers. You guide those in your periphery to a conclusion, but you allow some or all of them to reach that conclusion before you actually say it out loud. I had a wonderful political science teacher in college and we were studying the United States Constitution and various Supreme Court decisions. He had taught one Supreme Court decision and then, not too long after, taught another Supreme Court decision which was contrary to the first one, made perhaps 20 years later. I blurted out, "But that's exactly the opposite of what they already decided!" He knew that, of course. He was waiting for us in the classroom to recognize it without him saying it himself. This method worked quite well because, over 40 years later, I still remember coming to that revelation. That is effective teaching.

Pharaoh knows, with this statement, whom he will choose for this task. This question gets those in his presence to begin to think on this. No doubt, some of them might be thinking of people to put on a list; but others, having just heard Joseph, are thinking, "Isn't the right man standing right in front of you?" Pharaoh's words seem to convey that exact meaning.

What Pharaoh is saying appears to be a rhetorical question. Pharaoh is praising Joseph for in him is the Spirit of God; and Pharaoh recognizes that as necessary for a position of leadership. I believe that the Living Bible really captures this well: Joseph's suggestions were well received by Pharaoh and his assistants. As they discussed who should be appointed for the job, Pharaoh said, "Who could do it better than Joseph? For he is a man who is obviously filled with the Spirit of God." The Message, as well as several others, also convey this very thing: This seemed like a good idea to Pharaoh and his officials. Then Pharaoh said to his officials, "Isn't this the man we need? Are we going to find anyone else who has God's spirit in him like this?" Or the CEV: The king and his officials liked this plan. So the king said to them, "No one could possibly handle this better than Joseph, since the Spirit of God is with him." So Pharaoh is not just saying, "This is what we need; now you all start giving me some names to consider." He is saying, "The man we need is right here in front of us. Do you see it too?"

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[20] You will notice that, not once does Joseph say to Pharaoh, "Now that we got this whole dream thing resolved, let me tell you about my situation."

Regarding the Living Bible, the Message and the Contemporary English Version: I was raised in a church where the exact words of the Bible were important, as that is what we base our interpretation on; and throughout my study of the Bible, arriving at an accurate translation is fundamental to understanding the passage. However, I have found, over the years, that sometimes these less-than-literal paraphrases often convey the general notions of the text quite well. Whereas, we might not really get that this is a rhetorical question in a very literal translation, the Living Bible gives that sense, but in a different way (as an aside, my favorite paraphrases are the New Living Translation and the New Century Version—I think that everyone ought to have a *reading* Bible). Sometimes (not always), these paraphrases can help us to better understand what is happening in a passage of Scripture.

Ideally speaking, Pharaoh has led those in his periphery to see what is obvious to him—that Joseph is the man for this job. Pharaoh himself will say the words, but he gives the officials in his court time to catch up to where he is.

This Pharaoh is a smart leader. He recognizes the truth of Joseph's interpretation of his dreams. He recognizes Joseph's intelligence and competence. He also recognizes the importance of his staff understanding and agreeing with his decisions, to the point of leading them to these decisions even before he says them.

A leader cannot simply tell his subjects, "I want you to move from point A to point B." In some circumstances, a simple order does the trick; but, in other circumstances, a simple order is not good enough. So Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find any man like this, in whom the Spirit of God is?" Most of his servants—even supposing that they are thinking independently—recognize that the man needed by Egypt is standing right in front of them: Joseph. Pharaoh speaks in such a way as to allow his staff to catch up to him. Perhaps some trusted aide blurted out, "Hey, how about this man, Joseph?"

Lesson 418: Genesis 41:37–41 — God, through Pharaoh, promotes Joseph

Joseph has told Pharaoh how his dreams predict 7 years of plenty followed by 7 years of famine, and this all makes sense to Pharaoh. He understands and accepts the interpretation by Joseph of his dreams, acknowledging that such an interpretation is from God. Then Joseph tells Pharaoh how to deal with the future, and lays out a very wise plan that will not only save Egypt, but it will save much of the population in surrounding areas.

Pharaoh wants to put Joseph in charge of the grain, to oversee the nation in its 7 years of prosperity followed by 7 years of depression, but to do this, Pharaoh must be careful about conferring such power and he has to sell his cabinet on it first. How does he do that? He allows them to come to that idea on their own.

Joseph has come up with a plan as to what ought to be done about the future of Egypt.

Genesis 41:37–38 Now the plan seemed good in the eyes of Pharaoh as well as all his servants. Then Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can a man like this be found, one in whom is God’s Spirit?” (Tree of Life Version)

Genesis 41:37–38 Pharaoh and all his advisors considered it an excellent plan. Pharaoh said to his advisors, 'Can there be another person who has God's spirit in him as this man does?' (The Kaplan translation)

Remember, Joseph is not an Egyptian; and putting someone in charge of such a tremendous project is conferring a great deal of power and responsibility on that one man. It is an added dimension to place this on a non-Egyptian. So, it is best that several of the men under Pharaoh come to his same conclusion on this. With these few words, his trusted advisors come to the same conclusion as Pharaoh has.

We almost never know all of the conversations and pronouncements which are made, but soon after his rhetorical question, Pharaoh says...

Genesis 41:39 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown you all this, no one is as discreet and wise as you.

Pharaoh uses two words to describe Joseph, based upon their short meeting. He calls him, bîyn (וִיב) [pronounced *bean*] (as a Niphal participle), which means, *being intelligent, being prudent, being skillful*. Strong’s #995 BDB #106. Pharaoh also calls Joseph châkâm (חָכָם) [pronounced *khah-KAWM*], which means, *capable of knowing [judging]; intelligent, wise; skillful, adept, proficient; subtle, crafty*. Strong’s #2450 BDB #314. Both of these words are found numerable times in the book of Proverbs, often together.

Let me suggest that there are two kinds of intelligence at work here. Joseph is obviously a smart and perceptive man—that is, he has a reasonably high I.Q. and he has a reasonable amount of education to go with it (even though his education may simply be what he learned working for Potiphar and from being placed in an Egyptian jail). However, Joseph also has the discernment to do the right thing; to do the wise thing. He is able to come to realistic solutions to real-life problems.

The world is filled with high I.Q. types who, when it comes to the real world, are about as dumb as a box of rocks. People who have degrees in economics, for instance. Such people often, because of their education, have the weirdest (and insanely incorrect) views of economic matters (Paul Krugman[21] comes to mind—or anyone else who subscribes to Keynesian economic theories).

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[21] When President Obama decided to “stimulate” the economy by spending nearly a trillion dollars, the largest “stimulus package” in U.S. history, it became apparent to most Americans that it did not work. One survey said that only 6% of Americans believed that the Stimulus Package worked. Krugman famously said the problem was, he did not spend enough money. This, by the way, is a famous liberal answer to any failed liberal policy. “Well, we just did not do enough of that.”

Joseph is intelligent, but he does not harbor weird, esoteric views of life. He is not wedded to a set of weird theories which override common sense. He can evaluate a set of circumstances and the best thing to do in those circumstances. This is how he thrived as a slave under Potiphar and as a prisoner in Pharaoh's prison.

So, thus Pharaoh gives his decision, to choose Joseph. The Spirit of God is in Joseph because he could interpret the dreams when no one else was able. Pharaoh recognizes Joseph's abilities from the beginning, as no one else in the kingdom of Egypt could have done what he just did (recall that Pharaoh first called upon the wise men of Egypt to come and interpret his dreams, and they were unable to).

This may help to explain why Joseph insisted on making a good appearance before Pharaoh. He probably had no idea what was up, apart from Pharaoh having a dream, but Joseph wanted to make the best appearance that he could. By doing this, Joseph was exercising his wisdom. He was conforming to Egyptian protocol.

Had he shown up dirty, unshaven, in filthy clothes, Pharaoh may have even accepted his interpretation of the dreams, but he would not have necessarily looked at Joseph and said, "Yeah, you're the man I need to have in charge." But Joseph looked like a man who could be trusted with such a great task.

Joseph did not know exactly what was coming; but he did understand Egyptian customs and the Egyptian mindset, and he conformed to that.

Application: When you go on a job interview, you should look clean, presentable, and in the best clothes for the job that you are interviewing for. In society, you must dress appropriately. Do not show up with the attitude, "What you see is what you get." Or, "Here I am, take me or leave me."

Joseph was there, not necessarily on a job interview; but he knew the customs of cleanliness of the Egyptians. He respected the customs of the Egyptians. Therefore, he wanted to make the right impression. He did not want Pharaoh to give him the once over and think, "What a dirty-looking guy; what's his deal?" He looked clean and presentable to Pharaoh, and this allowed for Pharaoh an easy decision. He is showing respect for their cultural norms. The idea was, Joseph did not allow his personal appearance to become a distraction to whatever he had been called upon to do.

Pharaoh has called Joseph in from prison in order to interpret his dreams. Not only does Joseph correctly interpret the dreams, but then he provides Pharaoh with a solution to the problems that Pharaoh faces in the future. This solution requires a man to oversee the collection of a special grain tax; and the preservation of all the excess grain which is to be collected. Pharaoh determines that Joseph, standing before him, is the right man for this job.

Genesis 41:40a You will be over my house,..."

Overall, v. 40 is easy to understand—Joseph would be in charge, answerable only to Pharaoh. However, there are some things which need to be sorted out. Usually when the word *house* is used, it refers to a person's *house, household,* or *compound*. However, this refers to all of Egypt. Joseph is being promoted from prison to the highest authority in the land (under Pharaoh). Pharaoh's household is the land of Egypt. Joseph is not becoming the top slave in Pharaoh's personal house; Joseph is becoming the #2 man in all of Egypt.

Genesis 41:40ab You will be over my house, and all my people will kiss *the hand* at your word..."

It is the second part of this verse which is confusing, which reads, literally: ...upon [*because of, according to*] your mouth, all my people will kiss [*touch, have close contact with*],...

The problematic verb is nâshaq (נָשַׁק) [pronounced *naw-SHAHK*], which means, *to kiss, to touch, to have close contact with; to equip, to arm*. Strong's #5401 BDB #676. The verb is found in the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect.

Approaches to Interpreting Nâshaq in Genesis 41:40

1. The first approach is considering a missing or understood object of the verb. Perhaps the Pharaoh intends that the people *kiss the ring, kiss the hand* of Joseph. This does not mean that every person who Joseph sees must run up and kiss his ring, but that those who have some kind of contact with him kiss his ring, indicating that they recognize his authority. This is found in Green's literal translation: You shall be over my house, and at your mouth all my people shall kiss *the hand*. The italics indicate that these words were added.
2. The second approach is, the people will be armed or equipped according to Joseph's word. The Concordant Literal Version: You shall be over my household, and at your bidding all my people shall bear weapons.
    1) This understanding of the word is found in the Qal active participle elsewhere.
    2) This understanding of the word seems to be a later use of the word (Chronicles and Psalms).
    3) An interpretation requires us to think of this word as the passive (*the people are armed, equipped*), which is generally conveyed with the Niphal; or *the people arm themselves,* which is generally conveyed by the Hithpael.
    4) The problem with this interpretation is, Pharaoh is not putting Joseph in charge of his armies. At no time in Genesis do we see Joseph leading an army or equipping an army.
3. The third understanding seems to be quite reasonable, understanding *nâshaq* to mean, *to have close contact with*. Kukis Moderately Literal Translation: [Therefore,] you will be over my house and in addition, your mouth [or, *according to (your mouth)*], will command [lit., *have close contact with*] all my people. This would be in the sense of having command over Pharaoh's people, the Egyptians.
4. Fourthly, there is another understanding of this word—another meaning not listed

above; or this word is mistaken for another word.
   1) There is a very wide variance in the two meanings to begin with.
   2) The Hebrew letters found in this word are not commonly mistaken for other Hebrew letters.

5. Finally, we could go with the Greek or Latin here. However, remember, these are translations, and often a translation will attempt to smooth out the meaning, if the meaning is difficult to apprehend.
   1) The Greek verb used is hupakouô (ὑπακούω) [pronounced *hoop-ak-OO-oh*], which means, *1) to listen, to harken; 1a) of one who on the knock at the door comes to listen who it is, (the duty of a porter); 2) to harken to a command; 2a) to obey, be obedient to, submit to*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #5219. The English translation based upon the Greek translation is: You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be obedient to your word; only in the throne will I excel you.
   2) The English translation from the Latin is: You shall be over my house, and at the commandment of your mouth all the people shall obey: only in the kingly throne will I be above you.
6. Considering these various options, I would go with #1 or 3. However, although there may be difficulties with the translation of this verb, the overall context suggests that the people are under the authority of Joseph, and his authority is only second to Pharaoh's.
   1) In #1, the people are recognizing Joseph's authority and...
   2) in #3, Joseph is given the authority to command the people of Egypt.
   3) The 3rd option is not much different from the Greek or Latin understanding of this verse.

Although I looked at some other commentaries, I did not find them to be helpful here. Even the generally excellent notes of the NET Bible were somewhat difficult:

The NET Bible: *Heb "and at your mouth (i.e., instructions) all my people will kiss." G. J. Wenham translates this "shall kowtow to your instruction" (Genesis [WBC], 2:395). Although there is some textual support for reading "will be judged, ruled by you," this is probably an attempt to capture the significance of this word. Wenham lists a number of references where individuals have tried to make connections with other words or expressions – such as a root meaning "order themselves" lying behind "kiss," or an idiomatic idea of "kiss" meaning "seal the mouth," and so "be silent and submit to." See K. A. Kitchen, "The Term Nsq in Genesis 41:40," ExpTim 69 (1957): 30; D. S. Sperling, "Genesis 41:40: A New Interpretation," JANESCU 10 (1978): 113-19.*[22]

[22] From https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen44.htm (footnote); accessed September 18, 2016.

R. B. Thieme, Jr. often talked about spending 8 hours examining a single verse; over the years, I have found that time allotment not to be out of the ordinary. For the Basic Exegesis study (which I sent out), spending 3 or 4 hours on a verse is not unusual. When I put together a complete commentary on an entire chapter, spending 5–8 hours on a verse is typical.

Regarding this particular verse, I have probably given you way more information than you have an interest in. However, because this is such a difficult reading, I thought it better not to simply gloss over it, using a convenient translation, but to simply show you there, from time to time, there are problems in translating and interpreting the text.[23] On the other hand, this is a book written 4000 years ago in a language which is essentially dead (modern Hebrew is similar to ancient Hebrew, but these are different languages[24]); so difficulty, from time to time, is to be expected.

I should point out that, most of Genesis is reasonably easy to translate and to interpret from the Hebrew. In this study of Genesis, I have rarely glossed over a difficult verse. Interestingly enough, the book of Job, from the same era, is much more difficult to translate and, particularly, to interpret.[25]

Genesis 41:39–41

JPS (Tanakh—1985)	So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is none so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my court, and by your command shall all my people be directed; only with respect to the throne shall I be superior to you." Pharaoh further said to Joseph, "See, I put you in charge of all the land of Egypt."
The Voice	**Pharaoh** (*to Joseph*) Since God has shown all of this to you, I can't imagine anyone wiser and more discerning than you. Therefore you will be in charge of my household. All of my people will report to you and do as you say. Only I, because I sit on the throne, will be greater than you. I hereby appoint you head over all of the land of Egypt.
New King James Version	Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you." And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt."

[23] Furthermore, if your translation that you commonly use reads differently, you might wonder, *how did he come up with that interpretation?*

[24] You may or may not find the King James Version (which is English) difficult to understand; but, I can guarantee you, if you read the KJV as it was originally published, you would struggle with its meaning.

[25] So far, for me, the most difficult chapters to translate have been 1Kings 6–7.

Had you read any of these translations, you would have never guessed that there was some difficulty with translating and interpreting this verse.

Lesson 419: Genesis 41:39–44 God Promotes Joseph/The Servant-King

Joseph has been called in from prison to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh. He cleaned himself up, appeared before Pharaoh, and correctly interpreted Pharaoh's dreams—and Pharaoh believed his interpretation. Then he presented a plan to Pharaoh of how to deal with the upcoming prosperity followed by famine. Pharaoh believes that the prudent thing to do is to put Joseph in charge of overseeing the 14-year-project (7 years of plenty followed by 7 years of famine).

Pharaoh is so impressed that he promotes Joseph to #2 man in Egypt and places him in charge of taxing the people their grain so that it may be set aside for the future 7 difficult years (Joseph's plan).

Observe that both Joseph and Pharaoh are doing what is best for the people of Egypt. That is their concern and their focus.

Genesis 41:39–41 To Joseph he said, "Since God has made all this known to you, no one has your vision and wisdom. You shall be in charge of my household, and all my people will respect your every word. Only in regard to the throne shall I rank higher than you." Pharaoh went on, "I hereby give you authority over the whole land of Egypt." (Revised English Bible)

Pharaoh will elevate Joseph from one of the lowest places in Egypt—in prison—to second-in-command in all of Egypt.

God has a place for all of us. Just because you are a believer and just because you have doctrine, this does not mean that you will automatically go to the head of the class. God places us in the right place at the right time, which is not always the highest in rank. You might know more than anyone else in your business; you might be wiser than anyone else in your business; but God is going to put you in the right place, according to your gifts and His plan. This does not mean that you should pursue a higher ranking or that you ought not to.

For instance, as a teacher, when the department head became open, and a principal suggested that I apply for that position, I gave it some serious thought. I had seen this position done right; and I had seen it done poorly. The other person up for the job was sure to exercise her authority poorly (in the time that I was there, she was the worst department head that we ever had). In terms of background, my preparation was equal or better than anyone else on staff. However, I also recognized that my interest was connected to the students directly; and that I was not all that thrilled about working with adults. So I chose not to apply. In the long run, this worked against me (the person who applied did not like me at all); but even in retrospect, I believed that I made the right

decision. I believe that the subsequent years were a matter of God moving me out of a profession, which I dearly loved, at the right time. In fact, given all the relevant circumstances, God's timing was perfect.

Every believer with doctrine is going to have a place in this world; and we are to apply the doctrine that we know every single day. We will face injustice, we will face both good and bad bosses, we will have good circumstances in our lives and bad ones; but God is in control. With doctrine, it is all the same. We can have the maturity level to enjoy the good aspects of our lives; and we should have the maturity level to endure with contentment those things in our lives which are difficult.

As Paul writes in Philip. 4:11–13 I am not saying this because of being in need, for I have **learned** to be content regardless of my circumstances. I know how to get along in humble circumstances and how to live in prosperity. In every situation and in all circumstances, I have learned the secret both to be full and to be hungry, both to have plenty and to be in need. I can do everything through Christ, who gives me the strength. (AUV–NT; emphasis mine) We learn, through the application of Bible doctrine to life, to be content in all circumstances.

Genesis 41:41 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See [or, *Observe, Take note*], I have set you over all the land of Egypt."

Pharaoh tells Joseph, "You are now in charge." Even though we struggled with the meaning of the previous verse, this verse is quite clear.

Remember that Joseph, despite being hurried out of prison to speak to Pharaoh, he stopped and cleaned himself up first. Had Joseph not looked his best, it is highly unlikely that Pharaoh would have considered him for this high position. Joseph did not rush to speak to Pharaoh. He did not say, "I may look like hell, but no matter; the Pharaoh will understand."). Instead, Joseph looked like an executive; he did not look like a man just pulled out of prison.

Pharaoh will then outfit Joseph so that he looks like a man in charge.

Genesis 41:42 And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand. And he dressed him with fine linen robes, and put a gold chain around his neck.

The ring would be a signet ring. This would be used as the Pharaoh's official seal, so Joseph could pass a law or set a policy, put it into writing, and then put the official seal upon it, so that all would know, this is now the law of the land.

The robes themselves, as well as the gold chain, no doubt identified Joseph as a man with great authority in the land.

All of this would have all taken some time. Pharaoh did not necessarily do all of this in the first 20 minutes of meeting Joseph, and then move on to other business. It is unlikely that

he had all of this stuff hanging in the closet, just in case he ran into the right #2 man. Although this clearly follows the previous events, this may have taken place much later in the day—or even on a subsequent day. There was likely a ceremony; and this may have been done out-of-doors in front of the people of Egypt.

The Bible records all the pertinent events; but does not always give us every detail or even completely set the stage for each event which we are allowed to view. It is easy for two Bible scholars to read that same passage, and yet form a different vision of what is happening.

Why don't we find the words, *10 days later, in a public ceremony, before a gathering of 2000 Egyptians, Pharaoh took off the ring from his hand*...? Two possible reasons: (1) everything did take place right then and there on that day, and Pharaoh gave Joseph things which belonged to Pharaoh and had been used by Pharaoh; or, (2) when Joseph recorded these events, he may have simply left out many of the details. God revealed the meaning of the dreams to Pharaoh through Joseph; and God revealed how to solve the upcoming problems of Egypt.

Putting all this upon Joseph indicates that he is *over all the land of Egypt*.

All of Joseph's life has taken him to this point. He went right from prison to the top of one of the most powerful nations in the world, and God wants him to exercise his great authority with wisdom and grace. God has placed Joseph in difficult places throughout his early life, so that he will be able to properly exercise his authority. Joseph's life, to this point, has been training. Just as Joseph knew to clean himself up before Pharaoh, he would know how to conduct himself in this position of high authority.

Because of the spiritual state of the United States, we have a bevy of federal representatives who are corrupt and have completely lost track of their purpose and responsibilities. God does not want this in Joseph. Therefore, God trained and guided Joseph for years, placing him into very difficult positions, making him suffer unjust treatment. Joseph learned from these injustices and developed into a happy man who did not carry resentment or bitterness around in his soul. There are few things worse for a people than to have a leader with great authority who carries bitterness, suspicion and anger in his soul.

It is not good to have a leader in high office who spends a portion of his (or her) time determining how to harm his (or her) personal and political enemies.

The next time you are under pressure and the walls are closing in, bear in mind that God may be training you for some future set of circumstances. What you need is to learn and apply doctrine while these things are taking place.

Because of his training, Joseph will become one of the most consequential figures for the preservation of the people of Egypt and for the preservation of the families of his brothers. We already know that the family of Jacob cannot remain in the land of Canaan much

longer without being corrupted. Based upon Pharaoh's dreams, nation Egypt could have completely fallen apart. Joseph, because of his training—because of the difficulties which he experience and because of the unjust treatment to which he was subjected—will change history forever.

Genesis 41:43 And he [Pharaoh] made him [Joseph] to ride in the second chariot which he had, and they cried before him, "Bow the knee!" And he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Joseph is given this great, exalted position. However, bear in mind the purpose—Joseph is there for a dual purpose (1) glorify God and (2) serve the people of Egypt. It is possible for him to do both, without contradiction and without facing great moral dilemmas.

This is some confusion over the phrase *bow the knee,* which is actually an Egyptian word. It is likely an imperative and various people have translated it *kneel, bow the knee, give attention, prostrate yourself, your command is our desire, grand vizier (an Egyptian title), head of the wise,* and *tender father*. In the Hebrew the word is ʾabᵉrêk (אַבְרֵךְ) [pronounced *ahb-RAKE*]. It is doubtful that anyone has a clue as to how to actually pronounce this word and its meaning is also difficult to ascertain. For every Hebrew linguist who has written anything about the Hebrew language, we have a different meaning. Most of these ideas given here are probably correct or close to correct.

There are two kinds of leaders in this world: (1) those who use their authority to give orders and to look out for themselves and (2) those who understand that their responsibility is to those over whom they have authority. The Ultimate King is Jesus Christ, Who is also known as the *Servant-King* (on many occasions, He showed Himself to be a servant). The original concept of governing figures in the United States was very much influenced by Jesus Christ; the ideal is the citizen-legislator (or even, citizen-president), a man who steps out of his life in the real world, and gives over a few years to public service. This is not unlike the Lord of Glory who steps out of heaven and lives among us, God in the flesh. And, quite obviously, not only did He live among us, but He gave His life for ours, paying the price for our sins.

Interestingly enough, in the United States, apart from the court system, there is no traditional garb associated with those in high office. The president will wear a suit, as will his cabinet members, as will those in the Senate and House. The only ones in the United States who differentiate themselves from others by what they wear are those of the court. They generally wear black robes. I believe the idea of a lack of *uniform* for the most part in United States government is, they are supposed to reflect the ideal notion of a citizen-legislator.

The ideal politician in the mind of many of our founders was based upon the Lord, Who looks out for and takes care of His Own.

Our Lord is Lord over all—even the winds and the seas obey Him! Yet, He is also presented in Scripture as the suffering Servant (Isa. 53). Jesus taught this to His disciples,

when James and John wanted to be set on His left and right hand in the Kingdom. And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:42–45; ESV; capitalized)

My personal opinion is, Jesus Christ was originally very much the model for our government officials, who were seen to be citizen legislators. They were supposed to be there for the good of the people and to properly represent the people. We elected representatives, not rulers. How far from this concept is our government today!

In Egypt, as in nearly all nations, their leaders are rulers; and often with nearly absolute power. Joseph, however, is illustrative of the concept of *the servant-king*. What he does will benefit the people of Egypt, as well as many of the peoples in the surrounding areas.

Genesis 41:44 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and without a word from you, no man will lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt."

This is simply an indication that Joseph had great authority in Egypt. This is why God gave Joseph such extensive training. Note, Joseph has already had 2 positions of authority; and he has suffered many injustices in his life. In this narrative, these injustices are a part of the narrative; but Joseph does not dwell on them; he is not filled with mental attitude sins because of them.

So that we understand what is going on, God will move all of the Jacob's sons (Joseph's brothers) and their families to Egypt for a time, as the culture of the people of Canaan will continue to go downhill. For many generations, the people of Canaan will be cursed and eventually destroyed. On the other hand, for 2 or 3 generations, the people of Egypt will be greatly blessed, as God's people will live among them. This is blessing by association.

We have noticed how Pharaoh has responded well to Joseph and to his words about the Revealed God. We may take that as representative of many of the Egyptians at that time, who then chose to believe in Joseph's God (by his God, Joseph was able to interpret Pharaoh's dreams). So, we have positive volition toward the True God in Egypt; and therefore, God brings great blessing to Egypt.

In Canaan, some people were willing to accept the ritual of circumcision, but as the requirement necessary to intermarry and to share the wealth of the Jews.

Even living in Egypt, God will keep the sons of Jacob separate from the Egyptians.

Joseph is no longer a slave in Egypt, but has been promoted to the second highest position in the land. He was called in from prison by Pharaoh to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, and Pharaoh recognized both Joseph's accurate interpretation and his personal competence. Therefore, when Joseph predicted 7 years of prosperity followed by 7 years of famine, and then suggested that grain be set aside during the coming years of prosperity, Pharaoh was onboard and he put Joseph in charge of it.

In this way, Joseph was appointed to Egyptian royalty; and he was also married into Egyptian royalty.

Genesis 41:45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah. And he gave him Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On, for his wife. And Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.

Often, marriages among the politically connected were done to solidify alliances. This was a great honor for Joseph. Did you know before that two entire tribes of Israel had "royal Egyptian blood" in them?

An Egyptian Marriage (a relief graphic); taken from weebly.com; accessed November 15, 2016.

Some suggest that Joseph's Egyptian name means *the God speaks and He lives*. BDB suggests, *treasury of the glorious rest*. Ancient rabbis suggest that this name means, *revealer of a secret*. The ancient Coptic suggests that it means *preserver of the age*. Because this is an Egyptian name, we do not know for certain its meaning. These educated guesses are clearly apropos.

Asenath is Joseph's wife, and one of the few wives listed by name of the 12 sons of Jacob (the other being Judah's wife, Tamar, whom he knew but once—Gen. 38).

Asenath means *belonging to Neith,* who is a goddess. Her father is a priest of On; *On* is a city in lower Egypt, bordering the land of Goshen, and a center of sun worship.[26] All of this suggests heathen idolatry; but it is clear that Joseph worshiped the Revealed God. It is reasonable to suppose, based upon the words of Pharaoh and his trust in Joseph and

[26] *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon;* courtesy of e-sword; Strong's #204.

in the interpretation of his dreams, that Pharaoh believed in the Revealed God and Asenath may have also believed in Joseph's God, simply as being the wife of Joseph.

The Obelisk of On (a photograph); From BibleArcheology: *Little remains at On (called Heliopolis by the Greeks) except for this lone obelisk. A grand temple to the Egyptian god Re stood here in Joseph's day. Bryant G. Wood*. Accessed November 15, 2016.

It is fascinating that Egypt, with all of its records and its great history, is not nearly as well-preserved as Israel's history. Egypt has always been a great nation, from human viewpoint standards. However, man's true history has always included the manipulation or even obliteration of historical events. Historians have long distorted the events of United States history (I do not recall much from my history classes, but I do remember being taught that the founding fathers were deists and that FDR saved the United States from the Great Depression—two things which are false, yet taught in most high school history courses).

There is an online history of our presidents maintained by the White House. It is my understanding that President Obama inserted himself into many of these recollections. Similarly, when a new pharaoh came to power or a new dynasty, it is reasonable to assume that such a one was often in opposition to previous administrations, and therefore, might change or erase that history. I do not know how many times Egypt was overrun by other national powers (certainly this did not happen too often), but new rulers from outside Egypt might have done whatever was necessary to change or obliterate Egypt's previous history. Revolutions within Egypt against foreign-born leaders would have done whatever necessary to erase any good from their history (changing history is not a new invention). As a result, we have no idea how accurate any of the preserved ancient history of Egypt is.

On the other hand, we know all about the founding of nation Israel—back to the *very first Jews*. We know all about the patriarchs—the good and the bad. We know that their history has not been changed, because there is so much negative information about Jacob and his sons retained in the Bible. The history of the patriarchs is not whitewashed. Jacob is a prime example of that.

Genesis 41:46 And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from before Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

You may recall that Joseph was 17 when we first began this section of Genesis (when he went out to see his brothers in the field). 13 years have passed; many of which were spent in prison—all of which have Joseph living a life defined by unjust treatment.

You may recall that I spoke of the time constraints on Gen. 38 (the chapter where we study Judah and his daughter-in-law, Tamar). I said that this chapter must take place within a fairly limited period of time—20 to 22 years in fact. Here is the explanation: Joseph is about 17 years old when taken into slavery (Gen. 37:2) and is 30 years old when he stands before the Pharaoh interpreting Pharaoh's dreams (Gen. 41:46). This means that Joseph spent 13 years either as a slave or as a prisoner in Egypt (these were his 13 years of preparation by God).

Then there are 7 years of prosperity, followed by the first year of famine. So, from the time that Judah had a hand in placing Joseph into slavery, to the time when Judah and his brothers stood before Joseph asking for grain (Gen. 42), 21–22 years had elapsed. So, everything that takes place in Gen. 38 has to fall within that particular time limit. Gen. 38 begins with Judah separating from his family; and Gen. 42 will have all the sons of Jacob (save Benjamin) coming to Egypt to buy grain. These parallel tracks of historical events therefore must take place in the same time period.

Genesis 41:47 And in the seven years of plenty, the earth brought forth [grain] by [the] handfuls.

Just as Joseph had predicted, there were 7 good years in Egypt. The saying here indicates that there was great prosperity in Egypt.

I have never planted or harvested grains; but I have seen pictures of wheat and rye plants, and the portion of the plant which is used as seed is fairly small, compare to the overall plant. This description invokes the image of many handfuls of grain coming from their harvests.

Hand filled with grain (a graphic); taken from 123rf.com; accessed November 16, 2016.

Genesis 41:48 And he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and he put food in the cities. He put the food of the field which was around every city; he put it in among it. (MKJV)

The ESV provides a better translation: During the seven plentiful years the earth produced abundantly, and he gathered up all the food of these seven years, which occurred in the land of Egypt, and put the food in the cities. He put in every city the food from the fields around it. (Gen 41:47–48; ESV)

Joseph did exactly as he had admonished the Pharaoh. He began to collect food; but it was kept in the city where it was collected. The granaries had to be built to hold the grain; and precautions had to be taken to protect the grain as well (security precautions are logical results of constructing the granaries, but not specifically recorded in the Bible).

These 7 years were a very active time for Egypt. Granaries had to be established in every major city and area. That would have required a lot of building. Egypt enjoyed a boom economy for these 7 years.

Genesis 41:49 And Joseph gathered grain like the sand of the sea, very much, until he quit numbering it; for it was without number.

At first, Joseph kept records of how much grain was being stored up. However, after a certain point, there was so much that they simply stopped keeping records.

It is obvious that given enough time and manpower, the grain which Joseph had stored would have been measurable. However, what we have here is a figure of speech, called an hyperbole, where we have somewhat of an exaggeration. An hyperbole is used to indicate that there was a great deal of grain which was stored according to Joseph's orders.

The CEV expressed this final verse as: In fact, there was so much grain that they stopped keeping record, because it was like counting the grains of sand along the beach. This conveys to us that there was a whole lot of grain stored up. Joseph could have continued to store it up and keep records of how much was stored up, but he had so much, that it was just useless to do so. Saying that something was in such a great quantity that it could no longer be measured is hyperbole. It simply means that there was a whole lot of grain.

In mathematics, there are groups which are countable and finite; groups that are countable and infinite; and groups which cannot be even counted. If we looked at all the whole numbers between 1 and 1 million, we could count those numbers up and come to their total number (999,998). If we spoke of the set of whole numbers (0, 1, 2, 3,...), they are countable, but infinite. However, if we spoke of all the numbers, rational and irrational between 0 and 1, then you have a set of numbers which cannot be counted and are infinite.

Joseph has stored a lot of grain. However, it is a finite amount and, if he had to, he could have recorded the exact amount. This verse simply means that he had so much that, there was no way he was going to measure it all.

Genesis 41:50 And two sons were born to Joseph before the years of famine came, whom Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bore to him.

Between the ages of 30 and 37, Joseph has two sons who are born to him before the years of famine came. This could reasonably understood as his portion of great blessing during this time period.

God would bless Joseph with the *double portion;* his two sons would become two tribes in Israel. Usually the firstborn is the double portion and he continues more directly the line of his father. Joseph will not continue the line of promise, which will culminate in the 1st advent of Jesus Christ; but he would enjoy the double portion, usually reserved for the firstborn.

Lesson 421: Genesis 41:51–55 Joseph's Sons/Joseph's Authority

When Joseph had been quite young, his brothers sold him into slavery and so he ended up in Egypt. Because of false charges against him by the wife of his owner, Joseph ended up in jail. However, in jail, he correctly interpreted the dreams of two incarcerated officials. However, Joseph made the mistake of depending upon one of these men, rather than depending upon God, so Joseph continued in the jail for another two years.

However, the Pharaoh of Egypt had two dreams that no one could interpret and then, one of his aids remembered about Joseph during his own imprisonment. Joseph had correctly interpreted his dream. So Joseph was fetched from prison and brought before Pharaoh. Joseph not only interpreted Pharaoh's dreams correctly, but then he provided a clean solution for the future that those dreams predicted. There would be 7 years of prosperity in Egypt followed by 7 years of famine. Joseph knew what needed to be done; and Pharaoh placed him in charge of this project.

Joseph collected a temporary 20% tax from Egyptians—which was made up of grain that could be stored for the future famine. Joseph was in charge of collecting, storing and later distributing this grain.

It might be worthwhile pointing out that, no one forbade the people from establishing their own storage and putting aside grain for themselves. What was happening had to have been known throughout the land. This new tax could not have just come out of nowhere without any sort of explanation. So, individual Egyptian farmers could have set grain aside for themselves (and it would not be out of the question that a few of them did—but very few).

During these 7 years of prosperity, Joseph had two sons.

Genesis 41:51 And Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh, saying, "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house."

Mᵉnashsheh (הֶנַשֵׁמ) [pronounced *mehn-ahsh-SHEH*] means *causing to forget;* transliterated *Manasseh*. Strong's #4519 BDB #586. A significant portion of Joseph's life was difficult, even though he learned that God did all of it for a reason. Perhaps he names Manasseh to set aside the heartache of what his brothers had done to him. Joseph places these memories in the past. Now, he does not forget what happened (we are reading about it right now), but he forgives his brothers and does not seek their harm.

Joseph speaks of *all my toil*. *Toil* is the word ʿâmâl (לָמָע) [pronounced *ģaw-MAWL*], which means, *intense labor, exhausting toil, exhaustion, miserable work, work and toil so tiring, you just want to cry; misery, travail; production from labor*. Strong's #5999 BDB #765. I would have really expected to find this word used at the beginning of the book of Exodus (where the Jews are enslaved), but it is not. Under Potiphar, Joseph worked regularly and he probably worked hard. It is very likely that Joseph was engaged in intensive labor when serving time in prison. Or, if not that, his placement there caused him great discomfort and misery. Having this child has made him forget that labor and forget his family who placed him into slavery. By forget, I mean, he does not think about them all the time and what they have done to him. He does not have a soul filled with bitterness against the injustice of it all.

Application: Every single one of us will face injustices throughout our lives. In the devil's world, we cannot spend our lives opposing injustice (particularly as it has affected us). That gives us no more time in the day. Besides, for most people, correcting injustice boils down to getting revenge against those who have done you wrong.

Genesis 41:52 And the name of the second he called Ephraim, saying, "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

Ephraim is the Hebrew word ʾEphᵉrayim (מַיִרְפֶא) [pronounced *ef-RAH-yim*], which means, *to bear fruit, to be fruitful; double ash heap* transliterated *Ephraim*. Strong's #669 BDB #68. Joseph recognizes what God has done; and he knows that his life has been a result of being moved along by God's plan. He constantly relates his place in time to God and God's plan. We have not studied many incidents in the lives of his brothers, but based upon the history and remarks of Reuben, Judah and their father Jacob, God was certainly not at the forefront of their minds as He was with Joseph.

Egypt is called his land of affliction, as that is where he was sent to become a slave. However, this affliction will result in the saving of the family of Jacob.

In the future, Ephraim and Manasseh will become two tribes in nation Israel. This is Joseph's double-portion, which is usually the blessing of the firstborn. These sons are born of Egyptian royalty; they are not just born in Egypt, but they are born to a woman of royal Egyptian blood.

Genesis 41:53 And the seven years of plenty that was in the land of Egypt ended.

The 7 years of prosperity in Egypt came to an end, just as Pharaoh's dream had predicted. More than likely, this resulted from a lack of rain.

Genesis 41:54 And the seven years of famine began to come, according as Joseph had said. And the famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

Just as Joseph had promised, what followed was 7 years of economic recession, which probably meant that there was a lack of rainfall throughout Egypt. Therefore, whatever work was done was all for naught, as their crops would not grow without water. It is likely that there was some produce, but very little for the most part.

However, because Joseph collected so much grain over the first 7 years, Egypt was awash in grain during the famine—they had even more than they themselves required for the years of famine. As a result, Joseph oversaw the selling of grain to both Egyptians and foreigners.

We are under an agrarian society with a healthy amount of international trading. We are certain that the land was much more fertile during those years, yet the lack of rain could cause them ruination in any given year. All of this was God's plan—none of it occurred as a surprise to Him. Although we see it as human suffering, the famine had many purposes:

The Famine and God's Plan

1. The famine glorified God because Joseph, a man of God, predicted this, clearly giving the credit for the interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams to God.
2. The famine caused Jacob's family to be put under pressure that they had to come to Egypt to find food (they were financially rich enough to afford to search it out)
3. Therefore, these events reunited Joseph with his brothers and father.
4. As a result, the Israelites would find a safe haven in Egypt for the next four hundred years.
5. This famine also caused some serious attrition in the land of Canaan (Gen. 47:4, 13), so that it was not too overpopulated when the Jews return to the land (populations grow exponentially so that removing a portion of the population early on affects the overall population much more than removing a portion of it later. At this point in time, the Canaanites outnumbered the sons of Israel dramatically. This famine would have made the odds better (although God is able to work with any set of odds).

As we have seen throughout the book of Genesis, God is able to take anything and move His plan forward in time.

What follows is quite important for those who are concerned with politics. Joseph, the wisest man of his day, although he headed a strong government, this was not the first socialistic state policy. He did not collect all the wealth and then redistribute it to those in need. The gathering, storing and guarding of all this grain cost a tremendous amount of money. It had to be done—there was no other way to handle this situation—however, the

grain was not given away freely. Joseph saw that a fair price was charged for it; a price which would allow the grain to last for seven years of famine. This required for the population to save up their money during the years of prosperity and to remain active in business throughout the famine. That is, they could not produce much in the way of food, so they had to continue to work in other areas in order to be able to afford the food. In no way did this policy encourage indolence. There is no indication here that some families lived on the dole. In fact, we will find out later that they gave their all to the state in order to continue living.

Genesis 41:55 And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. And Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph. What he says to you, do."

Everyone in Egypt began to feel the pinch in the first year of the famine. It was probably a sudden change, based upon Joseph's prediction, from a year of prosperity to suddenly a year of famine. It is not clear at what point this occurred, but likely, early in year 1 of the famine, people began to hurt. Early on in this year, they began to realize that they did not have enough grain for themselves or for their livestock.

Pharaoh had placed his confidence in Joseph; so he told the crowds to go see Joseph (by now, a familiar figure of Egypt), and he would tell them what to do. Joseph was a familiar figure to all because he had overseen this temporary tax; and he oversaw the building of grain storage in the major cities. Pharaoh placed the entire responsibility upon Joseph.

A part of what a man in authority does is, he delegates authority, and then he steps away. When you delegate authority, then you step away and you allow the person you have given responsibility to, to do his job. You do not come back and try to micro-manage him. If a person requires micro-managing, then you have chosen the wrong man for the job. A man with great authority properly wields this authority through delegation of power. The leader of a country is a figurehead and a spokesman; apart from appearing in public and making his proposals known, he generally does not do very much that is directly hands-on.

In our system of government, a hands-on approach in some areas is necessary, simply to build a coalition of agreement. But, even if a president passes some bill related to immigration (as an example), he is not the one to get out there and begin processing immigration visas nor does he send out deportation notices from the White House. The president does not start building a border wall himself on the Mexican border. These things are done by people several layers below him. He gives that authority to someone else, who might organize a group of supervisors (also in authority) and planners; and they might, at some point, hire people to actually do the work. Let's say an immigration policy involves building a wall along the Mexican border—the president may go down there and do a photo-op; and he may even look at the plans and some of the construction—but he is not going to put on some blue jeans and start laying bricks (unless it is for a photo-op). He is not even going to go to the wall and tell them that they are doing the job wrong and then show them how to do it right. If he has an issue with what is being done, he is going to speak to people who might be two or three authority levels above the workers actually

doing the work. Ideally speaking, the president will not even have to do this—if he has properly delegated authority in the first place.

The mark of a good president is, he chooses hard-working and responsible people and not just places them in positions of authority but gives them latitude in their duties. A president or his aides do not try to micro manage those under their authority (as was done in the Vietnam war by President Johnson; or more recently, under President Obama, whose underlings tried to micromanage U.S. military men in the field).

This Pharaoh of Egypt rarely receives the credit that he deserves. He recognized great wisdom and ability in Joseph and then acted accordingly without prejudice. He placed all of Egypt under the authority of a foreigner, something which would have been quite unusual (it is possible that this is a foreign government in charge of Egypt—I have heard that theory—but we do not know for certain[27]). Then, when Joseph's prediction comes true, Pharaoh does not take any of the credit and he continues to allow Joseph to administer the program. His population, when the latter rain does not come and all of their crops have died, are in a panic and come to Pharaoh in large and small groups asking what they can do in order to feed their families. Pharaoh refers them immediately to Joseph.

So, Pharaoh was doing exactly the right thing—he put Joseph in charge of the taxation and the granaries; and then in charge of the selling of the grain during the years of famine. And when someone who knew Pharaoh came to him and said, "Look, we are really suffering right now; we have no bread to eat and no grain for our livestock—" and Pharaoh stops them mid-sentence, and tells them where to find Joseph.

This did not occur on simply one occasion. People and groups would come to Pharaoh throughout their recession and ask for food; and his stock answer was, "Go talk to Joseph; he's got this handled." Pharaoh, the man with the greatest authority, has delegated this authority to Joseph and allows Joseph to oversee all of it, from taxation and collection to the sale of the grain during the famine. He does not appear to want to look over Joseph's shoulder to make certain that he is doing a good job.

Because of Pharaoh's willingness to allow Joseph to have authority and to use it without being micromanaged, because the problem has a well-defined solution and because Joseph was in charge, all of this came off smoothly, even though, quite obviously, Joseph had never overseen a project like this before.

Two points: (1) All of this was accomplished without putting forward a political agenda. That is, the emergency was not used to further a particular set of political beliefs unrelated to the emergency. (2) Joseph was doing something that he had never done before. In fact, no one had ever done what Joseph was going to be required to do.

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[27] The history that historians have pieced together is similar; but with some points of great divergence.

He had management skills; he had great organizational skills. However, in life, it is not abnormal to do things which you have never done before. Sometimes it is these unique responsibilities which make our lives most interesting.

Lesson 422: Genesis 41:56–57 — The People Buy Grain From Joseph

The famine which Joseph warned Pharaoh was coming, had come. It affected primarily Egypt and Canaan (wherever else the famine was, we are not told).

Genesis 41:56 And the famine was over all the face of the earth. And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians. And the famine was severe on the land of Egypt.

There was a period of time when there was little or no rain. It sounds as if this applied to the populated earth overall—at least to that area around the Mediterranean Sea. The word *earth* is more often translated *land,* and can be applied to Canaan or to a much wider area.

In most of the cities, Joseph built grain storage silos which had to both be secure and accessible. He had to have well-trained workers collect the grain and store it; and, when it was time to sell the grain, to guard these silos and sell the grain. Then something had to be done with the silver. They obviously could not stack up the silver along side the silos for 7 years. There had to be a secure way of periodically taking the silver from the silos to a secure site (like the Pharaoh's palace vault—whatever that may have been).

One of the things which fascinated me is, Joseph does not simply open up the storehouses and say, "Come in and take what you need." He *sold* the grain to the people—the very same people whom he taxed in the first place. As a result, there would be no waste. When something is given away free, people often go overboard, taking more than they need. When they have to pay for the same thing out of their pockets with money that they have earned and then set aside, then they are less likely to be wasteful.

This is an important bit of information—Joseph did not give the grain away. This would have caused a number of problems:

Problems with Simply Giving the Grain Away

1. There would have been food riots with people rushing to the granaries to get all that they could.
2. There would have been the hoarding of grain. People would come, take too much grain; and then hoard it at home.
3. The granaries would have been depleted too soon, had he given the food away. Remember, the grain had to last through 7 years of famine.
4. The people would have become lazy and indolent; seven years is a long time to receive food for free; this would have caused irreparable harm to the people of Egypt.

Joseph was wise in the execution of the correct policies.

It is dangerous for a people to receive their food for free.

So Joseph sold this grain which he had taken from the people through taxation. This kept the granaries filled, allowed the people to purchase grain as they needed it, and prevented the population from becoming a welfare state, something which in some areas of the United States, we are now paying the piper for. There are people in this country who, now if they need money, food, or a place to live, the first place they look to for these things is the government.

Although the Bible does not speak of it, the people of Egypt were either very thrifty or they must have been told to set their own money aside for the future. It would seem that, given the dream of Pharaoh, that Joseph's plan would have been completely out in the open. That is, since he was building grain silos and collecting 20% of what the people were producing, surely some explanation was given for doing that (exactly what was said is not told to us in Scripture). The people of Egypt apparently took that into account and developed their own savings accounts as a result (however, we will later find out that their savings were only good enough for a few years). People who set money aside were those who trusted in the words of Joseph and his interpretation of the dreams of Pharaoh by the Revealed God. Those who have trusted in the words of God would have been setting money aside.

It is possible that there were different pricing levels, depending upon where you are from (Egyptians may have been favored, as they originally produced the grain). Although an interesting thought, there is nothing to inform of us of that here.

By the way, I want you to notice something else: God does not come to Joseph in a dream and tell him, "What is wrong with you? Give this grain away to the poor." There is definitely a place for taking care of the poor and the helpless. There are those who are unable, often through no fault of their own, to take care of themselves. Churches, private organizations, and even government should have a hand in this. However, what is problematic is when government begins to do all of the thinking and planning for its citizens. "You did not plan out for your future? Then we will take care of you." This is not what government ought to do. This is one of the many faults of social security. Too many people depend upon it for the sole source of income in old age (or as their primary source of income in old age—around 60% now[28]). It is much better to consider that there will be no social security when you retire, and plan accordingly.

It is not the Biblical thing to do to spend every dime that you make; and believe that, what happens in your retirement will be whatever happens, and you will just depend upon God. The way that Egypt depended upon God was by putting grain aside for a difficult time, and then drawing from that grain when their land was no longer producing grain.

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[28] The statistic that 2 out of 5 senior citizens would be in poverty without SS is misleading. This is a result of dependence upon government, which our government has been cultivating.

God has given us a brain and the ability to make wise choices. Therefore, we invest for the future; we set aside money for the future; and when the time comes and we no longer are able to provide for ourselves, then we have that which we put aside. We defer immediate gratification for a future benefit (which is certainly a Biblical norm that can get found in Proverbs).

Given the state of our world and our nation, it is possible that we can do everything right and still lose our retirement in one way or another. Under those circumstances, you still depend upon God.

What many people believe when it comes to trusting in God is that we are like little babies who are unable to feed, clothe or clean ourselves; and so we depend upon God for all of that. A portion of our life is spent like that and God provides for us then; but God also makes it possible for us to fend for ourselves for most of our lives. This does not mean that we neglect God for the bulk of our lives; but dependence upon God does not mean we spend all day every day sitting on a park bench depending upon God to bring us a ham sandwich.

For those utopian thinkers, if you want to know what ideal government looks like, Israel under God is a good example. Many of the laws found in the Old Testament have easy application to today's world.

The Jewish nation, which would be established 400 years hence along side a series of laws, did not simply hand out food to the indigent. As we will study, farmers were not supposed to harvest their entire fields; they were to leave portions of their field unharvested so that the poor could come through later and harvest this for themselves. Now, this was work—no doubt about it—and much preferred over our system today.

Now, you may say, "It is more complicated than that—who lives next to a grain field anymore? At present, we have huge government conglomerates which hand out various benefits, and all the people have to do is come into the office, and they are given these benefits. In many cases, they only have to show up once or twice a year in order to get some of their benefits—they come in the mail to them or they are transferred to their bank by direct deposit. Now, there has got to be something they can produce, something they can clean, something they can paint in exchange for these benefits. We need to carry over the principles of the Mosaic Law into today's society. When someone receives benefits from society, perhaps there ought to be a way for that person to serve society?

One of my ideas was to set up local websites of tax payers and benefit recipients (makers and takers). Freeze or even begin to reduce welfare benefits, while allowing tax-free $5/hour employment between makers and takers. That is, if I need a person to sit with my mother, do shopping for her or make her some meals, I as a taxpayer can go on this site and find someone who is a benefit recipient to do these things for $5/hour. Benefit recipients can go to this site to find jobs that they can do to supplement their income (they are *already* receiving benefits for which they do not work). Like Amazon.com, both workers and employers would be rated by the other side. An abusive employer would have a

difficult time finding employees; and an surly worker might have a difficult time finding a second job. A good employer and a hard worker would both be in demand.

Back to Joseph:

Genesis 41:57 And all the earth came into Egypt to buy, to Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the earth.

This is better translated:

Gen. 41:57 All countries came into Egypt, to Joseph, to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all the earth. (WEB) or,

Gen. 41:57 In addition, all of the surrounding nations [Lit. the world] came to Joseph to buy grain from Egypt, because the famine had become severe throughout the world. (ISV)

People began to find out that there was grain available in Egypt; and they came from all over the world to buy this grain.

The obvious metonymy is that the physical *land or earth* does not come to Joseph, but the *inhabitants* of the land (that is, *land* is a metonym for *the inhabitants of the land*). Furthermore, this is where *all the earth* means *the greater portion of the population*; and most of this is via representation; that is, Jacob's family does not come in its entirety; a sampling of his family comes (albeit, a large sampling).

God trained Joseph for this responsibility for a decade. Joseph had to plan and do things which had never been done before. He had to enforce the collection of a tax which was probably not overly popular. He had to deal with a large number of people—both Egyptians and foreigners—on a daily basis. His honesty and integrity had to be above reproach. Joseph needed to make good staff decisions. There are so many details left out of this narrative pertaining to all that Joseph did. However, God knew exactly how Joseph needed to be prepared, and He prepared him.

In the difficult times, Joseph needed to be patient and to wait upon God. When it was time, then God would move Joseph to the next step. Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery and Joseph ended up in Egypt. God did this because Joseph needed to be in Egypt. God placed Joseph in a well-to-do home and Joseph rose to the top in that home by working hard and revealing his intelligence. Joseph also learned the customs and language of the Egyptians at that time.

When Joseph was unjustly accused and thrown into prison, this was so that he could endure difficulties based upon unjust treatment; and also so that he would meet two men who had come from the cabinet of Pharaoh. Under any other circumstance, these two men would not have necessarily even spoken to Joseph; however, he was the authority inside the prison, and he was placed in charge of these two men. One of those men was released from prison and he returned to his post as the chief cupbearer of Pharaoh. And, when Pharaoh needed to have a dream interpreted, the chief cupbearer suddenly remembered Joseph, who correctly interpreted his dream and the dream of the chief baker.

So, in God's plan, there has been a purpose for all that happened to Joseph. It was not haphazard; things did not happen which caused God to say, "I had no idea *that* was going to happen. Let Me see if I can fix it." God was guiding the process of Joseph's life which took him to this point of being in charge of the emergency granaries in Egypt.

Joseph, Overseer of the Pharaoh's Granaries (a painting) by Lawrence Alma Tadema,, 1847. From weebly.com; accessed November 21, 2016.

To look back over the end of Genesis 41:46–57

Hajime Murai's Chiasmos of Genesis 41:46-57

A	(41:46)		Joseph traveled throughout the land of Egypt (ארצלכב)
	B	(41:47-49)	The seven years of plenty (ב עב)
		C (41:50-52)	Birth of Joseph's children
	B'	(41:53-55)	The seven years of famine (עב)
A'	(41:56-57)		All the world came to Joseph to obtain rations of grain (ארצהלכב)

From bible.literarystructure.info accessed November 21, 2016.

Lesson 423 Genesis 41:56–42:1 **Introduction to Genesis 42**

In Gen. 42, we will bring Joseph together face to face with his brothers for the first time in 20+ years. Joseph will recognize his brothers; they will not recognize him.

In this and subsequent chapters, Joseph is going to say and do some very odd things regarding his brothers. There is a reason for all the things that Joseph does; he is not just randomly giving his brothers jazz.

With the exception of the flood narrative, there are no other parts of Genesis as carefully organized as the autobiographical writings of Joseph.

Like most of Joseph's writings, not only did he produce a wonderful narrative of his life, but it was also really well-organized throughout.

The Chiasmos structure has parallels in the first and last statement; in the second and second to the last statement, etc. Very often, the most important element of the narrative is the middle statement (s).

Hajime Murai's Chiasmos of Genesis 42:1–38

A	(42:1-4)		Jacob did not send Benjamin with the rest (וימינב)
B	(42:5-16)		Joseph examined his brother (תוק)
C	(42:17-20)		Only one of your brothers need be confined in this prison, while the rest of you may go and take home provisions for your starving families (42:19)
D	(42:21-23)		Brothers repented their sin
C'	(42:24-26)		Simeon was left, Brothers got grain
B'	(42:27-34)		Brothers spoke about Joseph's examination (תוק)
A'	(42:35-38)		"My son shall not go down with you" (ומינב)

A chiasmos can make a narrative easier to remember; but often, the most important point is the one in the middle of the chiasmos.

From bible.literarystructure.info accessed November 21, 2016 (slightly edited).

This narrative will move seamlessly from Egypt back to the Land of Promise, back to the family of Jacob. It is quite extraordinary as to how this is done. We end the previous chapter with people coming from all over the earth to buy grain from Egypt, and we then return to Jacob's family (minus Joseph) who are facing the exact same hardships—famine in their land. They are in the first year of the drought, and they recognize that they are in trouble. The famine is so severe that, they understand that they will begin to die out as a family without the food of the earth.

I realize that few people, when they finish reading Gen. 41 and move into chapter 42 that they do not realize that this narrative is a milestone in literature. We have traveled to a new place, but without any change of circumstances. Notice the transition:

Genesis 41:56 So when the famine had spread over all the land, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt.

Notice that Joseph does not just open up the storehouses and tell the people, "Come on down and get whatever you need." Even though the storehouses were filled with the grain of Egyptians at the order of Pharaoh, it was now possessed by the state and the state was justified in selling the stored grain back to the people.

Gen. 41:57 provides a marvelous segue from Egypt back to Canaan.

Genesis 41:57 Moreover, all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over all the earth.

The famine is severe in all the land, and all the occupants of the land came to Egypt to buy grain (notice again, it is sold; it is not given away). This logically leads us to a small family in Canaan, whose patriarch is Jacob, to use as examples of those in the land who are suffering from the famine. And so Jacob sends his sons (all but one) to buy grain in Egypt.

This is such a wonderful change of scenery in the book; and I am unaware of any narratives of this era which present such an extensive, multi-continent narrative like this. We have suddenly moved from Egypt, in the continent of Africa, to Canaan.

Genesis 42:1 And when Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look upon one another?"

However, before we begin our study of Gen. 42, let's examine the concept of disaster in the lives of mankind.

We often have a difficult time with understanding human misery and suffering which is brought on by natural disaster. Anyone would be hard-pressed to explain each and every individual case, however, in general:

Why Does God Allow Great Disasters?

1. Some of those affected by natural disaster are under divine discipline.
2. Some of those affected by natural disaster are under suffering for blessing.
3. God cannot reach some people except through personal misery and suffering—I personally had to be brought to a point of great personal suffering before I would investigate the claims of Jesus Christ and then believe in Him.
4. God allows some to witness through their unselfish aid to those in need during times of disaster.
5. God tests some people and their faith in Him through natural disaster.

Because of our own hard-heartedness, some people refuse to face God and the claims of Jesus Christ apart from suffering. For some reason, this upsets those who have rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ. They do not like organizations like Samaritan's Purse, for instance, bringing presents to children on Christmas, and including with the present a tract telling about the love of Jesus Christ for them. However, sometimes when people have very little by way of material comfort, and someone expresses to them the love of Christ through a present—something they never asked for or expected—many times this reaches the heart of such a person, receiving the love of Jesus Christ through one of us.

Genesis 42:1 And when Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look upon one another?"

Interestingly enough, it is Jacob who prods his sons to go to Egypt. Reuben does not say, "I think what we ought to do is go to Egypt to buy grain." As the eldest brother, he should be making such suggestions by this time; thinking ahead, concerning himself with the needs of the family. Although he is not the patriarch, he is the oldest of the sons. Yet, again and again, he does not assume a full-on leadership role.

In the ancient world, leadership falls upon the first son, and yet, this is another instance where Reuben does not exhibit the leadership that he ought (I say this, as the firstborn of a family who also exhibited no leadership potential either).

As we near the end of the book of Genesis, keep in the back of your mind that, we are concerned with these sons in particular: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah and Joseph. The line of promise will go through one of these men, and there are reasons why they are the only ones named in this narrative and why when the sons of Israel speak, only these voices are heard. So, when any of these men say or do anything related to their own personal character and their relationship to God, it will be noted. In some narratives, we might read, *and the brothers said;* but whenever we are in a narrative that counts, we will find the name or names of one or more of these particular brothers.

The short explanation is this: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah are the oldest sons; so, if the leadership mantle is not taken up by Reuben, then it falls to the next brother Simeon; if Simeon does not take up the mantle of leadership, then it falls to Levi; and then to Judah. And we have to bear in mind that, for the most part, these sons seem to reveal little or no spiritual progress in their lives. Of all the brothers, Only Joseph reveals a strong faith in God. So, wouldn't the mantle of leadership go to him as the spiritually mature brother?

So far, we have seen that Reuben has not taken up his role as leader of his younger brothers. We have seen that Simeon and Levi overreact to situations and are quite violent. All of the brothers, save Joseph and Benjamin, are scheming (a trait which seems to run in the family). Now Simeon and Levi will not actually have speaking roles in the upcoming chapters—we already know their character and their distorted views of justice.

Also, Benjamin will be in view, but for different reasons.

One of the reasons that some scholars have questioned the time of writing of Genesis is, it concerns itself with things it should not know about. How do these writers of Genesis know who God is looking at? How do they know who would eventually become the line of the Messiah? There is only one line followed from beginning to end of the Bible, and that is the line of the humanity of Jesus. Flipping from one book to the next, we find that this line begins with Adam, goes through Seth, eventually finds its way to Abraham (then Isaac and then Jacob); and, eventually to David. The Messiah is also known as *David's Greater Son*. On several occasions, the Lord is called *Son of David*.

Much of this information is found in the book of Genesis, written around 2000 B.C. and earlier; and the Davidic Covenant does not occur until a thousand years later, where the line of David will be revealed to be the line of the Messiah—revealed to David by a God of grace. It is not until the Davidic Covenant that we find out, God will be blessing the line of David—and from him would come David's Greater Son (Jesus Christ). So, if a person has a difficult time believing in prophecy, then stories which focus on the leadership and the very specific line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob become very troublesome, indeed.

Have you ever known anyone to speak of the lottery of life? Have you known of politicians who often indicate that Charley Brown is successful because he was in the right place at the right time and he bought the right lotto ticket (I am not speaking literally about the lottery ticket). There are 12 sons of Jacob; so to a person who thinks this way, every son has a 1 in 12 chance of being in the line of promise. But that is not how God sees it. God knows what these young men will do in life; God knows the end from the beginning. Therefore, He will, from time to time, indicate the line of promise, hundreds of years before He states it outright.

I have no problem with the predictive nature of Genesis, because the co-Author of this book is God the Holy Spirit, Who is outside of time and not confined by time. So all the issues of the Messiah and the Jewish people are known to Him with complete perfection. Now, the human authors know some things, but their understanding of the future is not nearly as clear and perspicuous.

Throughout Scripture, we know that each book (or portion of a book) reflects both the sensibilities of a specific author (like Jacob or Joseph or Moses); and that we can often identify that author, not just because he is talking about his life, but because his style of writing is much different from the other authors. Abraham, Jacob and Joseph wrote very lengthy narratives; but these narratives are quite different in style—Joseph having by far the most sophisticated style of writing (I have not studied comparative ancient literature, but this would be a fascinating subject, if Joseph's writing was included, as I believe that he is one of the early writers who mastered the 3rd person omniscient writing style).

However, even though each portion of Scripture represents the very specific viewpoint of the human author; it is also the Word of God, authored by God the Holy Spirit. So, Joseph may be writing about these particular brothers simply because they were the oldest, and he remembered them more specifically; but God the Holy Spirit sees that their names are

included, so that we understand *why* the line of promise goes through one brother, but not another. There is no lottery of life with God.

I also believe that, there are certain passages, where the human author is thinking and saying one thing; but God the Holy Spirit is thinking and saying something else—and that these trains of thought are conveyed by the very same words (Gen. 22 Psalm 22 and Isa. 53 are good examples of this).

Genesis 42:1 And when Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look upon one another?"

So, the family of Jacob realizes that they are in trouble. They have had a bad year and they have not produced enough grain for the upcoming year. And, at this point, all these boys are only able to look at one another. No one proposes a solution. No one takes the lead. Jacob points out the problem, and the first voice we ought to here is Reuben, saying, "Here is what I, as the eldest, propose that we do." Jacob looks at his 11 sons, and no one says anything. No one shows initiative or leadership.

The actual leader of this family is already living in Egypt.

Lesson 424 Genesis 42:1–6 Joseph's Brothers Come to Egypt

We have spent several chapters with Joseph in Egypt, who went there as a slave, was then put into prison, and most recently has been elevated to the #2 position in all of Egypt. However, with Gen. 42, we return to Canaan, to his father and brothers, and their struggles with having a very bad year in this first year of the famine.

Genesis 42:1 And when Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look upon one another?"

The famine has come to Canaan, and the sons of Jacob and their families are feeling the pinch as well. This is a very serious problem, where this family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob could starve to death without grain.

It is reasonable to assume that hundreds of thousands of people in Canaan will die over the next 7 years of famine, which probably ended up dramatically reducing the population of those in Canaan considerably. It is likely that this was warning discipline for this land (remember what God did to Sodom and Gomorrah).

Genesis 42:2 And he said, "Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy for us from there, so that we may live and not die."

Obviously, Jacob is in desperate straights; and he recognizes that starvation of his family is imminent. Therefore, he tells his sons that he knows that Egypt has grain; so they need to go there and buy the grain.

We have no idea how Jacob finds out about this—that there is grain in Egypt—but he does. In my own life, I have had access to information which changed my actions (for instance, my present gym membership is a result of a chance encounter with a friend at a gym that I normally did not go to). Many years ago, someone attempted to give me information, which could have been very helpful, but I did not pursue it. He said, "Why don't you come by my office; I need to tell you something." This person was looking out for me, and I cannot tell you for the world why I never went by and talked to him. What he was going to warn me about, way, way in advance, was a plan to have me fired (which plan succeeded). He knew about this near the beginning of the school year; and in looking back, I could not tell you why I never went to talk with him. Maybe I was overwhelmed with that school year, I don't know.

My point is, we are exposed from time to time to words and our response to those words can result in a great change in our lives (I realize that the gym illustration is quite trivial, but it was the first thing that came to mind). When I was quite young and looking for a job as a teacher, I was going to try to interview with some schools in Texas by phone. However, it was because I spoke directly to a secretary there who told me that all I needed to do was show up in person and I would be hired. Apart from that conversation—and I do not even recall the district where she was—I might not have flown to Texas to take some interviews. That flight out to Texas changed my life completely, which only took place because of a few words that secretary said.

Most obviously, when a person begins to understand the importance of the Word of God and places himself (or herself) under the teaching of a well-qualified pastor-teacher, that is potentially a life-changing event. God saw to it that Jacob was made aware of grain being up for purchase in Egypt. This bit of information (and we have no idea how Jacob became aware of this) will change the lives of all Jacob's sons and their families.

Genesis 42:3 And Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt.

It should be mentioned that, Judah has somehow reunited with his family. They appear to be estranged in Gen. 38; but here, he would have been included in the 10 sons. Let me suggest that this famine has brought Judah and his family (such that it is) back into the fold—perhaps out of desperation.

You will recall that Judah separated from his family and he began a new life apart from his brothers (probably as a result of what they had all done to Joseph); and now Judah had some very serious responsibilities. He had a family for which he was responsible, a son by a deceased wife and twins by his present wife—the result of a levirate marriage and a woman that he chose not to engage in further sex with. No doubt there is a fascinating story there where Judah realizes that he must reconnect with his family or possibly face starvation.

The 10 sons are sent to Egypt. Benjamin, the youngest, is not. He remains with his father.

Genesis 42:4 But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob did not send with his brothers. For he said, “Lest perhaps mischief happen to him.”

Jacob holds back on Benjamin, his youngest son, his only surviving son by Rachel (Jacob does not know that Joseph is still alive). Benjamin is obviously his favorite son. Jacob rightfully does not trust his other sons to look after Benjamin. He is certainly not going to let Benjamin travel to Egypt with his older brothers.

As an aside, why is Joseph enjoying great success in Egypt; and Benjamin has, so far, been undistinguished in his life? God took Joseph away from his home environment and threw him into the midst of at least 2 unjust circumstances. These circumstances accelerated Joseph’s spiritual growth. Pressure can often bring out the best in us if we respond to that pressure with the application of Bible doctrine. If we respond to pressure with human viewpoint thinking, then that pressure can bring out the worst in us.

Benjamin has been under the close supervision of Jacob, and we ought to know by now, Jacob, despite God giving him every chance in the world, struggles with the application of doctrine to life. In fact, let me suggest that, after Joseph disappeared, Jacob’s life has retrogressed, spiritually speaking. Both Joseph and Jacob were presented with sets of difficult circumstances—and Joseph thrived and Jacob took it all very personally. Joseph applied divine viewpoint to life and his father Jacob mostly applied human viewpoint to his life. Joseph grew spiritually; his father Jacob retrogressed.

If anything, Joseph was being held back by his father. Joseph experienced accelerated growth when he faced difficult circumstances of unjust treatment, and he mixed that with his positive volition towards God and God’s Word.

How did Joseph have God’s Word? Let me suggest, as I have on many occasions, that the History of Man of God was passed along verbally, often from father to son; and with each generation, more information was added. I believe that the people of this era were more intelligent than we are today; and therefore, could hear and retain such information better than we could today.

As an aside, no one is strictly a product of his environment. We all have free will and the free will is active in good times and bad. Two great examples of this are the Pharaoh during the time of Joseph; and the Pharaoh during the time of Moses. The first Pharaoh heard truth and he responded positively to it. He did not even require proof. He heard the truth, he believed it, and then he placed Joseph in charge of the economic future of Egypt, which was a very bold move. The truth of Joseph’s interpretation was proven in time; but Pharaoh recognized that truth from the very beginning. He had the dreams, he heard Joseph’s interpretation of them, and this all rang true to him.

Pharaoh2, the one that Moses stood before, heard the truth, saw great signs and wonders, which backed up that truth, and continued to reject the truth. Even when he lacked the strength to stand up to and reject the truth, God gave him that inner strength to do so.

You can come from the same family, have a very similar upbringing, and yet two brothers can respond very differently to the gospel and to the teaching of the Word of God.

Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah all grew up in a similar environment. However, at some point in the upcoming narrative, the 4th oldest son, Judah, will take the lead; and he will supplant his older 3 brothers in the plan of God. And we know from Gen. 38 that Judah is not a man that we would have predicted to show any spiritual progress.

Genesis 42:5 And the sons of Israel came to buy among those that came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

The proper noun *Israel* does not apply to a nation; it applies to the person of Jacob, who is named *Israel* by God. There is no nation *Israel* as of yet. So, in this passage, *the sons of Israel* refer literally to the 10 brothers who come to Egypt; in Joshua 5:3 10:12, this same phrase refers to the army of Israel (the men of Israel); and in Rom. 9:27, this phrase refers to all of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (who is *Israel*).

Just as words and phrases can have different meanings, depending upon context; the same is true for many words and phrases in Scripture. Even though a word may have a specific meaning—and one that appears to be fairly consistent—we need to be careful when evaluating that word or phrase under different settings. The *sons of Israel* is a good example of this.

According to Gen. 42:5, thousands of people from all over Canaan traveled to Egypt to purchase grain.

Genesis 42:6 And Joseph was the potentate over the land. He was the one selling to all the people of the earth. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down themselves before him, their faces to the earth.

Now we bring the narratives together again—the narrative of Joseph in Egypt and the narrative of the brothers in Canaan. This is masterfully done, by the way. Gen. 42:1–5 describes Joseph's brothers in Canaan; Gen. 41 is all about Joseph in Egypt; and Gen. 42:6 brings them all together.

How many times have you read a book or watched a movie, and you are following one group of characters into a specific set of circumstances; and then, the plot turns to another set of characters in specific circumstances; and then these two sets of characters are brought together through happenstance? This is quite impressive when it is done well.

Joseph's brothers come before him and bow before him, in respect, and in fulfillment of the prophetic dreams which Joseph had.

Joseph and his Brothers in Egypt (a graphic); from sawyou.com; accessed November 30, 2016

So, we have two different realities, two different sets of people in two different lands, being brought together by the circumstances of this famine.

This sort of thing, by the way, is the basis of classical music and even much of pop music. Since you are more likely familiar with pop music, you may know that a song has a particular tune and melody and rhythm; but there is the bridge, which may use different cords, or a different beat; and this leads back to the original tune. This is particularly impressive when this different tunes are intertwined in some way, or lead in and out from one to the other. Sometimes, one tune might be superimposed upon another, which can be very satisfying to the ears (of all things, *Walk Through the Fire* from Buffy the Vampire Slayer comes to mind). Mark Steyn once did this same thing verbally, when sitting in for Rush Limbaugh in 2016, and he very movingly told about the Party at the End of the World, weaving together two different stories in a masterful way.

This is what Joseph has done with this narrative. He begins the narrative where he is with his brothers in Canaan, but they plot against him and sell him into slavery. The brothers remain in Canaan and Joseph is taken to Egypt. We follow some of the lives of the brothers in Canaan, but we mostly follow Joseph's life in Egypt.

There is the narrative of Joseph in Egypt; but there is also the narrative of his brothers in Canaan; and then, these two sets of people find themselves thrown together, under a very real set of circumstances. Both sets of people interact with entirely different agendas.

Lesson 425 Genesis 42:6–10 "You all are spies!" Part I

There is a famine throughout the land of Canaan and Egypt. The sons of Jacob come to realize that they do not have enough grain to get through the next season; and their father tells them to go to Egypt. So all 10 brothers go. Joseph, whom they sold into slavery, is already in Egypt (they have no idea that they will be meeting with him); and the 12th brother, Benjamin, is kept back at home by Jacob.

This is the first year of the famine, and Jacob has come to realize that his family does not have enough food to survive. Because there is grain in Egypt, he sends his sons to Egypt to buy grain.

Genesis 42:6 Now Joseph was governor over the land. He was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground. (ESV)

You will note the much different attitude of that era. The poor are not demanding that they be subsidized by the wealthy. The sons from Canaan recognize the authority and the foresight of Joseph, who is a great leader in the land of Egypt. They show him great respect. They have no idea that this man before them is their estranged brother, whom they sold into slavery.

The word used here to describe Joseph's position is shallîyţ (טִילַש) [pronounced *shahl-LEET*], which means, *having mastery, domineering; imperious;* as a substantive, *ruler, governor, master*. Strong's #7989 BDB #1020. It is combined with the words *over the land;* the *land* here referring to Egypt, where they all were.

Genesis 42:7a And Joseph saw his brothers, and he knew them, but remained a stranger to them, and spoke roughly to them.

Joseph knew who these men were. They did not expect to see him; nor did they recognize him.

Joseph speaks roughly to his brothers, which perhaps means that he sounds as if he is in a bad mood. *Roughly* is the Hebrew word qâsheh (הֶשָׁק) [pronounced *kaw-SHEH*], which means, *hard, severe, difficult, fierce, intense, vehement, stiff, harsh, hardened, stubborn; heavy; powerful, strong*. Strong's #7186 BDB #904. He sounds tough, hardened, harsh. This is not something which is unexpected. His attitude does not surprise the sons of Jacob.

The people of Canaan would have seemed uncivilized and unclean to the people of Egypt; and it would be quite natural for a potentate in Egypt to look down upon the vermin coming from elsewhere in the world.

The brothers would have had some understanding of Egypt. Their grandfather Abraham had been to Egypt; and they had *cousins* who were part Egyptian (the sons of Ishmael). We do not know how well Jacob's sons understood the culture of Egypt.

The sons of Jacob do know enough not to exhibit arrogance before a ruler in Egypt; they bow low before him. Joseph's tone of voice would have been understandable to them, although they would not have known what he was saying (he was speaking Egyptian and this was being translated for the brothers). So they understood the harsh tone in his voice before they knew exactly what he was saying.

Joseph is intentionally remaining unknown to his older brothers. Joseph is going to do some things which may strike us as odd, but reasons for his behavior can be ascertained. There is no reason to think that Joseph has not forgiven his brothers; and he has forgiven them because he understands the plan of God in his life (which he will later state). However, even though he recognizes that he is in Egypt, placed there by God to provide for his brothers, this does not mean that he wants to reunite with his brothers. For the time being, Joseph will intentionally remain a stranger to his brothers, and not belie any characteristic that they find to be familiar.

Genesis 42:7 And Joseph saw his brothers, and he knew them, but remained a stranger to them, and spoke roughly to them. And he said to them, "Where do you come from?" And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food."

Joseph's attitude, his language, and his interaction with them does not belie his actual relationship with them.

The sons of Israel will assume that they are being subjected to the same scrutiny as everyone else; and they are not surprised to meet such a stern man in charge of the grain distribution.

The Egyptian ruler before whom they stand is actually their brother—the brother they assume is dead or enslaved. His head and beard are likely shaved and he is speaking in Egyptian in harsh tones. There is nothing about him that seems like their brother, whom they have not seen for 20 years.

Genesis 42:8 And Joseph knew his brothers, but they did not know him.

Interestingly enough, the first portion of v. 7 is repeated, but with different words. He hears their voices and they hear his voice.

Joseph recognizes his brothers, but they do not recognize him. About 22 years have transpired since Joseph has seen his brothers, and they are certainly recognizable. If you have been to a 20 or 25 year reunion, there are people at that reunion that you recognize immediately. You remember their names, their reputations and your interactions with them. Certainly, you run into some people you think, "I have never seen this person before in my life;" even though they sat next to you Algebra I and Geometry over a period of two years. Even more telling than looks are a person's mannerisms and voice.

To his brothers, Joseph appeared to be an Egyptian ruler speaking the Egyptian language of that time (through an interpreter). But Joseph quickly recognized his brothers by their voices and by their mannerisms, and how they interacted with one another. Some things never change; or barely change.

It is not out of the question that Joseph realized that, at some point, that he would see his brothers during this famine. His brothers never expected to see him again. And the last

place they would have expected to see him is in an Egyptian palace running the place (I have assumed that they meet with Joseph not out in the open air but in a palace of sorts).

Genesis 42:9a And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them...

Joseph, if you will recall, dreamed that the sheaves of his brothers bowed down to his sheave; and that the sun, moon and stars bowed before him (Gen. 37:6–10). So now, he is seeing this beginning to be fulfilled. His brothers have all bowed down before him.

This verse suggests that Joseph did not think about these dreams; but the memory of them suddenly came back as his brothers are bowing before him.

These dreams tell Joseph that, even 20+ years ago, God knew what was going on, and God knew the future. These dreams tell Joseph that God is in charge.

Genesis 42:9 And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land."

Joseph voices suspicion of these men. This is a part of the roughness of his speaking. Throughout this narrative, it is going to seem as if Joseph is randomly hassling his brothers, but that is not what is going on. For each accusation and for each act, there is a very specific reason.

What is *not* happening is, Joseph thinking, "These guys gave me a hard time; well, I am now going to give them a hard time. They messed with me—well, I am going to mess with them!" Joseph is above that sort of behavior.

It is very easy to read this narrative and not to understand what Joseph is doing. For many, his motivation seems obscure, and I don't believe that it is explained anywhere in the narrative. Everything that he does makes sense; but it is very easy to read this narrative and not understand Joseph's thinking or motivation.

Now, the first reaction of many people reading this is, "Joseph is messing with his brothers. He is giving them a hard time and seeing how they will react." When reading this narrative in order, without knowing what is coming, that seems quite likely. However, when we see what happens, and we think about what Joseph really wants (to see his father and full brother again), then what he says and does begins to appear to be very calculated.

You have heard the expression, "A lawyer only asks questions that he knows the answers to;" Joseph is playing chess here, and he knows where he is able to take this charade. He is not just saying stuff to see what his brothers will say or do. He knows what they will say and do. Joseph also knows how he can exploit this accusation to gain what he wants.

First of all, this accusation is going to allow him to ask his brothers a variety of personal questions—to interrogate them—together and separately. Because he has accused them

of being spies, what he does by way of questioning will not seem out of the ordinary to the sons of Jacob, although they will certainly object to be taken as spies.

Joseph's possible motivations: If one reads these couple chapters on the interactions between Joseph and his brothers, Joseph is going to do a number of unusual things. It would be easy to confuse Joseph's motivations in these chapters.

> For instance, the NET Bible writes: *Joseph intends to test his brothers to see if they have changed and have the integrity to be patriarchs of the tribes of Israel. He will do this by putting them in the same situations that they and he were in before. The first test will be to awaken their conscience*.[29]

I believe that the NET Bible does not get this right. Joseph has some clear desires: *he wants to see his father and his full brother again and be reunited with them*. That motivation ought to be clear. However, why does Joseph do what he does to his other brothers?

Whereas Joseph is not filled with mental attitude sins towards his other brothers, he does not necessarily want to be reunited with them. Over the next few chapters, Joseph is going to do some odd things, and let me suggest 4 possible theories: (1) he is messing with his brothers (which was my first impression, as a result of reading the text); (2) he is testing his brothers to see if they had changed; (3) he still loves his brothers, but he is providing some wholesome discipline for them;[30] and/or (4) he is looking to see his full brother and his father again, possibly even to bring them to Egypt. At the same time, Joseph is rather agnostic about being reunited with his other brothers.

Most commentators believe that #2 explains Joseph's motivation, but, even though Joseph recognizes that what his brothers did was in accordance with God's plan, this does not mean that he really wants to hang out with them again. In the next few chapters, keep these options in your mind, and you will see how #4 makes perfect sense throughout.

Genesis 42:10 And they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food.

Of course, Joseph's brothers deny being spies. They are a little bit taken aback by the charge, a little offended, but they also know that they cannot act out too much.

As often been the case, which of the sons is speaking is not known. We would think Reuben. However, it could be any of the brothers—in fact, it is probably 3 or more of them denying that they are spies.

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[29] From https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen44.htm (footnote); accessed September 4, 2016.

[30] Kretzmann from http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/kpc/genesis-42.html accessed September 4, 2016.

They exclaim, “What you see is what you get. We need food for our families. There is nothing more going on than that.”

Sending 10 men into the land to examine it was apparently not unheard of during this time; and Joseph was certainly able to give the impression that, 10 men entering Egypt together might seem suspicious. Quite obviously, during the famine, there was no doubt that other nations gave thought to raiding Egypt rather than simply paying for the grain—this is how some nations functioned. So, what Joseph accuses the brothers of is not something which just comes out of the blue. It is not a completely irrational accusation.

The brothers obviously know that they are not there for nefarious reasons. Joseph also knows this, but this now gives him the opportunity to interview them, singly and in groups, and to determine what has happened to their family over the past 2 decades. Joseph will, of course, be most interested in his father and his full brother.

Lesson 426 Genesis 42:5–13 “You are all spies!” part II

So far, this is what we have studied. Vv. 5–10 come from the ESV.

Jacob’s sons have come to Egypt to buy grain. The man in charge of selling grain is their brother, Joseph, whom they sold into slavery 20+ years ago. They do not recognize Joseph but he knows who they are. Joseph does not reveal his identify to his brothers; but he instead accuses them of being spies. This accusation allows him to interview them, singly and in groups, to find out more information about his father and full brother (who is not among them).

Gen 42:5–6 Thus the sons of Israel came to buy among the others who came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan. Now Joseph was governor over the land. He was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground.

We have discussed how Joseph (presumably the author) has taken two narratives—narratives which he would have become aware of at very different times (he experienced one of them; and he was told about the other one); and he has woven these narratives together, as if he is watching these events unfold from above. He is first watching the events of his own life; then he observes his brothers in Canaan, as if a fly on the wall. Then he travels with his brothers where these two narratives intertwine. In writing, this is known as 3rd person omniscient style of writing (which is the most common style of writing in literature today).

Gen 42:7–8 Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke roughly to them. "Where do you come from?" he said. They said, "From the land of Canaan, to buy food." And Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.

Let me suggest that the first time we read, *Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them,* that he knew who these men were, as a group. Then in v. 8, where it appears that this is being repeated, Joseph is actually beginning to recognize his brothers individually. This one is Reuben, this one is Levi, etc.

Gen 42:9a And Joseph remembered the dreams that he had dreamed of them.

Joseph had two dreams: one where his bundle of hay stood upright, and the bundles gathered by his brothers were bowed before his bundle; and the second where the sun moon and stars were all bowing down before him. These dreams indicate to Joseph's family that everyone would bow down to, be subservient to, be inferior to Joseph.

In my family, myself and all of my brothers have owned businesses; however, the youngest brother, has the largest and most successful business which he has owned for the longest time. When we were all kids, kicking around, and picking on him because he was the youngest, it would never have occurred to us that, this little kid would be the most successful businessman among us.

Anyway, it is these dreams which assure Joseph that God is in control of everything. God knew what would happen to Joseph long ago, and He told Joseph what to expect in the future. His brothers and his father all objected to these dreams; but it is these dreams which let Joseph know that he is firmly in the plan of God. God is overlooking his very life. God has, if you will, mapped out his life, and Joseph is moving forward in God's plan.

Similarly, God is this involved in all of our lives. In the Church Age, every single life has meaning and purpose. Every single life, God has a place for that person; a life for that person. And, bear in mind, God's plan does not mean we become robots or that He makes us do a lot of stuff that we don't want to do. God's plan is perfectly aligned with our personalities and our thinking. We simply have to decide, to we go along with his plan or do we oppose Him for all of our lives. For Jacob, it was a little bit of both; for Joseph, he mostly went along with the ride, realizing that God was always with him and God was looking out for him. Furthermore, Joseph will testify to that fact to his brothers later on.

Obviously, having doctrine in your soul makes it easier to fall in with the plan of God.

Gen 42:9b And he said to them, "You are spies; you have come to see the nakedness of the land."

Joseph, speaking through an interpreter to his brothers, accuses them of being spies. He knows that they are not; they know that they are not; but this accusation allows Joseph to speak to the men singly or in groups and to inquire deeply into their lives.

If 10 men had been sent from some other country to do reconnaissance on Egypt, it is highly unlikely that they would be brothers. So, the key to the freedom of Jacob's sons is to convince this man that they are actually brothers—if we look at this situation from their point of view alone.

Gen 42:10 They said to him, "No, my lord, your servants have come to buy food.

Joseph has chosen not to reveal himself to his brothers, yet; which keeps his options open. If this is to be one of their few meetings face to face, where Joseph knows them but they do not know him, he is fine with that.

Genesis 42:11 We are all one man's sons. We are honest; your servants are not spies."

One says, "We have come to buy food." Another says, "We are the sons of one man." Another brother claims, "We are honest men!" A fourth brother adds, "Your servants are not spies."

Suddenly, these ten brothers were thrown into a frenzy. It is very likely that there are several sons chiming in, telling Joseph their situation. The interpreter has just told them that Joseph accused them of being spies. They all begin speaking at once. One tells the interpreter "Tell him we only came to buy food." Another says, "Please tell him that we are honest men." Another says, "We are all the sons of one man." He said this to let Joseph know that they were not a surveillance detachment but ten brothers, which is why all ten of them are there together. It is presented as if one person says this, but it is very likely that several of them spoke at once, and this is what Joseph remembered that they said.

Let me suggest that the accusation is so shocking, that the brothers did not know how to react (such an accusation would have been shocking to them). They said a few things, but obviously, what they have said is not a cogent argument to prove that they are not spies. That they would have to defend against an accusation like this is surprising to them. This has knocked them off balance, which is what Joseph intends. He wants them to start spilling their guts, as it were.

Obviously, Joseph knows that they are brothers and that they are not spies. As a leader under Pharaoh, Joseph has a great deal of power. The one thing that everyone knows is, Joseph could jail or execute all of these men if he so chose. So the brothers recognize that this accusation is very serious.

Because he has made this accusation, Joseph will be able to get a great deal of background and personal information about his brothers.

Bear in mind, Joseph wants to see his full brother and his father again; and he is no doubt thinking of reuniting himself with them, but not necessarily with his other brothers. By not telling them who he is, Joseph is leaving his options open.

Genesis 42:12 And he said to them, "No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land."

Joseph's brothers deny the accusation, the interpreter tells this to Joseph, and Joseph disagrees with them. "Don't give me that," he says, "I know you are spies."

Again, Joseph accuses them of being spies to spy out Egypt to later conquer it. This will give Joseph the chance to speak to them individually, and to ask them many questions, to presumably, to check one story against another. However, in all actuality, this will afford him the opportunity to ask about his younger brother and about his father, but without them realizing that is his intent. They will see all of this as intense questioning. The key here is, Joseph can do this without revealing to them who he is.

Joseph cannot simply shoot the breeze with these men in order to find out personal information about his father and full-brother. Questions like that, without a pretense, would have seemed weird. Furthermore, as the prime minister questioning potential spies, Joseph's persona would have come off very differently from how they would have remembered him. Joseph is better hidden in full view of them by appearing to be their accuser.

Because of this accusation, the brothers will view him as a suspicious leader of a neighboring country and never suspect that he is their brother. Joseph has completely hidden himself before his own flesh and blood, right in front of them, right out in the open.

You may ask, "Well, why doesn't he say, 'I'm Joseph, your brother; how is my father and Benjamin?' " At this point, Joseph does not know if he wants to pal around with his older brothers again. Remember they sold him into slavery. Joseph is interested in two things: his younger brother Benjamin and his father Jacob. If you keep this in the back of your mind, that will help to explain what he does.

And so there is no misunderstanding, Joseph has forgiven his brothers and what they did is all in the past—but, this does not mean that Joseph wants to hang with them. When people do you wrong, we are to forgive them—however, this does not mean that we choose to hang out with them as best friends. By not identifying himself, Joseph keeps all of his options open. He can identify himself at any point, but he would do that only with the understanding that he cannot undo that reveal.

Application: There are many things that you do in life that, you cannot undo. You can say that extremely hurtful thing to your spouse, the thing which cuts deep into their heart. You can commit adultery. You can commit a crime or an act of violence. You can begin taking some mind-altering substance. Your state can pass legislation to legalize marijuana. These are things that, once they have been done, they cannot be undone; they cannot be walked back. The effects of these things can last for years; even for generations.

Genesis 42:13 And they said, "Your servants are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan. And behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not."

The brothers begin to give Joseph as much information as they can, attempting to diffuse the situation. They offer up an abundance of details, which is no doubt what Joseph craves.

The brothers claim, “Listen, we are simply a family of brothers—nothing more than that. There are 12 of us—one is still at home and the other is no longer with us. We are not involved in some nefarious scheme against Egypt.” Notice, again it reads, *they said*. So, more than one brother is speaking.

From a human standpoint, Joseph is still beginning to identify his brothers, one-by-one, so, at first, he does not say, who says what. The brothers simply speak and Joseph remembers some of the things which they said to him.

God the Holy Spirit, the other Author, is only interested in what is said and done by Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Jacob and Joseph. It is clear by Reuben’s inability to deal with the aggression of his brothers toward Joseph two decades ago removes him from the line of the Messiah. The evil, vicious actions of Simeon and Levi remove them from consideration, even though they are next in line by age. This leaves Judah and Joseph; Joseph seeming to be the most reasonable choice through whom the Messiah should come. And so far, Judah has not done anything that puts him in a positive light.

Lesson 427 Genesis 42:14–19 “You are all spies” Part III

It is the first year of the famine and the family of Jacob realizes that they do not have enough grain to get through the next year. Jacob tells his sons to go down to Egypt, as Egypt has grain. So the 10 sons go down to purchase grain, not knowing that they will come face to face with their brother Joseph, whom they sold into slavery. Benjamin, the youngest brother (and Joseph’s full brother) remains behind with his father.

The brothers come to Joseph and bow before him, not knowing who he is. He is dressed and shaved like an Egyptian, and he speaks to them through an interpreter. Then Joseph does something that seems somewhat irregular—he accuses these 10 men of being spies.

Although such an accusation seems random, it is not. First of all, because Egypt had grain and surrounding countries did not, it would be subject to potential attacks from the outside. Secondly, these are 10 young men, who might come into Egypt in order to spy out the land, to consider taking it. So, the accusation is reasonable, despite Joseph knowing who these men are.

But Joseph’s intention here is to be able to use this accusation in order to speak to his brothers singly and in groups in order to elicit information about his father and full brother, but without letting one who he actually is.

The brothers deny this accusation, and begin to tell Joseph a great deal of personal information, hoping that this would dissuade him from such an accusation.

Genesis 42:14 And Joseph said to them, “That is what I spoke to you, saying, You are spies!

Joseph replies, “I still believe that you are spies.” Here is the reason Joseph claims to believe this—these are 10 healthy young men who could just as easily have been the generals for an army (they are probably not dissimilar in ages to the men sent my Moses in to spy out the land in Num. 13–14). So, the brothers would be able to understand Joseph’s suspicions; and the natural response is to simply tell Joseph the truth, “There are 10 of us because we are all brothers. We have come to take care of our families.”

Joseph gets the information from them that he wanted—that they still have a younger brother who is at home with his father. That would be Benjamin, who is Joseph’s younger full-brother. Benjamin is Joseph’s only full-brother (Rachel only had 2 sons, and she died when Benjamin was born).

In frustration, the brothers keep offering more and more details, which is exactly what Joseph is after.

Genesis 42:15 By this you will be proved; as Pharaoh lives you will not go forth from here unless your youngest brother comes here.

Joseph demands that they back up there story. “Prove it,” Joseph orders; “bring the youngest brother here.”

All of this makes perfect sense. If 10 men are sent in to a country to spy it out (like, in this case, to spy out Egypt to see about conquering it and taking all of the grain); they would not be brothers. Therefore, if the sons of Jacob can convince the prime minister that they are in fact brothers, then this would reduce Joseph’s suspicion of them (in their minds).

Bear in mind, Joseph, even though he has forgiven his brothers, may not want anything more to do with them personally. This is okay. There is nothing wrong with this. You may have a family member who became a druggie and caused all kinds of havoc and pain in your family. It is okay to simultaneous forgive this person and to cut him out of your lives. This has happened in many families.

People who are drug-addicted or alcohol-addicted often realize that regaining the trust of former friends and family members is something that may require decades of work. It is also possible that, even after decades of work, a particular family member may never be trusted again.

Joseph, at this time, is guarded (just as you may be with a family member who has entered into AA). He apparently is *not* thinking, “Great! These are my brothers! I can hardly wait to hang with them!” It is likely that Joseph does not want to renew his relationship with them; but, he does want to see his younger brother again, and his father. Therefore, his accusation will allow him to amass information about Jacob, his father; and Benjamin, his younger brother—but without revealing who he is to his brothers.

At this point, Joseph may want to bring his father and younger brother to Egypt and possibly keep them there. However, he may not want that same close association with the

brothers who sold him into slavery. Forgiving his older brothers does not mean that Joseph wants to become a unified family with them.

Many commentators suggest that Joseph puts his brothers through a battery of tests. I don't see it that way. I believe that Joseph is maintaining his distance from these brothers and that he is keeping his options open. In fact, there is only one time when Joseph clearly tests his brothers, and that will be when they return with their youngest brother Benjamin.

If we think about Joseph's motivation throughout, the things which he says and does will seem a lot less random and weird. It is easy to read this narrative and not really understand what Joseph is thinking and why he does the things which he does.

It is quite interesting to me that, even though I believe Joseph wrote this, at no time does he insert his motivation into the narrative. He does *not* write, "Now, I asked them this, because I wanted to know how Benjamin is doing." Joseph records the facts—the actions taken and the words said—and does not appear to get inside anyone's psyche, including his own.

Throughout this narrative, there would be several opportunities for Joseph to share his motivations. He will tell his servants to do some pretty weird things. A year from now, he will tell his servant to put his personal silver goblet into Benjamin's grain sack; and then Joseph will tell him to chase Benjamin down and bring him back for stealing the goblet. Now, that is a weird set of instructions. The servant understands that Benjamin did not steal the goblet, but their boss, Joseph, is going to accuse him of stealing his silver goblet. And he will send his servants out to fetch Benjamin and the goblet.

Now, Joseph could have told his servant, "Listen, I know this sounds crazy, but I am doing it for this reason." But he does not do that. I don't think he ever tells his servant what he is doing and why. He has the authority; he lays out the rules and agenda; and a good servant does what he is told to do, deferring to the judgment of his master. A good servant does not say, "This is a whole lot of weird that you want me to do. Not going to do it until you tell me just what it is you think you are doing." Joseph tells them what to do, they are his servants, and so they do it. Apparently, none of them say, "I don't get why you want me to do this."

As a result, we as readers, are forced to think about Joseph's motivation—to ponder the various alternatives. I don't think that there is anything wrong with some reasonable speculation, as long as it does not take us too far away from the text. Ideally speaking, we should be able to come to some conclusions which better help us to understand the text and the things that Joseph says and does.

I have not read many other opinions on Joseph's motivation. It will be interesting what others thought of his actions and what he said. The few I have read have got it wrong, for the most part (in *my* opinion, which is the correct opinion).

So, when you read my commentary and explanation about *why* Joseph does this or that, I am being speculative. I am also pretty certain that I am dead-on accurate about Joseph's thinking and motivations as well.

Genesis 42:16 Send one of you, and let him bring your brother, and you will be kept in prison so that your words may be proved, whether any truth is in you. Or else, as Pharaoh lives, surely you are spies."

Then Joseph puts them all into prison; which is where he has been for the better part of 13 years.

Joseph spent many years in prison. We know that he remained in prison for at least 2 years after interpreting the dreams of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker. Prior to that, he would have been placed into prison, but rose up in the ranks there—so, figure at least 3 years for that to occur (maybe many more years than that). Therefore, placing his brothers into jail for a few days while he devises a plan does not weigh heavily on his conscience.

My guess is, Joseph originally planned to send Reuben back home alone, recognizing that he was the only brother who tried to save him. He would keep the others in jail until Reuben returned. That would have been plan A. However, Joseph will settle on plan B instead.

Genesis 42:17 And he put them together into custody three days.

Joseph puts them all into prison for 3 days. My thinking is, he wanted them to experience prison, as he had; and he wanted to determine how he would proceed, in order to see his father and younger brother again. This gives him some time to ponder what he is going to do next. After all, when he is right there with his brothers, Joseph certainly has some clear objectives, but it would be easy to lose focus and make the wrong decision or to say the wrong thing.

You have to also remember that Joseph is the #2 man in Egypt. It is rare for someone with that authority to lay down a decree and then take it back.

Was releasing one brother only his first plan, or does he simply say this in order to cause his brothers some serious panic? Personally, I think that all of this occurred rather organically. Apart from Reuben, Joseph may have thought, a few weeks in jail for all of these guys might be a good idea. However, Joseph will rethink this and go with plan B instead. Plan B will have only one brother in jail, and the other brothers will return home with the grain.

Genesis 42:18 And Joseph said to them the third day, "Do this and live. I fear God.

Joseph tells them what they must do. Interestingly enough, he tells them that he fears *God*. This means that he believes in the Revealed God, the God of their fathers. Bear in mind, he is always (or nearly always) speaking through an interpreter.

This would have been reassuring to the brothers. They were all aware of Abraham's God—in fact, it is reasonable to assume that they had all believed in Abraham's God—but their dedication to God was less than stellar. In any case, this would have relieved some of the fear felt by the brothers.

I think that Joseph's mention of God here gave him a mutual trust/bond with his brothers, inserted a higher morality into the picture, and he is admitting, without admitting, that maybe he should not let them all rot in jail until the youngest brother is brought forth. (1) This is honestly who Joseph is. He does fear God. (2) His rash behavior at first (throwing all the brothers in jail) was softened by the 3 days, which included some communion with God (whether considering the Scriptures, praying, or whatever). (3) This also communicates to the brothers that Joseph is not some paranoid, lunatic ruler, but a man who believes in the same God they believe in. Whether Joseph actually *intended* #3 is unknown. I think probably, yes. Joseph does not want to send these brothers back to Canaan, and have them decide, "The prime minister is nuts; we can't go back there. We need to cut our losses." Therefore, Joseph needs to give these men something that reassures them so that they themselves will not fear to return. You see, Joseph wants his brothers to return, bringing along Benjamin. Therefore, he does not want his brothers to be so fearful of him that they will cut their losses and not return.

Joseph continues speaking to his brothers (through an interpreter):

Genesis 42:19 If you are honest, let one of your brothers be bound in the house of your prison. You go carry grain for the famine of your houses.

Joseph then tells them that one of them would remain behind to insure their return. But the rest could bundle up the grain and take it back home. It is not clear if this represents a change in Joseph's plan or if he did this so that his brothers would feel reassured that he was a reasonable man (and, therefore, bring back his brother).

My guess is, Joseph thought through this plan A (he had 3 days to think about it). If he kept 9 of his brothers in prison, then how does one man bring all of that grain back for his brothers' families? Wouldn't he be subject to robbery along the way? Given that there was famine throughout the land, robbery of grain would have been a real risk.

Therefore, from a practical standpoint, sending back one brother only with so much grain was a bad idea. If anything happened to the one brother, then Joseph has his other 9 brothers in jail; leaving his father, his full brother, and the families of these men to starve back in Canaan. Joseph, by keeping all of his brothers in jail, might endanger the lives of the two people he really wanted to see. Consequently, sending back all of the brothers save one would be the better approach (plan B).

Lesson 428 Genesis 42:20–24 Joseph Hears the Regrets of his Brothers

The 10 brothers of Joseph have come to Egypt to buy grain. They will be purchasing grain from their brother Joseph, whom they do not realize is their brother. When they all arrive, Joseph accuses them of being spies for the purpose of being able to question them more thoroughly about their backgrounds (which allows him to find out about his father and about his younger brother).

Joseph, the Prime Minister of Egypt, has accused his brothers of being spies (he knows that they are not; and they do not know who he is). He first was going to put them all in jail, save one, and have that one return home with all of the grain, and with the purpose of bringing Benjamin back. He has since reconsidered and will send 9 brothers back home and keep only one of them in prison, being held until they all return.

Genesis 42:20a But bring your youngest brother to me, and let your words be confirmed, be proved true, and you [all] will not die."

He requires that the youngest brother (his own brother) be brought on their return trip. So, you see how clever Joseph is? He is not sure if he wants to reveal anything to his older brothers; but this ruse will allow him to see his younger brother, Benjamin. Benjamin is Joseph's only full brother. They are Rachel's only children. Unlike his older brothers, Benjamin has not done anything against Joseph.

Genesis 42:20b And they did so.

The final sentence seems to indicate that they all agree to this. However, what they agree to do, and what happens later are two different things.

Plan A was to keep 9 brothers in jail and send one brother (Reuben) back. Plan B would keep one brother in jail (Simeon); and send 9 brothers back. Joseph makes the logical decision to send 9 brothers back; and then we have the discussion among the brothers. Whether these events followed each other in time is not completely clear (it appears that they did); but this separates Joseph's decision from the guilt that his brothers have been carrying all of these years.

Plan A of keeping 9 brothers in jail was probably Joseph's initial intent—perhaps to give them all a taste of jail. However, logically, Plan B is the most reasonable thing to do, which would make it more likely that the brothers would be able to return home safely with all the grain. In Plan A, one brother returns with a whole lot of grain; and in Plan B, 9 brothers return with a whole lot of grain. It is more likely that they will return home to Canaan safely with Plan B. Under Plan A, one man with so much grain during a time of famine, would be easily overpowered—so Plan A had to be discarded.

What appears to be the scene is, the brothers are before Joseph in a group (possibly still in jail); they have been informed of what Joseph expects them to do, and they begin talking among one another, not knowing that Joseph understands every word that they say.

Genesis 42:21 And they said one to another, "We are truly guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he begged us, and we would not hear. Therefore this distress has come upon us."

They begin to discuss what has happened in their past. They speak of Joseph's anguish after he had been thrown into the pit. Recall that he was 17 years old, and not only had his brothers all turned against him, but they were going to sell him into slavery (at first, they were going to kill him). No doubt, Joseph was very upset at the time and that his brothers could hear his pleading voice from the pit. The brothers conclude that all of this is happening because of what they did to Joseph, 20+ years ago.

This is a common thing which occurs among those in the human race. You commit some great, heinous act in your past, and then you believe that there are negative results that happen as a result of that act, even though it is something which you have done years ago.

As a common sense application—it is okay to look back in your life and to recognize great mistakes that you have made. We have all made such mistakes. However, that is not the same as believing that you are being punished for something that you did 10 or 20 years ago. Once you name a sin, God forgives it, despite its heinous level. God does not look at you, think about those lousy things you did 20 years ago and say, "I am still mad about those sins; so let Me make your life miserable some more!"

On the other hand, you can commit sins whose after affects can follow you for the rest of your life. You can have a child out of wedlock (or sire a child outside of marriage). That is a normal result which will be there for your entire life—he or she is not punishment for what you did, but they are a result which will impact your life forever. And having an abortion because a child is inconvenient—that will also impact your life forever.

There are many crimes you can commit, for which you may do jail time, and that will follow you around all of your life. You may be completely reformed, but having a prison record is going to impact your entire life. These are natural consequences; they are not God continuing to punish you for what you have done.

All of these brothers participated in this act. Placing their youngest brother into slavery was one of the most heinous things that they have done—and these brothers did some pretty heinous stuff (Gen. 34)! Now, here they are in Egypt, in an Egyptian jail, and they think of their youngest brother Joseph, whom they sent to Egypt as a slave and whom they have pretty much give up for dead.

It is clear that this act is seen by the brothers as the worst thing that they have ever done. Over 20 years later, they still feel guilty. Furthermore, remember, they have been lying to their father all of this time about the fate of Joseph. We have already discussed that Judah

may have even cut ties with his family for two decades because of this (the events of Gen. 38 were the result of that separation).

Furthermore, we have only studied a few things which the sons of Jacob have done. We do not know about their entire lives. But, what we do know is, they have done some very bad things in their lives. These are the patriarchs of nation Israel, but they are not great people. They have not led great and exemplary lives. We generally do not study these chapters in the Bible and think, I really need to be more like Reuben (or Simeon or Levi).

One reason that I have faith in my own salvation, which is based upon what Jesus did for me on the cross, is the Bible has many examples of believers with whom I identify. I wish that I could tell you that I personally identify with Joseph (or with Abraham), but I don't. I am far more like his 10 brothers, with their sordid and sometimes pathetic lives.

At first, it appears that Joseph was going to send Reuben back home, and leave his 9 brothers in jail. All of them are in jail right at this moment; and Joseph is probably questioning them 1 or 2 at a time, but, at the same time, Joseph hears what they are saying while in jail (obviously Joseph knows their language; but they do not realize that Joseph knows their language). Therefore, the brothers speak freely among themselves.

Genesis 42:22 And Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not speak to you saying, 'Do not sin against the youth?' And you would not hear. Therefore, behold, also his blood is required."

More literally, this reads: Then Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not say to you, 'You [all] should not sin against the lad'? But you [all] would not listen [to me] and now his blood—listen [to me]—is required."

As you can see, the actual Hebrew is more stilted and less free flowing Reuben is apparently quite upset while saying this.

Reuben reminds them that he was against killing Joseph, and said that they should not sin against him. However, as you may recall, Reuben suggested that he be sold into slavery. He may have opposed what was being done in the first place, but he eventually found the "happy medium" of selling Joseph into slavery rather than killing him. Reuben had intended to free Joseph later, but his brothers apparently negotiated the sale before Reuben could do that. Joseph would have been aware of all this.

The problem is, Reuben is the oldest brother. He could have required anything, because he stood in the place of their father, Jacob, when Jacob was absent. However, Reuben tried to find a way to save Joseph, but without coming out and clearly saying, "Look, he is our brother and we cannot do this to him!" A leader has to lead; and sometimes, this involves taking an unpopular position.

By way of application, sometimes there is not a happy middle ground between two different positions (in this case it was between killing Joseph or letting him go). A true leader would

have recognized that. Letting Joseph be sold into slavery was the expedient thing to do, but it was not the right thing to do.

Interestingly enough, this is why there has been such an impasse in our political system in the United States as of late. The far left of the Democrat party no longer has anything in common with the founding of our country. So, whatever values our founders had, have been completely rejected by the ruling faction of the Democratic party (which is almost every Democrat in Washington D.C.). Their intention is to subvert and undermine the Constitution of these United States. If you believe in the values which underlie our founding, then it is quite difficult to find middle ground with a movement which rejects these same values.

For instance, pretty much anything in the Constitution can be changed, but that requires a large majority of people to agree to it (and building such consensus is difficult and pretty much impossible for changes that the left wants to impose). Therefore, rather than change things constitutionally, they do an end run around the Constitution by passing legislation and/or putting in far-left judges who will agree to any far-left idea (declaring the anti-Constitutional legislation as Constitutional); or they impose their own far-left opinions from the Supreme Court, when they have a liberal/progressive majority (the Supreme Court, was *never* designed to make laws). In fact, our Supreme Court was designed originally to act like umpires in a baseball game, to call balls and strikes. They were not designed in the Constitution to make up new rules to the game mid-game (which is what a corrupt court has been doing for the past 100 years).

For instance—whatever your opinion is on abortion, an amendment to the Constitution could be passed in order to legalize abortion (it was understood for many years to be wrong). However, it would be impossible to get enough people to agree to legalized abortion in order to pass such an amendment. So then, instead, the courts decide that there is a fundamental right to privacy in the Constitution, leading a left-leaning court to the logical conclusion that, a woman has right to have an abortion. That is doing an end-run around the Constitution—which does recognize specific rights of its citizens which protects citizens from a corrupt government—but which does not give anyone the right to end the life of the fetus/child in the womb. That "right" is nowhere to be found in the Constitution. When the Supreme Court invents a right out of whole cloth, that is problematic because it was never the Court's job to do that.

I have gone out on a tangent here, somehow beginning with Reuben trying to find common ground where no common ground exists.

In any case, the brothers are still feeling quite guilty for having sold Joseph into slavery, and they are discussing this, 20+ years after the fact; and Joseph hears and understands every word that they say.

Genesis 42:23 And they did not know that Joseph understood, for the interpreter was between them.

All this time, Joseph has been speaking Egyptian, utilizing an interpreter to speak Hebrew to them. They spoke Hebrew, which the interpreter understood and translated for Joseph. Even though the interpreter probably knew that Joseph spoke Hebrew (it was not necessarily called *Hebrew* at that time), he simply did as he was ordered to do. There will be several instances where underlings will do exactly as Joseph asks, even though his orders may not seem to be very logical.

It appears that this interpreter is also Joseph's head of the house (when the brothers return, they will immediately begin talking to him and explaining to him their situation). So, Joseph's interpreter apparently occupies the position that Joseph did in Potiphar's house. Interestingly enough, it is probably Joseph who taught the interpreter the language that he and his brothers spoke.

Anyway, the brothers are talking among themselves—probably in more detail than we read here—not realizing that Joseph is listening and that he understands everything that they are saying.

Genesis 42:24a And he turned from them, and wept.

The conversation between his brothers causes Joseph to become tearful. His brothers voice regret over what they had done to him. So Joseph either turns away from them or leaves the room, becoming emotional over what they have said about their own actions. It is clear that his brothers feel guilty for what they have done. What they did to Joseph occurred over 20 years ago, and yet it is still at the forefront of their minds. They realize even to this day just how bad their actions were.

Also, being in an Egyptian prison would also have contributed to this particular memory coming up—but, bear in mind that, for over 20 years, they have had to consciously remember to lie to their father about what happened to Joseph, and to see the pain that this caused him.

Joseph is quite moved that his brothers feel this bad about what they did to him. So Joseph quickly exits, goes around a corner, or moves away from where they can see and hear him, and he weeps.

Genesis 42:24 And he turned from them, and wept. And he returned to them again and talked with them, and took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.

Simeon is taken and bound, to assure them that he be released when they return with the youngest brother.

Now, why Simeon? Reuben put up some fight in order to save Joseph from his fate. Simeon, apparently, did not. Given his temperament, Simeon probably was for the worst possible outcome for Joseph. When listening to his brothers, no doubt Joseph heard Simeon's voice over the others, saying, "I say we should just kill the little dreamer."

Also, Simeon is the second oldest, Joseph logically holds him accountable. He goes to jail, to be held until the youngest brother is produced. Although this is not found in the narrative, it is very likely that Simeon was one of the louder voices when it came to killing Joseph (from 22+ years ago). Since Reuben tried to get the brothers to back off regarding their desire to kill Joseph, Simeon, the next brother, would have been the most authoritative voice for killing him.

When it comes to the motivations of Joseph, I am reading between the lines and trying to provide a reasonable explanation for why Joseph does what he does. I believe that I am accurate in my assessment of his actions, but these are still just educated guesses on my part.

Lesson 429 Genesis 42:25–26 The Structure of the Narrative/Angels Observe Man

In Gen.42:1–4, the sons of Jacob discuss and prepare for a trip to Egypt in order to purchase grain for their hungry families. In Gen. 42:5–8, the brothers are in Egypt standing before Joseph, the prime minister of Egypt—and we are informed at that point that Joseph recognizes his brothers, but they do not recognize him. In vv. 9–20, the brothers are accused by Joseph as being spies, and in vv. 21–24, they discuss among themselves their bad behavior towards their young brother Joseph—things which they did over two decades previous, believing this to be the ultimate reason for their troubles. We are told that Joseph hears and understands them and that he moves out of their sight to cry (so thrice in this narrative, we are told something that only Joseph would have known, suggesting that he is the ultimate author of this narrative). In v. 25, the mules of the 10 brothers are loaded up, and the 9 brothers who are returning are given additional provisions (which would have kept them from going back into their bags).

In vv. 26–38, the brothers will return to Canaan, and then they will discover that each man has the silver in his sack that he had taken with them to buy the grain in the first place. At the beginning and end of this chapter, we have conversations recorded which took place in Canaan between Jacob, the patriarch, and his sons. In the middle, we have conversations taking place between Joseph and these same brothers, with additional information inserted known only to Joseph.

This seamless narrative continues, in which we will follow the brothers back to their homes in Canaan. Joseph obviously is not among them (he appears to have been the one recording this narrative). Joseph will later find out what happened, and he places this into his narrative just where it belongs in time. This is known as 3rd person omniscient. The 1st and 2nd person is not used; and the writer of the narrative appears to know all that happened, even though there is no one person taking part in all of these narrative sections (if we only knew what Joseph could see, that would be limited omniscience, if memory serves). Obviously, none of the other brothers were with Joseph during his experiences in Egypt; and Joseph is not with his brothers on the trip home. However, we as readers seem to follow the narrative along, as if we are along for the trip; flies on the tent ceiling, as it were.

From a literary standpoint, what we have here is quite remarkable, as we find ourselves sometimes with the brothers and sometimes with Joseph; and there appears to be no loss of continuity. We move from one place to the other seamlessly, according to the time of the events, as in any modern novel. These events are so well integrated that we forget that Joseph would have had to have combined his own experience with those told to him by his brothers (perhaps a year or more later) in order to develop the narrative that we read here.[31]

Writing and thinking about this has led me to a slightly different approach to the authorship (a unique take, I believe), but I will save that for near the end of the book of Genesis.

So, we are in Egypt now, with Joseph and his brothers; soon we will be on the trail with 9 of Joseph's brothers; and after that, we will be in Canaan where Joseph's brothers tell their father what happened to them in Egypt.

Genesis 42:25 Then Joseph commanded their sacks to be filled with grain, and returned their silver, each into his sack, and to give them provision for the way. And so he did to them.

Joseph does give them the grain that they had come for. He also surreptitiously returns their money to them. They do not know this at this time. Joseph also sees to it that they have food to get them through the trip (which would keep them out of their sacks of grain).

Joseph has servants who take care of all these things, and they appear to obey his orders implicitly, despite how unusual they are.

Genesis 42:26 And they loaded their asses with grain, and departed from there.

Joseph's brothers are in Egypt; they have received bags of grain which they purchased from Joseph; and now they load up their donkeys with the grain. I have no idea how much grain a pack animal can carry—perhaps 4 or 6 bags each, where these bags have been designed to be carried long distances on pack animals.

The sacks of grain are delivered to the brothers; and they load these on their asses, and leave.

There are some details left out. Obviously, the servants of Joseph loaded up these sacks with grain and, under Joseph's direction, placed the men's silver back into each bag. Probably, the sacks were then delivered to the brothers, and they placed them onto their pack animals. The idea is, the brothers would have no idea that their bags carried their silver as well as their grain.

Genesis 42:26 And they loaded their asses with grain, and departed from there.

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[31] Or, in the alternative, if the author was one of the brothers, then they would have had to have interviewed Joseph to gain access to all of the personal details included in this lengthy narrative.

The format here is quite extraordinary, even though most everyone who reads this takes it for granted. The narrative is presented in the 3rd person omniscient. That means, even though the writer (Joseph) is present and in the midst of much of the action, there are periods of time when Joseph is not involved in the events taking place—yet the narrative moves to different places with different people, as if there is a movie camera from above on them.

This reminds me of a remarkable Alfred Hitchcock movie (*Family Plot*) where the first 5 or 10 minutes is a single uncut camera shot, and it follows one person for awhile, until he intersects with another person, and the camera then follows this new person. That is what is occurring here.

How Joseph knew about these events which follow is easy to reason out; but never presented as a part of the narrative. That is, sometime in the future, the brothers would tell Joseph all that occurred, and then Joseph would have included this information in his narrative. It is done in such a way that, we never think about how the entire narrative was actually pulled together. We just read it and understand it. The nuts and bolts of how the narrative was constructed is never a part of the narrative. This is why this is such a revolutionary narrative. I do not know what is the earliest example of a 3rd person, omniscient narrative in historical literature, but this has to be among the earliest and certainly the most famous one from this era.

Let's relate this to the Angelic Conflict. Angels are among us and they observe us (we cannot see them). Angels, even though their ability to locomote is much different from ours (Genesis 28:10-19), are still singular creatures. So, they can only be in one place at one time (Job 1:6–12). We do not know how far they can see, hear and perceive from one position, but I suspect that there are clear limitations to their perceptive abilities. We also do not know how fast they can travel from point A to point B. Can an angel simultaneously keep tabs on a set of events taking place in Washington D.C. and in Los Angeles, California? We do not know. Is their moving from one place to the next somewhat like our changing channels via a remote? We may reasonably sort out that angels are not omniscient but that they are probably far more perceptive than we are.

Since angels learn from mankind, God may be directing them to watch Joseph; and then to watch his brothers, and to think about what they are seeing. We do not know how often this occurs or how often God says, "Now, I want you to all follow the brothers home;" but we know on at least one occasion, God spoke to Satan, and said, "Have you observed my servant Job?" (Job 1:8) This would suggest that there are historically significant events and people that God occasionally tells His angels (fallen and elect) to observe and consider.

Human drama is quite remarkable, and can you imagine being in the midst of the many thousands of remarkable events which have taken place in history? Angels can. They have been there. They are watching the most incredible drama ever witnessed—The History of God and Man—on the big stage, as it were. They have viewed the truly pivotal events of history—the events that result in eternal consequences and they learn God's

relation to man during these events (from which, they learn God's character). Let me add that, many things that we think were pivotal historical events probably were not.

Many of us have watched 2 or 3 movies at a sitting or have binge watched a series over the period of a few days—this appears to be what angels do—except that we are the series which the angels are watching, which began when God restored the earth and created man and this very big stage production continues on til today. Angels presumably can be wherever they want to be during the production of human history—that is, they can follow out any family or group of families, series of events, or whatever.

No doubt, you have seen an historic film or series and have wondered, *I wonder what really happened?* Some of us will even buy a book or two, if the subject really captures our interest, and read further into the events that we watched. Angels get to do that 24/7 (apart from whatever convocations take place in the 3rd heaven). Angels see these events take place in real time, without the gloss and liberal filter of Hollywood.

Just like us, angels have volition. Unlike us, elect angels have never sinned. This option is apparently always open to them; but I would assume that they have seen enough in the actions of man and in the actions of fallen angels not to make that mistake. It appears that angels all made their choices, for or against God, long before we came onto the scene. Satan appears to have been the first to turn against God; and that many other angels followed suit (a third of the angels followed Satan—Rev. 12:4).

A profound difference between angels and man is, there is no salvation for angels revealed in Scripture. Once they sin, that appears to condemn them. We, on the other hand, are born into sin, but with the promise of eternal redemption in Jesus Christ. We may commit millions of sins; and we may even be removed from this life by God by the sin unto death; but, if we have believed in Jesus Christ, we remain eternally saved.

Another significant difference between man and angels, is, we men are all related. We may be far, far distant cousins, but we all come from the same Adam and Eve. Adam's sin is passed down to every single person through their father. Angels were created singularly. Now, God probably said, "Angels be" and suddenly, there were 100 billion angels (or, however many), but they are not related to one another. Jesus informed us that, after our deaths, we will be like the angels, who neither give or take in marriage (Matt. 22:30).

The only time that angels take part in anything that is similar to giving and taking in marriage is in Gen. 6, where they intermarry with mankind and are able to raise up children through their human wives. However, none of those offspring appear to have believed in the Revealed God, as the earth was filled with their violence before the great flood came.

I believe that there is something in our relationship as men that allows the Lord to die for our sins and to carry upon His soul the penalty for the sins that we have committed, as He became true humanity. I do not know that there is a similar way for Him to do this for the angels. I am only guessing here, and I have not worked out any of the details, point by point; but I think that all of this is interrelated. That is, the fact that we can be redeemed

by the blood of Jesus Christ is because we are human and He became one of us, and died for our sins. The Lord can appear as an angel, taking on the form of an angel—but this is not the same as becoming an angel. Our Lord became a real man.

Ultimately, why has God created billions of unrelated creatures (angels) and billions of related creatures (mankind), I could not tell you. We are created, at least in part, to resolve the Angelic Conflict. That we all have free will is clear, because we have all sinned against God; and a third of the angels have sinned against God. But why God created angels in the first place is quite the mystery (apart from the creative nature of God; a characteristic that we ourselves have).

I have gone pretty far afield; let's return to the narrative.

Genesis 42:26 And they loaded their asses with grain, and departed from there.

Preparing the Grain for Transport (a graphic); from Divine Seasons; accessed January 18, 2017.

They are in Egypt; Joseph's servants have loaded up their donkeys; and now 9 brothers will return to Canaan with enough food for the families for the next year. The brothers are given some additional provisions, so that they will not need to get into their bags of grain. Simeon is in prison; in order to be released, youngest brother Benjamin must be brought to Egypt.

Most of the time, the events of these trips are not recorded. However, there will be something of great significance occur on their return to Canaan.

Lessons 430–431 Genesis 42:27 **The King James Version**

10 sons of Jacob have gone to Egypt to purchase grain. Because they are accused of being spies, one of them, Simeon, is kept in an Egypt prison. He will be released from prison as soon as his brothers return, bringing with them Benjamin, in order to *prove* their story to the prime minister there, who has accused them of being spies.

The brothers went to Egypt to buy grain (much grain was set aside during the 7 years of plenty); and they were allowed to purchase this grain. It was sacked and placed on their donkeys for the return trip home.

Along the trip, this happens:

Genesis 42:27 And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass fodder in the inn, he saw his silver. For, behold, it was in the mouth of the sack.

The word *behold* is no longer a part of modern vocabulary. Rarely do you hear a public speaker punctuate his talks with the words *behold! Lo!* (unless he is teaching from the pulpit). And very few pastors use that vocabulary any more. Many times, the word *behold* can be replaced with the phrase *and he saw*. Several translations take a similar approach:

Gen. 42:27 That night the brothers stopped at a place to spend the night. One of the brothers opened his sack to get some grain for his donkey. And there in the sack, he saw his money! (ERV)

Gen. 42:27 And as one of them opened his sack to give his donkey fodder at the lodging place, he saw his silver, for there it was in the mouth of his sack! (The Scriptures 1998+)

One of the problems with the King James Version is, it is filled with words like *behold, ye* and *thou*. It is not quite to the point of being irrelevant to us (like the Latin Bible was to those who adhered to the Catholic church over a period of hundreds of years, but did not read Latin and therefore did not understand a word of what was said during church); but some of our churches and pastors make the mistake of depending upon the KJV today. At this time, there are many outstanding translations in modern English (such as, the New KJV, the NASB or the ESV)—translation which are both accurate and readable.

There is even an evil movement known to some as the King James Version-only movement. Rather than simply recognize that the KJV was an excellent translation which served man for centuries, they are unable to let go of this translation, despite its shortcomings. It is, to be sure, an excellent translation and a literary masterpiece; but, in this day and age, it is outdated, and acts, to some degree, as a hindrance to evangelism, as young people are exposed to the obscure language, and it does not reach them. The Word of God has been translated into many languages, and the purpose is to be able to communicate it to those who speak that language. People no longer speak the King James English; and so the King James Bible does not speak to them. They must be reached with a more modern vocabulary.

This is why there are a limited number of Shakespear productions each year. Fewer and fewer people understand the language that he wrote in (old English, proper English). As time continues, reading Shakespear's plays and performing them decreases. So it is to the KJV Bible.

There is this myth going around (please allow me this additional tangent), that the Bible was written in one obscure language; it was translated into another language; and that was translated into another language; and the Bibles which we have are 3rd, 4th or even 5th generation translations. This is completely untrue and an argument always advanced by people who do not like the Bible, but know very little about it (most of what they *know* about the Bible is simply untrue—yet, they have their opinions, nevertheless). The KJV was translated directly from the original languages (Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic), from very

ancient manuscripts. Worst case scenario today is, some modern translations come primarily from the KJV rather than from the original languages. That is, some translations have taken the KJV and have simply modernized it. However, many modern translations go back to the original languages and translate from there (this is what I do[32]). My point is, we do not have a series of people whispering a sentence to one person, who then conveys that sentence to the next person, and so on, until the original sentence is far removed from the final telling of it. The Old Testament is in Hebrew (with a small portion being in Aramaic); the New Testament is in Greek; and we translate from ancient manuscripts written in those languages into English. Tens of thousands of people have devoted their lives to developing lexicons, determining the correct reading for every passage, and writing translations throughout human history. There is no more important book in human history; and so people with specific spiritual gifts do everything possible so that an accurate translation of the Bible is available in every written language (this is an ongoing process in the history of man).

So there is no misunderstanding, we do not have the original manuscript of any book of the Bible; nor do we even have an autograph of any book of the Bible (an autograph is a completely accurate copy of the original manuscript). But, what we do have is a plethora of ancient manuscripts in the original and in other ancient languages, going back thousands of years. There are 26,000 partial and full manuscripts of the New Testament in the original Greek (this number may include Latin, Aramaic, and other ancient language manuscripts); and some of the partial manuscripts go back as far as the 1st century A.D. We can, by determining the age of these various manuscripts, compare them in order to determine what the Bible originally said. At worst, we occasionally come up with a verse or a passage which is questionable (two come to mind for the New Testament: the end of Mark is suspect; and the narrative of Jesus and the prostitute where Jesus writes in the sand, is questionable).

In the places, where this or that verse might be questioned or the meaning of this or that word is difficult to ascertain; there is no place where this affects a serious doctrine or concept. The traditions of the orthodox faith of Christianity are never called into question by a difficult or questionable passage. Despite what you have heard or read, the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ is unquestionably the view of the Bible. His death for our sins, His resurrection and ascension—these are all fundamental doctrines and there is no manuscript anywhere which brings any of these doctrines into question. These doctrines are found throughout the Old and New Testaments. There are no translations out there which contradict the fundamentals of the faith.

Let me footnote that—the Jehovah's Witnesses have their own translation of the Bible where certain favorite passages of theirs are mistranslated, based upon faulty notions about the Greek language; and they will use their translation to *prove* that Jesus is not

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[32] The translation which I have used throughout most of Genesis has been the Modern KJV, which is simply an updating of the KJV done by a man named Jay P. Green, Sr., who is perhaps the single most prolific Bible translator of our day. He has done at least 3 translations that I am aware of: the MKJV, the KJV3, and the Literal Translation of the Holy Bible.

God. Without going into detail, they mistranslate John 1—and yet, other passages with the exact same construction in the Greek are not similarly translated by the JW's. So, with the exception of their bible, you can take any one of 90 or so English translations and derive from any of them the major doctrines of the faith. If you want to delve into this particular topic, please see **Jehovah Witnesses/Jesus, the God-Man** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Are there any problems at all with the existing manuscripts that we work from? There are a few. I have spent the last 20 years translating and commenting on various books of the Old Testament. The book of Samuel, for instance, is supposed to be one of the most poorly preserved manuscripts. In translating that entire book (2 books in the English), I came across one passage where the accepted manuscripts got an important word wrong. If memory serves, we find the word *Ark* where we should have the word *ephod* instead (these words are very similar in the Hebrew). Understanding what these two things are and how they are used makes it clear that the *ephod* was called for and not the *Ark*. Now, I went through the entire book of Samuel *word-by-word,* and this was the biggest problem in the entire book. There were many other minor problems and discrepancies, but none which actually affected the meaning of a passage which would then affect an important doctrine or concept.

On the other hand, there are some modern translations which mistranslate a passage, and this can cause no end difficulty (and these are *mistranslations;* the problem is *not* with the ancient manuscripts). An excellent example of this is Deut. 22:28–29. Here are some very *bad* translations of this passage:

The Message	When a man comes upon a virgin who has never been engaged and grabs and rapes her and they are found out, the man who raped her has to give her father fifty pieces of silver. He has to marry her because he took advantage of her. And he can never divorce her.
New Century Version	If a man meets a virgin who is not engaged to be married and forces her to have sexual relations with him and people find out about it, the man must pay the girl's father about one and one-fourth pounds of silver. He must also marry the girl, because he has dishonored her, and he may never divorce her for as long as he lives.
The Voice	If a man meets a girl who's a virgin and who isn't engaged to someone else, and he forces himself on her, when what he's done is discovered, he must pay 20 ounces of silver to her father as a bride price, and she will become his wife. He can't ever divorce her after this because he's dishonored her.

These translations make is sound as if, a guy can go out and rape a woman, and if he is caught, all he has to do is marry her and give her father some money. As one might expect, this passage shows up on many anti-Bible sites, and cited as proof that men could essentially do whatever they wanted to do with women (in ancient *Bible times*) and get away with it.

Here is a better translation:

Kukis not so literal	If a man finds a young, virgin woman and he takes her (manipulating her) and he lies with her, but they are discovered, then this man will give the woman's father 50 silver coins and she will become his wife because he has violated her. He will not be allowed to divorce her ever.

There is no force here in this passage, although there may be some manipulation or seduction used by the man. There are a couple of important points to be made here: (1) In the ancient world, single, virginal women did not just wander off by themselves. Their family kept a close eye on them, as it was a tradition for the father of a bride to collect the bloodied bed sheets from wedding night to prove that he delivered a virginal daughter to her husband. (2) Women who were not virgins rarely married. I understand that this does not make any sense to you; but think of it like this: what are the chances that a woman with 7 children by 7 different men is going to find the love of her life if it is not one of those men? She may still be attractive and vivacious, but after some conversation with an interested suitor, when he finds out that she has 7 kids, he is likely going to run in the other direction. So, to us in our culture, an unmarried woman with 7 children by 7 different men is analogous to a young woman in the ancient Jewish culture who is no longer a virgin. When a man married a woman who turned out not to be a virgin, he could divorce her immediately upon finding that out.

My point in all of this is, the situation described did happen, but it was very rare. In the event that a man did come upon a single woman, a virgin, away from her family (which is a very are circumstance, indeed) and he seduces her and they are found out, then he must marry the woman and pay a reasonable dowry to her father, for he delivered to this young man a virgin. There are passages in this same context which actually deal with rape; but these two verses are not about rape.

There is an additional way in which this passage is misinterpreted: people make it seem as though the woman has no choice in the matter. That is *not* what this passage says. Not only does the woman have a say in the matter, but her father does as well. There is nothing in this passage that indicates that, it is the woman and her father who are required to accept these options. No. It is the man who seduces her—if this is what the woman wants and the father allows, then he must fulfill these conditions of marriage. All of the constraints and restrictions are upon the man; there are none placed upon the woman.

For more information on this passage, see the exegetical study of this in **Deuteronomy 22** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Continuing on this tangent:

You may be surprised to learn that, we have more confidence in the text of the Bible—which is based upon handwritten manuscripts from 1000 or even 2000 years ago

(which were copied and recopied many times)—than we have in the writings of Shakespear, whose writings were produced *after* the invention of the printing press.

> *John Lea, in The Greatest Book in the World offers fantastic insight into whether or not scepticism regarding New Testament evidence could impact William Shakespeare's body of literary works, he begins with the words: 'In an article in the North American Review, a writer had made some interesting comparisons between the writings of Shakespeare and the Scriptures, which show that much greater care must have been bestowed upon the biblical manuscripts than upon other writings, even when there was so much more opportunity of preserving the correct text by means of printed copies than when all the copies had to be made by hand. He said: "It seems strange that the text of Shakespeare, which has been in existence less than two hundred years, should be so far more uncertain and corrupt than that of the New Testament, now over eighteen centuries old, during nearly fifteen of which it existed only in manuscript…With perhaps a dozen or twenty exceptions, the text of every verse in the New Testament may be said to be so far settled by general consent of scholars, that any dispute as to its readings must relate rather to the interpretation of the words than to any doubts respecting the words themselves. But in every one of Shakespeare's thirty-seven plays there are probably a hundred readings still in dispute, a large portion of which materially affects the meaning of the passages in which they occur."'*[33]
> In other words, when you read a book in the Bible, it is far more of an accurate reading than any book that Shakespear is said to have written.

For many centuries, the translation of the Old Testament was based upon less than a half-dozen well-authenticated manuscripts which had been preserved in the original languages. These manuscripts have been the basis for nearly every translation made up until the 1960's. However, in the late 1940's, there was an amazing discovery made—the Dead Sea Scrolls were found (near the Dead Sea, quite obviously). These manuscripts (essentially, an ancient library) were dated approximately 100 B.C., thus becoming the oldest known manuscripts for the Old Testament (the complete Old Testament was not found, but large portions of some books were found, in both Greek and Hebrew). I believe that these are the only existing manuscripts from the Old Testament which predate the Lord Jesus Christ. These manuscripts had survived because they were in the dry desert air of Judæa. This discovery gave testimony as to the great accuracy of the text of the Old Testament, which had been preserved by hand for a dozen or more centuries. A full millennium had elapsed between the writing of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the oldest Old Testament manuscript which we had possession of. Yet, there are very few differences between these various sets of manuscripts.

Here is an oft-cited example which testifies to the accuracy of the Hebrew text: in Isa. 53, there are 166 words and the Dead Sea Scrolls has 17 letters which are called into question

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[33] From The New Testament Versus Shakespear; accessed January 10, 2017. The quotation obviously came from the 1900's.

(that is, there are 17 letters which are different in the Dead Sea Scrolls as opposed to the accepted text previously used). 10 of these letters accounted for a different spelling of the words of the text, which did not affect the sense of the text. 4 of the different letters simply reflect stylistic changes, and also do not affect the meaning of the text. The biggest problem are 3 Hebrew letters which make up the word *light,* which is added to v. 11. Now, between the manuscripts which we depend upon and the Dead Sea Scrolls, over 1000 years had elapsed, and the biggest problem in this very significant chapter is a singular missing word.[34] Here is how this verse is impacted:

Isa. 53:11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. (ESV)

Isa. 53:11 After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light and be satisfied. My righteous servant will justify many by the knowledge of himself; and he will bear their iniquities. (WEB)

If you read carefully, you will observe that there are more differences in the choice of words by the two translations than the word *light* makes to the passage.

My point in all of this is, modern translations are based upon very accurate ancient manuscripts; and further, we have a large number of excellent modern-English translations available to us now. Many of the modern translations are based upon the original text of ancient manuscripts which we have (and virtually anyone can gain access to these ancient texts (I have at least 15 ancient manuscripts available in my e-sword alone and I have my Hebrew Bible in front of me and my Greek NT within arm's reach of me right at this moment).

Other people have given a lifetime to the very tedious work of comparing dozens and even hundreds of manuscripts, to come up with what they believe to be the best reading in the original languages. Consequently, the KJV is replaceable. The Word of God is *alive and powerful* not because the KJV was just a literary masterpiece, but because the Bible is the Word of God. Pulling quotations from *Today's English Version* or from God's Word™ or from *World English Bible* can be every bit as effective as quoting from the KJV. In fact, when dealing with today's English speaker, these other translations are generally better choices to use to reach the unbeliever (the Shakespearian text of the KJV can sometimes be difficult to understand or off-putting). And, when accuracy and a literal translation is called for, we have the NKJV, the NASB, the ESV, the MEV, all of which are good, solid, readable translations which are reasonably accurate. And, if you do not mind the plethora of notes and commentary, the NET Bible is very readable and reasonably accurate as well.

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[34] From Norman Geisler and William Nix; *A General Introduction to the Bible;* Chicago; Moody Press, ©1968, p. 263.

Most churches which have abandoned the KJV have opted instead, for the most part, the NASB or the NIV Bible. Both of these are excellent translations, the former being slightly more accurate than the latter.

Unfortunately, the NKJV, which I believe to be one of the most excellent translations available today, is not used as often as it could be—and perhaps it is because it has the stigma of having KJV in its name. However, there is little difference between the NKJV, the NASB and the MEV. In any given passage, if you were told to identify which of those translations was used, you would have a 33% chance of guessing the correct translation, because they simply do not vary much from one another.

Below is a list of available English translations—most of which are available online or in Bible programs (like e-sword, which is a free Bible computer program).

You will note that many translations fall into more than one category. Unless otherwise indicated, these translations/versions are not in any particular order within a category.

Classifying Various Bible Translations

Classification	Bible Translations
Ultra Literal Translations:	Young's Literal Translation, Brenner's Mechanical Translation, the exeGeses companion Bible
	Best (in terms of readability)**:** NKJV, NASB, MEV, ESV (these translations are the most readable of the literal translation group)
Literal, almost word-for-word translations:	**Good:** WEB, NEV, KJV, CLV, CGV, Emphasized Bible, Green's Literal translation, KJV3, MKJV, Updated Bible Version, Webster's Bible translation; a Voice in the Wilderness; the Amplified Bible, the Expanded Bible, Kretzmann's Commentary (which is the KJV along with additional explanatory text); the Amplified Bible.
Expanded/Embellished Bibles:	The Amplified Bible, the Expanded Bible, Kretzmann's Commentary (which is the KJV along with additional explanatory text); the NET Bible; The Voice; Translation for Translators.

I would also classify the ExB and the NET Bible as "Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing);" however, the additional text often moves them closer to the "literal translations," as both Bibles contain many footnotes/textnotes which read *literally*... The Voice is *very* readable, which adds some additional explanatory text (italicized, with very few additional notes).

Classifying Various Bible Translations

Classification	Bible Translations
Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:	The Complete Jewish Bible; exeGesis Companion Bible; Hebraic Roots Bible; JPS (Tanakh—1985); Kaplan Translation (I think he has only done the Pentateuch); the Orthodox Jewish Bible; The Scriptures 1998.
These are not books necessarily approved by some Jewish group, but translations which use the Jewish transliteration for names (The Scriptures 1998), or keep a format compatible with the original Hebrew (ECB), or are done by a Jewish organization (The 1985 Tanakh). Some of these might even be *Christian* Bibles (The Complete Jewish Bible—called *complete* because it contains the Old and New Testaments).	
Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):	The Christian Community Bible (1988); The Heritage Bible; the New American Bible (2002); New American Bible (2011); New Jerusalem Bible; New RSV; Revised English Bible; the Catholic edition of TEV (the Good News Bible); the CEV.
Both versions of the NAB are quite good; the Heritage Bible is a very good translation which appears to have been peculiar to a now-defunct Catholic university. I think that the REB is a great reading Bible—its choice of words is often unique and interesting.	
Whereas, there are still some great problems with the Catholic Church (none of which can I imagine ever going away); their view on the Word of God has changed dramatically since the Middle Ages. At one time, the Catholic Church persecuted believers who tried to translate the Bible into a modern language (some were executed). They did everything possible to keep the Word of God out of the hands of the believer. Their church services were held in Latin for people who did not speak Latin. However, today, the Catholic Church gives its stamp of approval to many excellent translations. Many times, the associated commentary is not bad either. Just remember to ignore the apocrypha.	
Since dividing up the Bible translations using most of these basic categories, I have been surprised how close Jewish and Catholic translations tend to be. You might think that a Jewish translation tends to favor some form of Judaism and that a Catholic translation seems to conform to and promote Catholic doctrine, but that is *not* the case. Whereas that is occasionally the case with some footnotes which are added; it is almost never the case with the actual text of Scripture. Apart from the Jewish Bibles occasionally making use of some specifically Jewish words and names, you would be hard-pressed in a blind test to differentiate between a Jewish Bible and a Catholic Bible.	

Classifying Various Bible Translations	
Classification	**Bible Translations**
Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):	The Awful Scroll Bible; the Conservapedia translation; Ferrar-Fenton's Bible translation; God's Truth (Tyndale); HCSB; the Jubilee Bible 2000; H. C. Leupold's translation; the Lexham English Bible; the NIV; the Tree of Life Version; the Urim-Thummim Version; the WikiBible.
Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:	American English Bible; Beck's American Translation; International Standard Version; New Advent (Knox) Bible (there is an updated version); Today's NIV; Translation for Translators; The Voice.
Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:	Common English Bible; Contemporary English Version; The Living Bible; the New Berkeley Version; the New Century Version; the New Life Version; The Message; the Good News Bible (TEV); the New Living Translation.
Nearly always a different point of view/vocabulary:	The Knox Bible (and the Revised Knox Bible); the American English Bible; the Urim-Thummim Version; The Message; God's Truth (Tyndale); Contemporary English Version; the New Living Translation; the Bible in Basic English; the Voice.
I do not mean that these have an incorrect point of view, but that they are almost always translated differently in some respect, which is sometimes quite helpful in understanding a verse (assuming, of course, that their take is accurate).	
Limited Vocabulary Translations:	Bible in Basic English; the Easy English translation; the Easy-to-Read Version–2006; the International Children's Bible (this appears to be a slightly simplified version of the NCV); God's Word™; the Good News Bible (TEV); The Message; the Names of God Bible (which is almost equivalent to God's Word™); the New International Readers' Version; the New Simplified Bible, the New Life Bible, the Contemporary English Version.
For a simple reading Bible, I prefer God's Word™, ICB, NCV, and the NIRV from those Bibles above (in case you wanted a Bible for a young son or daughter; or wanted a Bible that you could use to read to a young son or daughter).	
Great Reading Bibles	The ISV; the ESV; the MEV, the NKJV; the New International Readers' Bible; the New Living Translation; the Revised English Bible.

Classifying Various Bible Translations	
Classification	**Bible Translations**
Good Reading Bibles	Beck's American Translation; Common English Bible; Contemporary English Version; The Living Bible; the Message; the New Century Version; the Good News Bible (TEV); God's Word™; the Easy-to-Read Version–2006[35]; the International Children's Bible (which is almost exactly the same as the NCV); God's Word™ (which is almost the same as the Names of God Bible[36]); the Complete Jewish Bible; JPS (Tanakh—1985)[37]; the Voice;
I think that the best approach is a good reading Bible, which is also an accurate translation.	
Painful to Read:	The Awful Scroll Bible; Brenner's Mechanical Translation; Concordant Literal Version, Exegesis Companion Bible; the Expanded Bible; the King James Version (for some; not for all); the Orthodox Jewish Bible; Rotherham's Emphasized Bible; Young's Literal Translation.
Outdated	American Standard Version; King James Version; Revised Standard Version.
Translations which often present an original or fresh view.	Revised English Bible; the Knox Bible (and Revised Knox Bible); the International Standard Version.
Translations which do not appear to offer anything different.	American Revised Version 2005; Bond Slave Version; A Conservative Version; King James 2000 Version; KJ3; Modern KJV; Modern Literal Version; Natural Israelite Bible; the Niobi Bible; the Restored Holy Bible; Restored Names Version; 21st Century KJV; and the Word of Yahweh.

[35] The 2002 Easy-to-read-Bible has some serious deficiencies; I don't think that there is any difference between the 2006 and 2008 versions. As far as I know, the 2002 version is only available with old versions of e-Sword.

[36] In the Names of God Bible, the names of God are bolded and italicized; and the Names of God Bible has *Elohim* rather than *God*.

[37] This is Old Testament only.

Classifying Various Bible Translations	
Classification	**Bible Translations**
What I mean by this is, rarely do I list any of these translations, even though I often read them when working on a passage, as they rarely offer anything new beyond the literal, often word-for-word translations—using the same vocabulary and sentence structure as the more common NKJV, NASB, ESV and MEV. The way that a thought is expressed or the vocabulary is not new or different from those listed in the 2nd category above.	
These are not hard-and-fast classifications. From time to time, I change them (particularly when it comes to their degree of literalness). It is not unusual for one verse may be very literally translated, and then the next verse is more free-form in some of these translations/versions. Or, there may be a verse which has a lot of additional text added; but the next verse is translated almost literally, with no added text.	
My guess is, you probably had no idea that there were so many different English Bible translations. Most of these can be found online or available to e-sword (which is an excellent and free Bible computer program).	
Since my work is primarily with the Old Testament, these categories and comments apply to the Old Testament, for the most part. There are many excellent New Testament only translations which I have ignored in this chart.	
On occasion, there are some serious differences in the text of various Bibles. In those situations, it is good to have a pastor-teacher or commentator familiar with the passage to sort it out. And, so there is no misunderstanding, nearly every believer in the Church Age needs to be under the authority of his right pastor-teacher. About the only exception to this would be the pastor-teacher of a local church. I am a commentator, and I am in church for nearly every service (Bobby teaches 4 lessons/week at Berachah Church and rarely do I miss even a single class in a month).	

Forgive the tangents; back to our text in the next lesson.

Lesson 432 Genesis 42:28–34 The Brothers Tell Their Father What Happened

The sons of Jacob had to travel to Egypt in order to buy grain for the first year of famine which struck that part of the world. When they encountered the prime minister of Egypt, he accused them of being spies and he kept one of the brothers (Simeon) there in Egypt, in jail, requiring the other brothers to return with their youngest brother Benjamin.

What the sons of Jacob did not know is, the prime minister was their younger brother Joseph, whom they had sold into slavery over 20 years previous. Unbeknownst to them, Joseph also ordered that the silver that they brought with them to purchase grain be surreptitiously returned to them, placed into their sacks of grain by his servants.

On the way back, the brothers stop at a lodging place (called an *inn* here); and one of them opens up his sack, because he is going to feed his donkey from the grain. He discovers that his silver payment is in the sack of grain.

Genesis 42:28a And he said to his brothers, "My silver has been put back. And, also look in my sack." And their hearts failed,...

When it says *their hearts failed them*, the verb is the Qal imperfect of yâtsâʾ (אָצָא) [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*] and it means *to go out*, but it is used in a variety of ways. So literally, it means that *their hearts went out* or *their hearts went forth*. It is a figure of speech similar to our figurative use of the phrase *I almost had a heart attack*. It threw their thinking and emotions into a turmoil. Bullinger calls this *hyperbole* and says that it is beautifully rendered by *their hearts failed them*. They were already discussing the guilt which they all felt from what they had done to Joseph 22 years ago, and they had been waiting for the other shoe to drop, so to speak—and it just did.

No one can explain why there is silver in this bag of grain. No explanation makes sense. Between the 9 brothers, none of them can think far enough outside of the box to explain this.

Since they do not know who this prime minister is, other than a high ranking official who has imprisoned their brother and who believes that they are spies, they are totally confused when they find this money is in their brother's sack. It never occurs to them that it was returned to them out of kindness. This discovery sends them into a panic. It is bad enough that Joseph (the prime minister) thinks that they are spies (so they think); it is even worse that it now looks as though they have stolen back their money (that is, they are concerned that is how it will appear to Joseph).

No doubt, the brothers are confused and fearful.

Genesis 42:28 And he said to his brothers, "My silver has been put back. And, also look in my sack." And their hearts failed, and they each were afraid, saying to one another, "What is this God has done to us?"

The brothers are quite concerned at this time. They brought the money to pay for the grain, they gave it over and got the grain in return; but somehow, this brother still has his silver. And this concerns them. Will the prime minister think that they have stolen from him?

This is one of the very few times that the brothers appear to consider God—but in an odd way. *What has God done to us,* they ask one another. They have just been accused of being spies, one of their own is in an Egyptian jail, cooling his heels, and now, money that ought to have been paid to the Egyptians was still on their person. Immediately they think that there was some kind of mistake and that the prime minister will believe that they have stolen some of their silver back from him—that in addition to the accusation that they are spies.

"What is this that God has done to us?" They are worried about what God might do to them to punish them now for what they had done to Joseph. They cannot grasp why there is silver in one of these bags of grain—so they have assumed the worst, that God is somehow setting them up for something.

Genesis 42:29–30 And they came to Jacob their father, to the land of Canaan, and told him all that happened to them, saying, "The man, the lord of the land, spoke roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country.

The brothers are quite concerned. Simeon is in an Egyptian jail and the Prime Minister will not let him go. They received their grain, but somehow, some of the silver they bought it with is back in one of their sacks. They have to ease into revealing all these things to their father. Apart from having the grain, nothing which happened was good.

Furthermore, there is the requirement that Benjamin be brought back—that is going to be the most difficult bit of information to convey. They have not told their father this—yet.

It is very like that all the brothers are speaking, each one adding this or that little tidbit of information. Normally, the oldest brother would speak and inform their father of all that had happened; and then the other brothers would, after he is finished, add anything else that Reuben left out. However, I don't believe that to be the case here. At some point, Reuben lost his leadership status—probably back when he tried to find the compromise position between killing Joseph and not killing him.

So, when they come in to their father, *they* told him what happened. Reuben ought to be their spokesman, but he is not. You may think, *well, this is just normal human psychology; there are 9 brothers and they all have something to say*. Later, there will be another situation which affects the family, and a spokesman and leader from the brothers will emerge. He will do all of the talking.

However, at this time, many of the brothers speak. They tell their father how they met the man in charge of the grain, who is also prime minister of the land, and he seemed to have a negative attitude towards them from the beginning. Furthermore, he believed them to be spies.

Genesis 42:31 And we said to him, 'We are honest, we are not spies.

When speaking to the prime minister, they all spoke as well. Reuben was not their spokesman then either. He lacked the skills and the recognized authority to speak on behalf of his brothers.

One brother says, "We told him that we are honest men." Another brother chimes in, "We explained to him that we are not spies." Most of the time when we find these conversations where *the brothers said,* we may understand that 2 or more of the brothers are speaking. Even though what they say may be presented as an extended quote of two or more verses, that no doubt represents the words of several brothers.

Genesis 42:32 We are twelve brothers, sons of our father. One is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan.'

The brothers inform their father about how they gave Joseph their entire background story. They tell Jacob about the things that they said. They put their trip and meeting with the prime minister into a context. One of them had said to the prime mnister, "We are 12 brothers;" and then another tells the prime minister about Joseph: "One is not." A third then added, "Our youngest brother, Benjamin, is at home with his father in Canaan."

The brothers seem to be working up to the requirement that the prime minister wants them to return with Benjamin. Obviously, they cannot lead with that. They have to put that little tidbit of information into an overall context, because they know that particular requirement is going to be a very hard sell. They know that their father will not agree to this unless he understands all that happened to them.

Genesis 42:33 And the man, the lord of the country, said to us, 'By this I will know that you are honest. Leave one, your brother, with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and go.

They explain to their father Jacob that were allowed to leave and they were given food to take, as they had requested. However, the one brother, Simeon, was left behind, at the order of the prime minister. This explains how they have returned with the grain, but with one less brother.

Interestingly enough, none of them added the fact that the prime minister placed all of them in jail and was originally going to release just one of them to return home (this fact would have made Jacob far more reticent to sent Benjamin to Egypt).

Finally, the brothers present the very difficult requirement of the prime minister:

Genesis 42:34a And bring your youngest brother to me. Then I will know that you are not spies, but that you are honest.

The prime minister has required them to bring their youngest brother back, to show that what they have said is not a story. Returning with Benjamin will prove to the prime minister that they are not spies, but that they could be believed.

Genesis 42:34 And bring your youngest brother to me. Then I will know that you are not spies, but that you are honest. And I will deliver you your brother [Simeon], and you will trade in the land.' "

If they return to Egypt with Benjamin, then the prime minister would allow them to trade in the land. Now, this final thing about trading in the land is not something which Joseph directly said, but it could be inferred, to some extent, by what he has said. In fact, it appears to be somewhat of an exaggeration. If Joseph actually said this, it was not recorded (we may reasonably assume that with most conversations recorded in Scripture,

every last word is not recorded). And, perhaps there is no great meaning to be taken from this final statement apart from, *they could return to Egypt to buy grain*. No doubt, the idea was list the benefits of taking Benjamin to Egypt. (1) The prime minister would believe what they had told him. (2) Simeon would be released and (3) they could continue to buy grain for their families.

So, this narrative continues—and, again, what we are reading about is taking place out of Joseph's sight. He is in Egypt and unable to observe any of this conversation between his brothers and Jacob, even though he is the probable author of this narrative. What happens between Jacob and his sons is what moves this narrative forward, and again, we seamlessly move from events in which Joseph was a participant to events that he did not observe, just as if the narrator followed along, as if from above, looking down from above, watching and taking notes. I am working on an alternative wrinkle on the writing of the final portion of Genesis, which I will reveal at a later time.

At the very beginning of Gen. 42, the narrator started with the conversation between Jacob and his sons, in the first year of the famine where they are all hungry and Jacob tells them, "Egypt has grain" (Gen. 42:1–4). We follow them on this trip to Egypt (Gen. 42:5), where they meet (but don't recognize) Joseph their brother (Gen. 42:6–25). In this portion of the narrative, there are several plot points known only to Joseph (Joseph turning aside to weep; Joseph ordering his servants to return their silver to them). Eventually, the narrator follows the 9 remaining brothers back home (Gen. 42:26–28) where they meet with their father and tell him what happened (Gen. 42:29–34). No single person was in each one of these portions of narrative; no single person was both a witness of all these events as well as privy to the things which Joseph did when interacting with his brothers. Yet the narrative is seamless. The narrative moves effortlessly from one section to the next, without regard to who the actual narrator is. The nature of this narrative is, in fact, so seamless, that very few people ever stop and ask themselves, *just who exactly is writing this narrative?* There are things which Joseph alone knows; but there are large portions of this narrative when Joseph is nowhere around.

Lesson 433 Genesis 42:35–38 Jacob's Last Word on the Matter

Jacob's sons have returned from Egypt to Canaan. They have relayed to their father what happened to them in Egypt. The prime minister there was mean to them, accused them of being spies, and kept one brother behind in jail. He requires that they return with their youngest brother in order to prove their story of being 11 brothers.

Apparently, while unloading their sacks of grain, to place the grain into dry storage, and after telling their father what happened to them in Egypt, the brothers make a discovery which they do not understand and cannot logically explain to themselves or to their father Jacob.

Genesis 42:35 And it happened they emptied their sacks, behold, every man's bundle of silver was in his sack. And when they and their father saw the bundles of silver, they were afraid.

A part of their conversation with their father is, one of the brothers opened his sack at a resting area along the way and he had discovered that his silver was in there, along with the purchased grain. This was such an inexplicable fact that no one said, "Hey, let's check all of our sacks." But, once they are home, they have to place the grain in a very dry containers in order to preserve it. That is when they discover that every man has his silver—the silver that they took with them to purchase this grain—in his sack of grain.

We do not know exactly what they used to carry their grain—perhaps they had some sort of a saddle arrangement with the bags of grain balanced on both sides and on the back of each mule. Based upon the wording in this passage (the phrase *his sack*) and another in Gen. 44, it appears that each man had one very large bag of grain secured tightly to each mule. When that bag was opened to pour out the grain into a container for each home, inside was another bag or container or pouch inside of the larger bag which contained the silver which they took with them to purchase the grain.

Now that they are home and they all began to open their sacks of grain; and it turns out the every man has a sack of grain that still has the silver in it. They did not check their sacks when the first silver was found, at one of their stops along the way home, because that simply did not occur to them. No one said, "Maybe they forgot to take all of our silver." That would have made no sense. But, now that they are all home and they have to arrange for the dry storage of this grain, each brother discovers silver in one of his bags (I have assumed that each man had perhaps 4 or 6 sacks of grain, all borne by their donkey or donkeys).

Did all of the families have a central dry storage area? Did each of the families have a dry storage area? If the first is true, they all discover the silver at the same time in the same place; if the latter is the case, each man returns to his part of Jacob's compound, and discovers this silver individually. In any case, they make this discovery, they are all quite disconcerted by it.

What appears to be the situation is, the brothers laid out the case for bringing Benjamin back with them to Egypt. Whether they had a family meeting about this or whether they simply were saying these things to their father as they unloaded the grain for storage in a central location, we don't know.

It appears that their father met them as they returned and that they all went to wherever the grain would be stored. The brothers then told their father what happened as they began to unload the grain. When they had come to a point at which their father seems to have been called upon to make a decision, they begin to find their silver in their bags of grain.[38]

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[38] There are other scenarios which are also in agreement with the text.

It appears that, after they tell Jacob what happened and after they discover their silver, that their father weighs in, telling them what he thinks. Whether Jacob is responding almost immediately or whether some time has passed (a few hours), we do not know. It would seem that all of this would take place at their return. So if they returned and it is daytime, then it seems logical that what we are reading all took place in the space of half a day.

Genesis 42:36 And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me. Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and [now] you will take Benjamin. All these things are against me."

What the brothers had just experienced was quite harrowing. Their lives had been in danger; they could have all been locked up in an Egyptian prison forever more; yet, Jacob manages to take all that happened and make it all about himself.

Jacob, throughout his life, has been a very self-centered man. He took all of this experience as being some set of events designed to be against him. He saw everything in life as how it relates to him.

I have known people like this. They relate to the world only in terms of how they feel; and if someone does not recognize their feelings or anticipate their feelings, they resent it. They may be dealing with some personal matter in their minds, and you don't know this, and you cheerfully say, "Hello," and they give you this angry look, as in, "What the hell is your problem?" The problem is, they are so self-absorbed that they believe everyone else ought to be thinking about their problems and emotions as well. They cannot imagine or acknowledge a reality entirely separate from them. Every occurrence in life of which they are aware somehow relates directly to them.

Of course, now and again, for each of us, our world appears to come crashing down upon us, and we are lost in a self-absorption that may last a few days or even a week or more. Perhaps we have been to the doctors and fear that we have cancer. However, for the believer in Jesus Christ, God is with us in all circumstances, and He has a plan for our lives in all circumstances, and that plan is not getting everyone around you to focus in on you and to commiserate with you. We have been bought with a price; and God has left us alive on this earth to glorify Him. So, even for the believer in an unusually difficult set of circumstances, the difficulties that we face are not to change our focus or purpose in life. Being sick or being in a very difficult circumstance in your life does not change God's plan for your life. That is, your general focus should not be on you—we focus on the Lord Jesus Christ through the doctrine which we have built up in our souls.

Jacob, on the other hand, sees nearly everything through the prism of, *how does this affect me?* Or, *why is this happening to me?* If this is how you respond to every change of life, then you are self-absorbed, and that is not the design that God has for your life.

Jacob blames his sons for being bereaved. He is, in part, right, although he does not really appreciate why. Joseph is dead (or so they believe) because of what his other sons did. They all know what they did; Jacob does not. However, Simeon's imprisonment was not

really the fault of his sons—there is nothing that they could have done to prevent that; and this was certainly not some plot by Jacob's sons to make him feel bad.

Jacob looks at his sons—who are perplexed about the silver—and says to them, "I lack two sons because of you (all)—and now, you want to take Benjamin with you so that I will lose him as well?" And then Jacob says, with great emotion, "All of this is upon [or, *against*] me!" Whatever happens in life, in Jacob's mind, it all comes around back to him and it is all done to give him grief.

Do you see how Jacob thinks? Throughout his life, he has attempted to manipulate the people around him in order to get the things which he believed were rightfully his. But now, as he has become older, and he has less and less control in the circumstances of his life; and everything seems to be turning against him (this is how he sees his life). Jacob has gone from being a self-centered manipulator to a man who engages in self-pity for much of his life.

The oldest son, Reuben, speaks up, thinking that he has the solution to this problem. As usual, Reuben has a half-baked idea which is unhelpful:

Genesis 42:37 And Reuben spoke to his father, saying, "Kill my two sons if I do not bring him [Benjamin] to you. Deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to you again."

Reuben finally takes a clear leadership position, and says that he will take Benjamin there and return with both Benjamin (and, presumably, Simeon). If not, his father could kill his two sons. This is certainly melodramatic and not really well thought out.

That is, this is a pretty odd thing to offer up. "If I don't return with your sons, you may kill mine"? Reuben offers up two of his sons, and these are the sons of the firstborn, the grandsons of Jacob. This is really not a great or realistic offer. Reuben never grows into his leadership position—he never seems to develop any wisdom—therefore, he essentially relinquishes the leadership position which ought to be his.

It is one thing to be a leader by position, which is what Reuben is. It is quite another to be a leader by one's wisdom and forethought. Reuben never developed into the leader his birth order gives him. He thinks that he has the solution; but he does not. He presents a stupid, half-baked idea. We are made aware of this incident, in Scripture, to explain further why Reuben would not be in the line of Messiah.

Jacob will have no part of Reuben's solution to their problem:

Genesis 42:38a And he [Jacob] said, "My son will not go down with you.

Jacob has listened to all that these boys have said, and he clearly delineates what is not going to happen. Reuben's offer is not one that makes any sense to Jacob.

Benjamin, his youngest and favorite son, is not going to go to Egypt. "Benjamin is not going with *you,*" he says. Then Jacob explains why:

Genesis 42:38 And he [Jacob] said, "My son will not go down with you. For his brother is dead, and he is left alone. And if mischief should happen to him by the way you go, then you will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

Jacob refuses. He does not want to entrust his favorite son to any of boy's older siblings ever again. All of the older sons were responsible to watch over their youngest brother (apart from Benjamin), Joseph; and they failed to do this.

The actual truth of what happened to Joseph, Jacob still does not know (in fact, the Bible is silent on whether Jacob ever knew what really happened). His sons were not simply neglectful—their actions were heinous and motivated by jealousy and hatred.

You would bring my gray hairs to Sheol contains a couple metonymies; his sons would not physically carry his gray hairs to the grave, but he means that by their actions and intentions, they would cause his death. Jacob is not speaking literally of his gray hairs, but they figuratively stand for him in his old age. Sheol stands for his death. This phrase is a colorful, expressive euphemism for causing his death.

Jacob is adamant. He will not allow his son Benjamin to return with them. So, they do not go back and Simeon is left in jail in Egypt. Jacob pretty much ignores Reuben's offer to allow his two sons to be killed.

At some point, when they run out of grain, what Jacob says here will no longer make sense. If everyone related to him starves to death, this will not preserve the life of Benjamin. That will be what the family faces a year in the future. The grain that they purchased gets them through a single year (they have no idea that they are facing a 7 year famine)—they purchase enough grain to get them to the next growing season.

Lesson 434: Genesis 43:1–7 Judah Insists that Benjamin Must Return with Them

Joseph, the son of Jacob, was sold into slavery in Egypt by his brothers. He has risen from the lowly station of a slave to the second highest position in Egypt—prime minister, right below Pharaoh in authority. Pharaoh told Joseph about his dreams he correctly interpreted them to mean that Egypt would enjoy 7 years of prosperity followed by 7 years of devastating famine. Joseph set up a system where grain was set aside for those first 7 yeas so that Egypt would be able to survive the famine. In addition, people from other countries came to Egypt to buy this grain.

In Gen. 42, the sons of Jacob, Joseph's brothers, came down to Egypt to buy grain. They did not recognize Joseph, but he recognized them, and he purposely did not divulge his identify to them. Joseph sold them grain, but accused them of being spies (which allowed him to separate these brothers from all of the other grain buyers; and also allowed him to

ask them a great many personal questions about their family—questions that could not have been passed off as mere chit chat between grain buyers and grain seller). Joseph let 9 of the brothers return to Canaan with grain, but he kept back Simeon, and required them to bring their youngest brother, Benjamin the next time. Obviously, Joseph's intent here, besides to put Simeon in jail for a bit, is to see his full brother again (Benjamin would have been about 10 when Joseph was sold into slavery; and Benjamin would have believed that Joseph was killed by a wild animal as their father Jacob did).

When Joseph oversaw the sons of Jacob being loaded up with grain, he also had their silver placed back into their sacks of grain and then sent the 9 brothers back home (I would assume that Simeon's mule had a bag of grain to carry as well). When the brothers all tell their father Jacob all that happened, they add, "So we must return to Egypt with Benjamin." Jacob refused, saying, "Absolutely not!"

In Gen. 43, a year has gone by and the famine is ongoing (this is year two of the 7-year famine— a timeline which Joseph and Pharaoh know and possibly many in Egypt know, but the family of Jacob would not have known that the famine would continue for another 6 years). Jacob realizes that he has no choice but to send Benjamin with his brothers to purchase more grain. Furthermore, he has to make provision for the returned silver which his sons had.

The sons will return to Egypt, and, being met by Joseph's house manager, they explain immediately the circumstances to him. First thing they tell him about is the silver that they found in their bags.

At the end of this chapter, Joseph will provide a sumptuous feast for his brothers, and yet still not reveal who he is to them.

Like every chapter before of Joseph's writings, Gen. 43 can be organized chiastically.

William Ramey's Chiasmos of Genesis 43:1–34c

A	The famine was severe in the land (1-2)
B	Israel's release of Benjamin (3-15)
C	Joseph sees Benjamin; a meal is prepared (16-17)
D	The brothers' fear of retaliation (18)
E	The brothers' speech to the steward near the house (19-22)
X	The Steward's magnificent response (23)
E'	The brothers are brought into the house and their needs provided (24-25)
D'	The brothers' prostration and greeting (26-28)
C'	Joseph sees Benjamin; Joseph weeps and meal served (29-31)
B'	Joseph's preferential treatment of Benjamin (32-34b)
A'	The brothers feasted and drank freely (34c)

One of the reasons I believe that the book of Genesis was transmitted verbally from generation to generation is, many portions of it are very well organized, like this. Such organization often lends itself to memorization.

From https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html accessed September 19, 2015. Many times, what happens in the middle of the chiasmos is key or is the most important part of the chapter.

Genesis 43 begins with year 2 of the famine, and the family of Jacob recognizes that they will have to return to Egypt for more grain.

Genesis 43:1 And the famine was severe in the land.

The famine was going to continue for 7 years. We are now beginning year 2 of the famine. The sons of Jacob would have purchased enough grain for one year, hoping that the famine would end after a year. They are not privy to the fact that Joseph predicted a 7 year famine. A year has passed and now there is not enough food for the extended family of Jacob.

Genesis 43:2 And it happened, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said to them, "Go again, buy us a little food."

Jacob, the father, once that grain has been eaten, tells his sons to return to Egypt to buy some more grain.

Jacob probably has not forgotten what the boys said, upon their return—that Benjamin must go back with them—but apparently, he is not going to mention that. He appears willing to take a chance with them; and still unwilling to part with Benjamin.

This is unrealistic, because his sons may return with money to by grain and find themselves all thrown into prison (worst case scenario); or simply not being sold grain (the best case scenario).

Jacob does not say, "Okay, we need to determine what we will do about the Benjamin thing." However, one of his sons speaks up:

Genesis 43:3 And Judah spoke to him, saying, "The man solemnly protested to us, saying, 'You will not see my face unless your brother is with you.'

A year has passed and this is new—that Judah speaks up. Recall that the key brothers in the final chapters of Genesis are Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah and Joseph. Even though the other brothers are here, in attendance—even occasionally speaking—their names are never recorded when it comes to speaking or acting.

What seems to have come out of nowhere is, Judah is behaving like the oldest brother. He has to deal with the world as it is, not as they would want it to be. Judah speaks up this time, and reminds his father Jacob what the prime minister told them. They had to bring back their youngest brother to verify all that they told him. They told the prime minister that they were 10 brothers with one brother gone and the other brother at home. In order for

him to believe this story (and not to think that these are simply 10 spies from a neighboring country), the brothers were to return with their youngest brother in tow.

Now, we know that the prime minister is Joseph; however, he has not yet revealed this to his older brothers. In fact, it appears that he may not reveal himself for who he is to them; but that he does want to see his younger, full brother and his father (and hence, the whole business with the accusations that Joseph actually knows to be false).

Joseph, in his position, deals with hundreds of hungry people coming to Egypt to purchase grain. He needed to set his brothers apart from the rest of those buying grain, so he accuses them of being spies and throws them all in jail. Now, they are separated from everyone else. When Joseph questions them, he has the excuse to ask for personal information. Joseph then allows 9 of his brothers out of jail, to take grain back to their families. And, as we studied, Joseph will require that his brothers return, but with their youngest brother with them—and this would allow Joseph to see his younger and full brother. All the while, his brothers do not know who he is.

Judah, having no idea about the Prime Minister's actual motivation, firmly continues to make his case to his father:

Genesis 43:4 If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food.

"Therefore, send Benjamin with us, and we can buy the food." Judah calmly puts his foot down. In fact, he personalizes this by saying to his father, "We will go down to buy food for you." But he makes certain that his father understands: "Of course we will return to purchase more grain—but Benjamin must go with us." Judah fully understands that there is no choice here. They cannot simply return as 9 brothers and expect to purchase grain with a problem. Judah reasonably expects that the prime minister may throw them all in jail and possibly even execute them for being spies. With that very real scenario facing them on their return to Egypt, Judah tells his father that they will return to Egypt, but only if Benjamin goes along with them.

Genesis 43:5 But if you will not send him, we will not go down. For the man said to us, 'You will not see my face unless your brother is with you.' "

The *man* is Joseph, the prime minister of Egypt. The brothers do have a healthy fear of him. He could call for their imprisonment or execution with a snap of his fingers. So they know that they must do as he has requested.

Judah stands firm. "We are not going down to Egypt to buy grain unless you send Benjamin to go with us. He has promised not to even see us unless our brother is there; and if he does not see us, then we cannot buy grain." He reminds his father Jacob (and his other brothers) what the prime minister said.

Judah added something which was not said in Gen. 42: "The man said to us, 'You will not see my face unless your brother is with you.' " Did Joseph tell them this? Joseph actually

said, "[I]f you are honest men, let one of your brothers remain confined where you are in custody, and let the rest go and carry grain for the famine of your households, and bring your youngest brother to me. So your words will be verified, and you shall not die." (Gen. 42:19–20a). Let me suggest that Judah felt it was not prudent to reveal to Jacob that the prime minister has essentially threatened all of them with death. Jacob is upset enough already; adding this tidbit of information to the mix would not help. Judah knows that it is necessary for them to return with Benjamin; but he also knows his father and what he can and cannot say.

Genesis 43:6 And Israel [= Jacob] said, "Why have you dealt ill with me, to tell the man whether you had yet a brother?"

Jacob asks them, "Why did you tell them you had a younger brother? How could you do that to me?" Jacob continues to see everything through the prism of his own life. To Jacob, he cannot understand why his sons would have told the prime minister about Benjamin and he takes this *slip-up* quite personally, as if this was their plan, to make his life miserable.

There are some people who relate each and every detail of that which goes on around them only as it relates to them. Jacob has become one of those kinds of people. Somehow, he thinks that his sons had ill motivation *towards him,* which caused them to reveal that they had a younger brother at home, thus putting Benjamin—Jacob's favorite son—into danger. Jacob's thinking was, "There was no reason for you to mention Benjamin." He seems either unable or unwilling to understand what really happened, which his sons have fully explained to him.

Since we studied those chapters, we know that it was apparent that Jacob's sons were panicked and began saying anything at all which might mollify the prime minister with his accusations. Saying that they are all brothers from the same father explained why 10 young men showed up to buy grain (his suspicions would have been that these are 10 generals who are casing Egypt for an attack[39]).

Genesis 43:7 And they said, "The man asked us strictly of our state and of our kindred, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Have you yet another brother?' And we told him according to the tenor of these words. Could we certainly know that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?"

This verse suggests that there was much more conversation which occurred than was recorded. Although what Judah said was not exactly right; this does not appear to be an embellishment of their story. Joseph would have asked the brothers a great many questions. It would have appeared to them that he was trying to trip them up in their story; but he was simply eliciting information about the rest of the family. Joseph did want to see

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[39] Obviously, Joseph did not really have those suspicions, as these are his brothers. However, the brothers would have understood the logic in Joseph's accusations.

Benjamin and his father Jacob again. At that point, he was still unsure about revealing himself to his other brothers.

Joseph will ask them again about their father in this chapter upon their return. Furthermore, this would make sense that, when Joseph questioned them, that he would have turned the focus toward his brother and father (obviously, the brothers still do not suspect who Joseph really is).

Lesson 435: Genesis 43:8–15 Jacob Agrees to Send Benjamin to Egypt

Summarizing Genesis 42:1–43:7: A year has passed since Gen. 42. The sons of Jacob had gone to Egypt to buy grain because of the famine and were accused of being spies by the prime minister there (the prime minister there is Joseph, their brother, whom they do not recognize). The prime minister throws all of them in jail; and then three days later, says that 9 of them can return to Canaan, but he will keep one of them (Simeon) imprisoned until they return with the remaining brother.

When the brothers return home and convey all of this to their father Jacob, they also discover that all of them have the silver that they left with in their bags of grain. This was the silver that was supposed to have been given to Joseph to purchase the grain. So, not only are they accused of being spies, but now it appears that they have taken the grain without paying for it (or it appears as if they somehow took their silver back).

As a result of all this, Jacob had refused to let them return with Benjamin. They have enough grain for a year, and Jacob requires that they just leave things as they are. They have grain and Simeon is sitting in an Egyptian prison. Jacob, the patriarch, would not give his okay for Benjamin to return with the brothers in order to fetch Simeon from jail. He just did not want to take the chance.

What they did not expect was, the famine continues. A year later, there is still a famine in the land. The grain which Jacob's sons purchased lasted a year, and now they were hungry once again.

In Gen. 43:1–7, because the famine has continued into year two, the brothers will have to return to Egypt, and that Benjamin must go with them this time. Judah, the 4th son, has stepped up as the leader among his brothers, and he is attempting to convince his father that there is no other choice but to send Benjamin along with them.

Although we cover this back-and-forth conversation in about ten verses, it makes seem as if this took place in about 10 minutes. However, clearly this conversation was much more involved and clearly took place over a period of a few weeks (we will get this from v. 10).

Genesis 43:8 And Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the boy with me, and we will arise and go, so that we may live and not die, both we and you, also our little ones.

Judah continues to act as the leader, the point man, the one in charge. His reasoning is quite simple: without grain, all of them will die—including Jacob and Benjamin. Therefore, there is no other possible option. Jacob must send the youngest brother along with them as proof that they are all brothers.

You may be thinking, *how does this constitute proof? If these were 10 spies, could they not show up with any additional person and pass him off as the youngest brother?* Here is the thing: everyone realizes that the prime minister is intelligent and fair. So, if the 9 brothers show up with some random 10th man in tow, Joseph could simply take that man alone and bring him to Simeon, requiring 10th man to be silent. If this is his brother, Simeon would call out his name immediately. My point being, there would be ways to verify the identity of a 10th man to show up with the brothers. Therefore, they must show up with the true Benjamin.

Furthermore, up to this point in time, they have been truthful with Joseph, the Prime Minister (they do not appear to be completely truthful with their father). Any misstep would result in the Prime Minister doubting everything that they had told him; and that could result in all of them being executed.

Obviously, we know that they are not spies and that their story is true; and they know this. It would make no sense to return to Egypt without Benjamin. Doing anything else would risk everyone's life—and, on top of that, they would not return with the much needed grain.

Genesis 43:9 I will be surety for him. You will require him of my hand. If I do not bring him to you and set him before you, I will be a sinner against you all the days.

Judah also takes full and complete responsibility for the welfare of Benjamin, his younger half brother. Judah places his life before his father for the safety of Benjamin. He assumes full personal responsibility for Benjamin.

At the same time, Judah does not make the ridiculous offer, "And you may kill my 3 sons if I don't come through."

Genesis 43:10 For unless we had lingered, surely now we would have returned the second time."

Judah is saying, "We have argued this point for such a long time, that we could have been there and back already." *The second time* simply refers to this would have been their second trip to Egypt for grain.

No doubt you have been in a discussion like this with your son, telling him to clean up his room. "In all this time we have been talking about it, you could have been done by now." So, this argument, which appears to us to be taking place over a period of 10 minutes, actually continued over a period of a week or three.

We don't know how many times the brothers talked with their father Jacob; we do not know all that was said. We do know roughly what Jacob and Judah said to one another; and that is what is recorded here. And we know by this comment that they discussed this for over a lengthy period of time.

Genesis 43:11 And their father Israel said to them, "If it be so now, do this. Take of the best fruits of the land in your vessels, and bring a present down to the man, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds.

There are some things in Canaan which are still available. It is not enough to live on, but these are things not found in Egypt—so Jacob wisely suggests that a gift basket be taken to the Prime Minister (it will be much larger than a gift basket). Whereas, Jacob seemed almost irrational at first; here, he is thinking clearly, and making an excellent suggestion.

Genesis 43:12 And take double silver in your hand, and the silver that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand. Perhaps it was an oversight.

They are also to take with them twice the silver necessary, because the silver had been slipped into their bags of grain and returned to them. So they are taking enough silver to pay for the first batch of grain that they brought home; and additional silver to pay for the next batch of grain. They are leaving nothing to chance. The idea is to have an unimpeachable story that the prime minister cannot suspect is dishonest in any way.

Genesis 43:13 Take also your brother, and arise, go again to the man.

Jacob also agrees to allow Benjamin to go with them. There really is no other choice.

All of this hesitation on the part of Jacob is based upon his loss of Joseph. Joseph was his favorite son, and Joseph was lost to him because, in Jacob's mind, his older brothers did not look out for him. Jacob did not know the half of it! He had no idea that his sons had conspired against Joseph to kill him or to sell him into slavery; and that bringing back his cloak stained with blood was just a lie.

Genesis 43:14 And God Almighty give you mercy before the man [the Egyptian prime minister], so that he may send away your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved."

Jacob seems to offer a prayer here, for God to give them grace before the man (this is before Joseph, the Prime Minister, whom no one knows that it is Joseph). He prays that the Egyptian Prime Minister return Benjamin to them.

Then Jacob goes with que sera sera view, *whatever will be, will be*. There is nothing wrong with this point of view, as long as it is encased in true doctrinal principles. When something is completely outside of your hands, as this appears to be, then you just let whatever happens happen and trust God, as you cannot stop it. However, what Jacob should have realized and said is, God has promised him great things, as the son of Abraham and Isaac.

And God said to him, "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body. The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you." Gen 35:11–12 (ESV) There is no *que sera sera* going on here. Although this does not specifically promise anything about Benjamin, God has promised Jacob about his offspring and their future. Therefore, Jacob can rest assured that God has all of this under control; and that Jacob has a relationship with God based upon Abraham and Isaac's relationships with God.

It is quite obvious that Jacob's concern for Benjamin is based upon his assumed loss of Joseph and his blaming his other sons for that loss. He does not know that Joseph is alive; he does not know that God has watched over all of his sons, despite their good and bad behavior.

Even though Jacob is not fully embracing God's promises, he still allows for his youngest son to go to Egypt, as there is no other option.

Genesis 43:15 And the men took that present, and they took double silver in their hand, and Benjamin. And they rose up and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

All of Jacob's sons, including Benjamin, rise up and go to Egypt, and then stand before Joseph.

Again, the narrative moves ahead seamlessly. In one verse, the brothers are discussing this matter with their father; and a few verses later, they are standing before Joseph, along with younger brother Benjamin.

I believe that Joseph is the author of all of this, and that he wisely chose to record this material in chronological order, and viewing all of the action as if a fly on the ceiling. However, in Joseph's life, the things which take place in Egypt all occurred to him chronologically; and information about what happened in between times with his family in Canaan was told to him much later in time (perhaps in Gen. 48 or 49). But, rather than record this information when his brothers and father tell him about these events, he weaves their accounts into a logical and chronological narrative, where we are sometimes with Joseph and sometimes with his brothers, but all taking place as if we were a bird flying overhead and making observations as these events took place.

This is known in literature as 3rd person, omniscient, defined in this way: *Third person omniscient is a method of storytelling in which the narrator knows the thoughts and feelings of all of the characters in the story, as opposed to third person limited, which adheres closely to one character's perspective*.[40] If we only remained with Joseph and only saw the things that he saw, then this would have been a 3rd person, limited point of view (3rd person

[40] From https://www.thebalance.com/third-person-omniscient-point-of-view-1277125 accessed November 21, 2016.

means that Joseph speaks of himself in the 3rd person as opposed to saying, “And my brothers came to me from Canaan and I beheld them bowing before me.”)

What we are actually getting is, God’s perspective (despite Joseph being the likely human author). I will, in the near future, offer up a slight wrinkle to this theory—which I don’t believe you have ever heard before.

Lesson 436: Genesis 43:15–25 The brothers tell the household manager all

When the second year of the famine began, the family of Jacob began to run out of grain, and it became apparently that they needed to return to Egypt. The prime minister of Egypt required that they return with their youngest brother in tow, to prove that they were not all spies.

The year previous, Jacob would not even consider sending his young son, Benjamin, with his brothers to Egypt. Now that hunger begins to set in, and after Judah takes a clear leadership position, Jacob recognizes that he has no other choice but to send Benjamin to Egypt with his older brothers. If grain cannot be purchased, then the entire family starves.

Jacob tells them to take a present, made up of foodstuffs primarily available in Canaan. He also told them to take the silver that was returned to them along with additional silver, to pay for the grain.

Genesis 43:15 And the men took that present, and they took double silver in their hand, and Benjamin. And they rose up and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

The narrative continues seamlessly, following the brothers back home, overseeing their arguments with their father Jacob, and then following them back to Egypt where they go to speak to Joseph—the probable author of this narrative, who was not actually present with his brothers when they talked and argued with their father about bringing Benjamin down to Egypt.

Genesis 43:16 And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, “Bring the men into the house, and kill an animal and make ready. For the men will dine with me at noon.”

Joseph apparently did not speak directly to his brothers, but arranged for them to come to his house for a full meal at noon.

Today, because of refrigeration, and the wonderful system of food delivery that we enjoy, we can have meat with any meal that we choose. In the ancient world, this was a rare event, often reserved for company and special large feasts. Religious feasts would have been great events, as the meat of the animal sacrificed to God would have been consumed by the offerer and his family.

Just as Joseph had once been over the household of Potiphar, he has a man over his household. Because of some things which happen in this chapter, this man appears to also act as Joseph's interpreter throughout.

Having foreigners come to a personal feast was not at all common; however, Jacob's sons would not have known this. They will be somewhat suspicious, nonetheless. They do recognize that it is an anomaly, but they do not quite get the degree that it is.

Genesis 43:17 And the man did as Joseph said. And the man brought the men into Joseph's house.

I would assume that Joseph had a very nice house, as he was second-in-command in Egypt, and he had been in that position for nearly 9 years now (7 years of plenty + 2 years of famine).

He would have had a large staff; and it is unclear how many would have lived onsite and how many would have had their own homes to retire to. His house was apparently large enough to hold a large group of people to dine—and we would assume that this is something that Joseph did from time to time given his position as prime minister. However, entertaining foreign grain-buyers would have not been a common occurrence.

Genesis 43:18 And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house. And they said, "Because of the silver that was returned in our sacks at the first time we are brought in, to throw himself on us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses."

Joseph's brothers are worried about what he might do. They do not know that he is Joseph, their brother; but because the silver was found in their bags, they were worried that Joseph would harm them—thinking that they had taken it from him. They seem to think that, having been hauled into his house may actually set them up to be overpowered.

The brothers are quite worried and quite suspicious at this point; not knowing what to make of such an invitation (which invitation they quite obviously cannot refuse). They consider some pretty wild options, such as thinking that this prime minister might fall upon them (that is, attack them) and then enslave them all.

Quite obviously, had Joseph wanted to fall on these men and enslave them, he could have done that at any time. He could have commanded a large enough force to make resistance futile. The brothers are just not thinking clearly; but the meal invitation was hard to figure out. This prime minister seemed to be a very hard man; what was he doing?

Genesis 43:19 And they came near to the man over Joseph's house, and they talked with him at the door of the house,...

The head of Joseph's house is bringing the brothers to Joseph's house for a meal; and the brothers are quietly talking over, "What's the deal? Are we being set up?" They appear

to decide, “We had better tell him everything; we had better come clean before anything happens.”

The brothers have not spoken to Joseph; they are simply aware that they have been invited to a meal at noon with the prime minister. When the man over Joseph’s house brings them to the front door, they decided to come clean immediately, and tell Joseph’s servant what had happened. There seems to be a level of comfort there with this man, that he is the right person to talk to.

This suggests that the man over Joseph’s house was probably also doing the translating for them.[41] This man would seem to be a neutral third party to the brothers; and he was a man who understood their language. So they just immediately tell him everything. They do not want it to appear as if they are holding anything back.

The Prime Minister seemed to them all to be a rather mean, unforgiving person. The man over his house seemed to be the right person to give their story to.

Genesis 43:20 ...and said, “Oh sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food.

“We need to tell you what happened when we first came to buy grain from you.” It is not completely clear from the context, but it appears that this servant of Joseph’s, who is over the whole house, who speaks the same language as the brothers. If an interpreter was required, that is not mentioned. That the brothers would tell this man everything suggests that they had some familiarity with him and some connection to him—so, logically, he has probably been doing the interpretation between themselves and Joseph. No doubt, hearing their own language spoken to them gave them a feeling of kinship with this man.

Confiding in him suggests that there is much more going on than them speaking to the first random person associated with the prime minister’s house. I would suggest that the confiding and familiarity indicates that this is a man whom they have seen before and talked with before.

At the same time, their confiding in him, and telling him everything, could have been their fear-response. They are being brought to Joseph’s house, presumably for a meal, and they worry that this is a set up of some kind. Before they even step through the door, they tell the head of Joseph’s house about the silver.

Genesis 43:21 And it happened, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's silver was in the mouth of his sack, our silver in full weight. And we have brought it again in our hands.

When they were a distance from Egypt, at an inn, they opened up their sacks and found that they had all of the silver that they took with them to buy grain with.

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[41] It is certainly possible that they spoke to this man in charge of Joseph’s household through a translator.

Interestingly enough, they appear to confound two events or to combine the two events. At the first, only one of the brothers opened his sack of grain at the inn and discovered the silver; then, when they returned home, they discovered that each one of them had silver in his sack (Gen. 42:27–28, 35–36). It is possible that we are not told everything that they say. That is, perhaps the entire quote is, "We came to the inn, *and Judah opened up his sack and discovered the silver was in it; and then we returned home* and we all opened our sacks, and we saw that every man had the silver in the mouth of his sack." So, it is possible that the quote provided for us had been edited down somewhat, as anyone reading this knows the full account. I don't think that there is no intent here to mislead.

If they left that middle part out, they may have been speaking quickly and with no little nervousness.

There should have been a single spokesman; and Judah, based upon him convincing their father, should have been that spokesman. My guess would be (1) the middle part of the quote was simply not recorded (for whatever reason) or (2) the brothers began speaking, one after the other, so that it came out like this. One brother says, "We came to the inn;" and another brother suddenly interrupts, saying, "And we all opened up our sacks, and every one of us had silver in the mouth of the sack." Neither man is lying; it is simply that the second brother began speaking before the first brother finished his thought.

Obviously, the proper person to tell all of this to is Joseph. However, the brothers just have to get this out of the way from the beginning. They do not want any misunderstanding or any implied untruth to stand. What they say has to be said, to anyone of Joseph's household who will listen. Since they tell everything to this one man, it suggests that they feel at ease with him or a kinship, suggesting that he speaks their language. In the alternative, revealing this information may have been the result of a bit of panic among the brothers, worried that Joseph was setting them up. In any case, they are telling Joseph's servant this information at the door, before they enter in, just in case there are men in the house ready to set upon them over the silver.

Genesis 43:22 And we have brought down other silver in our hands to buy food. We cannot tell who put our silver in our sacks."

Again, this appears to be that more than one brother is speaking. One says, "We brought this silver to pay for the grain." Another quickly adds, "We do not know how it came to be found in the bags of grain." They tell the absolute truth here (which appears to have been their approach throughout).

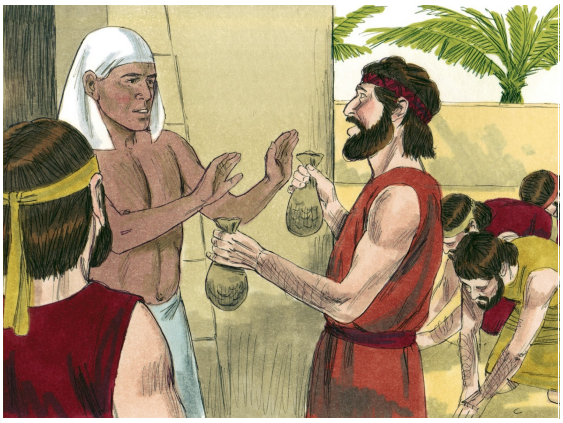
Remember, these are the same 9 sons who have been lying to their father for 20 years about Joseph's fate. Yet, here they are in Egypt, and speaking the complete and total truth to anyone who would listen.

Genesis 43:23a And he said, "Peace to you, do not fear. Your God, and the God of your father, has given you treasure in your sacks. I had your silver."

No doubt, Joseph gave his servant clear instructions. He received their silver, he tells them; and he reassures them that the God of their father gave them the treasure which is in their sacks. What he says is designed to put them at ease, and make it clear that no one believes that they stole anything. Strictly speaking, all of this is true. He did receive their silver. God, through Joseph and through this servant, returned their silver to them.

Before they did anything, the brothers tell the man over Joseph's household everything; and they assure him that they brought enough silver to pay for last year's grain and this year's grain. But the man tells them not to worry; he has received their payment already.

This would have put the brothers at ease, even if they did not fully understand it.



"I had your money," Joseph's servant said. Art from Bible Lessons for kids; accessed March 8, 2017. I believe that the artist is Jim Padgett.

Genesis 43:23b And he brought Simeon out to them.

Simeon was brought out to them. This suggests that the jail was nearby or that he had been brought out when it was known that his brothers arrived. This is another signal to the brothers that everything is okay.

Genesis 43:24 And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet. And he gave fodder to their asses.

There is the official building, where they meet with Joseph's servant—he tells them that the would dine with Joseph later that day and he guides them to Joseph's house. He gives them water for their feet and he provides food for their donkeys.

These young men were treated hospitably when brought to Joseph's house. They were given water; servants apparently washed their feet (it is not clear if the brothers washed their own feet), and servants gave them food for their mules.

Genesis 43:25 And they made ready the presents for the coming of Joseph at noon. For they heard that they should eat bread there.

It is the custom of many Americans to enjoy Thanksgiving dinner at noon or 1 or 2; and then, for those not in a coma, to have seconds much later on. This is a celebratory feast, when an animal (or several) is slaughtered for the meal.

Lesson 437: Genesis 43:26–34 The brothers have a meal with the prime minister

The sons of Jacob are at the home of the prime minister, awaiting his arrival, for a meal that they will all enjoy together. Still, at this point, none of the brothers realize that Joseph is the prime minister. Therefore, they are somewhat suspicious of being invited to his home for a meal; but this is an invite that they cannot turn down.

Jacob had prepared and sent Joseph a gift basket, and they got it ready, knowing the Joseph would come to them at noon to eat with them. The gifts had been carried by them by donkeys; and now, they take out their gift and make it appear presentable.

Genesis 43:26 And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth.

They bring the gift into the house; and they apparently have it arranged to look presentable. He is providing for free sustenance for his brothers and to their families, something which they do not earn or deserve from him. What they have to offer Joseph is small, by comparison, and certainly not life-sustaining; but it is what they have to offer him.

The brothers bow themselves before Joseph, as he comes into the room, just as Joseph had dreamed 20 or so years ago (they bow down as a group before Joseph on numerous occasions).

Genesis 43:27 And he asked them as to their welfare, and said, “Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?”

Joseph, of course, wonders about his father, and asks after him, speaking through an interpreter.

The brothers would assume that this is polite conversation—chit chat—not realizing who Joseph is and how interested he really is.

Genesis 43:28 And they answered, “Your servant, our father, is in good health. He is still alive.” And they bowed down their heads and fell before him.

Jacob is still in good health, the brothers tell him; and they bow down before Joseph once again. Essentially, the brothers are all bowed before Joseph. He asks them a question, and they remain where they are, but they look up and answer him; and then they bow down again.

Referring to their father as *your servant* was the common, polite vernacular at the time.

Genesis 43:29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, “Is this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?” And he said, “God bless you, my son.”

Joseph is seeing his younger brother for the first time in over 20 years. Benjamin is his full brother; their mother Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin.

Although most of the time, Joseph is actually speaking to them through an interpreter, there are possibly 2 times when he speaks directly to his brothers. Here would be one of those times where he says, “God bless you, my son” in their language. No doubt, if Joseph spoke that directly to him in Hebrew, that he gave it an Egyptian accent.[42]

I believe that Joseph spoke directly to his brothers on at least two occasions. Here, and when he told his brothers, “I fear God.” These are things which he presumably could have learned to say in their language[43] and words which were important for him to say directly to his brothers.

Genesis 43:30 And Joseph made haste, for his bowels yearned toward his brother. And he sought a place to weep. And he entered into his room and wept there.

The original language is rather unseemly, with Joseph’s *bowels yearning*. In the Hebrew, the bowels, kidneys, and heart were all used to refer to people’s inner thoughts and/or emotions. Joseph, no doubt, wanted to embrace his brothers at this time—particularly his younger brother, Benjamin. However, any sort of emotional expression would have seemed very odd to the brothers. In any case, Joseph is deeply moved.

The ESV reads: Then Joseph hurried out, for his compassion grew warm for his brother,...

Joseph was overtaken with emotion at seeing his younger, full brother. He quickly left for another room in which to tear up.

Because of all that happened, Joseph is still unsure about revealing himself to his 10 older brothers; but he feels a strong brotherly love toward his full brother, who was quite young when the others sold him into slavery.

Joseph hurrying out is exiting the room before he begins crying in front of them. He cannot break down and cry in front of them. This would have confused his brothers considerably.

Family is extremely important and God designed marriage and then the family as natural institutions for the perpetuation and survival of the human race. You can always tell when a movement is satanic if the promote concepts which are anti-marriage (e.g., homosexual

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[42] This is pure speculation on my part that Joseph spoke directly to Benjamin in their language and that he put an Egyptian accent on what he said. I believe I am accurate here, however.

[43] Obviously, Joseph knows their language, as these are his brothers. If he spoke to them directly, without an interpreter, they would assume that he learned these short phrases.

marriage, polygamy[44]) or anti-family (for instance, acceptance of gay families being taught to grammar school children; the idea that *it takes a village [to raise a child]*[45]).

In a normal family, there is a natural affinity between siblings; and between parents and children.

Genesis 43:31 And he washed his face, and went out, and controlled himself, and said, "Set the bread on."

Joseph got himself under control, and then went out and rejoined his brothers, and ordered that the bread be served. His brothers have no idea that Joseph was emotionally stirred, as he remained out of their sight while emoting.

Remember, all of this time, Joseph is speaking in Egyptian (perhaps with the exception of his direct remark to Benjamin). When necessary, an interpreter (probably the man who brought Joseph's brothers to his house) interprets for them.

Genesis 43:32 And they set it on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians may not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination to the Egyptians.

This suggests that the family of Jacob were called Hebrews; but that this was a term which had a much broader meaning then than it does today. It would have referred to those who came to Egypt from outside of Egypt; and possibly, this was more specific, referring to those from the Canaan area. By the time of the exodus, the word *Hebrew* will be identified strictly with the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all of whom will live in Egypt for a time.

We know that Hebrew is a general term in this context, because of the policy stated here: *Egyptians do not eat with Hebrews*. Quite obviously, there is not going to be a policy developed which is written just for the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; that would be ignorant. Only a small number of Egyptians would actually know of this family based upon a few instances of contact. Therefore, there would have been no dining policy set up throughout the land based upon this one extended family of less than 100 members. Therefore, we know that this term refers to those who come from outside Egypt (and perhaps from a specific area).

Egyptians were known, at this time, as being clean and fastidious; and foreigners were not. So, this was their policy for eating in the company of dirty foreigners.

I had a roommate sometime back from a middle eastern country (I have since forgotten where—it may have been India), and occasionally he would cook a great meal. It was his

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[44] The Bible does *not* endorse polygamy.

[45] This is a very statist notion, where ultimately, the responsibility for raising a child is placed in a political structure, rather than in the naturally capable hands of a mother and father.

custom to eat with his hands, even with sauces and the like. Now, at first, I thought I could ignore this, and that it would not affect me. But, as I watched—and I could not help but watch—it was distinctly unappetizing to have a person eating the same food as me, at the same table, but with their hands. This was not finger food; but food I would eat with a knife and fork; or even with a spoon. I finally had to eat at another chair, where I could not see him eat. Because of that experience, it makes perfect sense to me that Egyptians would choose to eat separately from people they viewed as heathen and barbarians (the people they called *Hebrews*). Their eating habits and concept of cleanliness were probably very different.

Egyptians just did not eat with certain classes or groups of non-Egyptians. Despite originally being a Hebrew, Joseph would have been viewed at this time as being an Egyptian. He spoke the language, he followed their customs, and he looked like an Egyptian. He was probably clean-shaven or had very little facial hair; whereas his brothers probably all had full beards.

Genesis 43:33 And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth. And the men marveled at one another.

Joseph oversaw the seating arrangements, and sat his brothers in order from oldest to youngest. Once a group of brothers and half-brothers reach adulthood, their relative age becomes more and more difficult to discern. Joseph knows and recognizes each of his brothers, and so he puts them in order. This seems quite remarkable to the brothers. Had any one of them understood probability, the idea that someone could just set them up on their birth order is pretty close to impossible. I believe it is something like a 1 in a 40 million chance for this to occur randomly (the mathematical expression for this is 11!, which does not mean **11!**; it means 11 factorial, which is 11·10·9·8·...·2·1). Joseph's brothers were impressed, but not nearly as impressed as they should have been.

Consider, for a moment, Joseph as a Christ-figure (a type) in this chapter. Recall that a type is a person or set of circumstances which looks forward to Jesus Christ or to His ministry here on earth (most often to His crucifixion). Types can also look forward to future events as well.

Joseph as a Type of Christ at this Meal

Joseph	Jesus Christ
Joseph is gracious to his undeserving brothers.	We receive undeserved grace from our Lord Jesus Christ. We are adopted into His family.
Joseph provides for his brothers and for their families sustenance for free, as he returned the silver to them.	God provides for His Own, as we are in Christ. We understand this as logistical grace; which extends beyond us to those around us.
Joseph's brothers bow before him.	We are subservient to our Lord.

Joseph as a Type of Christ at this Meal	
Joseph	**Jesus Christ**
Joseph's brothers bring him a present.	We offer up what we can to our Lord. Our giving, which is, by its very nature, rather paltry, is a recognition of what He has done for us.
Joseph enjoys a meal with his brothers.	We enjoy fellowship with our Lord.
Benjamin receives 5x what his brothers have received.	There are mature believers among us who receive great blessings from God (also undeserved).
Joseph will bring his family under his wing in Egypt and provide for them.	We are adopted into the family of God in His Son, and receive logistical grace here on earth and eternal provision to follow.
Throughout this final section of Genesis, there will be more and more parallels between Joseph and our Lord.	

Genesis 43:34 And one took portions to them from before him. But Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

The food was not served family style, but each person was brought his own plate; and Benjamin had 5x the amount of the other brothers.

At first read, we may think that Joseph is doing some odd, random things; but he does all of this with a purpose in mind. Benjamin has taken his place as his father's favorite; Joseph knows this because he understands the family dynamic. So, Joseph is seeing if his brothers are overly jealous of Benjamin. He is waiting to see if someone says, "Again, you are favored!" or "You get all the breaks;" or words to that effect. Joseph knows how his brothers treated him, as a result of the favoritism from their father (the fact that Jacob favored Joseph was *not* Joseph's fault). So, Joseph has Benjamin's plate piled high to see how his brothers will react.

Bear in mind, Joseph has not decided whether to reveal himself to his older brothers or not; that is still an option, but it is an irreversible option. Once Joseph tells them who he is, he cannot change that. Joseph is carefully examining his brothers, determining if he wants to renew his relationship with them.

There are quite a number of irreversible options in life. A person who has sex outside of marriage or has sex prior to marriage; or takes a drug (or several kinds of drugs); these are irreversible decisions. Once you commit adultery, that is always with you, whether you reveal your actions to your spouse or not. When you have sex outside of marriage, that is always with you. That is sometimes so powerful, that a husband (or wife) will risk the marriage relationship, just to tell what they did to their partner.

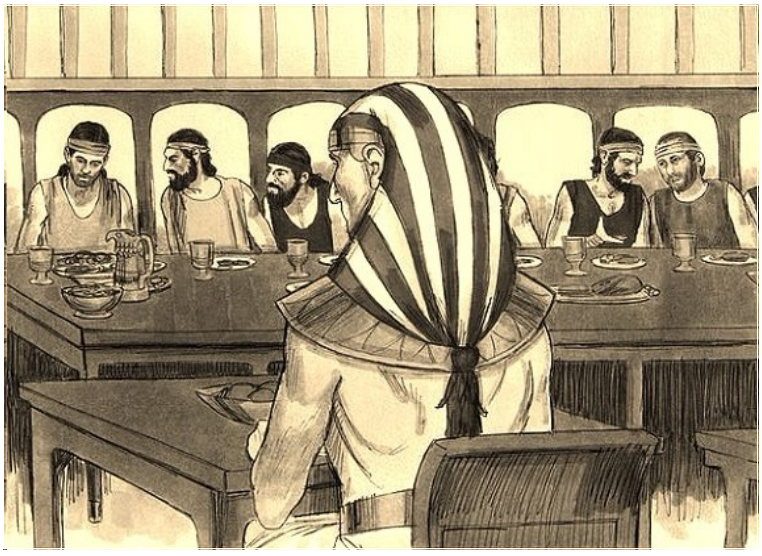
Such decisions occur on a local, state and national level as well. When the state of Colorado decided to legalize marijuana in their state, that was an irreversible decision. Unless the federal government steps in to control drug usage in that state (which is highly unlikely), pot smoking will remain legal forever. This is not something a state can simply change its mind about. If they ever decide that making marijuana legal was a bad idea, there will be far too many pot smokers in that state to ever change it back again (except, perhaps, after a long and carefully plotted out campaign against pot smoking, much like the anti-smoking movement continued for a period of several decades in the United States).

The most intelligent reaction from other states would have been to step back, and watch Colorado for the next 10 or 15 years to see if legalizing pot was good or bad for the state. However, self-restraint, when it comes to smoking pot, is rare. Those who want to smoke marijuana really want to smoke it; and they want to smoke it often; and they don't want anyone telling them that they can't. So drug users in every state will push hard to legalize marijuana—and the overall effect that this has on the state will be given by them as some wonderful thing. *We will tax marijuana and give the money to education,* they will say. Yet, guaranteed, as marijuana use increases, education in that state will decrease. Or marijuana proponents will try to seel the drug on its medicinal benefits (and, very likely, it has some medicinal benefits). But, wherever medical marijuana is made legal, 1% of those who buy medical marijuana buy it for an actual medical condition; the other 99% use this as a way to purchase legal marijuana.

What happens is, marijuana use is soon seen as legitimate and legal, like drinking a beer. And marijuana use increases, despite the known negative results.

So Joseph, by not telling his brothers who he is, keeps all of his options open. By giving Benjamin so much food, Joseph can sit back and observe how his brothers deal with that. Do they become jealous? Do they snipe at him? Or do they just let it go and engage in some good humor over it?

Joseph carefully watches his brothers, the brothers who sold him into slavery, to see if they have changed or grown up. Does he want to renew his relationship with them or not?



Joseph and His brothers at a Meal by Jim Padgett. Taken from The Torah; accessed March 8, 2017. Note the comparative size of Benjamin's portions at the end of the table.

Lesson 438: Introducing Genesis 44 A Summary of the Past and an Introduction

Reviewing Genesis 39–43: Jacob's sons were jealous of Joseph and the favoritism given him by his father. They were angry with him (it was not Joseph's fault) and wanted to kill him. None of them appeared to appreciate that Joseph did not make himself the favorite son; that was simply foisted upon him. It is simply what he was born into.

Reuben got his brothers to moderate slightly, convincing them not to kill Joseph but to sell him into slavery instead (which would have benefitted them financially). Reuben's idea was to go back to where Joseph was being held (in the dried well) and to free him. However, by the time that he got there, Joseph had been sold.

In Egypt, Joseph's life as a slave was good for awhile in the home of Potiphar, who was a nobleman. But then Potiphar's wife started putting the moves on Joseph, attempting to seduce him. When he refused, she accused *him* of making the advances, and Joseph was thrown into the king's jail (Potipher was high up in the Egyptian hierarchy). While in jail, Joseph was eventually placed with two men, thrown into jail, suspected of treason. Both men had similar dreams one night and were very troubled by them. Joseph offered to help them out. He listened to the dreams, and told them what would happen in 3 days (based upon the dreams they had). One man was hanged and the other was to be set free and return to his job as the chief cupbearer for the Pharaoh. Joseph made the mistake of depending upon this man to remember him to Pharaoh.

2 years later, Pharaoh had 2 similar, but disturbing dreams; and he could not find anyone in his realm who could interpret them. Suddenly, the chief cupbearer remembers Joseph and Joseph is fetched from prison to the palace interpret these dreams. Joseph cleaned himself up and went before Pharaoh. He correctly interpreted the dreams, which predicted that Egypt would enjoy 7 years of great prosperity and then 7 years of very destructive famine. Then Joseph told Pharaoh how to solve the problem. Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of that project.

As a result, Joseph built up a massive grain supply in Egypt. That Egypt had a massive grain supply was well-known even as far away as Canaan. When the family of Jacob came to the realization that they did not have enough food to get through the next year of famine, Jacob told his sons to go to Egypt and buy some grain there. They went and the person to sell them grain was their brother Joseph, who recognized them; but they did not know who he was (he spoke to them primarily through an interpreter). However, Joseph accused them of of being spies (this ruse allowed Joseph to question them thoroughly, to get out of them that they have another brother). They explained that they were all brothers, so Joseph insisted that they fetch the youngest brother from home to prove their story. The youngest brother is Benjamin, Joseph's only full brother; and the only brother who did not take part in selling Joseph.

Joseph lets 9 brothers return to Canaan, but he places Simeon in jail, to be held until the other brothers return with Benjamin. Joseph also places their silver back in the bags of grain. When they discovered this, they became quite disturbed, believing that the Prime Minister of Egypt would suspect them of stealing their silver back.

When they told their father about the silver and about having to return with Benjamin, he rejected that idea. He did not trust them (and with good reason). However, a year went by and their grain is coming to an end, and they have to return to buy grain—or else they will all starve. Judah steps up and makes a forceful case to return with Benjamin, and Jacob agrees to let him go.

When they arrived in Egypt, they were invited to a feast with the Prime Minister, and they went—they had no choice. Joseph saw to it that Benjamin had 5x as much food as his brothers, and he no doubt watched to see their reaction. (would they complain about it?) Joseph also placed the brothers in order of their births—something which is mathematically impossible for a stranger to do. It surprised the brothers, but apparently, none of them had gotten as far as Algebra 2 in high school.

The division between Gen. 43 and 44 is possibly a few hours. I am assuming that after this feast, Joseph will see that their mules are loaded up with grain. This seems like a very odd place to divide the narrative into separate chapters (and it is), but there is a chiasmos for Gen. 43, and 2 chiasmi for Gen. 44. So, as literary units, these are reasonably separated here.

A chiasmos is a way of organizing a narrative so that it can be more easily remembered. It is because of this (and other things) that I believe that Genesis was originally memorized and passed down from person to person by word of mouth.

William Ramey's Chiasmi of Genesis 44:1–34

A Joseph's instructions to his steward concerning the ruse (1-2)
B Brothers' departure from the city (3-4a)
C Joseph's instructions to his steward (4b-6)
X Brothers' protestations of innocence (7-10)
C' Steward's search and discovery of the silver goblet (11-12)
B' Brothers' reaction and return to the city (13)
A' Joseph's accusation: His ruse succeeds (14-15)

Interim: Judah acknowledges the brothers' guilt (16)

A Joseph's judgment: Benjamin shall remain (17)
B Judah's request for Joseph's judgment reversal (18)
C Judah's rehearsal of the 1st journey (19-23)
X Brothers' justification before their father (24-29)
C' The consequence if Benjamin does not return (30-31)

William Ramey's Chiasmi of Genesis 44:1–34

B' Judah's basis for Joseph's reversal (32)
A' Judah's plea: He shall substitute himself for Benjamin (33-34)

From https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html accessed September 19, 2015.

Joseph had a plan, a ruse, and it is unclear whether he fully understood what would happen as a result. Clearly, Joseph has a purpose in mind for what he has done. He placed the silver back in every brother's bag, but placed his valuable silver chalice in Benjamin's sack. I do not believe that what Joseph is doing here is arbitrary or just to have a little fun with his brothers.

Remember that God the Holy Spirit has particularly focused our attention upon Joseph, Reuben and Judah throughout these dozen or so chapters (and, to a lesser extent, Levi and Simeon). What is at issue is, which tribe of Israel should be the leading tribe? Abraham was chosen by God; not his brother Nahor. Then Abraham's son Isaac was the chosen line; not his other son Ishmael. Then Isaac's son Jacob was chosen rather than his twin brother, Esau. At this point, we have the fathers of the 12 (actually, 13[46]) tribes and they will become Israel; however, there is still the line of Messiah (known to us at this point in time as the *Seed of the Woman*). Messiah would come from one of these tribes. Which one?

We no doubt wonder about Judah and why Judah continues to be considered, given all the wrongdoing that Judah had participated in. Recall that Judah was ready to see his daughter-in-law executed rather than to provide for her a kinsman-redeemer (Judah brought this gal into his family, and by doing so, he became responsible for her—and then he shirked this responsibility). Instead, Judah held her accountable for the same behavior that he himself had engaged in.

And yet, Reuben, although not the worst of the brothers, never quite behaves as a leader ought. In the previous chapter, when it came to returning to Egypt for grain, it is Judah who takes a leadership role. He negotiates with his father in order to bring Benjamin down to Egypt, as required by the prime minister there.

Reuben clearly distinguished himself as not the leader when, over 20 years ago, his brothers said, "Let's kill Joseph, this dreamer;" and Reuben said, "No, we will sell him into slavery instead and be remunerated for it." Reuben had the authority to simply say, "No, we are not going to do any such thing; and anyone who tries to harm Joseph will have to go through me." But he did not (probably worried that his brothers might take him up on that).

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[46] There are 12 brothers in total; and Joseph would receive the double portion, so that his two sons would become two tribes.

In this chapter, Judah will do something quite noble and remarkable; so remarkable, in fact, as to cause us to take another look at him as the man to watch. Bear in mind, this is the same Judah who left his family for a time, married a Canaanite women, raised up 3 sons, and then fell into somewhat of a mess when he chose a woman to marry his first son. That first son dies the sin unto death; the second then marries the girl, but does not give her his seed, and he dies the sin unto death (you may recall that, if he raised up a child by this wife, his own inheritance would be lessened considerably). Then, instead of giving his third son to this woman, Judah sends her back to her family (which is exactly the wrong thing to do—in marriage, the woman becomes a part of this new family and so the new family assumes responsibility for her). If you understand that a woman in marriage then becomes a part of that new family, then the concept of levirate marriage is easier to understand.

Where we are in this narrative: the sons of Jacob went down to Egypt to buy grain. They meet the Egyptian prime minister who accuses them of being spies, and sells them grain, but keeps one of them in jail, waiting for them all to return with Benjamin, the youngest brother. After returning home, their father, Jacob tells them that they are not going to return to Egypt with Benjamin. That is not going to happen.

However, a year later, they are out of grain and out of options. They must return to Egypt for more grain—and Judah, taking a leadership role, convinces his father to send Benjamin along with them. The logic is inarguable: if they did not take Benjamin, all of them could find themselves thrown into prison, and that means no bread for anyone, including Benjamin. If they did nothing, the family would starve. So Judah is arguing for the only logical course of action—the brothers must return to Egypt with their brother Benjamin.

They have returned to Egypt; the prime minister has graciously called them to eat at his private residence, and they all enjoyed a fabulous meal together. At this point in the narrative, they have given Joseph's servants the silver and they are being loaded up with a year's worth of grain to return home with.

And, as I have repeated innumerable times, the Prime Minister who is entertaining them is their lost brother Joseph, who recognizes them, but they do not know him. Joseph has chosen not to reveal himself to his brothers (at least, not yet), while he carefully weighs his options.

For many readers of this narrative, Joseph appears to be doing a series of oddball things—I recall thinking this when I first heard this narrative taught. However, what Joseph does is not odd or random; he acts with a purpose. That purpose is to bring Benjamin to Egypt; and later, to bring his father to Egypt. Joseph has forgiven his brothers long before; but that does not mean that he wants to reveal himself to them and then begin hanging out together. That is a possible option for the future; but not the only option (in Joseph's mind). By not telling his brothers who he is, Joseph keeps his options open, including the option to never associate with his brothers again.

We have all had friends or relatives who go off the deep end with drugs or alcohol or some other problem, and we have had to make the choice to disassociate from them. We may

forgive these people, but, at the same time, we may choose to never see them again. In fact, in the past 10 years or so, the political climate has become so polarized that I have had at least 10 people among family and actual friends who have chosen to have no contact with me because (1) I do not believe in normalizing homosexuality and (2) I am very conservative in my politics. The problem is, when they express their opinions, I often like to express my own. This might not always be the best thing to do.

It is fascinating to me that this narrative, more than any other, really requires motivation to be revealed to the reader—and it would seem like such information ought to be forthcoming, as Joseph appears to be the author of this narrative (many things which occur are known only to Joseph). Yet, we do not find the phrase, *and Joseph did this because he thought*... I find this to be quite curious. So, on the one hand, I can tell you what Joseph is thinking and why he does this and that (and believe my explanations to be accurate), but at this time, I cannot tell you why Joseph chose to not reveal his specific thinking and motivations in the narrative.

Lesson 439: Genesis 44:1–9 — Joseph Sets Up his Brother Benjamin

In many ways, there is little reason for the previous chapter to end and another one to start. The chapter divisions occurred long after the original text was laid down—originally, there were no verses, no chapters, no spaces and no vowels in the text of the Old Testament when it was first composed. The text was not all written down at once, but at various points of time in Jewish history. As books were written (and appended), some would be recognized as the Word of God and accepted into the canon. Some literature written by Jews were not accepted as canonical. There were apparently many books written during Israel's history which were not accepted into the canon; and which books are no longer with us (some of these books were source material for Samuel and Kings cited in the Bible; but these original sources no longer exist).

The scribes carefully preserved the text of the books they believed to be God's Word; but the other books disappeared from history. In any case, whether Joseph recorded this history all at once or in stages (assuming that it was Joseph who wrote this down); at one time, there was nothing to suggest that a break between these two chapters would be inserted here, apart from the material itself and its overall organization (discussed in the previous lesson).

We ended the previous chapter with the brothers having a meal with Joseph in his personal home (at this time, they still do not know that this Egyptian prime minister is their brother whom they sold into slavery). At the beginning of this chapter, the meal is over and Joseph is providing them with the grain that they came to purchase. So, there is no change of location, of people, or of time, which has taken place. At most, a few hours have passed between the end of Gen. 43 and Gen. 44.

What is noteworthy about this final narrative section of Genesis is, it is pretty much a continuous narrative in Gen. 39–47. This is quite remarkable. Most of the chapter

divisions do not involve a passage of time or a change of place. Prior to this, much of Genesis has been episodic, where an event or series of events was recorded; followed by a new chapter recording another event or series of events. These events might be separated by a few months; or they might be separated by a few decades. Even though Genesis *is* the *History between God and Man,* and it is everything that God wants us to know about early man, this history is primarily episodic. An event or series of events is recorded; and then, suddenly, in the next chapter, we are on to something else.

But nearly the entire sequence of events at the end of Genesis is a single narrative, and I would wager this is the first instance of such a thing occurring in literature. This is also most likely the first occurrence of a continuous narrative where different groups of people and different places are a part of the narrative (I could be wrong; but I am not aware of any similar narratives in ancient literature like this—these incidents occurred approximately 4000 years ago).

Genesis 44:1 And he [Joseph] commanded the steward of his house, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each one's silver in his sack's mouth.

This is Joseph giving the command. They had completed their meal at Joseph's residence, where all 11 brothers enjoyed his hospitality.

Each son of Jacob brought silver in order to purchase the grain (and to pay for the grain from the last trip), and Joseph is placing all of that silver back into their sacks with the grain.

Obviously, this is a very unusual thing for a leader to command; and his servants go ahead and do exactly as Joseph demands.

Now, even though we appear to have a fairly detailed set of instructions given by Joseph, some of what he tells his servant to do is left out (this will become apparent later on in the narrative).

Genesis 44:2 And put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain silver." And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.

We may not think much of a silver cup, as we all have cabinets filled with glasses and cups of a variety of materials, but this would have been hand-crafted and worth a great deal of money; and Joseph's cup is far superior to a pottery-type cup (assuming that they had those). This would be a prized possession of Joseph's, and the brothers had all seen it. To bring this up-to-date, this would be like a modern-day Joseph telling his personal assistant to place his iphone (or ipad) into someone else's luggage unawares. It is a pretty big deal.

A Silver Chalice (a photograph) from a silver service, kept at the Walters Art Museum. From the Walters: *This chalice, or cup, held the wine of the Eucharist (symbolizing the blood of Christ). This silver service was found in Syria in 1910, in the village of Kurin. The Greek form of its name, Kaper Koraon, is inscribed on several pieces in the treasure, including a chalice, which reads: "...treasure of the Church of St. Sergios of the village of Kaper Koraon."* This chalice was used in Eucharists and other religious ceremonies in the 6th century Byzantium era; so it is nearly 2½ millennia later in time than the chalice spoken of here in Genesis. But it gives us a good idea as to the beauty of such a cup. Photo accessed March 22, 2017.

You will notice that Joseph's servants do exactly as they are told, throughout. We do not seem to find an instance where a servant says, "Now wait a minute—this doesn't make any sense." None of them seem to ask, "Now *why* exactly do you want me to do this?" And, throughout, Joseph obviously gives his servants other guidance (remember that Joseph's brothers come to his house and immediately tell the servant about the silver that they found in their sacks; and his servant has a ready answer for them—no doubt, this was because Joseph prepped his servant about what to say).

No doubt, what Joseph tells his servants to do regarding this family is indeed unusual (and the servant does not know that they are family). Obviously, Joseph has not given similar instructions about anyone else.

We find Joseph's behavior odd; and if we did not understand what he was doing, it would have been odder still. But, his servants appear to have no idea what Joseph is doing. There is no indication that Joseph said, "I want you to do thus and so; *and here is why I want you to do that*." Yet, his servants obey him, without question.

Genesis 44:3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses.

Joseph's servants would have been in charge of loading up the bags of grain for Joseph's brothers. Through this narrative, only one servant is named; but he is probably in charge of a half dozen or more other servants who actually do the work.

The brothers have had a marvelous meal in Joseph's home and are likely eating and then sleeping while the loading of their mules is going on. In the morning, these servants would have placed these sacks over the mules that his brothers brought, specifically for the

purpose of transporting the wheat. When the brothers wake up from that night's sleep, their mules are loaded and they are ready to go.

Joseph's servants have done just exactly as they have been instructed, and without protest, apparently. They put each man's silver back into his sack, and they placed Joseph's silver chalice into Benjamin's sack. Joseph's brothers do not suspect that anything is amiss. They have been lulled by the meal and relaxing fellowship. They have no reason to think that anything is wrong.

Only Joseph knows what he is doing (and we understand it too; that he is going to attempt to isolate Benjamin from his brothers and require him to remain in Egypt).

Genesis 44:4 They had gone out of the city, not having gone far. And Joseph said to his steward, "Rise up, follow after the men and overtake them, and say to them, 'Why have you rewarded evil for good?

Joseph is going to orchestrate a rather interesting scene. All of Jacob's sons have their money returned to them in their bags; and Benjamin also has a silver cup in his. They had all seen this silver cup; and for that era, it was quite remarkable. Plus, it was small enough to grab and go off with it—and that will be the accusation made against the brothers. Joseph brought them into his home, gave them a wonderful meal, and he is rewarded with the stealing of his prize possession, a silver chalice.

Genesis 44:5 Is this not that in which my lord drinks, and by which indeed he divines? You have done evil in so doing.' "

Joseph tells his servant exactly what to say. Very likely, this man (or someone with him) is able to speak the language of the Hebrews. He is telling his servant, "Place this chalice in Benjamin's bag, and then chase him down and accuse him of stealing it. Then bring him back here to me." These are very explicit, yet weird accusations to make.

My educated guess is, this is the man over Joseph's house who speaks to them in Hebrew; and he is accompanied by many servants.

It is interesting that Joseph is said to divine by the silver chalice. The verb here is the Piel imperfect of nâchash (נָחַשׁ) [pronounced *naw-KHAHSH*], which means, *to practice divination, to divine; to observe signs or omens; to communicate with demons; to whisper*. Strong's #5172 BDB #638. We know that Joseph interpreted dreams; and we know that among his brothers, he is the spiritually mature one. Based upon this, I would guess that this verb has a positive meaning or that Joseph was just saying this. He will later claim to know by divination that his youngest brother stole this chalice—and we know that to be a false statement. Joseph knows that the silver chalice is in Benjamin's sack of grain because he ordered his servant to put it there.

Could Joseph have been a prophet, able to know and tell God's will? Although that is possible, his ability to know the future appears to be confined only to dreams and what they reveal—we have no other examples of other such abilities of Joseph.

Bear in mind, this is what Joseph is telling his servant to tell his brothers. For this reason, my educated guess is, Joseph has no such powers, and this is what he had his servant say in order to separate Benjamin from his brothers.

Genesis 44:6 And he [Joseph's servant] overtook them [Joseph's brothers], and he spoke to them these words.

He refers to the steward, the head of Joseph's household; and he is likely accompanied by many other armed servants or soldiers (he would need to be in order to have the power to call the shots).

Those who accompany the steward are simply there for show. There is no anticipation of having to use force—and it is likely that the servant has arrived with overwhelming force. The best way to avoid a violent confrontation is to obviously have strongest side.

I believe that Joseph's intention was to remove Benjamin from his brothers; and by doing this, cause their father Jacob to come to Egypt in order to plead for his life. This intention is never stated outright; as none of what Joseph does is explained in this narrative.

Genesis 44:7 And they said to him, "Why does your lord say these words? Far be it that your servants should do according to this thing.

What the servant accuses the brothers of comes as a shock to them. The sons of Jacob deny stealing from Joseph. Again, none of them are specified by name. The verb is in the plural, suggesting that several of them begin answering; but no one this time steps up as the spokesman or leader.

Genesis 44:8 Behold, the silver which we found in our sack's mouth, we brought it in to you out of the land of Canaan. How then should we steal out of your lord's house silver or gold?

The brothers continue speaking; probably each sentence is a different brother speaking.

They point out that, when they returned to Egypt, they brought to silver with them used to buy the first bags of grain (which silver had been placed into those first bags of grain). The very fact that they had brought this silver with them, indicates that they have been honest with the prime minister.

They brought this additional silver with them and they told this to Joseph's servant up front, immediately, immediately as they arrived. It was the first thing out of their mouths. So why would they steal from Joseph? Their argument is, their behavior, which Joseph's servants

have observed, mitigates against them being thieves. What sense would it be to bring back the silver, and then to steal from the prime minister (which is a good, logical argument).

Lesson 440: Genesis 44:7–13 The Cup is Found in Benjamin's Sack

Joseph's brothers have the grain which they purchased from Joseph, and they have left Joseph's home. However, Joseph's servant chases them down and accuses them of stealing Joseph's silver chalice—which chalice the servant himself placed into Benjamin's sack of grain.

None of Joseph's brothers stole anything from him; and they are adamant about that.

Genesis 44:7–8 And they [Joseph's brothers] said to him [Joseph's steward], "Why does your lord say these words? Far be it that your servants should do according to this thing. Behold, the silver which we found in our sack's mouth, we brought it in to you out of the land of Canaan. How then should we steal out of your lord's house silver or gold?

They tell Joseph's servant, "Listen, you know we are honest. When we found the silver in our sacks from the first trip, we returned this trip with that silver in hand. We told you about this from the very beginning." (Bear in mind that various sons of Jacob are speaking, each one adding additional testimony as to their innocence.)

As we already studied, the first thing that the sons of Israel did was to tell this man about the silver that they found in their bags.

Genesis 44:9 With whomever of your servants it may be found, both let him die, and we all will be my lord's bondmen."

The sons of Jacob were so certain of their mutual innocence that they commit to being slaves of Joseph and that the person guilty of stealing his silver goblet be executed.

This is fascinating, given what some of the sons have done in years past. Levi and Simeon destroyed an entire family; and then the brothers took all that they had (when you defeated another army—or, in this case, family—taking all of their stuff was acceptable practice in the ancient world).

Let me suggest that these brothers have reformed since that time. We have already studied how Levi and Simeon had committed murder (Gen. 34) and Judah had been quite dishonorable towards his daughter-in-law; but here, there appears to be such a mutual trust in the behavior of one another, that they are willing to subject themselves to slavery, if they are lying about the silver cup. They simply know that no one among them would be so bold and dishonest as to steal anything from this pharaoh.

Genesis 44:10 And he [the steward] said, "Now also let it be according to your word. He with whom it is found will be my servant, and you [all] will be blameless."

Joseph's servant has a ready response, and it is an interesting one. He is saying, "If one of you is found with the chalice, then he will become my servant. The rest of you can go." These men have just pledged themselves into servitude, if one of them is found with the chalice, and Joseph's servant says that he is only interested in the one who is a thief (and he already knows who the *thief* is).

Based upon what has happened so far, I would assume that the steward has a ready answer which was specified by Joseph. Joseph has already told his servant, "I want you to search through all of the sacks, starting with the oldest brother, and ending with the youngest brother. Then, I want you to return with the youngest brother alone when you find the silver chalice in his sack. The other men are not to be held responsible." Even though these particular instructions are not found, we realize that Joseph is very explicit in the commands which he gives his servant. This is revealed by the words of Joseph's servant. Joseph certainly did not tell his servant, "You know where the chalice is; find it, bring back Benjamin, and play the rest by ear." This was not some slip shod scheme by Joseph; he wanted his full brother to return to him; and in doing that, he expected that his father would come from Canaan to beg mercy from him. What Joseph wants is his full brother and his father. He has not yet decided what he will do about his other brothers.

Joseph did not expect his other brothers to protest and then to return to Egypt. What he wants is for Benjamin to be brought back alone; and then he expects that his 10 brothers would return home and tell their father, Jacob, what happened. As a result, Jacob would come to Egypt to plead for his life. So, Joseph had it all planned out so that his youngest brother would remain with him and that his father would come to Egypt to save Benjamin.

The brothers offer themselves up as slaves and the culprit to be executed if the cup is found with any of them. The steward softens the threat to Jacob's sons. "Whoever took the cup will become my servant." Then he adds: "The rest of you can go home." Literally, he said, "You [all] are innocent [or, *free from guilt, free from punishment*]."

Obviously, Joseph prepared this man to do what he did and to say what he said. And the steward did not question Joseph; he simply did what he was told to do. The servant does not need to know everything; he does not need to know Joseph's entire plan.[47] What Joseph appears to have said (this is not actually recorded) is: *I want you to return with Benjamin alone, accused of stealing my silver cup; and let the other men go free*.

At this point in the narrative, the servant has accused the brothers of stealing his master's chalice, but nothing has been proven yet. The brothers will prove to this man that they are innocent; they will open up their sacks of grain to be examined.

Genesis 44:11 Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and each one opened his sack.

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[47] Do you see the parallel here which can be made between God, His plan and our part in it?

None of the sons were worried at this point of having stolen anything. They all took the sacks of grain down to reveal what is in them. They were going to certainly prove to this man that they had done nothing wrong.

Genesis 44:12a And he searched first at the oldest and with the youngest last.

Interestingly enough, there was something that was glossed over in this portion of the narrative: the silver that they brought with them had been placed back in their sacks with the grain—that would have been revealed from the beginning. As each man opens his sack, the silver would have been found.

How did the servant react to that (he placed the silver in the bags himself or ordered for that to be done)? And how did the brothers react to that? As the silver is found, each brother would have thought, "Oh, crap! Now I will be enslaved!" But the servant would have been instructed to say, "Your God has given you this silver; I have already received your silver." (This is what the servant said back in Gen. 43:23 and we assume that he will repeat this—however, that is not recorded).

The other option is this: Joseph's servant himself reaches into each sack. He feels the silver that is there, and says nothing; he does not even bring it out. So the silver is there, but he does not even reveal that he has touched it. He knows what he is reaching for and he knows in whose bag it is, because he placed it there himself.

There was only one issue before them—who had the silver chalice? Who stole Joseph's cup?

Genesis 44:12 And he searched first at the oldest and with the youngest last. And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

This approach is interesting. It makes me wonder, did the servant memorize the young men in the order of their ages? Recall that they were seated that way at the meal at Joseph's. Did Joseph, at some point, tell his servant, "Look at these men carefully and remember this order." It appears to be intentional for him to come to Benjamin's sack last. By beginning with the oldest and working down to the youngest, each person knows when his bag will be checked.

Perhaps the servant said, "Let me start with the eldest brother" and perhaps he said, "I will check your bags according to where you sat at dinner." We do not know if the servant lined up the brothers or whether he had them line themselves up.

The way that this appears to be written, he was to make certain that the oldest son was checked out first; and the youngest son checked out last. In reviewing the Hebrew, this appears all that is required to fit this narrative; and certainly anyone could have remembered who the oldest and youngest brothers were. However, most commentators, myself included, believe that the servant dealt with all the men according to their ages. Whether he did that by memory or had the brothers line up that way, we do not know.

The Silver Cup is Discovered in Benjamin's Sack of Grain (a graphic); from News You Can Believe; accessed March 29, 2017. *Unknown to Joseph's half-brothers, Joseph's silver cup had been put into Benjamin's grain sack*.

The site for this graphic and several other commentators have suggested that throughout, Joseph is testing his brothers. Although there is one time when Joseph has tested his brothers (concerning piling 5x as much food on Benjamin's place as the others), I do not think that this is Joseph's motivation. I don't believe that Joseph has arranged for a half dozen tests for his brothers, that he is keeping a mental score, and, as a result, he will decide what to do about his brothers. That approach makes little sense to me.

In this case, when the cup has been found, Joseph already knows what his brothers will do. Benjamin will remain with Joseph and the brothers will all go back to Canaan, with the grain and an explanation as to what happened. They already did this with Simeon. Joseph said, "I am going to keep one of you behind in prison," and then he chose Simeon. It appeared at first that he was going to throw them all into jail and keep them there.

Also, going back to Joseph giving Benjamin 5x as much food—I think that Joseph did that as somewhat of a lark, interested in what his brothers would say. I don't know that he was testing them, per se, as they clearly passed the test, and nothing changed as a result of that *test*.

Genesis 44:12 And he [Joseph's steward] searched first at the oldest and with the youngest last. And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

As a result of finding that cup, Benjamin would be required to stay, as the slave of Joseph's slave; and all of the brothers would be faced with the dilemma of returning to their father without Benjamin—the one thing that they feared the most.

So far, Joseph has not revealed his identity to his brothers. He has apparently not yet decided if he wanted to continue a relationship with his older brothers; but he certainly wanted to begin and renew his relationship with Benjamin, his younger brother; and he would like to see his father again. What Joseph has orchestrated here would have that result. Benjamin was to return with Joseph's servant to Joseph; and the rest of Joseph's brothers return home with the grain and a very sad story. Joseph expects that this will cause Jacob, his father, to come to Egypt, on behalf of his son, Benjamin.

Notice how all of this has been orchestrated so that, even yet, Joseph has not had to reveal his identity to his brothers, who originally sold him into slavery. Let me suggest,

Joseph is not bearing a grudge, but carefully considering his options. Renewing a relationship with his older brothers is still an option.

"Joseph's Brothers Find the Silver Goblet in Benjamin's Sack" a painting by Alexander Ivanov, 1861 (Tretjakov Gallery, Moscow). From WordPress accessed March 14, 2017.

Genesis 44:13 Then they (the sons of Jacob) tore their clothes, and each one loaded his ass and [they] returned to the city [to Joseph's city].

The Jewish people tend to be very demonstrative, and they tear their clothes, upset about the cup being found with Benjamin. Recall their jealousy of Joseph and how they were willing to kill him or to sell him into slavery—primarily because of the favoritism shown by their father towards him. However, this time, it is clear that Benjamin is the favored son, and they all are upset and very protective of him. We know that they are protective of Benjamin, as they all return to Joseph's city.

The brothers have spent 20+ years living a lie with their father; and their father was quite disturbed at the loss of his son Joseph. The scene was so difficult to take that Judah, for most of those years, separated himself from his family entirely for 20 years (Gen. 38). The brothers know that they cannot repeat this wrong; they cannot cause their father the same misery over Benjamin as they did with Joseph.

Let me suggest that Joseph did not anticipate this. In my opinion, Joseph expected the servant to return with Benjamin, and for his brothers to take the grain (and the silver) and return home to their families. Their families are in Canaan; their families lack grain; and it would make sense for the brothers to cut their losses and return home. After all, when Joseph laid hold of Simeon, and dismissed all of the brothers save him, all the brothers left; and for a year, no one came to plead for Simeon's freedom.

Lesson 441–442: Genesis 44:14a — The Doctrine of Leadership

Joseph, who has not revealed himself to his brothers, had his head servant place his silver chalice into Benjamin's grain sack; and then the brothers were sent on their way. An hour or so later, this head servant goes out, chasing down these brothers, because of the

missing chalice. He searches their grain sacks and finds the chalice in young Benjamin's grain sack, right where the servant put it.

Furthermore, all of their families are back in Canaan, lacking in food; so when weighing the options, it does not appear that the brothers really have a choice here. They must feed their families.

But Joseph's brothers do not abandon Benjamin. All of the brothers return to Joseph's city. Also, notice the text of the next verse:

Genesis 44:14a And Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house,...

Here, where we might expect the older brothers to be named—Reuben, Simeon and Levi—but Judah is named instead. It is *Judah and his brothers*. Although we are not given any specifics, it appears that Judah has taken the role of a leader amongst his brothers.

Bear in mind, there was no doubt a clear option for the brothers. The steward tells them, "Look, we are taking Benjamin because he has stolen my master's chalice. You may all return to your homes with your grain." But, the brothers don't do this. They return with Benjamin, and Judah has taken the lead. We do not know what Judah said. So let me suggest that Judah said, "We cannot allow our brother Benjamin to be enslaved. We must return to Egypt with him." Or, "I will return with Benjamin; we cannot allow him to be enslaved. We cannot return home without him; our father will die of sorrow."

Whatever Judah said expressed his leadership. We don't know how the other brothers felt about this, but Judah was not going to return home without Benjamin. So Judah, the clear leader of all his brothers, accompanies Benjamin back to Joseph's city; and the other brothers follow him (as is done when a leader leads). None of the brothers decide to take their grain and donkeys and return home. They follow the brother who has become their leader.

Joseph has rigged things so that his brother Benjamin would be brought back to Egypt, as he was accused of stealing his silver chalice (which chalice was found in Benjamin's bag of grain). Joseph expected his brothers to simply return home and for his father to come down to Egypt to ask for a reprieve for his son.[48] That was the logical expected outcome. When Simeon was kept behind in jail, the remaining 9 brothers did not protest, did not say, "We are not leaving Egypt without our brother Simeon!" They considered their options, cut their losses, and took the grain and were on their way back to Canaan.

However, Joseph's brothers do something that he does not expect—they return with Benjamin, led by Judah, who fully assumes a leadership role among his brothers.

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[48] This is conjecture on my part, but I believe that this best expresses Joseph's motives.

Just like many skills in life, some people have a natural aptitude for some things, but that natural aptitude also requires knowledge, training and application. I do believe that some men are born chiefs and others are born Indians; however, a natural leader can often be beset by arrogance and/or lack of training.

This doctrine is for everyone. You may think, "Well, I am not going to be the President of the United States; I am not going to be a military leader; I am not even going to be head of my department—so I don't need this doctrine." Wrong. Most men will have a position of leadership in a family; and most women will have a position of leadership as a mother. Those are the most important positions of leadership in our society. So, even though I will illustrate various principles of leadership using David, Joab and the President of the United States, they are merely illustrations. These principles are important for all people.

The Doctrine of Leadership

1. There are certainly some people who, early on, seem to be on a leadership track. Many of them gravitate early to lead their sports teams at school; to head organized clubs and groups; to run for student council. Most leadership skills must be learned; and they learn more of these skills acting early on as leaders over small things.
2. There are people who have an innate desire to lead; and others who are fine with a subservient role.
3. Someone who has been a leader all of their lives is probably not a very good leader. Such a leader is often operating from a natural charisma and personal charm but has limited other leadership skills. President Barack Obama is a man like this, who won the presidential election in part by having considerable charisma and charm, but no actual abilities, experience or training in that role.
4. A good leader needs to be under authority in order to learn how to correctly exercise authority.
    1) We saw this with King David. God had Samuel anoint David king over Israel at a very young age (14 or 16 or whatever).
    2) David was not made king over Israel until 15–20 years later.
    3) David did not simply receive leadership training by being under authority; he was trained under lousy authority. He was under King Saul for much of that time. King Saul was erratic, unfair, paranoid, and, at times, psychotic. Sometimes, a person learns to become a good leader by being under the authority of a lousy leader. Saul began as a fairly good leader; but in the final 10 or 20 years of his life, he seemed to suffer some kind of mental problem which compromised his skill as a leader.
    4) During a portion of that time, David had a modicum of authority—he rose in the military ranks to become a military leader. However, at the same time, he was under authority which was very unfair.
    5) David had to learn how to exercise his authority and he needed to see what it was like to be under lousy authority.
    6) David was flexible with respect to the nonessentials and he was inflexible with respect to the essentials (I believe this is a *Thieme-ism*).

7) A study of Joshua would reveal that he was a great leader, even though most of his life was under the authority of Moses.

5. Saul eventually forced David to leave Israel. Then David had to quickly adjust. Everyone looked to him to make the final decision regarding any matter which came up. Much of the latter chapters of 1Samuel is all about David learning leadership skills on the fly.
6. The best leader learns authority orientation from the bottom. What was David's first job? Tending the sheep for an unappreciative and neglectful father. David's father appeared to see David as the runt of the litter—and, for whatever reason, never recognized David's potential. Based upon the little we know of David's childhood, it is possible that David was far more artistic than his brothers (David wrote, composed, and played many songs).
7. Ideally speaking, a good leader should experience unfair authority. No one can exercise authority unless they are able to understand how lousy decisions impact those under authority. Sometimes, people in the armed forces receive outstanding leadership training, because they find themselves forced to endure a series of very bad leaders who make lousy decisions.
8. A good leader needs to function out of an easily definable set of core values—ideally speaking, Bible doctrine and/or divine establishment principles.
   1) In the alternative, many of those under him must view his values as being theirs, or, better than theirs.
9. A good leader must see his role as the man with the greatest responsibility. In an army, an infantryman is responsible to those on both sides of him and to his commanding officer (s). However, the commanding officer is responsible for everyone in his unit.
   1) A good example of people who have leadership positions but do not take responsibility for those under them, is Congress. So many members of Congress (in the House and Senate) use their position to enrich themselves rather than to serve their constituency.
   2) There are many long-term Senators, for instance, who have used their position to make real estate investments which later turn out to be great investments because the government does something with the adjacent land. They use their position to purchase stocks which are later influenced by legislation.
   3) A considerable number of Senators and Congressmen have one political position in one year, and 3 or 4 years later, change that position entirely. Many of them obfuscate their actual positions in public and cannot give simple straight answers to simple straight questions.
   4) Whereas not all Senators and Congressmen exemplify poor leadership skills, many of them do—particularly when it comes to exercising their authority on behalf of their constituents.
10. An arrogant leader simply wants to be in charge; a lousy leader thinks, they know the best way to do something, so that is why they ought to be in charge—in order to implement their superior policies.

1) A good contemporary example of this was former president, Barack Obama. He is a man who has seen very little authority over him. For a short time, he had one job when he was under the authority to someone, and he wrote that it was like being behind enemy lines.
2) When he became president, he believed that he knew what was best, and that was the direction of the country under his leadership. The view of the people was unimportant, because he knew better. The actual results of his policies were unimportant. He simply knew what was best for everyone, and that is what a leader does, in his mind, is to implement his superior policies.
3) To make this clear: being smart, believing yourself to be intelligent, and thinking that you have the best way to do things—these things are not leadership in themselves. Wanting to tell everyone what to do is not true leadership.

11. Having no authority orientation explains why some husbands are lousy husbands and why some people are bad teachers, coaches and bosses. They have no concept of authority. They like the power—they like being able to tell everyone else what to do—but they take absolutely no responsibility for what they do.
    1) Again, former President Obama is an excellent example. At no time did he admit that what he was trying was what he thought would work, but now he sees that it doesn't? Of course not. He was not humble enough to do that. He was unable to take in new data and process that information, if it meant changing his mind.
    2) President Obama blamed former President Bush incessantly for nearly 2 full years, but he never admitted publically that higher taxes, taxing the rich, redistributing wealth, excessive taxes on corporations, excessive debt, and excessive regulations will destroy job growth. Even after being the only president *never* to preside over a year of 3% GDP, he never moderated his big government policies.
    3) The chief problem with President Obama's leadership is, he was a strict ideologue, was certain of what would work, and never appeared to reconsider or moderate his views, even when his policies did not produce the desired results (and, it is possible that, in his eyes, they did produce the proper results).
12. A good leader ought to be able to evaluate himself, his own actions, and then be flexible enough to change policies. Leadership requires some flexibility; a good leader cannot be a rigid ideologue.
13. A good leader needs to be organized. He must be organized in his life and in his thinking. A leader is in control of a large organization. If he cannot organize his own life, how does he organize a much larger organization? His life has a limited number of moving parts. If a leader cannot organize those moving parts, then how can he organize dozens or hundreds of people, all of whom have the same moving parts?
14. Also, a good leader needs someone under him—an excellent secretary or

assistant—who is organized and can step in when needed. Many times, a president is primarily a figurehead with a vision; but it is those under him who actually accomplish his vision. In the example of the President of the United States, he has cabinet members who are also leaders, who also oversee a very large, often bureaucratic structure; and the president needs good men under him. In other words, a good leader must be able to delegate responsibility and he must be able to recognize other good leaders.

15. A leader needs to be self-disciplined. He cannot give in to his various lusts; not even to power lust. His own body must be under his control, so that he sleeps and eats when it is time to do so; not when he feels like it.
    1) In the armed forces, the commanding officer looks after his men first. They eat first. Their needs are seen to first. When a CO's men are taken care of, then he can eat.
    2) A good leader must be able to exercise self-discipline when with his men. He cannot be give to flights of fancy, become easily shaken, fatigued or angry.
    3) Often, there is a lack of self-discipline among the lower classes. In fact, this is why they are lower class. They refuse to recognize authority, and therefore, have not advanced in their lives as they should have (they rebel against their parents and teachers). They use every instance to complain. They refuse to work hard. When it is necessary, they do not like having to work two jobs or working in a position which is below their own exalted view of themselves.
    4) We are just as likely to find arrogance among subordinates and those in the lower class than among the rich, the successful and those in power.
    5) Whenever a person will take money from the government instead of working, they are arrogant. They believe that it is up to others to work and up to them to take from the labor of others. It is arrogant to think that others ought to work so that you can eat (there are exceptions, of course, for those who are unable to take care of themselves).
    6) Making an issue out of a race, economic class or one's position in an organization is arrogant. Arrogant people love to dwell on unimportant, petty issues. They also love to entangle others over them in their petty concerns.
    7) Many think that they are owed a position, higher salary or simply free money simply because they breathe and/or vote for someone who promises them a free ride. Such people are to arrogant and self-centered to think how they impact society with their attitudes.
    8) Arrogance often can result in mob behavior. We have observed it in riots in the 1960's and 1970's; we see it today in the United States in marches and demonstrations by organized labor (who refuse to recognize how they destroy everything that they touch). In their arrogance, self-centeredness and frustration, they lash out, not caring one whit whose property they destroy.

16. A good leader, as a part of self-discipline, needs to have a relaxed mental attitude. You cannot spend your time being angry toward your subordinates. You cannot be jealous of them or wish them harm; you cannot gossip about them. When a subordinate takes a swipe at you, you either deal with it publically and according to a clear policy; but you do not plot revenge against that subordinate. In any case, an RMA solves many problems and results in a good sense of humor.
17. It is ideal that a leader has a real spiritual life—that is, they are born again and they utilize the filling of the Holy Spirit. 6 great leaders immediately come to mind: Moses, David, Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee, General George Patton and Douglas MacArthur. As a leader, one must properly function within one's spiritual life as well. Being a leader who is born again does not mean that you force the gospel on everyone (you cannot necessarily make your subordinates attend church); but you use spiritual principles to guide your actions (Jesus Christ is the ultimate leader). In the right circumstances, you can certainly share your faith with an underling.
18. A good leader must know his subject, whether he is the CEO of Godfather's Pizza, the manager of a Starbucks, a teacher, a coach or a military commander. In whatever field you lead, you must understand that field or you must have trusted people in positions of leadership below you who take up the slack in some areas. When you lack the knowledge, then you need the ability to recognize other leaders and to properly delegate authority.
19. A leader must project leadership. What he says and does and his demeanor must carry with it an air of authority.
20. A good leader must have a true sense humility. A leader cannot lead with an arrogant mental attitude.
    1) Poise, confidence and a commanding presence are not indicative of arrogance.
    2) True humility does not mean you keep your head down and you say, "Aw shucks, it wasn't nothing." Again, you must project confidence and leadership when in a leadership position. This is extremely important for parents. The parent sets the agenda; not the children.
    3) There are always detractors. When you are a good or a lousy leader, there will be those under you who think you are lousy at what you do, and often, they will share this feeling. These detractors are the arrogant ones.
        (1) This is where poise and self-control come into play. As a leader, you are going to run across people like this, and, some of them, you can squash like bugs. You cannot act out of arrogance to destroy those who simply do not like you or are having problems with authority. Sometimes, you make an example of such people; and sometimes, you allow them to continue. A leader is never going to have 100% support and in almost every system, a leader cannot simply get rid of every person who is not 100% behind him.
        (2) Here is where a leader has to make a careful, calculated decision.

One malcontent can destroy your organization, and, obviously, a good leader cannot allow that to happen.

(3) On the other hand, sometimes nipping such a problem in the bud is a frank, one-on-one talk, where there is no rank and no repercussions.

(4) Part of being a good leader is determining how to deal with the malcontents, because they exist in every organization which requires a leader.

4) Arrogance destroys potential in any subordinate and it destroys leadership.

21. A good leader must know how to deal with insubordination, and not every person can be dealt with the same way. You cannot throw every trouble-maker out of your unit, out of your classroom, and certainly, not out of your home.

1) Again, you must be able to assess the situation and act accordingly.

2) There are times when you cannot tolerate insubordination and times when you tolerate it to a limited degree. Determining which you do is a matter of training, experience and a proper understanding of your resources.

22. Good leadership can distinguish between that which is essential and that which is nonessential. Stubborn, arrogant and petty people will spend their time in leadership harping on the nonessentials.

23. Not only does a leader need to know his own profession, but they must be involved in a lifetime of study. This could be termed *professional diligence*.

1) Joab, in **2Sam. 10** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD) , in the midst of battle, found himself walking into what looked to be a terrible situation. He was able to instantly survey the situation, to then determine the best course of action, and to execute a winning course of action.

2) Despite his overconfident entry onto the battlefield, Joab quickly evaluated the situation that he was in.

3) He probably both recognizes the Aramaeans and knows their battlefield capabilities.

4) In order to formulate a plan so quickly, Joab needed to know his enemies, their strengths and weaknesses.

5) He had to recognize that the Ammonites functioned as bait and would probably not advance against them.

6) He had to recognize that, he cannot take his army against Rabbah anyway; it cannot be conquered that quickly.

7) He knew enough about the Aramaeans to know that they had horses and chariots; he also determined nearly instantly that their horses and chariots would hinder them, if they were kept in the forested wilderness, where they could not maneuver.

24. This leads us to another aspect of leadership: a good leader must be able to think on his feet and to make instantaneous decisions when they are called for. When heading any kind of organization, often decisions are required—and too often, these decisions will not have good outcomes. A commanding officer during wartime will oversee missions where there is tremendous loss of life; yet, too

often, there is no other choice.

1) When a sudden decision must be made, a leader cannot spend weeks, days or even hours obsessing over that decision.
2) In the past few years, we have had two presidents faced with almost the exact same situation: a Middle Eastern leader used chemical weapons. President Obama said that the use of chemical weapons would be a red line. When chemical weapons were used, the President did not react with force but took a diplomatic route to remove the chemical weapons. Despite knowing that these weapons were not removed and that they were under the control of a power hostile to the United States, the President and two of his aids *sold* this diplomacy as being 100% successful.
3) When faced with the use of chemical weapons, a President Trump struck the airport and the air force which carried those weapons within 48 hours.

25. A good leader must be able to be fair and just in dealing with those under him. The good leader must be able to use a variety of personality types without ever appearing to favor one person over another (apart from their own positions relative to one another). You cannot have your obvious favorites or special friends in an organization. You do not have to like those who are over you or those who are under you. A subordinate's personality may rub you the wrong way; a superior may be too curt, overbearing or mealy-mouthed, in your opinion. Human personality differences should not be an issue in fairness; neither should friendship. Whether or not you personally like someone should never be an issue to a good leader. Recognizing the value and potential of those under you is necessary; liking or not liking them is not important.
    1) Therefore, a good leader must, therefore, understand all kinds of people—their weaknesses, strengths and capabilities—and be willing to work with all kinds of people. Being able to deal with all kinds of people fairly—including those with personalities that you do not like—is good leadership.
    2) This is an area where women often have trouble with leadership—they want to have subordinates that they like; because it is their nature to respond. If a subordinate has a personality type which rubs them the wrong way, they will punish that person or treat them more harshly. Many women in positions of authority would never have the idea to put someone in a place of responsibility if they did not like them. That this person rubs them the wrong way would always be a part of the relationship.
    3) A woman in a position of authority has to be able to recognize what her nature is and to compensate for it.
    4) A person's personality is not an issue to a leader; their abilities and potential are what are important, and to properly match these people with their assignment.
26. A good leader knows that they cannot do it all. Therefore, a good leader must be able to delegate responsibility. This involves taking the personnel that you have and matching them to the responsibilities and duties which must be done.

1) A good leader places people in positions of authority and responsibility based upon their fitness to that position. A department head may not like Charlie Brown, but if Charlie Brown is suited for a particular position, then that is where he ought to be. A good leader must be able to delegate responsibility without subjectivity entering in to the picture.
2) Again, a leader cannot operate based upon liking or disliking the people he leads. He must be objective in his decisions and in delegating authority. You do not delegate authority to someone because they are your friends; you delegate authority to the person who is right for that authority.

27. Related to this is, a good leader must remain objective. He functions in his position of leadership for the benefit of his organization, not for the benefit of his own feelings.
    1) Therefore, a leader should be seen by most as being fair and just.
    2) A leader should not play favorites; if a leader is friendly with any of those under him, then he must take care to treat that person fairly, and no better than anyone else. Some say "it is lonely at the top." This is because some leaders choose to limit their fraternizing, so as not to appear unfair.
    3) There are many times when a leader needs time to think. Often, this requires some sort of isolation in order to make good decisions.
    4) When a leader delegates responsibility, handing out high positions, he needs to match the right person with the right position; their personality should not be a major factor. His like or dislike for such a person should not be a factor.
    5) No doubt that David faced this with his nephew Joab. Joab was perhaps the most powerful person in Israel besides David. David recognized that Joab was the right man for the job.
28. There are times that a leader ought to explain himself and times when he should not. Those under you do not need to have a full and complete explanation for every single thing that you do. There are not enough hours in the day. However, now and again, when there is time and when the situation warrants it, you may choose to explain your reasoning for doing this or that; to explain why you choose Charlie Brown to head the marketing department.
    1) Now and again, a situation will warrant a private explanation. Let's say that Lucy was up for the same position as Charlie Brown. When publically commending Charlie Brown, you explain why you chose him, but not why your chose him instead of someone else.
    2) However, at the proper time, you may pull Lucy aside and explain why she did not get the promotion. This does not mean that you pull Lucy aside for each and every decision that you make and tell her why you made the decisions that you did.
29. In order for a good leader to properly assign authority to those under him, he must be a good judge of character. A leader must hire and fire people, advance and—once and awhile—demote people, and deal with friction within the

organization. A good leader has to remain objective and fair and he must accurately evaluate those under him. If a leader is unable to fairly evaluate those under him, then he cannot place people into the proper positions; nor can he hand out specific assignments.

1) I have been under 3 different female bosses in succession. One did not like me, but grudgingly, respected and used my skills and abilities. One liked me, and used my skills and abilities. The third did not like me, and attempted to mismatch me with my responsibilities in order to get rid of me.
2) I worked hard under all 3 bosses, but recognized that I was intentionally being misplaced by the 3rd.
3) Under the first 2 bosses, our department flourished and advanced. Under the 3rd boss, that department eventually took the biggest loss in standardized scores in the history of our school (after I was gone). It was so bad, the head principal was fired over it.
4) This illustrates that a leader must be able to place people into key positions, regardless of liking them or not. A good leader has to be able to recognize those who are essential and talented who are under them and exploit their skills—personality and liking or disliking these people should not be an issue.

30. A good leader knows that his organization is a team effort. A sales department is not great because there is one good salesman. A restaurant is not excellent because there is one good cook there. A football team is not great simply because they have the best quarterback in the nation or because they have a coach who has gone to a dozen superbowls. A leader oversees a number of moving parts, and the success of his organization is dependent upon allowing these moving parts to have some modicum of freedom, initiative, creativity, responsibility and recognition. Charlie Brown may be a great blocker, but he has an attitude. You cannot bench Charlie Brown in every game until his attitude changes. A good coach works with him, a good coach lays some discipline on him, and sometimes that coach benches him (remember, a good leader must be flexible in the nonessentials). But, the coach is responsible for the entire organization, so part of his job is to bring Charlie around, attitude and all.
31. A good leader must be intelligent. Many of the skills listed herein require the leader to be people-smart.
32. Keeping up with the advances and changes in your discipline means that you must be teachable, as a leader. Like it or not, a person with limited intelligence will have limited authority in life.
33. Finally, leadership respects the chain of command. The leader does not go all the way down through 3 levels of leadership, to dress down the person who screws up; a good leader speaks to the person under him, and this observed problem finds its way down the chain of command.
    1) All sorts of people want to destroy the chain of command principle. They may be arrogant, they may be well-meaning, they may not understand

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authority at all. However, often a person bypasses authority because they are arrogant and they demand immediate attention. A leader can screw up his own authority by allowing the chain of command to be violated.

2) With regards to the chain of command—there are times when you go up the chain of command, but you do it person by person, in the order of their authority.

3) Unfortunately, those in the Obama cabinet are bad examples of this. Some of them went down several levels of authority to tell people in the military field what to do. Just as a private in the army does not get to air his complaints to the President of the United States, so the President of the United States does not phone a private in the field and start telling him what to do.

Obviously, leadership touches all of us. The person with doctrine in their souls (or with a good understanding of establishment principles) will be involved with leadership in one way or another. When you are under authority, then you need to exhibit authority orientation. That is, whether you like the leader over you or not, you accept their authority and operate under their authority without becoming a problem.

Revised 2017. Although I wrote much of the material above, I know that a significant portion of it came from other sources. I believe that most of these points were originally taught by R. B. Thieme, Jr.

See Bible Doctrine Resource for another approach to this doctrine.

We have studied this doctrine because Judah has stepped up and become the leader of his 10 brothers. His father Jacob did not say, "Look, it is time that you boys let Judah lead." He did not fight Reuben for this honor/responsibility. Judah just assumed this position; he led and his other brothers followed him. Judah revealed that he had true leadership ability; and his brothers recognized that and did what followers are supposed to do—they followed him.

Lesson 443: Genesis 44:14–22 — Judah Rises up to Defend Benjamin

When the book Chronicles was composed, the first chapter of genealogies naturally begins with Adam and goes through Abraham (Abraham's sons and grandsons are named as well in that chapter). This is exactly what we would expect. But, what genealogy is then covered in 1Chron. 2? Judah's! Judah became the royal line of the Hebrews and therefore, the preeminent line. By the time that Chronicles was written, the Davidic line was the established royal line of Judah.

The sons of Jacob had come to Egypt to buy grain in the second year of famine, and young Benjamin accompanied them at Joseph's insistence. The brothers enjoyed a meal

with Joseph (still not knowing his true identity) and they were sent out from Egypt, with full sacks of grain on their donkeys.

However, once the brothers were on the trail, heading back to Canaan, Joseph's servant went out after the brothers of Joseph and accused them of stealing Joseph's silver chalice. The servant then searches their bags of grain and finds the chalice in Benjamin's. Benjamin would therefore become the servant of Joseph's steward (which had been decided between the brothers and Joseph's servant before the chalice had been found).

All of this had been orchestrated by Joseph, who has not yet revealed himself to his brothers. He had his steward slip the chalice into Benjamin's grain bag, and then his steward was sent after the brothers in order to *discover* that Benjamin had *stolen the chalice*.

Joseph expected that his brother Benjamin would be brought back, and that his remaining 10 brothers would return home to Canaan with the grain, forced to convey this bad news to their father Jacob. When Simeon was kept in jail in Egypt, the remaining 9 brothers returned home with the grain, to their families. They left him in jail for a year. So, Joseph is expecting his brothers to behave in a similar fashion. They may feel badly about Benjamin being taken, but, after all, what can they do? The chalice was found in his bag. All of the men witnessed this with their own eyes. It does not matter whether they believe it or not; they saw it.

The way that this played out was brilliant. The brothers agreed that if any one of them was found with the chalice, he would become the servant of Joseph's servant (in fact, the brothers suggested that the thief be executed). Then all of the brothers witnessed with their own eyes the chalice being found in Benjamin's bag. They had no defense.

The few commentators I have read kept talking about Joseph *testing* his brothers. He is *not* testing his brothers! He already knows what they will do (or, at least, he thinks he knows what they will do). Joseph is manipulating events to give him a desired outcome. He wants to spend time with his younger brother, Benjamin; and he would expect that their father would come and protest him being taken as a servant.

Still, at this point, Joseph's brothers do not know that this prime minister of Egypt is Joseph, their brother whom they sold into slavery to Egypt.

Despite Joseph's clever manipulation of events, something that Joseph did not expect happens: instead of Benjamin alone being returned to him (under the authority of his steward), the rest of his brothers return as well, under the authority of Judah. This was completely unexpected.

Genesis 44:14 And Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, for he was still there. And they fell before him to the earth.

Of course, Joseph is still here; he knows what is going to happen. His servant is going to bring Benjamin back. But, surprisingly enough, Benjamin's older brothers come back with him. Remember, when Simeon was put into jail, all of the brothers simply took their grain and went back home. This time, things are different.

Note how this reads, *Judah and his brothers*. Now, recall, there are 3 sons that we are concerned about: Reuben, Judah, and Joseph. Reuben, by his lack of action when it was needed, is ruled out as being the true head of the family (after his father Jacob). Levi and Simeon have done nothing of note since Gen. 34; and their actions in that chapter eliminated them from being preeminent in the line of Jacob (by order of age, Simeon and Levi are brothers 2 and 3).

Judah, the 4th-born, has assumed leadership over his brothers; and his brothers have returned with him to Joseph. No doubt, some of them said, "Look, if we go back and complain, that Prime Minister is going to make us his slaves as well." We can speculate as to the back-and-forth discussion, but what happened is undeniable—Judah assumed leadership over his brothers and he led them back to Egypt.

Genesis 44:15 And Joseph said to them, "What deed is this that you [all] have done? Do you [all] not know that one like me can certainly divine?"

I believe at this point, Joseph did not know that his brothers were going to return; the steward, under Joseph's direction, gave the brothers an easy out. They had offered that the thief should be executed and they would all become his slaves. The steward said, "You do not all need to become slaves; I will simply take the guilty man back with me as a slave." So, they had an out, but they did not take it. I guarantee you that this threw Joseph off his game.

Initially, in this conversation between Joseph and his brothers, Joseph appears to think that his servant did not explain the options carefully enough. Joseph will reassert those options. "The man who stole my chalice will stay as my servant; the rest of you may leave," is what he will say. No doubt, Joseph is thinking, "Why didn't my servant make these options more clear?"

Joseph continues the ruse, looking to see what the brothers will do. He asks them, "What have you done? Surely you know that I am able to know these things? You cannot steal from me and expect to get away with it." If you recall the verb *divine* that Joseph used back in v. 5, he uses it again here in v. 15 twice.

Joseph no doubt expected for the brothers to simply return to Canaan. He is somewhat surprised that they are all here (that is not outright stated; that is my interpretation). Remember, they previously left Simeon behind to spend a year in jail. His brothers thought it over and decided, "Okay, that seems fair;" and they left Simeon behind. They made that decision with Simeon, realizing that the Prime Minister could throw them all into jail.

However, this time, two things are different: (1) the brothers return, and plead for Benjamin's life and freedom. (2) They do not all speak at once; Judah, their leader, speaks for them. Judah led them back to Joseph's home and Judah did all of the talking.

Also, story-wise, what Judah says gives us the background from Judah's perspective. I have observed on many occasions what a marvelous narrative this is—well, this aspect of the narrative is also quite remarkable. Judah will bring us up to date of what has happened in his remarks to Joseph.

Genesis 44:16a And Judah said, "What will we say to my lord?

Is it not fascinating that Judah is the one who speaks up and responds to Joseph?

Throughout these few chapters, 3 brothers are identified as speaking: Reuben, Judah and Joseph (the last time Reuben was identified as the speaker was Gen. 42:22, 37). When the others speak, they are simply identified as *the brothers*.

This time, we do not have *the brothers* speaking. Before, 3 or 4 brothers (or more) would all begin speaking, each man putting in his two cents worth. Not this time. One man speaks—Judah. He does all the speaking; he speaks for all of them. The brothers followed him back to Joseph's city; and they allow him to speak for them. Let me suggest to you that no one knows what Judah is about to say; and Joseph, who has so carefully orchestrated circumstances up to this point, will be surprised and moved by all that Judah has to say.

Genesis 44:16a And Judah said, "What will we say to my lord? What will we speak? Or how will we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants."

Judah accepts the guilt without admitting the guilt. "I don't get why or how this happened, but you caught us red-handed; and we have no explanation for what you have found." Judah concludes them all guilty. "God has found out the iniquity of your servants," he says. None of the other brothers did anything wrong; yet, because they are related to Benjamin, his sin falls upon all of their shoulders.

Judah renews and acknowledges the subservience of his brothers to Joseph.

Judah and the other brothers saw what happened. The steward checked each and every sack, and the last sack that he came to—Benjamin's—had the silver chalice in it. An investigation does not get much more clear cut than that. No one of them can believe it, but there is was—they all saw it with their own eyes.

We have all seen the courtroom drama where everything is stacked against the defendant, and it appears that he has no defense; and yet his defense lawyer stands up and changes that entire perception. Judah is about to do this, but even Joseph, as brilliant as he is, will not see where Judah is going.

Genesis 44:16b Behold, we are my lord's servants, both we and he also with whom the cup is found."

Judah appears to have offered himself and his other brothers as slaves to Joseph. He seems to be saying more than simply acknowledging Joseph's authority. The statement *"Behold, we are your servants"* can be understood in two ways: (1) Judah is saying, "This is Egypt, you are Prime Minister, and so we are under your authority." That would be a general observation that Judah makes, indicating that he recognizes Joseph's authority. Or, (2) "You found the chalice with us; so we have all returned to become your servants." This second approach is much more specific and presents all of the brothers as having sinned. "His sin is our sin."

When Joseph hears this, he assumes that his own servant did not make the options clear to the brothers. He has a ready response:

Genesis 44:17a And he [Joseph] said, "Be it far from me that I should do so."

Jacob appears to be offering himself and his brothers as Joseph's servants. Joseph responds by saying, "That's not what I wanted or expected. I am not going to take you all as my servants."

Here is what I think is going on in Joseph's mind. His steward was supposed to peel Benjamin away from his brothers and bring him back alone. This is what Joseph instructed his steward to do; this is what his steward tried to do. Joseph did not expect to have all of his brothers return. What he thinks is going on, at first, is, his steward had not been clear enough in talking to the brothers; so Joseph first just attempts to clarify the issue.

Genesis 44:17a-b And he [Joseph] said, "Be it far from me that I should do so. The man in whose hand the cup is found, he will be my servant."

Joseph no doubt gave explicit instructions to his house servant of what to do. His steward was to go after the brothers, accuse them of stealing Joseph's chalice, find that chalice in Benjamin's bag, and bring Benjamin back alone to be Joseph's servant. We saw when the steward and Benjamin's brothers interacted, this is what was clearly proposed.

Think about how carefully this was planned out. The brothers were on their way back. They were packed up, loaded with grain for their hungry families, and had traveled some distance out of Egypt. When Benjamin is found with the chalice and Joseph's steward demands the enslavement of Benjamin *only,* then the logical thing to do is to let Benjamin be taken and then resume their trip home—after all, they are already on their way there with the grain which they purchased. Why stop now and return?

The steward told the brothers that is how this would play out; and Joseph affirms this position by saying, "Whoever stole my cup will become my servant." In other words, "Only one man is guilty; and therefore, only one man will become my slave." So, the sons of

Jacob had an out. They saw Joseph's servant discover the silver chalice in Benjamin's bag; and he told them, there would be only one guilty person, the man who had the chalice.

The fact that Benjamin's brothers returned with Benjamin was no doubt a surprise to Joseph and this threw him off his game.

Genesis 44:17 And he [Joseph] said, "Be it far from me that I should do so. The man in whose hand the cup is found, he will be my servant. And as for you, you go in peace to your father."

Joseph makes it clear that the other men are fine; they can return to their father. Only one man is in trouble here, and that is Benjamin. He will become Joseph's servant. He will actually become Joseph's servant's servant, according to what has already been said.

Joseph did not expect his brothers to come back with Benjamin, and he makes it clear here that they are off the hook. He expected that his house steward would have made that clear to them; but here they are. Joseph tells them, "You can return in peace with your grain to your families and your father." Joseph *wants* them to return, because he knows that his father will not let this stand. Joseph is certain that Jacob will come to Egypt himself to sort this out.[49]

Lesson 444: Genesis 44:18–24 Judah's Summary of Previous Events

At this point, Judah is speaking directly to Joseph, and recounting the events which brought them to this point. He is respectful and he recognizes Joseph's authority. Judah still does not know that the prime minister standing before him is his younger brother whom he sold into slavery 2 decades previous.

Judah appears to be making an appeal to Joseph about Benjamin, who was caught with the Prime Minister's silver chalice in his bag; and therefore, subject to enslavement to Joseph. This was found while all of the brothers were on their way to return to Canaan. What Joseph expected was, since the stolen chalice was revealed to all of the brothers, and that is was undeniably in Benjamin's sack of grain, that the brothers might be unhappy that this occurred, but, logically, there was nothing that they could do. Joseph expected all of the brothers to return to Canaan, with their grain, minus brother Benjamin, plus brother Simeon (who had been in an Egyptian prison for a year). 10 brothers left Canaan for Egypt; 10 brothers will return to Canaan from Egypt. Even though this did not make sense to the brothers, there was really nothing that they could do about it—or so, this is how Joseph believed they would think.

As an aside, I want you to notice and consider something which may not have occurred to you. The youngest brother is logically the smallest and least able to defend himself, and so he must deal with his older brothers in ways other than physical confrontation. The

[49] This is my educated opinion of Joseph's motivation.

youngest brother finds out in short order that a physical confrontation every time he has a disagreement with his older brothers is not going to shake out in his favor. So, whereas, this is not a hard-and-fast rule, many younger brothers learn to use their words to manipulate their older brothers. When there are 3 or more brothers in close confines, have you ever known the youngest brother to try to stir things up between 2 older brothers, and then he sits back and watches? He manipulates them to entertain himself.

Despite Joseph's character—which is nearly unassailable—we must admit that, throughout his interaction with his brothers, he has been manipulating them. Throughout the past few chapters, they have all danced to Joseph's tune. Joseph knew what he wanted his brothers to do, and he set up events which resulted in them doing what he knew they would do.

Joseph has an end result in view at this point—he wants to separate his younger brother and his father from his brothers and reunite with them. He has not yet decided what he will do about his brothers who sold him into slavery; and so he has not yet revealed his identity to them. So Joseph has been manipulating events toward those ends.

Also, as an aside, the commentators who say that *Joseph is testing his brothers;* that is not the full story. That is not even a tenth of the story. Joseph is attempting to bypass his brothers; he is attempting to put them to the side for a time. Joseph is interested in his young brother Benjamin and in his father. Only one time has Joseph clearly tested his brothers, and that is when he gave Benjamin 5x more food than his brothers. Joseph was interested to watch their reactions. How much of that was testing and how much was simply for his own entertainment value, we don't know. He may have done that simply to justify in his own mind what he was doing. He expected to see his other brothers complain; and he would know that Benjamin was treated the same way that he had been treated. However, that did not happen.

Now Joseph watches his brothers to see how they will react. Benjamin is no doubt the favorite of their father Jacob. Will they all say, "Well, too bad, Ben. You should not have taken the cup. Best of luck. We are out of here." ? That was not a test, but what Joseph expected his brothers to do, based upon his imprisonment of Simeon. They still took their grain, bid their brother farewell, and returned to Canaan. Joseph expects them to do the same thing, and he has given them every opportunity to take that route. But that is not what they did; they returned with Judah leading them.

Because Judah and his brothers have returned, Joseph probably thinks that his steward did not make things clear, than only Benjamin was in trouble and only Benjamin had to remain in Egypt. But his steward made this very clear.

Genesis 44:18 And Judah came near him [Joseph] and said, "O my lord, pray let your servant speak a word in my lord's ears, and do not let your anger burn against your servant, for you are even as Pharaoh.

Judah moves closer to Joseph, but in a non-threatening way. Remember how one of the characteristics of a good leader was, he took responsibility for those under him? This is what Judah is doing. He is looking out for Benjamin, who is under his authority. The leader who does not assume responsibility for those under him is not a good leader.

Judah also recognizes the authority of Joseph. He understands that speaking to Joseph is like speaking to Pharaoh. He asks for permission to speak freely, hoping not to rouse the anger of Joseph. In defending Benjamin, Judah will be walking a tightrope, being careful not to offend the Prime Minister, who could throw all of them into jail.

Judah reviews what Joseph has said to them and what they said back; and how it is because of Joseph that they brought Benjamin to him.

Bear in mind that we only get the highlights of this conversation; and that all of this is repeated back and forth by a translator.

Judah is speaking one-on-one with the Prime Minister of Egypt, explaining how they have come to this point, where Benjamin, their youngest brother, is set to become the prime minister's servant. Judah asks for the Prime Minister to indulge him.

Often, when a story comes to a climax, some of the previous events are recalled, which are most pertinent to that climax. That is what is happening here. Now, I don't mean that all of this is just a story—all of this literally happened just as it says it did—but the storytelling features established 2 components of writing which come down to us today: (1) the 3rd person, omniscient point of view when telling a story (easily the most common used approach in all books, movies and television shows); and (2) the summing up of events before the *big reveal;* that is, a quick summary is provided prior to the climax. We find #2 used quite often in detective novels (or shows) and in mysteries and thrillers. All of the suspects are gathered into a room with the brilliant detective, and he recounts what has happened and how he has come to his brilliant conclusion. Remember, what we are studying was written 4000 years ago!

Genesis 44:18 And Judah came near him [Joseph] and said, "O my lord, pray let your servant speak a word in my lord's ears, and do not let your anger burn against your servant, for you are even as Pharaoh.

Joseph apparently give Judah the *go-ahead* sign. So Judah continues speak; he will simply say things that both he and Joseph know are true.

As I have done in the past, I will begin and close Judah's entire quote with quotation marks; I will not begin each new paragraph with quotation marks. This is a very extensive quotation.

Genesis 44:19 My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Do you have a father or a brother?'

Judah is speaking to Joseph; he refers to *Joseph* as *my lord,* which is a term of great respect.

Judah reminds Joseph of the circumstances in detail, not trying to justify the stealing of the cup. Judah reminds Joseph of the facts, which facts Joseph will have to agree to. "Remember, you asked us if we had a father or a brother;" and Joseph knows that he did that. What Judah will state throughout is undeniable. Judah does not color or spin any of the facts.

Joseph Converses With Judah, His Brother (Gouache on board; c. 1896-1902); by James Jacques Joseph Tissot; from the Jewish Museum, accessed May 2, 2017.

Genesis 44:20 And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one. And his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loves him.'

Judah then says, "We answered you by saying, 'Yes, we do have a father and we do have a brother; but let me tell you a bit more about their relationship.' "

Judah speaks up for Benjamin. He tells Joseph details which Joseph already knows. Judah is going to make a point, based upon Joseph's questions and demands. Joseph is the *dead brother* here, and Judah, of course, does not realize that he is actually speaking to Joseph.

Jacob, when in the east (outside of the land of Canaan), fell in love with his Uncle Laban's daughter Rachel. Even though Jacob ended up with two wives and two mistresses in the end, he only loved Rachel, but he only had two sons by her: Joseph and Benjamin (Rachel died when giving birth to Benjamin). Judah has made the assumption that his brother Joseph is deceased now (or as good as dead), and that all Jacob, his father, has left in life from the love of his life is Benjamin. In his youngest son, he could see characteristics of his wife whom he loved.

Genesis 44:21 And you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, and let me see him.'

“The only reason that Benjamin is here,” Judah explains, “is because you required that of us. He would still be back at home with his father had you not made this a requirement in order to see you again.”

Judah is implying that, it was not necessary for them to bring Benjamin. None of this had to happen. Benjamin could have remained behind with his father (which was the clear preference of their father). At this point, there would be no disagreement. Judah, obviously, has no idea as to what Joseph is doing, deliberately manipulating the situation so that Benjamin would be brought to Egypt and then kept in Egypt. Judah simply assumes that what he observes on the surface is what is actually happening.

Judah continues to recall the succession of events. He reminds Joseph (not knowing that he is Joseph) that he said his father could not go on living if he lost his son Benjamin:

Genesis 44:22 And we said to my lord, ‘The boy cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, he [the father] would die.’

Judah reminds him, “We clearly told you about this; that Benjamin cannot be taken from his father.”

Jacob has been playing favorites all of his life; and, at this point, his sons have accepted that. Particularly Judah. This is simply the way that it is, and Judah accepts that. His father has a favorite son; he understands that and is able to live with that understanding. Judah, along with the rest of his brothers, recognizes their father’s need for a son to remain at home with him. They no longer hold this against the young son, as if he has done something wrong.

He tells Joseph, “It was you who required Benjamin to come down here with us. You gave us no choice in this matter.”

Genesis 44:23 And you said to your servants, ‘Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will see my face no more.’

Judah reminds him, “You made this a requirement. Benjamin would not be here, had you not required him to be.”

Judah gives no excuse for the finding of the silver chalice. Obviously, it makes no sense to him, but he saw it being found with his own eyes. But, Benjamin being in Egypt in the first place was the choice and the requirement of the prime minister.

Judah goes into this in more detail; and you think he is going in a particular direction with his argument (that is, you think he is building up to laying the blame for everything on Joseph’s shoulders), but he will suddenly veer in another direction.

Genesis 44:24 And it happened when we came up to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.

Judah and his brothers returned home after their first time in Egypt. Simeon was left behind in jail in Egypt. They had to tell their father that Simeon was in jail and that they could not return to Egypt without their youngest brother coming with them.

"We told this to our father," Judah explains. "You told us that we had to bring our youngest brother back with us to Egypt. You gave us no alternative. We explained this to our father, but he did not want his favorite son to leave his side."

It appears that Judah is leading up to the conclusion, "All of this has come to pass because of your demands, my lord. Had you not required this of us, none of this would have happened." That is where he appears to be going in this conversation.

Lesson 445: Genesis 44:23–34 — Judah's Remarkable Offer

At this point, Judah is speaking to Joseph, the Prime Minister, summarizing what has happened thus far (not realizing, of course, that this is the brother he sold into slavery). The brothers had gone to Egypt, purchased grain, but they had to leave Simeon behind in prison because the Prime Minister, to whom Judah is speaking, believed them all to be spies. Simeon was placed in jail to insure that the brothers would all return with their youngest brother, a requirement to prove to the Prime Minister that they are indeed all brothers and not spies. We know this to be an elaborate scheme by Joseph to see his younger brother Benjamin.

What follows is a continuation of a long quotation, Judah speaking to Joseph:

Genesis 44:23–24 And you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will see my face no more.' And it happened when we came up to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.

A year later, their grain had been exhausted, and all of the families needed food again. The brothers had families, and children and they needed to be fed. As the patriarch, Jacob instructs them as to what must be done.

Genesis 44:25 And our father said, 'Go again. Buy us a little food.'

Obviously, a year passes between the events recalled in vv. 24 and 25. Judah skips over many events and conversations.

The brothers told all of this to their father; and he refused to allow them to return with Benjamin, his favorite son. Since they did not need any more grain, for a year, all of the sons remained at home. No one returned to Egypt. But, after a year, the famine persisted and Jacob's family was in dire straights once again. The family needs food again; Simeon is still in jail in Egypt and there is still the outstanding requirement that the brothers return with Benjamin in tow. As you will recall, they would either all starve or go to Egypt for more

grain. Jacob had no choice but to allow his son Benjamin to go to Egypt with his older brothers.

Genesis 44:26 And we said, 'We cannot go down. If our youngest brother is with us, we will go down, for we may not see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.'

"And this was the problem. You required that we bring Benjamin and we were starving as a family. We did not have a choice, by *your* requirements. All we wanted was to purchase grain for our families; nothing more, nothing less. It is you, sir, who required us to bring Benjamin here—much to the objection of our father."

This is a very long, continuous quotation, from vv. 18–34, when Judah recalls how they all got to this point. Apart from the words of Jacob, near this end of Genesis, where he blesses each of his sons, this is the most extensive quotation. Even though this is not proper English, I have placed the quotation marks only at the beginning and end of this lengthy quotation (and not at the beginning of each new paragraph).

When Jacob became aware that the entire family needed food, he had to be reminded that, the brothers could not return to Egypt without the youngest brother with them. If the brothers went without Benjamin, they probably would not be allowed to return; and no grain would have been brought back. Therefore, they had but one real choice, and that was for them to return to Egypt with Benjamin. Judah knew that this was their only option; and Joseph, who required this, knew that this was their only option.

All of this conveys the fact that there is no other way that this could have gone down. Because of the requirements of the prime minister, Benjamin had to come with them when the brothers returned to Egypt.

Judah continues to explain all that happened from their perspective.

Genesis 44:27 And your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons.

Now Judah relates what their father said to them. He only had two sons by his lovely wife Rachel. Rachel was the woman that Jacob loved. Despite Jacob's shortcomings (and they were legend), his relationship with Rachel is one of the great love stories of Scripture. In each of his sons, he could see his wife, which would have been of no little comfort to him.

Judah has no idea, but what he says here to Joseph is quite affecting.

Genesis 44:28 And the one went out from me, and I said, *Surely he is torn in pieces*. And I never saw him since.

One son was lost, Jacob thought. All of this time, Jacob believed his son Joseph to have been torn to pieces by a wild animal; and his sons all believed Joseph to be wasting away

as a slave in Egypt. Judah had no idea that he was speaking to Joseph (remember that Pharaoh gave Joseph an Egyptian name and that is how the brothers would have known Joseph).

I have interpreted this quotation to be Judah speaking to Joseph, telling him what their father Jacob said in vv. 27b–29. The italics above indicate what Jacob said to his sons, surmising what had happened to Joseph, his son.

Genesis 44:29 And if you take this one also from me, and mischief befall him, you will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.'

Joseph continues to recount what his father Jacob had said to them. Jacob warns that losing Benjamin would make him inconsolable. There would be nothing left for Jacob apart from death. He would have no reason for living.

Genesis 44:30 And now when I come to your servant my father, and the boy is not with us, since his life is bound up in his life,...

Judah is not concerned about himself; but he is concerned about his father. Let's briefly explore the psychology of this. It was apparently very difficult for Judah to continue with the lie that all of his brothers agreed to—that Joseph was probably killed by a wild beast, when they all knew that they had sold Joseph as a slave to Egypt. This bothered Judah to such a great extent, that he separated himself from his family for about 20 years. Bear in mind, this lie would have to be kept up every single day by every brother; and all the while, the heart of their father was hurting.

Judah knows intimately just how difficult it was for his father, day by day, to be without his favorite son, Joseph. This was a real struggle for his father, and he knew that the loss of another son would be too much for him. And all the time, Judah and his brothers had made a pact to lie to their father about what happened to Joseph, and to allow him to believe something which broke his heart (as the truth would have been far more difficult for their father to deal with).

Genesis 44:31 ...it will be, when he sees that the boy is not with us, he will die. And your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave.

Judah truly fears that his father may die, if faced with his son being detained. Or, if he does not die, he will be in such a state of misery as to be all but dead before his family.

Joseph, the prime minister, may not exactly understand why Judah is taking the lead here; or why Judah is potentially blaming himself for Benjamin going into slavery. Judah appears to recognize that and explains his position further:

Genesis 44:32 For your servant became surety for the boy to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him to you, then I will bear the blame to my father forever.'

It is Judah specifically who gave his word that he would look out for Benjamin. If anything happens to Benjamin, it is on him. That was Judah's personal assurance to his father. Judah made no excessive promises like, "Kill my children, if I return without Benjamin" (which is what Reuben said, to assure his father). Judah, instead, simply gave his father his word.

It is at this point that Judah's words and direction take an unexpected turn. We would, no doubt, expect him to simply blame the prime minister for what happened and say, "Look, none of this would have happened if you had not demanded that we bring Benjamin to you." But that is not the direction that Judah goes. That only appears to be what he is building up to.

What Judah says instead is quite disarming.

Genesis 44:33 And now please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a slave to my lord. And let the boy go up with his brothers.

Judah makes an offering now that is quite unexpected. He will remain as a slave rather than his youngest brother. "You want a slave? Please take me. Let my younger brother Benjamin return to his father."

Judah pleads with Joseph on behalf of Benjamin (a graphic). Taken from Children's Church; accessed May 9, 2017. I don't know the actual artist or origins of this illustration. It may have come from the Golden Children's Bible.

Bear in mind that this is a strong offer. Benjamin would have been an unwilling slave; and Judah would have been a willing slave. That makes a lot of difference. If things were exactly as they seem, it would be difficult to pass on this offer.

Joseph was surprised that the 10 brothers returned with Benjamin to plead his case; and this is even more surprising. Judah offers himself to Joseph as a slave instead of Benjamin. He would be a willing slave. This offer was completely unexpected.

Genesis 44:34 For how will I go up to my father, and the boy is not with me lest perhaps I see the evil that will find my father?"

Joseph closes out by explaining, "Look, I cannot return to my father without Benjamin. Since that is clearly the case, please allow me to remain here in his stead. I will be your slave."

Obviously, this is analogous to the Lord Jesus Christ dying for His brothers, in their stead.

Judah's actions are not completely altruistic. No doubt, he has felt guilt about selling Joseph into slavery over 20 years ago. Judah liked women, and now he has a wife that he does not have sexual relations with (Tamar) (I think this is by Judah's choice[50]).

However, it is the type, rather than the motivations, which is important to us. Judah is a type of Christ, offering himself up for the life of his youngest brother. This sets Judah not just as the leader of his brothers; but as a Christ figure as well. For this reason, the line of the Messiah will go through Judah.

There is no reason for this to stop here and begin a new chapter. We continue this conversation between Joseph and his brothers in Gen. 45.

Lesson 446: Genesis 44:33–34 45:1–4 Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brothers

Just as, there was no simple reason for there to be a chapter break between Gen. 43 and 44; so there is no real reason to break between chapters 44 and 45. All of Joseph's brothers have returned to his home (presumably) in Egypt; and Judah is speaking directly to Joseph. Right in the middle of their conversation, we start with a new chapter. Actually, Judah has come to the end of what he had to say, and now Joseph will respond to what Judah had to say, which is the beginning of Gen. 45.

There is an organizational break here, which would explain why the chapters are divided in this way. Whoever divided up the chapters (or whatever group did this) considered primarily organization when it comes to most of the final chapters in Genesis (most of the final chapters of Genesis represent a flowing, continuing narrative, not unlike the Flood narrative which was spread over 3 chapters[51]).

In previous chapters of Genesis, there were dramatically different topics because the material which was recorded was primarily episodic. So, many chapters may have been given over to Abraham; but we drop in on his life for an incident, and then, sometimes,

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[50] Scripture tells us that Judah and Tamar never had relations after he assumed responsibility for her; but we are not told *why* they did not have relations. On the one hand, Judah was ready to have Tamar executed (that would certainly have cooled her ardor); and on the other hand, Judah was clearly worried that relations with Tamar could result in his death.

[51] Interestingly enough, the flood narrative was a very large chiasmos.

many years pass; and we drop in on his life for a separate, often unrelated, incident. So a chapter follows 1 or 2 or 3 incidents in Abraham's life; and then whoever is making these decisions decides, *time for a new chapter*. However, we have nearly a continuous narrative for these final 10 or so chapters of Genesis.

The first half of Gen. 43 takes place in Canaan, where the family of Jacob recognize that they are out of food, and that this year will be another bad year for growing crops. So, with quite a bit of discussion, Jacob finally agrees to allow his son, Benjamin, to go down to Egypt with his brothers, as required by the prime minister of Egypt. Gen. 43:1–14

From Gen. 43:15 through Gen. 45:24, the brothers are in Egypt interacting with the prime minister, who is Joseph, their brother (and they do not know it is Joseph). For a brief time, the brothers took their grain and head back to Canaan, but Joseph's steward went after them, alleging that some one of them took the prime minister's silver chalice. When the chalice was found with Benjamin, he had to return to Egypt. All of his brothers went back with him (although that was not necessary). Gen. 44:3–14

What appears to be the case is, this extensive, continuous narrative could be broken up into smaller pieces, each of which could be organized into a chiasmos. So, on the one hand, most of the chapter breaks seem arbitrary; and on the other hand, they appear to coincide with the chiasmi which could be applied to each section.

To remind you, a chiasmos is a way of organizing a narrative, where the first section matches the final section; the second section matches the second to the last section, etc. This is the sort of thing one would do in order to make a narrative easier to memorize.

William Ramey's Chiasmos of Genesis 45:1–28

A Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers (1-4)
B Joseph's address to his brothers and God's provision (5-8)
C Joseph's invitation (9-13)
X Joseph embraces his brothers (14-15)
C' Pharaoh's invitation (16-21a)
B' Joseph's provisions and address to his brothers (21b-24)
A' Brothers reveal to their father that Joseph is alive (25-28)

From https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html accessed September 19, 2015.

There may be a different chiasmos for this chapter; check bible.literarystructure.info for other approaches. This particular chiasmos looks pretty good to me.

Up to this point in time, Joseph had interacted with his brothers on several occasions, but chose not to reveal his identity to them. Whereas, Joseph demonstrates no animosity toward his brothers; he also is not ready to forge with them a renewed relationship. Through manipulation, Joseph would have kept Benjamin in Egypt; and that would have

caused his father to come to Egypt—I have deduced that this is what Joseph wanted. Whether or not that involved his other brothers had not yet been decided.

Let's review the last couple verses of Gen. 44, which take us into Gen. 45:

Genesis 44:33–34 [Judah is speaking to the prime minister of Egypt, pleading for Benjamin's freedom]: "And now please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a slave to my lord. And let the boy go up with his brothers. For how will I go up to my father, and the boy is not with me lest perhaps I see the evil that will find my father?"

What Judah did here was completely unexpected; Joseph had no idea that this is the direction that he was going in. It appeared with all the Judah said, that he was going to come to the conclusion, "All of this is *your* fault, my lord!" But, instead, Judah offers up himself in the place of his brother to serve Joseph as a slave. This caught Joseph by surprise.

Genesis 45:1a Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him. And he cried, "Cause every man to go out from me!"

The word *cried* simply means that Joseph gave a loud command.

Joseph asks for all of his staff to leave, and now he is alone with his brothers. What Judah has said has touched Joseph greatly. That he would give up his life for his brother suggests that Judah has changed dramatically. That his other brothers returned with Benjamin to protest or to stand in unison with Benjamin is also quite affecting. Joseph had no idea that this is how his brothers were today. These are the same brothers who coldly sold Joseph into slavery because they did not like the favoritism shown him by their common father, Jacob.

Genesis 45:1 Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him. And he cried, "Cause every man to go out from me!" And no man stood before him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers.

No man stood before him, means that all of Joseph's servants and guards removed themselves from his home. Joseph is alone with his brothers and he finally tells them who he is actually is.

It will become clear that Joseph really did not know how his brothers would react. He may have guessed that they would run up and hug him and apologize and cry a lot; but that was not their immediate response.

I suspect that Joseph reveals his identify, and his brothers just stand there stunned. They do not run up to him; they are simply stunned by this turn of events.

Joseph Maketh Himself Known to His Brethren (a painting), James Jacques Joseph Tissot, French, 1836-1902, from PinInterst; accessed November 30, 2016. The Old Testament, c. 1896-1902.

Genesis 45:2 And he wept aloud. And the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

Nevertheless, Joseph's weeping was so loud that he could be heard outside of his house.

It appears that Joseph began weeping before he revealed his identify to his brothers; and the circumstances must have caused the brothers no little confusion. This head of state standing before them first dismisses his personal staff and armed guard; and now, he starts crying.

Up to this point in time, Joseph had been in control of himself and his emotions; however, he was unprepared for the offer that Judah made. He really did not expect the 10 brothers to return with Benjamin (after all, they did not remain there with Simeon; they got out of there as quickly as they could). All of this moved him; and he could see how much his brothers had changed—particularly Judah. You may recall that earlier, Joseph became aware that his brothers were guilt-ridden for what they had done to Joseph; but it is one thing to regret past actions; it is altogether something else to make fundamental changes in one's life. Joseph recognizes that his brothers are now different.

As discussed before, I don't believe that Joseph was testing his brothers throughout these past chapters; and finally, with this test, they passed, and he revealed himself to them (this appears to be the opinion of many commentators). I believe that Joseph was simply manipulating the situation so that Benjamin would be left behind with him in Egypt; and that their father would come to Egypt to protest. He seems, up to this point, to be up in the air about how to deal with his remaining brothers. However, what happened here was unexpected, revelatory, and therefore, Joseph decided to make himself known to his brothers.

Genesis 45:3 And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" And his brothers could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence.

Joseph's brothers have been wracked with guilt since he was sold into slavery; and since they handed over his bloodied tunic to his father, destroying the heart of their father.

The brothers were clearly afraid of the man who stood before them; and saying, "I am Joseph" did nothing to comfort them. How many of them muttered, "Oh, crap" under his breath after that?

Joseph has all of the power at this point, and he could order that they be executed, if he so desired. Remember, he had endured a decade of unfair treatment. A lesser man would want revenge.

No doubt, Joseph had been thinking about his relationship to his brothers for a long time. He had forgiven them long ago. But, you can forgive someone and not want to interact with them regularly after that. You may forgive a family member for a gross faux pas, but that does not mean that you will hang out with the person except during Christmas and Thanksgiving. So, Joseph, when telling his brothers, adjust to this new set of circumstances quickly and easily; but his brothers are taken aback by this sudden revelation.

His brothers are processing all that has happened. They have not even begun to piece it all together yet. Just moments ago, they were upset that Benjamin had been brought back as a thief to serve out a life sentence as a slave in Egypt; and now, the prime minister tells them that he is Joseph, their brother; and he loudly cries before them.

The brothers are no doubt somewhat frightened and taken aback. Obviously, in their minds, they would be reviewing the events of the past year or so and all of the interactions with this man. It is clear that they are unsure of what to say. Furthermore, each man is processing this information individually, thinking back to the day that they decided as a group to sell Joseph into slavery, and what their part was and what they said.

No doubt, some of Joseph's brothers expect him to say, "And now, it's payback time, my brothers! I have thought about this for a long time!" After all, people often make judgments of others based upon their own character; and their opinion of what you might do. These judgments reveal what they themselves would do, if the circumstances are reversed.

These brothers observed the great sadness of their father for the past 20+ years, and no doubt, some of them thought back as to what they had done and said; how they could have done things differently.

Genesis 45:4 And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near me." And they came near. And he said, "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.

Joseph says it a second time, because they are just standing there, probably frightened of him, not really knowing exactly how to react to him. No doubt some of them are trying to take this in; others are looking at his face, trying to determine if this is actually true.

The brothers inch forward, closer to him; partially out of fear, as this could be seen as an order from Prime Minister Joseph. None of them is able to speak, including Judah.

Lesson 447: Genesis 45:4–7 Joseph Tries to Calm His Brothers (Part I)

Joseph, after selling grain to his brothers, sent out his servant (and probably some military types) to arrest whichever brother stole his silver chalice. The chalice turned out to be in Benjamin's bag of grain, so he was brought back. Rather than simply continue with their trek back to Canaan, the brothers also returned with Benjamin (which was unexpected[52]). Judah, who has assumed leadership over his brothers, has been speaking directly to Joseph, recounting how they had all come to this point.

Then Judah did what was not expected. He offered himself up as a slave instead of Benjamin. Joseph was so emotionally moved and he could not keep his identify secret any longer. He revealed to his brothers that he is Joseph, the young brother that they sold into slavery.

Up until this time, Joseph has been speaking through a translator; and that allowed him to both keep his distance and keep up his personage as being simply a strict royal Egyptian with great power. Here, he turns directly to his brothers, after telling all of his servants to leave (which would have included his translator), and he speaks directly to them in the Hebrew language, in his own voice. Although we are not told all of this in the Biblical narrative exactly, it is a logical deduction that we would make.[53]

Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brothers (a graphic); from pinimg; accessed May 24, 2017. I could not locate the original artist for this.

Genesis 45:4 And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near me." And they came near. And he said, "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.

You can just see these 11 men, inch closer to Joseph; but with no little apprehension. He is, quite obviously, a man who has the authority over their lives. At his word, they could be

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[52] That this was unexpected, is not specifically stated, but fits in well with the context.

[53] The translator, for instance, is only specifically named one time; but there is no reason to assume that Joseph ever spoke directly to his brothers without a translator until this point in time (apart from the time he told Benjamin, "Bless you, my son"). Since he is revealing himself to his brothers, and since he knows their language, it would make little sense for him to use a translator to say any of this.

taken into custody and jailed. So they heard the words, “Please come near me,” and they responded by moving closer—but only because he had this great authority, not because they were suddenly put at ease.

Hearing that this man before them is Joseph would have placed all of these men into a sort of mental isolation from the rest of what Joseph says. They are no doubt looking him over to see if it is true; and yet, they all seem to know it is true. They are thinking about their actions which put Joseph into slavery, and they no doubt thought, each one of them, what they had said and what he heard them say.

As soon as Joseph said, “I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt;” let me suggest that these particular thoughts filled the minds of his brothers: (1) they examine Joseph, think about his voice, his mannerisms, and relate this back to the Joseph they knew as a 17 year old kid. (2) They ask themselves if this could be possibly true. (3) They search their minds for clues as to Joseph’s actions and words, and if this should have revealed to them his actual identity. (4) They no doubt thought about their actions that placed him into slavery in the first place; and the words that they said; and the words that Joseph would have heard and associated with them. Given whatever set of circumstances that had occurred over these 20+ years, no doubt Joseph remembered what each brother said and what his contribution was to putting him into slavery. No doubt, each brother remembered what he had said, and probably thought about it on many occasions. (5) The brothers thought about their father, who had been heartbroken to hear that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal (the false cover story); and how they had lied to him all of these years. (6) They wondered if their father would realize that they had lied to him all of this time. My point is, while Joseph is talking in vv. 4–13, they are not necessarily hearing everything that he is saying to them. These brothers have a great deal to think about, and they cannot turn off all these thoughts while Joseph is speaking. Therefore, bear in mind that, while Joseph is speaking, the brothers do not hear every word of what he has to say, they are very worried about what has happened, they are thinking of a half-dozen different things; and, to top it off, these 11 brothers probably fear for their lives right now.

I don’t know that Joseph realizes just how lost in thought each of his brothers are (except perhaps for Benjamin), but he presents divine viewpoint to them, hoping to calm their obvious apprehension.

Genesis 45:5 And now do not be grieved, nor angry with yourselves that you [all] sold me here. For God sent me before you to preserve life.

Immediately, Joseph begins speaking divine viewpoint to them. Joseph tells them not to be upset in any way; not to be angry with themselves. Joseph does much more than present them with the words, “What you did is just water under the bridge.”

Despite their multiple shortcomings, these brothers had all believed in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; they knew that God had made promises to them regarding the land of Canaan; but they did not appear to have a close walk with God.

This verse also suggests that it was his brothers who sold him into slavery (the text where that happened was not at all clear, as the subject of the verb was not specified).[54] However, here, Joseph clearly places the responsibility for selling him on his brothers; but as a part of the plan of God. Joseph is there in Egypt for a reason; and he would preserve the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob because of the circumstances of his life. God made the circumstances fall into place exactly as they did. All Joseph had to do was to go along with it. This required him to have divine viewpoint and to be able to accept injustice in his own life (on several occasions).

In our study of the men, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it became clear that, whether they obeyed the direction of God or not, God's plan still moved full speed ahead. Abraham mostly obeyed God; and Jacob mostly disobeyed God—yet their volition was never an impediment to God's plan. Jacob was so difficult and hardheaded, that God once wrestled with him all night, and permanently sprained his hip, so that he would remember how much he fought against God. Yet, even with that, God's plan moved forward, in Jacob's life and in the destiny of all his sons.

What Joseph's brothers had done to him was absolutely wrong, yet God took their bad intent and their wrong behavior and turned it into a good result. God has laid out His perfect plan before us in the Bible—we even know what will happen in the future. Your bad or good decisions will not change that plan. God never looks down on us and remarks, "Oh my gosh, that Charlie Brown has gone on a *sin-binge;* now I have to recalibrate everything!" No. God knows all that will happen, our every good act and our every bad, and He has His plan worked out, regardless of our successes or failures. Rom. 8:28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (ESV) If anyone is called according to God's purpose, it would be Jacob and his 12 sons.

Application: You, on the other hand, are fully able to screw up your own life; you have the ability to turn your life into a worthless succession of 70 (or, however many) years. God gives us that free will; and He removes some people from this life (via the sin unto death) because of their negative volition toward His plan.

Back to the scene before us:

These brothers are clearly afraid of Joseph, worried that he might lash out against them in revenge. In communicating divine viewpoint to them, Joseph is attempting to get all of his brothers on the same page. Divine viewpoint will explain why Joseph is not out for revenge. Divine viewpoint explains how they all got to this point in time, and why everything is okay. "God sent me here before you to preserve our lives." As long as the brothers can hear and understand divine viewpoint, then their fears will be lessened.

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[54] This could be Joseph's shorthand for the events which took place. Who exactly sold who to whom is somewhat murky. Although this appears to be definitive; it could be an abbreviated view of the events.

Now, it will still take time for the brothers to catch up to this, mentally and emotionally. For the most part, based upon what we have observed, these brothers are not known for having divine viewpoint. They are not known for asking the question, *what does God want me to do in this situation?* Judah, based upon what we have studied, is perhaps the closest to having some divine viewpoint. We do not know enough about the others. Most of what we do know does not cause us to give them the benefit of the doubt.

Joseph continues to explain what the future holds:

Genesis 45:6 For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be no plowing nor harvest.

Joseph tells them what to expect in the future. He knew himself that there would be 7 years of famine; but his brothers were not aware of this. They simply knew that they had suffered through two years of drought and no crops (I have assumed throughout that the overall problem has been drought).

Joseph explains to them that they have come to him twice because they had suffered two years of no harvest; and there are still five bad years to come.

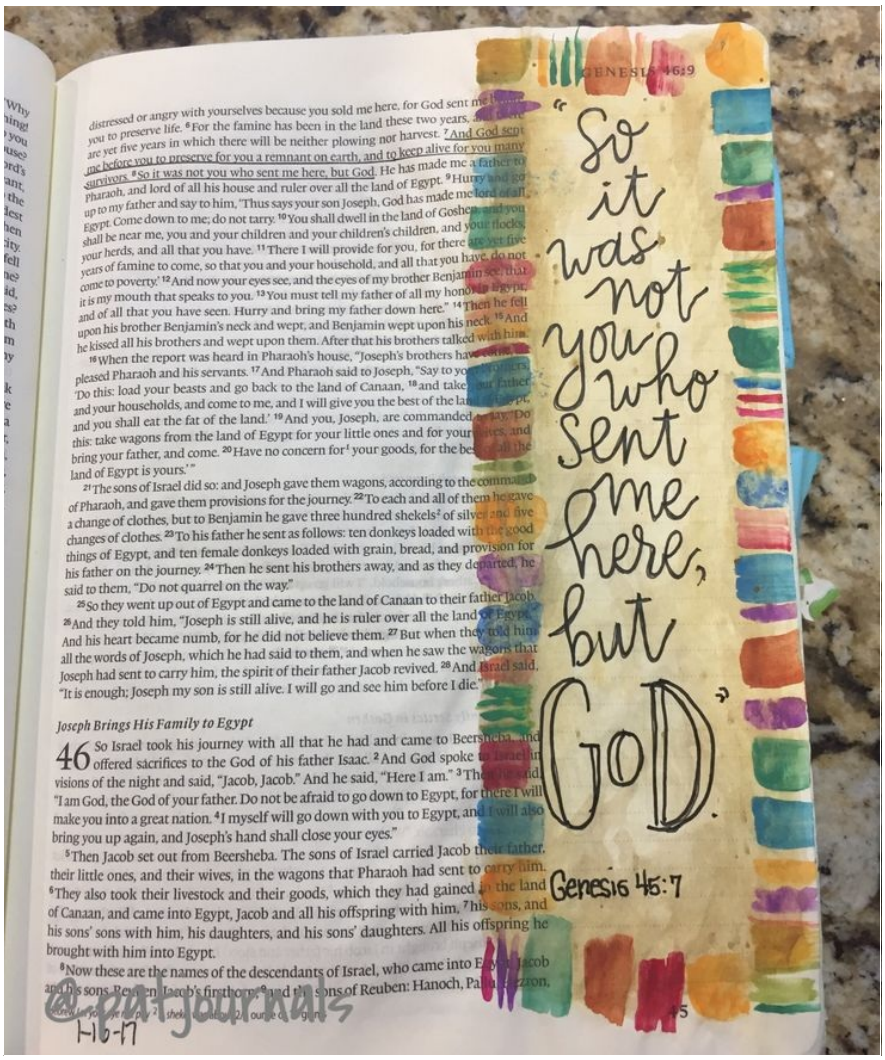
Genesis 45:7 And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

Joseph explains that God was involved in his life; and God took what they did and He used it to advance His plan and purpose.

Joseph fully understands what God has done in his life and what God is doing with his life. He did not require a vision or some explanation from God to understand this. This is the viewpoint of the mature believer throughout most periods of time.

Application: We have all suffered injustices throughout our lives. People have said and done things which impacted our lives negatively and unfairly so. Most of the time, there is no fixing this, although, many people spend much of their lives trying to correct injustices done to them, often receiving very little personal satisfaction as a result. These acts of injustice against you often have a purpose—sometimes a very important purpose. They sometimes change your path or your direction. You may not appreciate it at the time; you may rail against what has happened to you, but it is God's hand guiding these events, moving His plan for your life ahead.

Genesis 46:7 (possibly by Pat D) (a graphic); from Pinterest; accessed June 5, 2017.



What Joseph's brothers had done to him was obviously wrong; but God used their actions to further His plan. The Jewish people have to be kept separate from all other peoples; they have to be isolated until they are able to take the piece of land that God has given them.

There was very little that was amazing or spectacular in Joseph's journey from Canaan to becoming prime minister of Egypt, apart from the starting point and the end. Joseph was careful to preserve his own integrity. He did not cut corners but one time. But, God did not do spectacular miracles that everyone would talk about for years. God gave 3 men 4 dreams; and Joseph was given the ability to interpret those dreams—that was the most spectacular thing which occurred in Joseph's journey to this point in time.

Yet, putting aside the spectacular events (which were not all that spectacular), everything had to be timed just right; the people and places where Joseph was, had to be determined by God. First of all, Joseph needed to work for someone very high up in the Egyptian government to begin with. Through this assignment, Joseph learned Egyptian customs and the proper Egyptian language (not everyone would speak proper Egyptian). Since his master had a lofty government position, when Joseph was put into jail, it would be a jail where possible revolutionaries are placed—those who might be thought to be in opposition to the present Egypt administration. This allowed Joseph is able to converse with the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, both of whom had come out of the Pharaoh's administration, and both men were suspected of being traitors. In this jail, Joseph correctly interpreted each man's dream with the result that each man's future was foretold by their

dream, as per Joseph's interpretation. The man who remained alive, later remembered Joseph and his ability to correctly interpret dreams when Pharaoh had two dreams that no one else could interpret. Timing was everything. God's timing is perfect. Every good circumstance, every bad circumstance, every good decision and every bad decision led Joseph to stand before Pharaoh at just the right time. God was no doubt involved in the timing, the places and the people. However, this is nothing which could be seen as miraculous.

Now, because Joseph had been placed into these various circumstances, he not only received training in the language of the Egyptians, but in their customs as well. When he spoke to Pharaoh, he knew the proper demeanor to assume; and the proper look that he should have. He knew how to speak to Pharaoh directly without an interpreter. This is one of the many ways that God prepared Joseph. So it was not just timing; but training as well. Timing and training, people and places—all of this led Joseph to this point.

Application: In the present day, God gives all of His people guidance, timing, and training. To access all of this at the right time to achieve the maximum benefit, we need only learn the Word of God. God provides the ability and the teacher (s) for that; as long as you have the positive volition.

We have no idea how Joseph had been taught divine viewpoint. If I had to guess, it was a matter of hearing, learning and repeating the Word of God as it existed in this time (which would be most of Genesis and the book of Job). He would have heard this from Jacob and perhaps from one of his mothers (his actual mother had died in childbirth; but there remained Leah and two personal servants—and it may have been Deborah, Jacob's mother's personal servant). How and why Joseph developed divine viewpoint and his other brothers, for the most part, did not seem to—is not something which is recorded in Scripture. But he clearly understood that he was in God's plan; and that all the good and bad in his life led him to this point.

Lesson 448: Genesis 45:4–10 Joseph Tries to Calm His Brothers (Part II)

When Joseph's brothers left Egypt, Joseph sent his servant out to arrest Benjamin for stealing his silver chalice. The servant did so, telling the other brothers that they were free to go with the grain in their sacks. However, this time, under Judah's leadership, they returned to Egypt and Judah spoke directly to Joseph. In fact, Judah offered himself up as a substitute for Benjamin, causing Joseph to well up with great emotion.

As a result, Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers. He tries to communicate divine viewpoint to them, but his brothers have their heads filled with many disparate thoughts, so that concentrating on what Joseph is telling them is quite difficult.

Gen. 45:4–7 So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before

you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. (ESV)

Joseph understands the succession of events which brought them to this place. He sees God's hand in all that has happened, so he is able to speak to his brothers with divine viewpoint rather than with rancor.

Primarily, we have two evidences that Joseph had received divine training of some sort: (1) he clearly possesses divine viewpoint and has learned to accept his various fates (for the most part; with one slight deviation where he trusted the chief cupbearer to free him); and (2) Joseph is obviously keen to add his own story to the divine narrative. This second point was not egotism on Joseph's part, but an eagerness to share what God had done in his life. Who could not help but share such a grand journey?

Application: We have, as individual believers, far more than Joseph had. We have the complete Word of God; and with divine viewpoint, we understand that God's guidance and timing are perfect. The mature believer is able to think back on various circumstances in his life and recognize God's hand, God's guidance, and how all events, good and bad, have led him to this point in his life. If you are a believer with doctrine in your soul, you actually know if you are in the right place and doing the right thing (or not).

Genesis 45:8a And now you [all] did not send me here, but God.

In the Hebrew, the person and number of the subject is put into the verb. So the verb *to send* is a 2nd person masculine plural subject. On top of this, Joseph throws in the 2nd person masculine plural pronoun, which emphasizes this point. "You all—you, you and you—you did not send me here; God did!"

Joseph clearly understands that it is God Who orchestrated all that has happened. He is where he is today because of what God has done. Joseph has God's thinking in his soul.

Application: This ought to be something which every believer understands (and obviously, not all believers do). We have a specified amount of time in this life; and we have specific gifts, in the Church Age. God has brought certain events to pass in our lives; and He will continue to do so throughout our lives. We don't live in a random universe; the events which take place in our lives are not simply by chance. We are where we are because of God; we are what we are, as a result of our volition and our relationship with the words of God.

Joseph fully understands. He cannot be angry with his brothers, even though it is their sinfulness which placed him into slavery. This was all a part of God's plan; and Joseph understands that it all had to take place. By this unique set of circumstances, he will preserve the lives of his family.

Joseph now stands before his 11 brothers, and he has revealed to them who he is and that God did all that He did in order to preserve their family. There are no hard feelings; there is no revenge being plotted by Joseph. His brothers will, for many years, be suspicious of Joseph, thinking that, at any time, he might turn against them because of what they did to him.

Because Joseph senses that his brothers are not catching on, he continues to explain. In doing so, Joseph reveals how well he is oriented to God's plan and his place in God's plan (Gen. 50:15).

Joseph's brothers are disturbed; they have just found out that the young man they sold into slavery stands before them, with the power over life and death. Joseph is attempting to communicate divine viewpoint to them, to reduce their fears; however, most of them are still thinking about the first words that he said ("I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into slavery").

Genesis 45:8b And He [God] has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler over all the land of Egypt.

"Look at me," Joseph is saying. "God gave me this power and authority in the land of Egypt. This did not happen because of a series of random events."

Application: Believers who grow spiritually, can see God's hand in their lives; and God's guidance and His overruling will. The believer in Jesus Christ, who is oriented to life, can say with Joseph, "You [all] did not bring me to this point; you did not place me here; but God did." Like everyone else, I have personally suffered injustices; I have faced circumstances that were beyond my control. You can either fight them or you can recognize that this is God working in your life with a predetermined and specific purpose. Your life is not random and God's guidance and timing are always in play.

Application: I have, at various times in my life, looked back at various events which took me from point A to point B. There is no doubt a divine hand in all of it. Like anyone else, there have been events which were difficult or unpleasant; and I could choose to fight those events or to accept them. When something is out of your hand, then you accept it.

Application: One thing which will free up your time and thinking is to realize that, you do not have to fight every injustice perpetrated against you. Many times, you can simply let it go.

Genesis 45:8b And He [God] has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Let's look at some of the specific phrases:

> Gill combines the opinions of several commentators to explain what it means for Joseph to be a *father to Pharaoh*: *[This means] to be a teacher to him, as*

> *Aben Ezra, that is, to be his counsellor, to advise him well in all things, as a father his children; or to be his partner and patron, as Jarchi, to have a share with him in power and authority, and to be reckoned as a father to him, see Gen. 41:43; and to provide for him and the welfare of his kingdom, as parents do for their children.*[55]

This understanding would imply that Joseph revealed his God to Pharaoh and that Pharaoh believed in the Revealed God. Further, just as Joseph is explaining divine will to his brothers; no doubt, he explained divine viewpoint to Pharaoh as well. The men would have interacted with one another; and Joseph would have been giving Pharaoh timely reports (weekly, monthly, whatever)—either directly or through a subordinate. What Joseph did would have reflected God's point of view; and it is reasonable to suppose that Joseph needed to explain aspects of this to Pharaoh now and again.

Recall that only Joseph, in all of Egypt, was able to interpret Pharaoh's dreams; at this point, it is clear to Pharaoh that Joseph's interpretation was unquestionably on target (they are in year 9 of a 14 year prophecy). And Joseph, from the outset, credited his God with the interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams. Pharaoh, by accepting Joseph's interpretation of his dreams, was, in essence, accepting the God of Joseph as well. Salvation requires a little more faith in the Revealed God (in our era, Jesus Christ) than no faith at all.

Joseph was *lord of Pharaoh's house; Lord of his house* cannot be understood in the sense as being the man over Pharaoh's household (that is, his head servant); as Joseph was not in that position (he was the head servant in Potiphar's home). Here, it makes more sense to understand Pharaoh's house as his land, his country, his people—and that Joseph reigned over them.[56] Joseph is the #2 man in all of Egypt (as Pharaoh originally proclaimed). He has retained that position for 9 years, suggesting that he has performed honestly and with integrity.

Quite obviously, Joseph was *ruler over all the land of Egypt*. We may understand this phrase to be explanatory of the preceding phrase. The fact that Joseph preserved Egypt and the lives of his family was all a matter of God's will.

Joseph could have spent every waking moment railing against his fate; looking for every possible chance to escape—but he remained, moved up among the family of servants, and behaved with great honor, circumspection and responsibility. He learned the Egyptian language, Egyptian protocol, Egyptian customs, and the Egyptian look. God, through this series of events, was training Joseph for great things. Rather than rebel against his fate, Joseph embraced it, and grew spiritually and appropriately for the Egyptian culture in which he found himself.

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[55] Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible;* from e-Sword, 1Kings 45:8.

[56] In the Bible, the word *house* is used in a number of different ways. In Psalm 23:6, David speaks of dwelling the house of the Lord forever. This does *not* mean that God has a brick and mortar house, and that David is going to live there.

Genesis 45:8 And now you [all] did not send me here, but God [did]. And He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Joseph cannot hold a grudge against his brothers because he is where he is because God placed him here. Had his brothers treated him with great respect and protection, God would have still preserved this family—and probably through Joseph in the same manner. You may wonder, *how could that have happened?* Joseph was a young man who walked through many places alone, on orders from his father. So, even had Reuben's scheme worked and he released Joseph before he was sold into slavery; who is to say that this could not have occurred in a different way? Perhaps, while traveling alone, Joseph is overpowered and taken and sold as a slave by someone else?

My point is, God has a plan for every single believer—particularly now, as all believers are indwelt by God the Holy Spirit. Therefore, God may lead us in directions which we do not always embrace.

Genesis 45:9 Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'So says your son Joseph, *God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me, do not wait*.

The Bible is famous for a quote within a quote within a quote. Joseph is speaking to his brothers; he tells them what do say to their father (a quote within a quote). *This is what your son Joseph says,* is then followed by all of the text in italics, which is another quote (quoting specifically what Joseph wants to tell his father), in a quote, in a quote.

They are to tell their father of Joseph's exalted position in Egypt; and that Jacob needs to come to him in Egypt without delay.

What Joseph wants his brothers to say to Jacob, on his behalf, continues in vv. 10–11.

Genesis 45:10 *And you* [singular] *will dwell in the land of Goshen, and you will be near to me, you and your sons and your sons' sons, and your flocks, and your herds, and all that you have*.

Joseph asks for his brothers to speak to his father on his behalf, to invite all of them to Egypt (but here, this invitation is specifically directed towards his father, Jacob). However, this invitation extends to Jacob's sons and his grandsons as well (his *sons and sons' sons*).

Joseph is aware of his brothers' families. Recall that, when he accused them of being spies, he used this accusation to interrogate them, which interrogation would have included information about their families (we were not privy to most of the interrogation, but we know that they included personal information, which led to the fact that there was another brother, Benjamin, back home[57]). This was not mentioned earlier, because it did not really advance the narrative. But Joseph would have used interrogation to find out personal

[57] Joseph obviously already knew about his brother; but he asked questions until this fact was revealed.

information about his brothers—this would have certainly interested him, just as you would be interested in the family of your brother and sister.

Nothing is lost by coming to Egypt. Jacob will obviously desire to bring all of his possessions, as they will be a part of his life in Egypt.

This request is quite fascinating, as Joseph is asking his father and all of his father's sons to leave Canaan. At this time, Joseph surely understands the importance and meaning of Canaan in his own heritage—he seems to understand his place in the world and God's hand in his life better than any of his brothers—yet he tells them all to come with him to Egypt and to bring everyone and everything. Assuming that Joseph has such knowledge, then how do we explain his request to bring his entire family to Egypt?

Joseph is being realistic. He understands that, by the grain he has set aside, he can keep his family alive—but, logically, that must happen in Egypt. Because of his position, Joseph cannot simply resign, return to Canaan, and still have access to the grain in the Egyptian granaries (which he personally set up). The believer in Jesus Christ needs to be realistic and not prone to delusions of grandeur or some preconceived notion of the plan of God. By asking his father and family to come to Egypt, Joseph is suggesting their only real option—given that there are 5 remaining years of famine. Nevertheless, Joseph's trust in God and God's plan for his family continues, despite it seeming to be anti-intuitive, with respect to God's promises for his family, for all his family to move to Egypt.

Lesson 449: Genesis 45:9–16 Joseph Invites His Family to Live in Egypt

Joseph has revealed his identity to his brothers and has given them the divine viewpoint approach explanation for why he stands before them. He emphasizes that does not blame them for selling him into slavery; but he attributes all of the events which came to pass as being in God's hands. As a result, Joseph claims to bare no ill-will toward his brothers.

Joseph asks his brothers to go and speak to their father, and to bring him to Egypt; and that he would take care of all of them in Egypt (as there were 5 more years of famine to go).

Genesis 45:9 [Joseph is speaking to his brothers] "Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'So says your son Joseph, *God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me, do not wait*.

Joseph asks for his brothers to appeal to their father to come down to Egypt as soon as possible. He tells them exactly what to say to their father.

Genesis 45:10 *And you* [singular] *will dwell in the land of Goshen, and you will be near to me, you and your sons and your sons' sons, and your flocks, and your herds, and all that you have*.

The brothers are being asked to repeat what Joseph has said, as if he is speaking directly to his father. Joseph requests that his father bring everyone and everything down to Egypt.

Genesis 45:11 *And I will nourish you there, for there are still five years of famine, lest you* [singular] *and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty*.

Throughout vv. 10–11, all of the 2nd person references are masculine singular. So this is what the sons are to say to Jacob; and this is what Joseph through them says to Jacob, his father.

There remained another 5 years of famine (which Joseph has told his brothers; and they are to tell that to their father); and potentially, this could take Jacob and his sons into complete and total poverty which could literally end their lives. However, Joseph is in Egypt, and he has made provision for his family there. Joseph, without God appearing to him and guiding him and teaching him, understands the issues and what his family needs to do. Divine guidance does not require God to come to you personally and tell you when to make a left turn and when to make a right turn.

There are two things which Joseph had: knowledge of God's plan and God's will; and he acted in obedience to God's will. None of this required special revelation.

Now let's step back look at this passage as a whole. Joseph has revealed his identity to his brothers and he is urging them to quickly return to Canaan and tell their father; and then to bring him down to Egypt.

Genesis 45:9–11 [Joseph is speaking to his brothers] "Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'So says your son Joseph, *God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me, do not wait. And you* [singular] *will dwell in the land of Goshen, and you will be near to me, you and your sons and your sons' sons, and your flocks, and your herds, and all that you have. And I will nourish you there, for there are still five years of famine [remaining], lest you* [singular] *and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty*.

It is not completely clear how much Joseph thought about this. Prior to Judah offering himself up to be a slave instead of Joseph, Joseph's plan had been to keep Benjamin there, and, as a result, lure his father there to protest the imprisonment. He had not really determined what to do about his other brothers until just a few minutes previous. When Judah said, "Take me as a slave and let Benjamin return to his father;" that changed everything. Joseph had to reveal his identify to his brothers at that point. And that meant, whatever future plans that he had for his father and younger brother, the other brothers would be included in those plans. There was no undoing this *reveal*. Once Joseph's brothers knew who he was, that bell could not be un-rung. Joseph waited for a long while before ringing that bell.

So far, the normally talkative brothers had little to say—they probably appeared to be in a state of shock. Next, Joseph will address them directly.

Joseph has quickly worked out in his head what needed to be done. Most people do not appreciate that, Joseph did not expect all of his brothers to return to Egypt with Benjamin. Much less, did he expect Judah to offer up himself in place of Benjamin. All of this, I suggest, caused Joseph to quickly change his plans. He already double-checked to make certain that his brothers understood that they were not under arrest; only Benjamin.

Joseph's original plan was all about keeping Benjamin there and thus luring his father to Egypt. His brothers were not necessarily involved in Joseph's future plans. However, when Judah offered himself up instead of Benjamin, this changed Joseph's calculation altogether. He quickly reformulated his plan, which now included all of his brothers. Therefore, he revealed his identity to them. With this big reveal, Joseph then had responsibilities, which Joseph outlined.

His brothers needed to return to Canaan, tell there father than Joseph is still alive; and then return to Egypt with their father. But, Joseph, in looking at his brothers, recognizes that they are somewhat dumbfounded. They do not seem to be moving; they do not acknowledge what he has said to them; they seem to be standing before him with blank looks on their faces (except for Benjamin).

This ends what Joseph expects his brothers to say to his father. He continues speaking directly to his brothers in v. 12.

Genesis 45:12 And, behold, your [plural] eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin [sees], that it is my mouth that speaks to you.

From this point forward, all of the 2nd person references are plural. So Joseph is now speaking directly to his brothers who are before him. It appears that they are not moving and not really responding. No doubt, they are still in shock and attempting to process this information, which is something that they do not fully understand.

This tells you something about Joseph's brain—he had to, on the fly, recalibrate a plan which he had already worked out in his head, because he had revealed himself to his brothers. and then familiarize them with his plan. The brothers do not appear to respond; not one of them says, "Okay, you got it, boss. We're off." Instead, they are looking at Joseph like a cow at a new fence.

Joseph is saying, "Look at me with your eyes—can you see who I am? Listen to my voice; do you recognize it? Do you understand that I am speaking your language?"

Joseph recognizes that his brothers are still mentally and emotionally catching up to all that has happened and they very possibly have not heard a word that he has said, after, "Listen, I am Joseph, your brother." Throughout all that has happened, Joseph has been considering whether to reveal himself to his brothers or not. He has considered what he would say, how he would reassure them; and he also considered never telling them. Joseph's mind is racing at 100 mph; and it is clear that his brothers are not quite keeping up with him.

When I was a teacher of mathematics, I saw this all of the time. Mathematics is a science which builds upon what has already been learned (when taught properly). When going through a multi-step process, I would watch the faces of my students. If I was on step 6 of a 10 step process and moving right along, I could see in the student's faces the ones which I had left behind. They could be stuck back on step 2 if I had done something in step 2 which they did not understand. In mathematics, even if I slow down at step 6 and slow down even more for step 7, this does not help of the students who are still back on step 2. They cannot get off step 2 because that mystified them. Their minds are unable to move ahead. In mathematics, when taught properly, everything proceeds logically; and it all builds; and it all makes sense. But when there is an intermediate step where you are lost, then there is nothing upon which to build; there is no foundation. You are back on step 2 and you cannot leave it.

Joseph's brothers (10 of them) are still catching up to where Joseph is and to what Joseph is saying. They all still remember what they did to Joseph; they remember what they said to him; they remember what they said to each other; they remember how they lied to their father for 20+ years. Each brother is mentally going through these historical events leading them to this point in their lives, leading them to the point where they fully understand that it is their younger brother Joseph standing before them, and all that they did brought him and them to this point.

Now, Benjamin, of the 11 brothers, would have been less confused by this, as he was about 10 when his older brother disappeared. He was not involved with this in any way; he did not lie to his father. So, Benjamin is with Joseph and what he is saying; the other brothers are working up from their past to this moment, trying to piece things together—unable to fully follow all that Joseph is saying.

In Joseph's mind, he has them all going back to Canaan, and then telling their father that he is still alive and that this son who is alive wants him to move to Egypt. However, the minds of his brothers are thinking about Joseph at age 17 and all that they did which resulted in him being sold into slavery. In their minds, they have not yet moved ahead to the present day, looking forward to future events, where Joseph is in his mind. Joseph is saying, "You need to return home, tell our father; then pack everything up and come down to Egypt to live." But at least 10 of is brothers are back at the point that Joseph said, "I am Joseph!" They are piecing together their memory of how Joseph was sold into slavery; what their part was in it; and the few brothers who may have gotten as far as, "Hurry and go to my father and tell him..." All of the brothers implied that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. They handed over Joseph's bloody clothing; and then allowed their father to believe that Joseph was now dead. They knew better and they could have put Jacob's mind at ease, but they did not do that.

Furthermore, we know that these things are still on their minds because, when Joseph first placed all of them into prison, they all began to recall what they had done to Joseph and how that awful sin led them to this place in their lives. So, they have never let go of what they had done to Joseph; and the fact that they had to continue to lie to their father every day of their lives always kept these past events in the forefront of their thinking.

Let's look at this passage as a whole. Joseph has revealed himself to his brothers and he is now telling them what to do.

Gen. 45:9–12 "Hurry and [you all] go up to my father and [you all] say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, *God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not tarry. You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. There I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come, so that you and your household, and all that you have, do not come to poverty*.' And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you [all]." (ESV; italics added)

"There are still 5 years of famine remaining; and you need to go back home, get our father; and then bring him and all of your families here to Egypt." is the gist of what Joseph tells his brothers.

Genesis 45:13 And you [all] will tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you [all] have seen. And you [all] will hurry and [you all will] bring down my father here."

All of the verbs in v. 13 are all the 2nd person plural, perfect tense. This means that the actions are being viewed as a whole; not as a process. There is no past, present and future tense in the Hebrew. Verbs are imperfect, perfect, or imperative. A perfect tense often refers to past events, but not exclusively. A perfect tense views an action from a distance; it sees an action as having been completed or as a simple event. It is the imperfect tense which views the action of a verb either as a process, an ongoing event, or a future event. Here, Joseph uses the perfect tense to refer to what his brothers will do in the future. Generally speaking, when the perfect tense is used for a future event, it is often with an attitude of certitude or certain expectation.

Joseph's brothers are to make known Joseph's position in Egypt; that God has greatly blessed him there in Egypt. Joseph is not simply wealthy; he is powerful. What has happened to him is quite difficult for any of his brothers to imagine.

Then the brothers take something of an emotional break, initiated by Joseph:

Genesis 45:14 And he [Joseph] fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept. And Benjamin wept upon his neck.

Benjamin is Joseph's only full brother; and he had nothing to do with selling Joseph into slavery. Their mother died giving birth to Benjamin. Benjamin is the only brother who did not look to harm him (although Reuben made a half-hearted effort to preserve Joseph's life).

For all of this time, Joseph has kept his emotions in check; and when he began to tear up, he would step away into another room, where he would compose himself. But now, he

allows his own emotions a release in front of his brothers (he dismissed his household already, as he did not want his servants to view him crying).

This brief emotional interlude allows his brothers to begin to absorb all that has happened and to process this information, along with what Joseph is calling upon them to do.

Have you ever said, "What?" to a person, and then, immediately afterward, realize that you actually heard and understood what they said? I believe that, when Joseph stopped talking about what they needed to do, that allowed the brothers to catch up to him, mentally (and emotionally). After being frozen in time, thinking about selling Joseph into slavery, their minds returned to them and they actually heard the other things which Joseph had said—it just took some time for it all to register with them.

Genesis 45:15 And he kissed all his brothers, and wept upon them. And afterwards his brothers talked with him.

Joseph, manifesting great grace and recognizing what God has done in his life, despite what his brothers intended for him, enjoys the company of his brothers.

His brothers have mentally and emotionally caught up to where Joseph is, and now they are all able to talk with one another. However, what they had to say was not really all that important. What Joseph had to say to them at the beginning—that is important, even today, 4000 years later.

Genesis 45:16 And the report was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brothers have come. And it was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and of his servants.

Joseph has been a man of great honor; and the Pharaoh, who respected him and appreciated him, was glad to hear of his family and that the rest of his family would come to see him.

Joseph has saved the Egyptians; they have life because of Joseph. All that he has done has been good; so it makes sense that Pharaoh would be in favor of more people like him coming into Egypt.

It does not appear that anyone knew who these men were or what was going on until now. Joseph's servants may have had an inkling that this group of men were special to Joseph, but they probably had no idea why. Joseph kept telling them to do things that did not make sense (many people read these chapters today and not understand why Joseph did what he did).

Lesson 450: Genesis 45:12–22 Provisions to Bring Joseph's Family to Egypt

So far, in Gen. 45, Joseph has revealed himself to his brothers. They were somewhat shocked as he began to tell them what he wanted them to do. He gave them divine

viewpoint, that God placed him here in Egypt for the benefit of preserving the family. However, it is not clear just how many of his brothers were able to concentrate on what Joseph was saying. Once he revealed who he was, that would have had 10 of his brothers remembering events of 20+ years ago and their part in the enslavement of Joseph. In the first 11 verses, Joseph lays out his entire plan to preserve his family and it is my guess that only Benjamin heard everything (as he had no reason to experience guilt).

By v. 12, Joseph recognizes that his brothers are deep in thought. Therefore, he summarizes his proposal:

Gen. 45:12–13 And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. You must tell my father of all my honor in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here." (ESV)

The emotional impact also catches up to Joseph, so he allows himself to be emotional in front of his brothers (something which he had hid before).

Gen. 45:14–15 Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. After that his brothers talked with him. (ESV)

My guess is, 10 of his brothers continued to be wary of Joseph's big reveal here. They believed it; but they were suspicious of Joseph and his motives; and many of them suspected that he would, at some time in the future, take revenge on them.

Joseph would have filed an official report with Pharaoh, to let him know what was going on:

Gen. 45:16 When the report was heard in Pharaoh's house, "Joseph's brothers have come," it pleased Pharaoh and his servants. (ESV)

Prior to this, these men were just some people from Canaan that Joseph appeared to have taken an interest in.

We now move from Joseph and his brothers to Joseph speaking with Pharaoh.

Genesis 45:17 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: load your beasts and go into the land of Canaan,...

Bear in mind that Pharaoh is encouraging immigration by Joseph's brothers and family, even though they are not even half way through their famine. They are only a couple of years into the famine. He does not tell Joseph, "Listen, I am all for bringing your family here, but now is just not a very good time. You know better than anyone else all about the famine here."

But that is not Pharaoh's attitude. Primarily, Pharaoh knows Joseph's family through Joseph (that is, he makes judgments concerning Joseph's family based upon the sort of

person Joseph is). Since Joseph has been a welcome addition to his country, it only stands to reason that Joseph's family would be a welcome addition as well.

All of Egypt has survived because of Joseph; and Pharaoh has observed that Joseph has acted with wisdom and circumspection. At no time, has Joseph exceeded the bounds of his office; at every turn, he has shown good sense, deference and honesty towards Pharaoh. In his dealings with the people, Joseph has shown himself to be a man of honor.

The beasts here were probably donkeys, horses and/or camels. They will be loaded up with enough supplies and provisions to get them to Canaan, but the idea is to send enough of them to pick up all that belongs to Jacob and to his extended family. Essentially, Pharaoh is sending a fleet of ancient-world U-haul's to Canaan, to help Joseph's extended family move to Egypt.

Genesis 45:18 ...and take your father and your households and come to me. And I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land.

Pharaoh is so pleased with what Joseph has done that he will give some of the best land to Joseph's family.

Come to me, suggests that they should check in with Pharaoh when they arrive (simply meaning, he wants to meet them).

One needs to understand that this is different from the illegal immigration which is occurring in the United States today. Joseph has shown himself to be beneficial to Egypt; and it is assumed that his brothers will be as well. They are going through the proper channels to gain admittance. Pharaoh is doing more than simply granting them admission; he is sending a moving caravan to bring them back to Egypt. Today, this would be a country who sends out American emissaries to find great minds and workers from other countries to bring them to the United States. This is not unlike granting citizenship to foreign students who graduate from American colleges.

Genesis 45:19 Now you are commanded; do this. Take wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come.

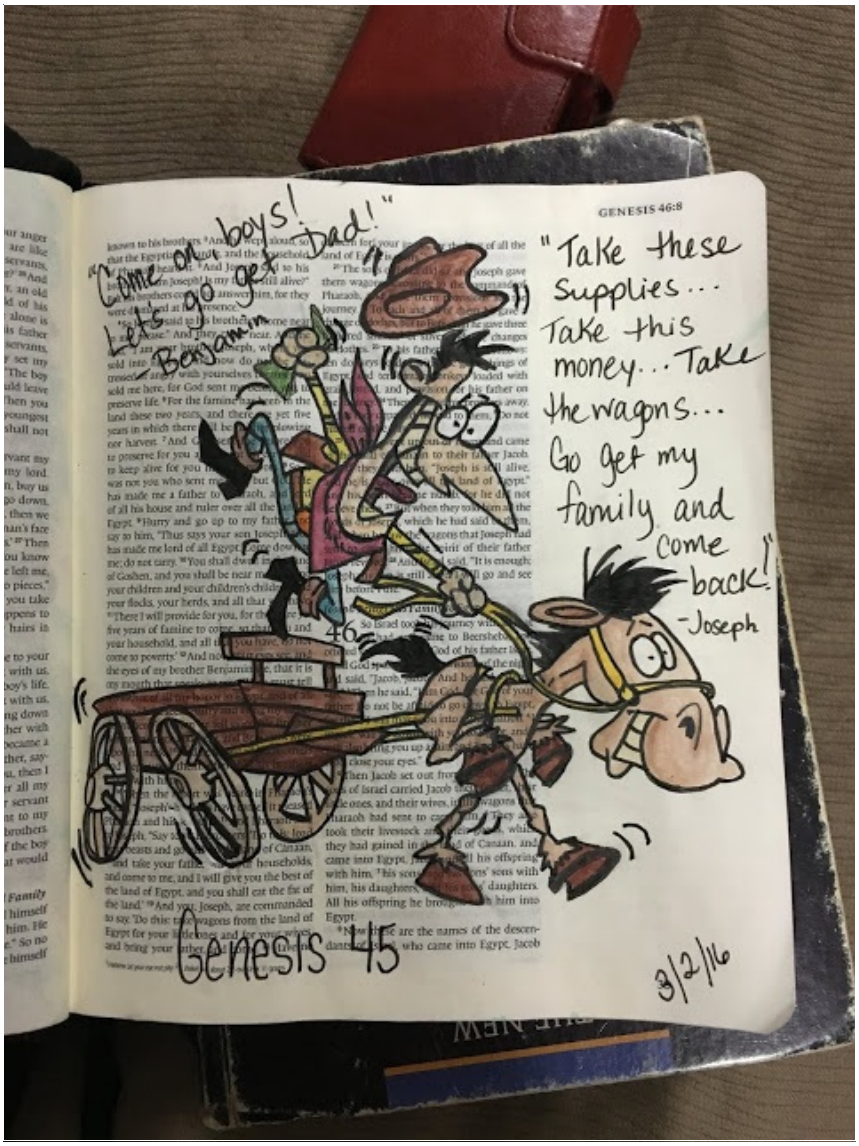
Some translations are problematic here (the MKJV, which I use throughout this study, is okay—if I had to do it all over again, I probably would have used the NKJV, ESV or the NASB). Many translations make it seem as if this is something which Pharaoh *wants* Joseph to do, but that is not what is happening here. The MKJV provides a good translation. "Now you are commanded..."

Here is a reasonably literal rendering:

Genesis 45:19 You [Joseph] will [give this] command: 'This [you all] will do: take for yourselves wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives [to be

transported in]; and you [all] will also bring your father when you [all] come [back here]. (Kukis moderately literal translation)

Even I have not completely translated this correctly. The first verb is the Pual perfect of *to command*. The Pual is the passive intensive verb stem; so properly, this reads, *Now you have been commanded [to say]...* We know this because the pronoun *you* is the masculine singular; and the verb is a masculine singular. However, *do this* involves a verb which is a masculine plural, Qal imperative. For this reason, we know that this is what Joseph will *say* to his brothers. 'This [is what] you [all] will do:...' Pharaoh issues a command here, which Joseph must obey. Joseph is being told what he is to say to his brothers.



So that Joseph does not misunderstand and think that Pharaoh is just saying nice things that he does not really mean; Pharaoh makes this a command. As a command, Joseph cannot misunderstand what Pharaoh is saying or offering. Joseph must obey this command. Joseph cannot even politely refuse a command. Joseph cannot say, "That is very kind of you, sir, but I cannot accept such an offer." As a command, Joseph must act on it. He has no other choice as, the one man with authority over him is Pharaoh.

Genesis 45 from sentimental sara leigh blogspot (a graphic); from Pinterest; accessed June 5, 2017. This is called Bible journaling, something which I just recently discovered. This may not be the best example of it. People use water colors or translucent markers

in order to emphasize certain passages with pictures, quotations, comments and/or restatements.

Pharaoh commands Joseph what he should command his brothers to do. Pharaoh is going to send them away with an ancient-world U-haul caravan which will be used to transfer their loved ones and possessions back to Egypt. The graphic above illustrates this caravan.

Genesis 45:20 And do not regard your stuff, for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.' "

In other words, if there are things which remain in Canaan that, for whatever reason, you are unable to bring, don't worry about it—we have the same stuff here, which you are welcome to.

What is amazing in this chapter is how God's plan proceeds and how all that God wants to happen, happens, despite the good and bad deeds done by the sons of Jacob. We have studied these brothers and their various actions, and some of them make good decisions and some make bad decisions; but God's plan moves forward, nevertheless.

Who is overseeing all of this? God. This is God's plan. This is what God wants to happen. It is a reasonable question to ask, "But this is the land which God gave to us; so why are we leaving it?" And this fact will be made clear in the next chapter. God's plan is for Israel to leave Canaan—the land which He has given them—and move to Egypt (temporarily). Two generations back, God already warned Abraham about this. Then the LORD said to Abram, "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 for four hundred years. (Gen. 15:13; ESV) It is highly unlikely that any of Jacob's sons are thinking about this particular verse (but we were prepared for it).

We have studied already things which Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah and Joseph have all done (remember, these are the brothers who would be logically considered when it comes to the line of promise and the double portion—something which generally would have gone to the firstborn). Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah have all made a series of bad decisions. Yet, none of those decisions have impeded the plan of God. For the most part, Joseph had good decisions and was mentally aligned with the plan of God. Judah, in the previous chapter, redeemed himself and his many bad decisions with one great decision.

Where we are right now in this narrative: Pharaoh has given Joseph the command to send a fleet of ancient-world U-hauls to Canaan, and Joseph's brothers will follow through, leading these wagons back to their homes.

Genesis 45:21 And the sons of Israel did so. And Joseph gave them wagons according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way.

In v. 19, it read *this do;* and is v. 21, we have the same verb, and it reads: *they did so*.

Note that the wagons given to these sons are by way of *the command of Pharaoh*. As the ultimate authority of the land, he requires Joseph to make the offer of Egyptian residence to his brothers.

Joseph's brothers did as Pharaoh had required, which was pretty much just consenting to a return home trip to pick up their father and their wives and children and their stuff.

Genesis 45:22 To all of them he gave each man changes of clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of clothing.

Joseph clearly favors his full brother. These are extraordinary gifts. Recall that Joseph, a young, healthy strapping teen was sold as a slave for 20 pieces of silver (Gen. 37:28); so giving 300 pieces of silver to Benjamin would have been quite an impressive present. Also, changes of clothing were quite rare. Having a single change of clothes would be perhaps the standard for many adults (if that). Clothes were not easily manufactured in those ancient times.

Lesson 451: Genesis 45:23–28 Joseph's Brothers Temporarily Return to Canaan

Pharaoh has given Joseph orders to bring his family from Canaan to Egypt; and Pharaoh promises him a choice portion of the land.

Genesis 45:23 And to his father he sent this: ten asses loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses loaded with grain and bread and food for his father by the way.

This is quite interesting that so much is sent to Canaan by way of supplies; but the idea is, there is no force applied to Jacob to come to Egypt. Joseph sends him many presents, which, quite obviously, Jacob could have kept and just stayed there. However, when he finds out that Joseph is still alive and that Joseph sent him these presents, no one could stop him from going to Egypt.

One has to bear in mind, also, that Joseph, as 2nd to Pharaoh, is limited on his own life choices. He cannot simply pick up and leave Egypt, not even for a vacation. He is in a position with great authority and that authority includes great responsibility (a fact lost on many people with authority today). Although Joseph did not plan or scheme to gain his position (as his father Jacob believed he had to do throughout his life), now that he has it, he cannot simply abandon it. Furthermore, he understands the plan of God well enough to recognize, this is his destiny; this is his place in the world. Interestingly enough, Joseph does not have to have a talk with God in order to figure this out (recall that his forebearers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were guided directly by God at several stages in their lives).

This may surprise some of you, but there are people out there, if given the #2 job in some country, would really prefer not to. Most people, if offered power, prestige and money, would grab that up without a second thought—but there are a few who would consider

such an offer and then reject it. There are some people who not enticed by power; and others who would consider it carefully before accepting.

Joseph recognized this as simply a part of his life that God had planned for him. He was not a power-hungry man; he just ended up in positions of authority because of his natural leadership abilities (as well as for his integrity). Obviously, Joseph was far more interested in functioning in a position of responsibility outside of a prison rather than inside a prison. However, even as the #2 man, Joseph could not simply up and take a vacation in order to visit his father. His position was much too important. If anything happened to those granaries in his absence, millions of people could starve as a result, as there are 5 more years during which those granaries must be guarded, with the grain carefully parceled out. The entire purpose of these granaries was to allow Egypt to survive through the 7-year famine.

Application: God has set a particular place for us in this world, regarding our location and our vocation. There were particular teaching positions which I believed that I should have gotten, which I did not. There were jobs I wanted more than the one which I got; and positions which I wanted where I taught which I did not get. This was all God's plan and God's timing. I had to recognize that, this was God's very specific plan for me. The believer is not always properly recognized for his abilities; the believer is not always advanced in his field as he believes he ought to be. Many times, the believer faces, for whatever reason, problems and roadblocks (sometimes, these are problems which we cause for ourselves). But the mature believer considers his options and acts accordingly and accepts the consequences. The mature believer can accept his position in life, even if it is not the position for which he strived.

Joseph stands in stark contrast to his father Jacob, who planned and schemed his entire life. Even though God appeared to Jacob on many occasions, but not to Joseph; Joseph has a much better handle on divine guidance. God did not design things so that we need a voice from heaven telling us whether to go left or right every time we need to make a decision. Joseph was a man filled with doctrine; we know this because he has been able to consistently make good decisions throughout his life, despite the difficulties. How many people would have railed against the injustices that Joseph endured; and rebelled against them? We have people doing that all of the time; often for minor and even accidental slights. Joseph accepted the various things which came his way, understanding and then doing the will of God.

There are things in your life which you cannot change; therefore, you need to accept those things and adjust your life accordingly.

Genesis 45:24 And he sent his brothers away, and they departed. And he said to them, "Do not quarrel along the way."

This is an interesting comment made by Joseph, and suggests that there has been more back and forth between the brothers than the conservation that we have been made privy to.

Let me suggest that Joseph has carefully looked over his brothers, and he can recognize that there are some dissenters, but who will not make their opinions known in front of him. However, once they are on the road back, there may be a couple of brothers who oppose the idea of moving to Egypt—and it is not because they are theological geniuses concerned about the future of their descendants. That is my interpretation of what Joseph is saying here.

There might be several areas that his brothers might argue about: (1) should they move to Egypt; (2) should they tell their father what has happened or is there a way to spin their return without mentioning Joseph; (3) who was the most to blame for selling Joseph into slavery; (4) is it right for Benjamin to have all of the gifts that he had; is that really fair? So there was the potential for many discussions or arguments which the brothers may not have felt comfortable having right there in front of Joseph, who obviously had great authority. The settled upon decision is, they are to return with all of these things to their father in Canaan and tell him that Joseph is alive and that he wants them all to move to Egypt. The decision is Jacob's, as the living patriarch of the family; and the brothers are simply to present him with the request from his son Joseph. It is also likely that, Joseph's last memory of his brothers, outside of his home as an Egyptian ruler, was of them arguing what to do with Joseph and how to explain whatever they chose to do to their father. It was 20+ years ago, but they no doubt argued fiercely whether to kill Joseph or to sell him into slavery. This would have been a memory of his brothers etched into his mind.

To my way of thinking, this would begin a new section, as they were previously in Egypt, but now they are in Canaan. However, what follows is still a part of the chiasmos organization shown at the beginning of this chapter.

Genesis 45:25 And they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan, to Jacob their father.

It fascinates me that often these lengthy trips are completed and usually without any sort of actual commentary beyond, *and they went from point A to point B*. The big exception to this is Moses leading the children of Israel out from Egypt and towards Canaan (more or less). That ends up taking 40 years and comprises the bulk of the narrative portions of the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy (their movement is primarily tracked in the second half of Exodus and in Numbers). But these trips back and forth between Canaan and Egypt; or between Canaan and Haran—they are stated without description, despite the fact that they must have been amazing and perhaps even eventful journeys.

Genesis 45:26 And they [the sons of Jacob] told him [Jacob], saying, "Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart fainted, for he did not believe them.

You will recall that Judah has become the leader of the sons; but the brothers are all so jazzed by what has happened that they are all speaking, they all have things to say, and

information to contribute. So, whereas Judah has become their defacto leader, often speaking for the brothers; this is news that all of them had to share.

Jacob had long ago given up all hope on Joseph. In Jacob's mind, Joseph had been dead for over 20 years now. Hearing that he was alive and the prime minister of Egypt is quite an amazing thing. It did not seem real to him. Having 11 sons speaking to him excitedly, all at once, must have been somewhat surreal—as soon as he realized that they were telling him that Joseph was alive.

Based upon the next verse, it appears that Jacob actually did faint, or have some sort of separation from reality incident. Exactly the nature of his response is not completely clear—did he physically faint, did he simply become unresponsive to the words of his sons? If I were to guess, it would be that he simply was unable to process the information that Joseph was alive. For 20 years, Jacob had lived his life thinking that his son had been killed by a wild animal. What Jacob was hearing, despite having each son back it up, just did not compute.

Did he fall deep into thought, trying to sort out what happened? Or did his mind simply enter into a blank mental state, unable to process what his sons have told him (no doubt, they all chime in and confirm that Joseph is alive). He was taking in information which made little sense to him. Once the original reality of the bloody cloak of Joseph set in, Jacob accepted his son's death as reality. After that time, Jacob no longer considered that Joseph was still alive.

No doubt, Jacob fell into some state of shock, not unlike the shock his sons were in when Joseph revealed himself to them. No doubt, his confusion and inability to process this information was related to the fact that Joseph's "death" crushed Jacob's spirit. So he had a lot of emotions to unravel and sort through.

Genesis 45:27a And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said to them.

It seems like the sons did not really develop an organized way of telling their father, despite the fact that they had to know, this information would have seemed unreal to him. They essentially have the proof right there with them; but they concentrate on telling their father all the Joseph had said.

Certainly, you can imagine all 11 sons all coming into Jacob's tent and speaking to him almost all at once, one son chiming in and adding to what the previous son had said. As they recall the words of Joseph, they speak them. But their father is still having a hard time believing them.

Genesis 45:27b And when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived.

Apparently, Jacob had really been taken aback by all that had been told to him. His sons kept speaking to him, telling him all that Joseph had said to them, but this thought was very difficult for him to compute.

At some point, recognizing their father's skepticism, one or more of the sons said, 'Okay come outside and take a look at this." And there were all of these prized pack animals with them, some loaded with foodstuffs and supplies; others with no loads at all; and then there are all of these wagons—and my guess is, a wagon would have been quite an expensive item in those days. So Jacob looks and he sees a half-dozen or a dozen wagons, all with teams of pack animals, and he is amazed. What his sons are saying makes sense; else, where did all of these wagons, mules and supplies come from? Jacob apparently snapped him back to reality at seeing the wagons. That was something that was more than simply the word of his sons—seeing all of those wagons was remarkable to Jacob. They had seen traveling caravans in the past, and there were likely some wagons included; but before Jacob are a significant number of mostly empty wagons. What a sight that must have been!

Genesis 45:28a And Israel said, "It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive.

Most of the time when we see Jacob called *Israel,* this means that he is saying or doing something which reflects divine will. He sees the wagons and he believes that his son is alive. "It is enough" means, "I am convinced; you don't have to say anything else. I believe you all, that Joseph is still alive." He has heard what his sons had to say, and he sees the many wagons parked out in his front yard; and Jacob knows his son is alive.

Genesis 45:28 And Israel said, "It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

So, Jacob comes back from his semi-catatonic state and he makes a decision which puts him in touch with the plan of God once again. The geographical will of God is for this family to move to Egypt and to live there for the next 400 years (Jacob and his sons probably do not realize that is their future as the people of God).

Although I believe that the *Scriptures* were passed down through the early ages by word of mouth, we do not know how much the sons of Jacob knew. Even if they memorized the words of God, we do not know how much they understood and believed.

Interestingly enough, back in Gen. 15:13–14, we read: Then the LORD said to Abram, "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 for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions." Did anyone take this into consideration? Did Joseph remember this and apply it to their circumstances? We do not know for certain; and I do not find it specifically referenced anywhere.

In Gen. 46, Jacob will journey, with all of his sons, to Egypt.

Lessons 452–453: Genesis 43–45 Summary & Spiritual Lessons of Genesis 43–45

Murai offers up a chiasmos of Gen. 43–45. So let's review what we have read in those chapters, and then take a look at his chiasmos. You may recall that I spoke of the odd places where these chapters were divided on several occasions. These poorly chosen divisions will continue through Gen. 46 and 47.

Summarizing Genesis 43–45: Gen. 43 begins with the sons of Jacob in Canaan at the beginning of the second year of the famine, follows the sons of Jacob to Egypt (Benjamin is included among the sons). Gen. 45 concludes with the wagons of Pharaoh being parked out in front of Jacob's residence, and Jacob's declaration that they would go to Egypt to see his son Joseph, whom he thought was dead.

In Gen. 43, we begin in the second year of famine, and Jacob calls his sons together and tells them, "We need to return to Egypt to get another supply of grain. We are almost out and our crops failed this year again." (I am taking some liberties here with this *quotation*). Judah reminds his father that, the prime minister of Egypt required them to bring their brother Benjamin with them, to prove that they were not spies. And, to show he was serious, the prime minister (this is Joseph—whom they do not recognize at this time) held Simeon in jail (Simeon has remained in jail in Egypt for a year). The brothers knew that, if they simply showed up without their youngest brother in tow, the prime minister would not see them; and therefore, they could not buy any grain (which grain had to be purchased through the prime minister). In fact, that was the best case scenario. For all they knew, if they showed up without their youngest brother, the prime minister might even throw them all into jail.

Jacob finally agrees to allow Benjamin to return with his brothers; and Judah takes full responsibility for him. Jacob also sends with his sons double the money (as the silver they purchased the grain with originally had been returned in their sacks of grain[58]). They also bring the prime minister a present, specifically of products available from Canaan.

The brothers went to Joseph's official office, and Joseph, looking them over, required them to be taken to his house for a meal. Joseph's servant, who took the men to Joseph's house, was probably the man in charge of Joseph's house as well as his interpreter. The brothers begin to tell him everything (this suggests that the servant also acted as their interpreter and they probably felt some kinship with him, as he spoke their language). They told him how the money was in their sacks, and they did not realize this until they got home, but they brought double the money, to pay for the grain in the previous year and the grain for this year. The servant reassures them that he received their money and that God had placed that money in their sacks (it is reasonable to think that this answer had come from Joseph, originally, who figured that his brothers might confess this to his servant).

[58] By doing so, Joseph thus insured that his brothers always had enough money to return and purchase grain the following year.

As an aside, let me suggest that what the servant is saying is true. He did receive the money, and, at the command of Joseph, the money was placed back into their sacks—as per the will of God (for something to be the will of God, it does not have to have a miraculous origin).

The brothers are taken care of (their feet are washed; their animals fed); and Simeon is brought out to them. When Joseph returns, they bow before him and remain in that position for quite awhile. He asks pointed questions about their father (which would have seemed to them like a normal discussion between strangers, given that they told Joseph all about their family on the first trip).

The prime minister Joseph focuses upon his younger brother, who they brought with them, and says, "God be gracious to you, my son" (which I maintain was spoken to him in their native language[59]). Joseph exits momentarily to cry (he does not want them to see him); washes himself and returns, asking his servants to serve the meal.

Joseph eats separately from his brothers, as Egyptians and foreigners were not to eat together; and Joseph saw to it that Benjamin received 5x as much food as his brothers. This may have been Joseph's only actual test of his brothers, which he would have done to see how they would react, recalling that they were very jealous of his father's preferential treatment of him (which treatment Joseph had no control over).

In Gen. 44, it is the next day and the donkeys of the brothers are loaded up with grain to take back to Canaan. In these sacks of grain, their silver is surreptitiously returned; and in Benjamin's sack, Joseph's silver chalice (which he had used the previous day at the meal) was placed as well. The brothers probably all noticed the silver cup.

After the brothers left, Joseph sent his servant after them to retrieve the chalice and to accuse whichever brother had the chalice with him (the servant himself placed the chalice in Benjamin's bag—so he knew where it was). The servant checked every bag, from the oldest down finally to Benjamin. When he found the silver cup in Benjamin's bag, he promptly took Benjamin into custody. He told the other brothers that they may leave; they were not going to be detained.

In my opinion, Joseph expected that the brothers would continue on their way to Canaan with the grain, leaving Benjamin behind, given that they left Simeon behind previously (without throwing a fuss over it). They were already loaded up and had traveled some distance; and they all saw the silver chalice being taken out of Benjamin's sack. What was there to say? What was there to dispute? But, instead of returning to Canaan, Judah leads them all back to speak with Joseph (which, I am guessing, took Joseph by surprise).

[59] That is strictly conjecture on my part.

Joseph first makes it clear that only Benjamin was under arrest and that the rest of them could return home peacefully with their grain. Judah, however, approaches him, to speak personally with him. Judah recounts the previous events, to which both men could agree. He told him that it is Joseph who required Benjamin to come with them and that their father would simply die if his youngest son, Benjamin, did not return.

Then, just when you expect Judah to say, "Based upon what we both know, Benjamin is only here because you required him to be; so, in that way, *you* are responsible for all of this." That appeared to be the logical direction of his argument. But instead, Judah said, "Take me instead of the boy; make me into your servant. I accept it. I accept his punishment. Let the boy return to his father." Joseph did not expect to hear Judah say this; and Judah's brothers were no doubt surprised as well.

Judah's expectation would have been that, he would become Joseph's servant, and that his younger brother Benjamin would return to Canaan with his other brothers. Joseph had no idea that Judah would propose this. Thus far, Joseph has been anticipating the actions of his brothers and manipulating things so that, he would eventually get to spend time with Benjamin and his father.

Gen. 45 begins with Joseph being very moved over what has just happened; and how Judah is willing to give his own life for his younger brother's. Joseph asks for all his servants to leave the room and then he reveals to his brothers who he really is. He is crying, he asks for them to come close. As Joseph continues to talk, it is apparent that his brothers are still confused by what just happened. Joseph explains what happened to him in terms of divine viewpoint; pointing out that he is where he is in order to preserve their lives. He attributes this to God's will, not to their bad behavior. He explains the concept of Rom. 8:28 (And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. —ESV; capitalized) to them. It is not clear whether his older brothers fully understood or appreciated all that Joseph was saying. Undoubtedly, revealing his identity was a shock to his brothers.

Joseph is able to think on his feet; and he immediately comes up with a plan of action. He tells them that 5 years of poor crops remain and that they ought to retrieve their father and bring him and all of their families to Egypt. Furthermore, Pharaoh orders Joseph to send ancient-world U-haul's to Canaan, to provide transport so that they might live in Egypt. An order like this must be obeyed.

When the brothers first arrive in Canaan and tell their father that Joseph is alive, he almost fainted, and he did not believe them. However, when he saw all of the wagons, he believed them and was ready to move to Egypt to see his son.

In these 3 chapters, we begin in Canaan, with Judah convincing his father to send Benjamin with them; and they end in Canaan, with all of the brothers telling their father that Joseph is still alive and wants them all to move to Egypt.

There is an overall structure to these past 3 chapters when taken together (and there is an argument to be made to have kept all these chapters together):

Hajime Murai's Chiasmic Structure of Genesis 43–45

A (43:1-2) **Jacob** orders his sons **to go to Egypt** for food
- B (43:3-7) **Joseph** asks about **Jacob's** family
  - C (43:8-10) **Judah's promise** (ונברעא)
    - D (43:11-14) "May **God** Almighty dispose the man to be merciful toward you, so that he may let your other brother go, as well as Benjamin." (43:14) (כסף)
      - E (43:15-25) The **brothers** apologize about returned **silver**
        - F (43:26-34) The Supper with brothers (כסף)
      - E' (44:1-13) **Brothers** were searched; and then one was arrested because of **silver** goblet
    - D' (44:14-17) **God** has uncovered your servants' guilt. (44:16)
  - C' (44:18-34) **Judah** acted to keep the **promise** (ברע)
- B' (45:1-15) **Joseph** was concerned about **Jacob**

A' (45:16-28) **Jacob** agrees **to go to Egypt** with his sons

A/A': Going to Egypt. B/B': Joseph cared about his family. C/C': Judah's promise. D/D': The God. E/E': Returned silver. F: The Supper with brothers.

From http://www.bible.literarystructure.info/bible/01_Genesis_pericope_e.html accessed January 24, 2017 (edited).

Some general lessons are included from the entire narrative of Joseph, thus far. I could fill this in with some more citations.

Spiritual Lessons from Genesis 43–45

1. The overall lesson is, despite the actions of Jacob and his sons, God's plan moves right along on schedule.
   1) Jacob has shown himself to be a schemer and a manipulator, who often saw the world as revolving around him. Things which occurred in his life were key to moving the plan of God along.
   2) It was God's plan that all of Jacob's sons would become the Jewish race and there could not be any mixture with *males* outside of their family (there will be the exception of some people who choose to become Jews). Women from all over the world married into the Jewish race. Women who married Jews generally believed in their God and, therefore, became Jews.
   3) Jacob's sons varied in their actions. Simeon and Levi were vicious and

they destroyed an entire clan because one in that clan raped their sister. They used the teachings of their faith (circumcision) in order to kill all of the males of that clan.

4) 10 of the sons plotted to sell Joseph into slavery and they all lied to their father about his death (bringing back his bloodied cloak and theorizing that he was killed by wild animals). This sent their father into 20 years of sadness and depression while all ten continued to lie to him about Joseph.
5) You may recall that Judah, for about 20 years, left the family—and I suspect that it was all about the level of dishonesty that the sons of Jacob all had to maintain with their father.
6) Joseph, when in Egypt, rose through the ranks, and eventually became prime minister of Egypt, the #2 man.
7) It is through Joseph that Egypt and his family would be preserved.
8) No matter what, God was going to preserve the family of Jacob, despite their good, their sins, and their evil. It is God's plan for that to be the line of the Messiah (the Messiah for the Jews and the Savior of the human race).
9) We as believers can choose where we stand regarding the plan of God. We can move the plan forward and participate in it (which often involves great blessing), as Joseph did; or we can continue to fight against God throughout much of our lives, as Jacob did. We can continue to operate outside of the plan of God, as many of Joseph's brothers did; and end up playing no significant role in to the plan of God.
10) In a football game, would you like to receive the winning touchdown pass or would you rather be knocked on your butt by the defense during that same play? This is a choice that the believer in Jesus Christ gets to make day in and day out.
11) No matter what we choose to do, God is always moving His plan forward. No matter how we fail, God's plan always moves ahead.

2. God uses difficulties to advance His plan. In this situation, He uses the famine of Egypt and Canaan to move and isolate His people. Now, you may ask, "Well, why doesn't God simply tell Jacob to move his family to Egypt?" Two reasons: (1) Jacob is not noted for his strict obedience (although he did leave Haran when told to by God—he had also had his fill of Laban by that time as well); and (2) for what reason would Egypt have agreed to the Jews moving there? Like most sensible countries, Egypt controlled who entered their country; and no one could simply move in and become an ex-pat. All of the circumstances of this narrative move and isolate the family of Jacob in Egypt. That was God's plan and He always accomplishes His plan.
3. Jacob, even as the patriarch, often made many situations all about him (you no doubt know people like that). When he finds out that the prime minister of Egypt requires his son Benjamin to come to Egypt, he complains, "Why did you treat *me* so badly as to tell the man that you had another brother?" (Gen. 43:6; ESV); as if his sons plotted against him to take Benjamin from him.

Spiritual Lessons from Genesis 43–45

4. Yet, despite Jacob's egocentric view of things, God's plan moves forward.
5. There is redemption in the plan of God. Judah illustrates redemption; Judah represents the idea of one man giving up his life for another.
    1) Judah—despite his part in the plan to kill or to sell Joseph; despite his sordid personal life; despite his bad decision to marry a Canaanite wife and then to be oblivious to the plan of God—takes the lead for his family and takes full responsibility for Benjamin.
    2) Circumstances and situations need to be dealt with from the perspective of realism. Judah, when speaking to his father about a return to Egypt, argues from the point of realism. As long as we are alive, we are in the world, and we have to be realistic about our place in the world.
    3) Judah, in offering himself for Benjamin, acts as a type of Christ. He offers his life for the life of Benjamin, making himself both Benjamin's savior and mediator.
    4) This is how Judah is a type of Christ—he acts as savior and mediator on behalf of his brother; just as Jesus Christ will be Savior and Mediator on behalf of the human race (who are genetic *brothers* to Jesus Christ).
    5) We learn from Judah that, we can be failures through much of our life; and yet, God is still willing and able to use us.
6. Despite making many mistakes, Jacob reasonably suggests to take along a *fruit basket* to the prime minister. Whether this is a good will gesture or an attempt at manipulating him, we don't know. It was a reasonable thing to do; but, ultimately, it played no part in the plan of God. Think of this personal present suggested by Jacob as the role that human good plays in the plan of God. It was a nice gesture; but the events which followed would have taken place, whether this gift was brought or not. Ultimately, the gift had nothing to do with the plan of God. Ultimately, human good plays no part in the plan of God and it will be burned at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
7. Jacob and all of his sons agree that honesty is the best policy; and they return with double the silver so that they could pay for the previous year's grain and for the next year's grain. They confess their discovery of the silver to the first person they see at Joseph's home.
8. This servant of Joseph's appears to have believed in Joseph's God (Gen. 43:23). He tells the sons of Jacob that he received their silver; but God apparently put that silver in their grain sacks. I personally do not take this passage as blasphemous. He did receive payment and God, through Joseph (and his servants) sent the brothers back with money.
9. In case you wonder, *why did Joseph do that?* Joseph wanted to meet his younger brother and see his father again. If they ran out of silver, there might come a time when they could not come to him to buy grain, as they would have nothing to offer for the grain. By returning the silver, Joseph made certain that his family could always afford to return to Egypt to buy grain (Joseph is obviously a very smart fellow).
10. We see God's will clearly worked out. Joseph dreamed that his brothers and

Spiritual Lessons from Genesis 43–45

father would bow down to him; and Gen. 43:26, 28 fulfill that dream the dream that Joseph had so many years previous.

11. When the brothers were not overly concerned about unequal treatment (Benjamin received 5x as much food as they did), they were much happier. Gen. 43:34
    1) If you believe that you are not getting equal treatment and that those people around you are getting better treatment in life (for whatever reason), you can become a very miserable person if you obsess about it.
    2) There are times when you, as an individual, are treated unfairly and on occasion, for illegitimate reasons. This is the devil's world and you cannot become overly upset over your life; nor should you waste your time searching out better treatment or somehow correcting the injustice you believe to have faced.
    3) Few people have received greater unjust treatment than Joseph, and he simply went with it, always being honest, demonstrating integrity, and exhibiting no bitterness whatsoever. Note that (1) he was happier than his other brothers and (2) he was clearly rewarded by God.
    4) No one has ever been treated more unjustly than our Lord, Who, despite doing nothing wrong in His entire life, was executed under Jewish and Roman laws (two otherwise excellent systems of justice for that era).
12. Judah and the blessings of God:
    1) The leadership of Judah brings the brothers back to the city of Joseph. When Simeon was taken prisoner a year earlier, all of the brothers left. None of the brothers appeared to be leading. Judah is fulfilling one of the most important aspects of leadership—personal responsibility. He gave his word to his father that he would be responsible for Benjamin, and he fulfills that responsibility by offering himself up in Benjamin's stead.
    2) Judah, when setting the table for his later actions, is completely honest and candid with the prime minister. He lays out a series of facts which the prime minister would accept completely. Gen. 44:16–31
    3) This offer of Judah also make him a type of Christ, offering himself up, the just for the unjust. The line of promise is all about redemption and a substitutionary offering. This is why the line of Judah became the line of promise. Gen. 44:33–34
    4) That Judah is the line of promise will not be clear to the Hebrew people until the Davidic Covenant, which would occur approximately 1000 years later. Then God will promise David that his son/Son (Solomon/Jesus Christ) would sit on the throne of Israel; that his dynasty would extend to his Greater Son. Psalm 89
    5) We understand this through careful study and having knowledge of future events. The Jewish people did not understand this until the time of David and Solomon, after the Davidic Covenant had been committed to writing. 2Sam. 7
    6) However, the foundation for that covenant was laid by Judah in Gen. 43–45.

Spiritual Lessons from Genesis 43–45

13. All of this time, we have been watching 5 brothers in particular: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah and Joseph. Judah would become the line of promise; and Joseph would receive the double portion as a result of their actions in these chapters.
14. Joseph's actions:
    1) Joseph never seeks revenge against his brothers, but reconciliation. Joseph does not look to somehow establish justice for himself; but he looks instead to provide for his brothers and their families. Gen. 45:5–8
    2) Joseph explains how he stands before them as prime minister by the plan of God; and does not hold his brothers' previous actions against them. Gen. 45:4–13
    3) On the plus side, Joseph was patient, he did not seek revenge, and he allowed his brothers their free will; on the negative side, he was somewhat manipulative and calculating.
    4) When Joseph asks his brothers to bring his father to Egypt, this is a request based upon a realistic appraisal of circumstances. Joseph wants to keep his family alive; and he cannot simply resign his post in Egypt and continue to have access to the grain which he set aside. Joseph completely accepts the hand which God has dealt him; and he accepts the responsibilities that come with this plan. Gen. 45:9–11
    5) Joseph's consistently honorable actions and wisdom have ingratiated him to the Pharaoh of Egypt; and this makes his family welcome in Egypt as well. Honor, integrity, and honesty are always the way to go in any situation. Gen. 45:16–20
    6) Later, the double portion will become Joseph's heritage. Gen. 48:3–5

I have personally been amazed at the study of the book of Genesis. It is filled with incredible history and spiritual teaching. My complete commentary on Genesis will be nearly 15,000 pages when completed.[60] **Genesis Links** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD) for further study of this important book.

From the first page to the last, this book is filled with great wisdom and spiritual importance. Spending the thousands upon thousands of hours of study of this book have been one of the great blessings of my own life.

Lesson 454: Genesis 46:1–3 2Tim. 2:11–13 Jacob Moves to Egypt

Gen. 46 takes us from Beersheba, where Jacob speaks to God in a vision; to Egypt, where Jacob and all of his sons are reunited. Also, all of Jacob's descendants are listed in this chapter. They have not intermixed with another family, as was suggested to them in Gen. 34; or as had happened with Esau (Jacob's fraternal twin) and Seir (Gen. 36). Their purity as a people is one of the often neglected themes of Genesis (also neglected by most

[60] The weekly Bible study which I send out will only be about 3000 pages in all.

commentators—the preeminence of Judah, so that the line of promise will go through Judah).

It is important to recognize that it is God's will for the sons of Israel to move en masse and in toto to Egypt. Obviously, God gave the sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob the land of Canaan, but they would not actually go into Canaan to take it as their possession until the time of Joshua. Gen. 46 assures us that the sons of Jacob are in the geographical will of God. Their move to Egypt is not a rejection of God's promises nor does it postpone God's plan or His promises. This move does not take any of them out of God's geographical will.

In vv. 1–3, God gives Jacob assurances that his leaving the land of Canaan is okay and will not affect the promises given Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Vv. 4–7 speak of the trip from Beersheba to Canaan and all who went with Jacob. Vv. 8–27 lists all of Jacob's descendants, all of whom are moving to Egypt (which passage demonstrates their racial purity). Vv. 28–30 is the reunion of Jacob and his son Joseph. Finally, Joseph prepares his family to meet Pharaoh in vv. 31–34.

Ramey's chiasmos is short and sweet:

William Ramey's Chiasmos of Genesis 46:1–30

Reference: Genesis 46:1-30

A God spoke to Israel in night visions at Beer-sheba (1-7)
  X Israel's genealogical record (8-27)
A' Joseph appears to Israel in Egypt (28-30)

The overall chiastic structure of Genesis 46:1-30 appears to be simplistic. It also forms the literary "X" of the entire Joseph Narrative. God is faithful to His promise to Abraham as recorded in Genesis 15.

Genesis 46:1-7 is also a chiastic structure. For example:

A Israel arrives with his possessions [and household] at Beer-sheba (1)
  B God's call to Israel and his response (2)
    C Israel is not to be afraid to go down to Egypt (3a-b)
      X God will make Israel a great nation in Egypt (3c)
    C' God will bring Israel back out of Egypt (4a-b)
  B' Joseph will close his father's eyes (4c)
A' Jacob departs with his household from Beer-sheba (5-7)

From https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html accessed September 19, 2015.

A chiasmos is not necessarily unique.

Hajime Murai's Structure of Genesis 46:1–7

A	(46:1)	Arrival to Beer-sheba (עב הראב)
B	(46:2-4)	Vision of God
A'	(46:5-7)	Departure from Beer-sheba (עב ראבמ)

A: Beer-sheba. B: Vision of God.

From bible.literarystructure.info accessed January 24, 2017.

Genesis 46:1a And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba,...

Beer-sheba is the last stop along the road on the southern road out of Canaan. Jacob (called Israel here, which usually means he is doing something right) knows that he is leaving the Land of Promise (something which he has done once before). Jacob also realizes that might be a bad thing. God gave this land to the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but Jacob and his extended family—all of them—are leaving it behind.

This is somewhat ironic, because much of Jacob's life was spent in pursuit of the blessings of the firstborn, which blessings were closely tied to the land of Canaan; and now he would be the patriarch to actually pick up and leave that land, taking all of his sons (and his sons' sons) with him.

Jacob Leads His Family into Egypt (a map); from ebible teacher; accessed July 12, 2017.

Genesis 46:1a And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba,...

It is interesting that Jacob had been outside the Land of Promise far more than Abraham or Isaac—Abraham appears to have gone to Egypt on one occasion; I cannot recall Isaac ever leaving the land—in fact, Abraham acted on at least one occasion to specifically remain in Canaan; and, on another occasion, Isaac was about to leave the land for Egypt because of a drought, and God guided him to another area in Canaan. Jacob, on the other hand, has gone east to Haran; and here, he will pack up his entire family and move southwest to Egypt.

There is no doubt that Jacob had some misgivings about all that was taking place. He longed to see his son Joseph again; he believed that this is what he had to do. But, he was leaving the Land of Promise, the land that God specifically gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their descendants. This departure seemed counterintuitive. Since God gave the land to the sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; it would seem most logical to remain in the land, no matter what.

Genesis 46:1b ...and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

Jacob appears to express this conflicted mental state with an animal sacrifice to God. However, most of the time when Jacob offers an animal up to God, he is within the plan of God.

Then, God spoke to him, to clear all of this up.

Genesis 46:2 And God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!" And he said, "Here I am."

God makes all of what is happening clear to Jacob. It is interesting that, in Gen. 45:27, we have Jacob's name used (when he is revived); and the name *Israel* when it is attached to him moving to Egypt (Gen. 45:28 46:1); and yet, when God speaks to him, it is, "Jacob, Jacob." (Why not, *Israel, Israel?*)[61] As we have noted before, God only on a half dozen occasions doubles a man's name when He calls them. This is over a period of perhaps 4000 years of human history.

Jacob, in moving south, is in the plan of God; and my guess is, he has a much improved mental attitude at this time, looking forward to seeing his son Joseph.

Genesis 46:3a And He said, "I am God, the God of your fathers. Do not fear to go down into Egypt,...

Jacob, for one of the few times in his life, is thinking and doing the right thing. God wants all of Jacob's family to move to Egypt. That is the right thing to do; this is God's will for them to do. At the same time, Jacob is concerned about leaving the land of promise. That is also the proper way to think. Jacob is leaving the land that God led Abraham to and then gave to him—so Jacob ought to have misgivings about doing this.

Therefore, God must reassure Jacob that he is doing the right thing.

Genesis 46:3 And He said, "I am God, the God of your fathers. Do not fear to go down into Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation.

God's promises still stand. There is no change in that. God gives Jacob the go-ahead to leave the Land of Promise and to go down to Egypt. God says, "I know that you are

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[61] At this point, I do not have an answer for this.

conflicted; it is okay that you take your family to Egypt—this is My geographical will for you."

God reiterates His promise originally made to Abraham and Isaac. He gives Jacob the assurance that he needs. We all know how much Jacob has failed. God remains faithful to Jacob, while he makes good decisions and bad. Also, there is some indication in later chapters that, while in Egypt, Jacob exhibited some spiritual growth.

There is an entire theology built upon the idea that, Israel (the nation) failed so much and so often—and then, when they rejected God's Son, God had to put them aside *forever*. According to that theology, they simply took their negative volition it too far; they were too negative toward God; and far too sinful. The idea is, you can go so far from God as to lose His unmerited grace. This view is called covenant theology or replacement theology; and logically, the doctrine of eternal security would be rejected by same people (they don't, necessarily; but it would logically follow).

The concept of covenant theology (also know as, replacement theology) is this: God got so fed up with Israel and their constant negative volition, that He did not simply introduce a new program, but God cut Israel out of the picture altogether and gave all of their promises to the church and to Christians (and many people believe that God *spiritualized* all of His promises which He had made to Israel). Covenant theology holds that Israel was so bad, and failed so much, that God just could not deal with them anymore, and He dumped Israel, as a people and as a country, completely and forever.

This is the same kind of theology which rejects eternal security.[62] When we believe in Jesus Christ, we are saved because we stand upon what He did on our behalf; we are not standing on our own righteousness. In fact, salvation by grace is the exact opposite of standing on our own righteousness. Therefore, once we have exercised faith in Jesus Christ, even if just for a few moments, God records that momentary faith forever—and it does not matter what your life is after salvation (with regards to your salvation), because we are all saved by grace through faith in His Son. We stand wholly and completely upon Christ's merit. Christ's merit, which is imputed to us, stands, regardless of subsequent faith or lack of it.

So, it is reasonable to ask...

Can a Believer in Jesus Christ Lose His Salvation?

1. Paul addresses this exact issue in the New Testament. 2Tim. 2:11–13 This is a trustworthy saying: If we died with Him, we will also live with Him; if we endure, we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will also deny us; if we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself. (Berean SB) This

[62] A person can believe in covenant theology and eternal security at the same time. However, this would be an illogical point in their thinking. If God could choose Israel and Israel failed so completely as to be cut out of the plan of God as God's peculiar people; then why would God spare those believers who sin too much?

passage gives us 4 *if...then...* statements, which describe the believer in time and in eternity.

2. The first *if...then...* states is, *If we died with Him, we will also live with Him.* Dying with the Lord simply means that we believe that His spiritual death is sufficient for our salvation; and this saving faith means that we also live with Him in eternity. This first saying establishes that Paul is speaking of believers (and he is writing to Timothy, the pastor of a local church, who ministers to believers).
3. ...if we endure, we will also reign with Him;... The believer who endures[1] is the believer who grows spiritually and exploits the grace of God in his life. This believer will reign with Jesus Christ in the future. We may understand this to be reward in the future.
4. ...if we deny Him, He will also deny us;... The first statement indicate that we are dealing with believers; the second statement deals with rewards. Logically, this third statement is all about denial of *rewards to believers*. There will be believers who fail in life and do not operate in the plan of God; some believers will even deny the Lord throughout most of their lives. These believers will be denied reward.
5. And just in case we do not understand that fact, Paul adds a fourth statement: ...if we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself. First, keep in mind that Paul is writing to Timothy about believers; so here, we are speaking of *faithless believers* (which may sound like a contraction in terms). There are those who place their faith in Jesus Christ who later deny or reject this initial faith. That is, they are faithless; they no longer exhibit faith in Christ in their lives. However, God remains faithful to such (meaning they cannot lose their salvation). God remains faithful because He cannot deny Himself. When we have faith in Jesus Christ, we stand upon His merit; we stand upon His finished work. There is nothing that we can add to this for our salvation. God's salvation cost the Lord everything; God's salvation costs us nothing. Therefore, once we exercise faith in Him, we cannot lose our salvation, as God cannot deny Himself. God cannot deny the saving work of His Son. Believers who seem religious and believers who later abandon their faith may spend most or all of the rest of their lives out of fellowship; but God remains faithful to us, He cannot deny the work of His Son.

[1] Thayer gives, as one of the meanings for this verb: *to preserve: under misfortunes and trials to hold fast to one's faith in Christ*.

Dispensationalism vs. Covenant Theology: In the previous lesson, we talked a little about Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology and how Covenant Theology logically leads us to take a position that salvation is not by faith alone in Christ alone. The idea is, if God could have made all of those very specific promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (and later to King David), and yet Israel the nation could actually, through her actions,

nullify those promises for Israel, then why couldn't we, as believers in Jesus Christ, nullify our faith through negative volition? It is a logical position to take; not the one that covenant theologians always take (my point being is that covenant theology is not only the wrong view, but it is often illogical as well).

The false view of salvation is, we do *not* stand upon Christ's merit only; but, also, a little bit (or even a lot) on our own merit. That is, our salvation requires us to be at least a little bit good afterwards (and some theologies require that we are really, really good after salvation). For the believer, some believe that he must maintain at least a mediocre spiritual life, or God will cast him aside, as He cast away Israel (according to Covenant Theology). This is the false view that someone can observe your life, not recognize that you are a Christian, and therefore, if you were saved, you lost your salvation. Or they might conclude, you had a head belief, but not a heart belief (which is a ridiculous statement, Biblically speaking, as the *heart* does not refer to one's emotions when found in the Bible). Let me repeat, this is a false view. Your salvation is completely separate from your life as a believer. Salvation is a one-shot deal—you believe in Jesus Christ, and you are saved. The Christian life, which occurs *only after salvation,* is never a one-shot deal; but a day-to-day, decision-by-decision process. So often, we have this completely turned around, where other people seem to think it is their duty to watch you and determine whether or not you have been really saved (something which they cannot observe). On the other hand, there are these rededication services where you rededicate yourself to Jesus Christ, as if the Christian life is some big, one-shot decision.

Let me draw an analogy here. You enter into the job market, you find an employer who likes you and you make a one-shot decision to work for that employer. This is not the end of everything, but the beginning. After that, you have your actual job performance. That is a day-to-day thing; and often it involved continuing education in your field. The only place where this analogy breaks down is, you can be fired from any job; but God does not kick you out of the kingdom for being a crappy Christian. Now, you may end up living in the last house on Dirt Street in heaven in eternity; but that is infinitely better than spending eternity in hell.

Related to this, covenant theology teaches that, regardless of what God promises, if we sin too much, then we are lost. We are lost forever. All of God's very specific promises to Israel are nearly meaningless in covenant theology. Because of Israel's disobedience, promises made by God are then spiritualized and given over to the church. The idea is, even though these promises seem as though they refer to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; they actually are applicable the *spiritual* descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (in other words, their genealogy is not an issue—which is an odd view to take, given all the genealogies in the Bible). So, all of God's unconditional covenants to Israel, ironically, are not quite good enough to save Israel in Covenant Theology. They are, somehow, just not unconditional enough.

Logically, the person who believes in covenant theology does not believe in a God of grace; does not trust God to save us to the uttermost, because God did not preserve nation Israel to the uttermost (despite His numerous promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob).

For some people, Dispensational Theology and Covenant Theology very difficult terms, so let me see if I can give a basic run-down on these two views:

Dispensationalism believes that God has different programs in different eras. For nearly 2000 years, God worked through a particular nation and a particular people—the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They looked forward to a time of great peace and prosperity, to the coming of their Messiah, to the raising up of a Prophet just like Moses. They looked forward to a time when David's Greater Son would sit on the throne of Israel. This changed dramatically after the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. Suddenly, there was a new institution known as the church, where there is no importance placed upon one's genealogical origins or on such externals as circumcision or animal sacrifices. These two dispensations are known as the Age of Israel and the Church Age, and in between these two dispensations is another dispensation, called the Dispensation of the Hypostatic Union, when Jesus Christ, the God of the Universe, walked on this earth. Israel, as a people and as a nation, are *temporarily* set aside; and the Church, the body of Christ, is in the forefront. But, in dispensationalism, all of the promises which God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still stand, are to be taken literally, and will be fulfilled at some time in the future.

In Covenant Theology, there was no nation Israel or people of God, as they appear to be in the Old Testament; but they were just the church, the same thing that we are today. Most people who study any of the Old Testament closely have a hard time buying that sort of theology.

In Dispensationalism, the nation and people of Israel are set aside for a time, but not forever. There is actually another 7 years remaining in the dispensation of Israel (this 7 years is known as the Tribulation); so that, when the church is raptured (*all* believers on the earth are removed and only unbelievers remain), then the dispensation of Israel resumes. All of God's promises to Israel will be fulfilled after the Tribulation.

Covenant Theology believes that God's relationship with man is based upon a number of covenants; and that, when Israel failed as a nation and as a people, spiritual Israel took their place—permanently. God's promises (covenants) that he made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not to be taken completely and totally literally; so that these various promises which speak of their descendants must be understood to mean their spiritual descendants. God was really not talking about a literal land of Canaan, but a spiritual land which, I guess, we somehow conquer. In Covenant Theology, genealogy is no longer a factor and nation Israel is not a part of God's plan any more. Covenant Theology believes that the Church is simply spiritual Israel; and everything that God said to Israel needs to be reinterpreted in a spiritual way and applied to believers today.

Another point of illogic is, Israel turned away from God; and so Israel was rejected by God entirely. But, somehow, at the same time, the church began in Abraham's tent and that was the true church (his spiritual descendants). So, somehow, they take the Old Testament literally; but somehow, they don't. It is not clearcut to me.

Throughout the Church Age, these have been the only two main theologies, and virtually every church and denomination is in one camp or the other (there are certainly variations within the theologies that I have outlined). Now let's compare these theologies side-by-side:

This chart is part of an article written by Ligon Duncan which you can read here: Dispensationalism - A Reformed Evaluation. I have heavily edited this chart.

Although there was a lot of cut and pasting done for this doctrine, I do not believe that the dispensational side received an accurate explanation; and therefore, I have either discarded or rewritten many points.

DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY	COVENANT THEOLOGY
(Lewis S. Chafer, John Walvoord, Tim LaHaye, John Nelson Darby, C.I. Scofield)	(Charles Hodge, Loraine Boettner, Louis Berkhof, John Murray, B.B. Warfield)
1. God's promises are absolute. What God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still stands and literally applies to their descendants. Descendants, by the way, are both genealogical and spiritual descendants of Abraham. That is, they must believe in the Revealed God to be a part of true Israel.	1. God's promises can be nullified or changed if the people fail too much or become too negative. Genealogy and nation Israel really count for little or nothing in Covenant Theology. Some believe that the original church began in Abraham's tent.
2. Stresses 'literal' interpretation of the Bible. However, there are various forms of figures of speech which are not strictly literal and not to be taken as such.	2. Accepts 'spiritual' interpretation of the Bible text. For instance, the promises that God made to Israel can be understood as not literal promises and as not having to apply to the literal descendants of Israel. Such promises are *spiritualized*.
3. 'Israel' nearly always refers to the literal, physical and spiritual descendants of Jacob (Jews who have believed in Jesus Christ).	3. "Israel" may mean either literal, physical descendants of Jacob or the figurative, spiritual Israel, depending on context.

DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY		COVENANT THEOLOGY	
4.	God has 2 peoples with 2 separate destinies: Israel (earthly) and the Church (heavenly).	4.	God has always had only 1 people, the Church, which gradually developed and replaced Israel.
5.	The Church was born at Pentecost.	5.	The Church began in O.T. (Acts 7:38) and reached fulfillment in the N.T. Many consider that the church began in Abraham's tent.
6.	The Church was not prophesied as such in the O.T. but was a hidden mystery until the N.T. Most of what Jesus teaches, until the upper room discourse, is primarily directed toward the Jewish people and toward a literal nation Israel.	6.	There are many O.T. prophecies of the N.T. Church. The church is as present in the Old Testament as it is in the New.
7.	All O.T. prophecies for 'Israel' are for literal Israel, not the Church.	7.	Some O.T. prophecies are for the literal nation of Israel, others are for spiritual Israel.
8.	The Church, unknown in the OT, is a parenthesis in God's program for the ages. OT prophecies about the Messiah often jump from His 1st advent (when Jesus walked the earth) to His 2nd advent, when He will return to earth to save literal Israel at the end of the Tribulation. The church is sandwiched between those two advents. The church is called a mystery, because it is unknown in the Old Testament.	8.	The Church is the culmination of God's saving purpose for the ages. The Old Testament is filled with prophecies which may be applied to the church, after they are properly spiritualized. Despite the specific promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and David; about a specific piece of land; these cannot be understood literally in this age; and those promises apply to us in the church.
9.	The main heir to Abraham's covenant was Isaac and literal Israel (the people, the nation). However, unbelievers descended from Abraham are not a part of this covenant.	9.	The main heir to Abraham's covenant was Christ and spiritual Israel (the church).

DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY	COVENANT THEOLOGY
10. Most Dispensationalists teach that men in the O.T. were saved by faith in a revelation of God peculiar to their dispensation, but this did not include faith in the Messiah as their sin-bearer, but faith in God, in however He revealed Himself (in the Jewish dispensation, God is the Redeemer and/or Savior of Israel).	10. All men who have ever been saved have been saved by faith in Christ as their sin-bearer, which has been progressively revealed in every age. Dispensationalists certainly believe in a progressive revelation, which also applies to the Savior.
I use the expression, *the Revealed God;* however He chose to reveal Himself, that is where a person had to place his faith. I use myself to illustrate this (not always a good idea). When I was first saved, I did not understand the resurrection or ascension. Honestly, I did not know what happened to Jesus after His crucifixion; but I still believed in Him, and with that limited knowledge, I was saved. Later, I came to understand (and believe) the resurrection and ascension.	
In the Church Age, we understand that Abraham offering up his son, Isaac, was a type of God offering up His Son for our sins. We have studied this type in great detail already. Abraham and people of that era did not see this as a type, but as a great act of faith by Abraham. Those who believe in that God are saved in the Old Testament; even though they may not fully understand that the Son of God would die in our stead for our sins.	
11. God's program in history is mainly through separate dispensations. Each dispensation has its own set of rules (but there are many similarities).	11. God's program in history is mainly through related covenants.
12. The O.T. sacrifices were not recognized as the Gospel or types of the Messiah as sin-bearer, but only seen as such in retrospect. Typology developed long after the types and antitypes occurred in history.	12. O.T. believers believed in the Gospel of Messiah as sin-bearer mainly by the sacrifices as types and prophecies.
Typology is actually only fairly recently developed—in the past few hundred years. Current typology is the belief that the Old Testament is filled with *types;* that is, things which represent Jesus Christ and were revealed in the OT, but had a fulfillment in the New. The best example of this is the offering of Isaac by Abraham. In the OT, this is portrayed simply as the ultimate act of obedience; but we understand it today to represent God the Father offering up His Son, Jesus Christ for our sins. Abraham did not understand that was what he was doing.	

DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY	COVENANT THEOLOGY
13. The Holy Spirit indwells only believers in the dispensation of Grace, and the Holy Spirit only indwelt some believers in the O.T.	13. The Holy Spirit has indwelt believers in all ages, especially in the present N.T. era, and will not be withdrawn. I am not sure if this is a universal point of doctrine among covenant theologians.
14. Jesus made an offer of the literal Kingdom to Israel; since Israel rejected it, it is postponed (quite obviously, until the people of Israel will accept such a Kingdom).	14. Jesus made only an offer of the spiritual Kingdom, which was rejected by literal Israel but has gradually been accepted by a spiritual Israel (the church).
15. O.T. believers were not in Christ, not part of the Body or Bride of Christ.	15. Believers in all ages are all "in Christ" and part of the Body and Bride of Christ.
16. The Law has been set aside or abolished. The Law and the principles of the Law continue to be true and applicable as a part of the laws of divine establishment. 9 of the 10 commandments continue as universal moral principles.	16. The Law has 3 uses: to restrain sin in society, to lead to Christ, and to instruct Christians in godliness. The ceremonial Laws have been abolished; the civil laws have been abolished except for their general equity; the moral laws continue.
17. O.T. laws are no longer in effect unless repeated in the N.T.	17. O.T. laws are still in effect unless abrogated in the N.T.
18. The Millennium is the Kingdom of God. Dispensationalists are always Pre-Millennial and usually Pre-Tribulational.	18. The Church is the Kingdom of God. Covenanters are usually AMillennial, sometimes Pre-Millennial or Post-Millennial, rarely Pre-Tribulational.
These are some very technical terms; and some people reading this will not know them.	
19. The O.T. animal sacrifices will be restored in the Millennium.	19. The O.T. sacrifices were fulfilled and forever and abolished in Christ.
20. The Millennium will fulfill the Covenant to Abraham. Israel has a future.	20. Christ fulfilled the Covenant to Abraham. Some Covenanters believe in a future for literal Israel, most do not.

DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY	COVENANT THEOLOGY
21. Much of Genesis and Exodus prove the purity and isolation of the Jewish people. This is a big theme of these two books. Two chapters specifically deal with attempted contamination of these people (Gen. 34 38); and the line of Abraham is spoken of on numerous occasions.	21. The purity and integrity of the Jewish people is much less important, as the key to the covenant is their spiritual descendants and not their genetic descendants. Gen. 34 and 38 are just interesting stories about ancient times, but have little meaning for us.

The Old Testament makes a great deal more sense under Dispensationalism, as we can pretty much understand everything that we read literally. Even Old Testament types were literal persons and events.

To people for whom this is new, Covenant Theology is difficult to grasp, as so many things in the Old Testament have to be partially-spiritualized in order for them to make sense in that theology.

From https://www.the-highway.com/covenant-vs-dispensational.html accessed July 12, 2017, and heavily edited.

Jacob is a spectacular failure for much of his life. King David has about 20 wives and mistresses; and his son Solomon has 1000 wives and mistresses (which still did not satisfy his sexual lust). Besides the wives, David committed two terrible sets of sins in his life. Despite their failures, the legal line of promise goes through David and Solomon (the genetic line of promise goes through David and another son, Nathan). We have also studied Judah's failures as well. Now, how does God allow the line of promise to go through Jacob, Judah, David (and Solomon for the legal line)? Are these men not failures? Of course they are! The key is God's grace. All of these men have trusted in the Revealed God; therefore, God could not deny them, even during periods of their faithlessness. All men fail. All saved men fail.

Lesson 456: Genesis 46:1–2 John 5:1–16 — Signs and Miracles

Jacob sons have returned to Canaan, telling him that Joseph is still alive and living in Egypt. Furthermore, that Joseph sent him all the necessary ancient world U-haul's to bring Jacob to Egypt. So, in Gen. 46, Jacob begins his move southwest to Egypt.

Gen. 46:1–2 So Israel took his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am." (ESV)

Beersheba is essentially the last city of Canaan in the south. Jacob no doubt had misgivings about leaving the Land of Promise; and so, God speaks to him before he actually leaves the land.

It is always fascinating to me who God chooses to reveal Himself to in a vision or by some other sort of manifestation. God revealed Himself to Jacob on many different occasions. God will reveal Himself as a burning bush to Moses. However, God does not appear to have manifested Himself to Joseph (or to any of his brothers). So we cannot assume that God only reveals Himself to the really spiritually advanced believer.

There are certain denominations which emphasize healings, tongues and/or various mystical experiences. They believe that the Bible is evidence of taking that approach. There are miracles and healings in Scripture, but they are generally limited to very specific times in history and they occur or are performed for very specific reasons. Most often, these signs and miracles are done for the audience of a very specific people.

In the book of Genesis, we have studied perhaps 2000 years of human history. God has appeared to perhaps a handful of men during that time period; and there have been two dramatic miracles[63] of judgment (the Great Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah). There is a miracle associated with Abraham (the birth of Isaac) and a great vision associated with Jacob (the vision of the angels and of God). However, for the most part, the signs and wonders found in Genesis are quite limited, considering its timespan. The only reason that it appears that these signs and miracles take up a great portion of the book of Genesis is, the book of Genesis is all about God's interaction with mankind. That would logically include signs and miracles.

Ancient Critics of Christ's Miracles: God is certainly not limited by His creation and He could certainly perform 200 miracles a day for every believer (or unbeliever) on earth, if that was His plan. However, in the gospels of Jesus Christ, it becomes clear that miracles do not automatically change a person's negative volition. Men who witnessed great miracles performed by the LORD often took that opportunity to argue with Him about some minor aspect of the Law or about whether or not what He had done was lawful. Very often, they accepted the miracle (s) that they witnessed at face value, but argued some tiny, unimportant aspect of the miracle (such as, *is it legitimate to heal a man on the Sabbath*). Thus, witnessing a miracle—no matter how impressive it might be—does not guarantee that a person will believe in Jesus Christ. John 5 gives us an example of this:

John 5:1–3 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed.

The physically deformed and ailing people went to a particular pool; probably because some of them had some comfort and locomotion in the water that they did not have on land. Many believed that the pool has some sort of healing properties; but there is no history given as to how that belief developed, and certainly no examples of past healings are mentioned.

[63] I use the term *miracle* in the generic sense, so represent any act of God, whether miraculous or not.

John 5:5–6 One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be healed?"

This is a fascinating question, which makes me smile. Jesus looks down at an invalid, a man which He chooses out of the crowd of invalids, and asks him, “Do you want to be healed?” Quite obviously, he desires this above all other things.

John 5:7 The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me."

Based upon these words, some believed that there was a healing affect of the pool of Bethesda, despite the fact that this man could have been coming to this pool for the better part of 38 years now. The invalid seems to think he needs to be placed into the pool when the water is being stirred up, in order to be healed, and other men are getting into the waters ahead of him, as they are apparently more mobile than he is. None of them, by the way, are getting healed. This would further suggest to me that they believed the healing process (which is not actually occurring) to take a long period of time.

John 5:8 Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk."

Jesus orders the man to get up, pick up his bed (cot, or whatever it was that he lay on) and walk. This man has not walked for 38 years, much less carried a bed (perhaps a cot or some cloth covers). Bear in mind, his muscles have completely atrophied during this time; he has no strength in his legs; so, even if his original malady of being lame were solved, it would requires years of therapy to get the strength in his legs back. Yet, Jesus tells him, “Get up and walk.” And he did.

John 5:9 And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath.

At the command of Jesus, this man was healed. Therefore, he could stand up, take up his bed, and walk. And, as we have observed in this narrative, Jesus did nothing other than *tell* the man to get up and walk (after asking him if he wanted to be healed). So, all that Jesus has done is surveyed the pool area, picked this man out, and then He spoke to him.

The problem is, this is the Sabbath, a day during which no work should be done. Now, even though it is pretty clear that Jesus did no work, this will be contested. He told this invalid to do work on the Sabbath. Then the invalid stood up and started walking, carrying around his bed (a burden) as Jesus told him to do.

John 5:10 So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed."

This man has not walked for 38 years, so he picks up his bed and he is walking; and he is completely healed. He does not require physical therapy to get his legs to work again. I guarantee you, that this man cannot stop walking. And yet, because he is carrying his bed, some Jews complain that he is breaking the Sabbath. Now, remember, Jesus *told* him to pick up his bed.

John 5:11 But he answered them, "The Man Who healed me, that Man said to me, 'Take up your bed, and walk.'"

The man's answer was, "The man Who healed me told me to take up my bed and walk." Jesus did not just tell this man to walk; He told him to pick up his bed and walk. This was intentional on the Lord's part.

These critics—these legalists—do not seem to be very impressed that this man has been healed; but they are greatly concerned that he is standing there or walking about, and he is carrying his bed.

John 5:12 They asked him, "Who is the Man Who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?"

Do you see how these religious types are focused in on just one thing: "You're walking around with your bed; you are carrying a burden. You are not supposed to do that." This man had not walked for 38 years, and some might think that is quite a big deal. But, he is carrying his bed (again, perhaps a cot or some sort of cloth to lay on) and it is the Sabbath—so that is their focus.

So that there is no confusion, there is nothing in the books of the Law which forbid this man from being healed; or from picking up his bed and walking around with it. However, what he is doing violates the laws made up by influential rabbis (they supplemented the laws of the Pentateuch with hundreds of additional laws).

John 5:13 Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place.

All of this happened quite quickly. Jesus told the man to get up, pick up his bed, and walk; and I can guarantee you that this man would not stop walking; it was the greatest feeling of freedom and exhilaration that he had had in 38 years. But, he lost track of Jesus, as he enjoyed walking about.

The man apparently led the other Jews back to this pool of Bethesda, and Jesus is not there, and there is a crowd there. These Jews with the former invalid were not looking to find Jesus to inquire how was He able to heal the man; or ask Him to heal more men; they went to track Him down to complain that He encouraged this other man to violate the Sabbath day (which he did not!).

It is worth noting that this place is filled with cripples and invalids; and yet Jesus chose to heal only one of them. Furthermore, the religious types have no interest in the miracle performed by Jesus. Jesus did not only remove the lameness of this man, but restored his leg muscles so that he could walk.

John 5:14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you."

Jesus later finds this man in the Temple (meaning, on the Temple grounds), and He speaks to him. The implication I get from this conversation is, this man was an invalid based upon his sins from long ago; and Jesus tells him not to return to that.

John 5:15 The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.

Whomever the man had spoken to, he found them (or they found him) and he told them that it was Jesus who healed him.

Did these Jews threaten the man with some kind of penalty for breaking the Sabbath unless they gave up the name of Jesus, Who healed him and then told him to get up and walk, carrying his pallet? That appears to be the case, although this is certainly speculation on my part.

John 5:16 And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.

And so these Jews persecute Jesus because of healing on the Sabbath. None of them appeared to be very interested in the fact that Jesus healed this man.

They have no argument that this miracle has occurred; they believe that it had. In fact, that appears to be a part of their indictment against Jesus. They believe that Jesus had healed this man—a man who had been an invalid for 38 years. Their problem was, this healing took place on the Sabbath and Jesus told him to carry his bed. My point being, healing this man did not convince anyone who was on negative signals. If a person does not want to know that the God Who created them and the God Who saved them, then no amount of miracles will change their minds.

We have this sort of thing occurring in politics all the time. When a president acts, the opposition party will oppose him reflexively. If what the president is doing is having good results, then the opposition party will focus on some minor set of details—sometimes completely unrelated to what the president is doing—and focus in on that.

My point is, signs and miracles are not necessarily that convincing to the people who see them. They may believe that they have occurred, and yet refuse to acknowledge the power which made them happen.

One of the most amazing things in Scripture is the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies by Jesus Christ. No one seriously doubts the 400 year separation between the Old and New Testaments; yet the things which Jesus said and did and Who He was are remarkable fulfillments of Old Testament prophecy. But, if someone does not want to believe this, then they won't. And if you discuss it with them, they will either make up stuff about their knowledge of prophecy or they will concentrate on extremely minor aspects of the prophecies or the fulfillments. In today's era, most will just use Google to find information which will support their negative volition.

Many unbelievers will say, *Jesus did not even exist; He was just made up by Bible writers*. So, when you show them the 10 or 20 secular writers who knew about Jesus and wrote a few things about Him, does this change the minds of the unbelievers? Of course not! They choose what they believe and they choose what they disbelieve. Evidence is important to them *only* when it supports their negative volition.

It is not uncommon for an unbeliever to claim a special alliance with science; and a tremendous respect for scientists (if they know any religious language, they might refer to them as the *shamans* of modern society). And, at least 80% of the time, these unbelievers who believe in science also believe in evolution from one species of animal to another (something they have never seen); man-made climate change (believing that the world could become uninhabitable in as few as 100 years—something else they will never see); and they believe that man can choose his (or her) own gender (or that there are more than two genders). And, also quite often, they will make fun of people who believe in God, because they cannot see Him or bring Him out for everyone to see; and yet, these are 3 tenets of their own faith.

Back to these signs and wonders: we find a surfeit of signs and wonders in Scripture when related to big events in God's plan: the exodus (which would establish Israel as a national entity), the incarnation (or 1st advent) of our Lord, and the establishment of the church.[64] However, for the bulk of believers, the other 99.99% of us—who do not live during these momentous eras—we can go our entire lives without seeing a single miracle which defies the laws of science and yet still have a full and complete spiritual life. I am not saying that no miracles occur today nor am I implying that God is somehow less able to perform miracles today. I am saying that miracles from the hand of God today are very rare, and our lives are far more similar to Joseph's life than they are to Moses' life (or even to Abraham's life). Insofar as we know, Joseph never spoke with God, saw God (a manifestation of God), or any miracle. Yet, he is one of the greatest believers in the book of Genesis (actually, in the entire Bible, if you will).

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[64] There will also be some miracles related to the establishment of a prophet who is at odds with the political class in Israel.

The believer who grows spiritually can see tremendous gains over periods of, say, 5 or 10 or 20 years—but not from watching a succession of signs and miracles but from spiritual growth which is a matter of putting the thinking of God inside your soul (that is, growing in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ). Holy rollers who are looking desperately to see a healing or some tongues spoken or some great miracle, are like drunks on a bender, in search of their next drink. As soon as the emotion wears off from seeing one false wonder, they go out seeking it again, hoping to titillate their emotions again, thinking this to be spirituality. The spiritual life is not powerful emotions guiding you through life. The normal believer will have a rainbow of emotions throughout his life; and, ideally speaking, will not be caused to act on the basis of emotion. Our actions, as believers, need to be based upon thought, and upon the filling of the Holy Spirit (which is achieved by means of 1John 1:9).

Today, we have the complete Word of God; it ought to be powerful to recognize that we have the mind of Christ at our disposal; that we are able to think like God thinks in this world of confusion, sin and evil. Now, *that* is a miracle.

Lesson 457: Genesis 46:1–4 God Tells Jacob, "I will be with you."

A Review of Genesis 46:1–3: Back to our narrative; where God is speaking to Jacob.

Gen. 46:1–2 So Israel took his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am." (ESV)

God has chosen to speak to Jacob, which suggests to me that Jacob did have some misgivings about moving to Egypt. He knew that he had to go see his son, whom he had believed had been killed; but Joseph essentially is moving Jacob and Jacob's sons down to Egypt for good—for the rest of their lives.

It is also important, in the book of Genesis, for God to explain that it is the right thing to do for Jacob to move to Egypt. This is an extremely important decision and a change which needs to be explained. Therefore, it is fundamental to that explanation for God to be onboard with Jacob's move.

God calls to Jacob and then He speaks to him.

Genesis 46:3 And He [God] said, "I am God, the God of your fathers. Do not fear to go down into Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation.

God knows that Jacob is confused by this situation and no doubt has (or should have) some second thoughts about moving to Egypt. Obviously, Jacob must see his son Joseph, but this involves leaving the Land of Promise; so God reassures him that this is okay. This

change of location does not change God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Leaving Canaan is not a misstep, but Jacob and all of his sons are still within God's geographical will. Going to Egypt is God's plan.

Recall that we recently discussed Dispensationalism versus Covenant Theology. In the dispensational way of understanding things, we take all of this very literally. Jacob is a real person; he is the son of Isaac, the grandson of Abraham; and Jacob has received the same promises that his father and grandfather received. These promises all relate to the literal land upon which Jacob is standing on at this time—the land of Canaan. This is the literal land that we today associate with Israel and Palestine. Jacob is in Beersheba, a real place, a place that we know about today; and that he is about to travel southwest to Egypt, the same Egypt that we know about today. In Dispensationalism, all of this is very literally understood. Even apart from underlying theologies (or superimposed theologies), there is nothing in this text to make us think anything other than this is literal narrative.

God previously promised to make a great nation of Abraham, and of Isaac and of Jacob; and all of this is related to the land of Canaan, also called the Land of Promise. None of this changes, even though Jacob is going to Egypt and will reside in Egypt for the next 400 years. God assures Jacob, in this encounter, that He will fulfill His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and that He will go down to Egypt with Jacob.

God explains just how He will accomplish this:

Genesis 46:4a I will go down with you into Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again."

God tells Jacob about the future. This appears to be God's final appearance to Jacob, as He encourages Jacob to continue on his journey to Egypt. When God says, *I will go down with you,* this means that Jacob is in God's geographical will. God is *with* Jacob because Jacob is in the right place.

Quite obviously, God can be anywhere at any time (actually, manifest Himself anywhere), as He is omniscient. But that is not what God is saying to Jacob. God is *not* saying, "I have revealed Myself to you on many occasions in the land of Canaan, and I will continue to manifest Myself to you when you move down to Egypt." You see, God is *not* going to continue to appear to Jacob; God will not be wrestling Jacob, God will not be renewing the promises to Jacob. But God will be *with Jacob,* meaning that it is okay for him to go southwest into Egypt.

When God says, *and I will also surely bring you up again;* this means that God will fulfill all of His promises that He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This land is still theirs; this land will be captured by and inhabited by Jacob's literal descendants.

God has already told Abraham that the people of promise would spend 400 years in Egypt (something which is not alluded to in the final chapters of Genesis); and God here promises Jacob that his people would be brought back up to Canaan.

The isolation and purity of the people of Israel are extremely important topics of Genesis, and they are emphasized throughout. Periodically, we have a roll call, and all of Jacob's sons and their sons are accounted for. We never lose a son—that is, not a single one of Jacob's sons says, "You guys go off to Egypt; I think I really like living in Canaan." They are all accounted for in the book of Genesis, and they will all be accounted for in the book of Exodus.

There have been several points in Genesis where there were potential problems. In Gen. 34, there was an attempt to destroy the purity of the descendants of Jacob by intermixing with the people of Shechem, where it was suggested to them that they intermarry, giving the daughters of each family to one another. It was not God's plan for the Jewish people to align themselves with another family. Therefore, that mixing of the families did not occur. However, this did happen in the ancient world, as we saw with Esau and Seir (Gen. 36).

Another problem which threatened the isolation of the Jewish people is, Judah, for a time, separated himself from his family. I suggested that the continual lying to their father about Joseph became impossible for him to do, and he moved away and married a Canaanite woman. At some point, Judah unceremoniously returned to the family, sans his Canaanite wife (she had died), sans two of his sons (they had died), but with his 3rd son by the Canaanites and his twins by Tamar. Gen. 38 is the parallel track of Judah's life, while Joseph was in Egypt. There was at least one other Canaanite woman who became a part of this family—Simeon's mistress.

The people of Canaan are in great moral decline, and this is seen throughout the book of Genesis. This is likely why God is going to take the land from the Canaanites and give it to the sons of Israel (many peoples in human history have lost their land over great personal degeneracy). The Canaanites are not quite there yet (remember the verse, *the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full*); but they will reach a point of no return, and that is when the sons of Israel will reenter the land and take it by force, killing most of the Canaanites living there (this narrative will be found in the first half of the book of Joshua).

It is reasonable to suppose that many Canaanites will lose their lives over the next 5 years due to the famine which has affected Canaan and Egypt. For the most part, they rejected the Revealed God, the God of Abraham. We have studied some notable exceptions already; but there would come a point in their history where their degeneracy reaches a level where the Jewish people would destroy them and take the land of Canaan from them.

In Egypt, for a number of reasons, the sons of Israel (Jacob) will remain separated from the people of Egypt (although, no doubt, some Egyptian women will marry into Israel's family).

Genesis 46:4 I will go down with you into Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again. And Joseph will put his hand on your eyes."

God tells Jacob that he would die and that his son, Joseph, would close his eyes. The implication is, this would all occur in Egypt. That is, Jacob would remain in Egypt until his death.

It is interesting, because God also says, "I will also surely bring you up again." Jacob will live the remainder of his life in Egypt. However, Joseph will bring Jacob's body back to the land of Canaan and bury him in the land God has given them. Joseph himself would ask that his body not be buried in Egypt, but be carried into Egypt at the proper time (we have still to study this topic known as the *bones of Joseph*).

Interestingly enough, according to the history of Genesis, Jacob encountered God on many occasions and Joseph does not appear to have ever spoken to God, not even in a dream. Yet it is Joseph's faith and understanding of God's plan that is striking; and Jacob's seeming lack of spiritual growth which is equally striking. Joseph is clearly able to view the arc of his life and recognize God's hand in the events of his life (Gen. 45:7–8 50:20)—even though he has not had any visions or seen any miracles (recall that a very young Joseph had a few dreams from God, but did not appear to understand or appreciate them at the time).

Jacob, on the other hand, because his eyes have been so focused on himself for much of his life, often seemed unable to recognize the hand of God in his life (even though it is clearly apparent to those of us who have studied his life). Jacob's wrestling with God, upon his return to Canaan from Haran, was illustrative of Jacob's interaction with God. Jacob spent much of his life in conflict with God.

Joseph, on the other hand, had very little direct encouragement from God (none, it seem), yet he is able to look at every circumstance and see it as the outworking of God.

What separates Joseph from Jacob? Why are father and son so very different? The difference is, Joseph is able to think like God thinks; Joseph has divine viewpoint in his soul. Jacob, for the most part, does not. Now, both men, father and son, have believed in the Revealed God; but Joseph's understanding and acceptance of divine viewpoint is greater. Joseph is fully aware of God's plan moving forward in his life; and he embraces it, never looking back, never seeking revenge against his brothers who sought to harm him.

Jacob, on the other hand, was always helping God's plan along, as long as it favored himself. He took the birthright of his brother Esau for a pot of bean stew; and he deceived his own father, with the intent of receiving his father's personal blessings when his father was near death.

There are times in Joseph's life where he appeared to question renewing his relationship with his brothers again (he kept his identity a secret from them for 2 years); but this was done without malice.

Because we have studied the book of Genesis (most of it) and we have a good overview of the actions of the patriarchs and the themes of this book; we understand and appreciate

the purity and isolation which is necessary for the Jewish people. Obviously, when making this history, the sons of Jacob did not always have a full appreciation of these same themes.

Let me express this in another way. People who are living history often do not appreciate the big themes; nor can they always able to put events into a true historical perspective. I was raised during a time when the assassination of President Kennedy seemed like the most important event of that era, but it really wasn't. A generation or two later had the Challenger explosion, which many of them saw as children on television in school; and that may have thought to be a dramatic point in American history; but it wasn't. Decades later, we are certain aware of these events—and they live on inasmuch as they occurred during impressionable points in the thinking of some generations—but these events are footnotes in history now.

In contrast, far more important than these events in American history were the Billy Graham Crusades, where the evangelist went all over the United States telling Americans who had forgotten, Who Jesus Christ is. I still recall some of these evangelical events being broadcast on prime time television (when there were only 3 networks). The evangelization of the United States after World War II is unlikely mentioned in any history book, but the result of millions of people believing in the Lord Jesus Christ during that time has consequences for us today. The blessedness of this nation and all the grace that God has bestowed upon America is directly related to that time in the 1950's. I see this as the 3rd great awakening of America and a far more important series of events because all of this has eternal impact.

My point being is, both Jacob and Joseph had some understanding of who they were and their relationship to God; but not a full and complete appreciation of what God was doing. They were focused upon day-to-day events for the most part. However, both Jacob and Joseph, when living in Egypt, understood the importance of the promises of God to them about the land of Canaan. Jacob, no doubt, gave some thought to these promises, as he is about to leave Canaan with all of his family with him.

God's appearance to Jacob in Beersheba suggests to us that Jacob had some misgivings about going down to Egypt to live. Obviously, he had to go to Egypt to see his son Joseph; but moving there, moving out of God's Promised Land, that was a major consideration in Jacob's life. So, even though we don't have an actual record of Jacob considering this decision and how it relates to God's plan; God will speak to Jacob, so that we all understand more about the importance of this move and how it relates to God's previous promises.

Personally, I think that there was some inner conflict in Jacob regarding this move to Egypt. It had to enter into his thinking in some way or another. The land of Canaan was given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and now Jacob is packing up his entire family—all of his descendants—and moving them out of the land. No doubt, Jacob experiences some tinge of doubt. Whereas, Joseph understands that this is the right move for his family; Jacob

no doubt has some doubt. God speaking to him allows Jacob to leave Canaan without the constant worry, *have I just made the biggest mistake of my life?*

We have to understand that we live in a different era. God will not going to stop us right before we make a right or a wrong move and say, "Stop;" or "Go." When you fill your soul up with doctrine and when you spend most of your time filled with the Spirit (by means of 1John 1:9), then you pretty much know what is right and what is wrong. Furthermore, with God's Word in your soul, God will guide you. It will not be by miracles or a grand apparition or even by a *still, small voice*. God designed for our souls and His Word in our thinking to interact with the circumstances of life so that we are able to take what we learn in the Word and apply it to daily life. God's guidance in our lives is very similar to God's guidance in Joseph's life.

Lesson 458: Genesis 46 by 1Cor. 7:17–24 — 1Corinthians 7 Interlude Part I

1Corinthians 7 Interlude: We last left Jacob and his family in Beersheba, about the exit the land of Canaan, with the intention of moving to Egypt. We do not know for certain how much Jacob thought about the promises of God concerning the land he was leaving; but it should have been on his mind. It was a major decision to pick up and move from the place where God originally led his grandfather; the place that God gave to his grandfather, his father and to him. Jacob understood that this was future; but it was still a clear promise from God (I am assuming the Jacob had a rudimentary understanding of the promises that God made to him).

For the new believer, the general rule is, he is to not make any big decisions (for the most part) until he learns some Bible doctrine—then he is in a better position to make big decisions. The new believer needs to pursue spiritual maturity; he needs to pursue Bible doctrine first and foremost. Other major decisions—like moving, marriage, job changing—need to be put aside for a time, if possible. Paul discusses this in 1Cor. 7; and we will take a short excursion in that passage. When a person believes in Jesus Christ, this changes his entire life; and God can make complementary changes internally. But there are day-by-day changes which occur along with the intake of Bible doctrine. It is this doctrine in our souls, interacting with our thinking and life's circumstances, which is the actual measure of growth in the believer's soul.

1Cor. 7:17 Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches. (ESV; capitalized[65])

God has placed us at a particular place at a particular time which corresponds to our own person and His plan. God has developed a plan for each person's life, and that plan is compatible with our interests, character and personality; as well as to the time in history in which we find ourselves (my own spiritual growth, my personal history, my interests, my spiritual gift, and the time I find myself in history are completely compatible—as if God put

[65] This version is used throughout this section.

me in exactly the right place during the right time of history). For me, all of this has come together perfectly; and I believe that is the design that God has for every believer's life.

One of the accurate slogans of modern Christianity is, *God has a plan for your life*. We discover that plan by the intake of the Word of God into our soul and spirit. As we grow spiritually, we learn where God wants us to be and what God wants us to do. One has to get away from the notion that God is going to make us do something that we do not want to do (one of my worries as a young Christian). It's not like that.

1Cor. 7:18 Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision.

Circumcision had an important meaning at one time—it separated out a person as having been regenerated. It was an overt sign or symbol of what had occurred within the soul. In itself, it did not make a person saved or unsaved. Obviously, the vast majority of people received circumcision before they had any choice in the matter. Therefore, their free will was not engaged (and there is no salvation apart from the exercise of a person's free will, in the Old or New Testaments).

Just as salvation is a change of the heart—something which cannot be seen; it is represented with circumcision, something else that most people cannot see. Circumcision is representative, therefore, of salvation. Regeneration means a person is born again, born anew—which technically means that the human spirit becomes functional, which is where we store all of our spiritual knowledge. Whereas, circumcision to Abraham meant revived biological life in his reproductive organs; it also represents a revived spiritual life to us. All men, because of the sin nature, are born with a dormant human spirit. Salvation revives or makes alive that spirit.

Now, in the Church Age, circumcision is no longer a necessary ritual. Even though believers could, in the first century, cite many passages from the Old Testament where circumcision is required, it is *not* required in the Church Age. No doubt, there were legalists in first century Corinth who told new members of that church, "You have received the gospel of Jesus Christ; now it is time to be circumcised!" If I were an uncircumcised adult gentile in Corinth, this is the last thing I would want to hear.

As I have emphasized on many occasions, if something is found in the Bible, that does not mean that we should go out and imitate it. We find many references to circumcision in Genesis and Exodus; but that does not mean that those of us who are uncircumcised need to become circumcised. Paul explains:

1Cor. 7:19 For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God.

Paul's epistles guided believers in the Church Age. You do not get extra points in this age for being circumcised or uncircumcised. God does not look at a Church Age believer and

say, “He’d really do a lot better in My plan if only he’d get circumcised.” Circumcision does not mean anything; nor does uncircumcision. There are no additional recognition or advantage given to believers who are circumcised.

There are many New Testament commandments for us to concentrate on:

For salvation: “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved,” (Acts 16:31b; ESV)
For spirituality: be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18; ESV) But if we admit our sins He is faithful and just so He can forgive them and cleanse us from all that is not right in us. (1John 1:9; Wiki, capitalized)
For spiritual growth: But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2Peter 3:18; ESV) Study to show yourself approved unto Elohim, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. (2Tim. 2:15; UTV) Let the Word of Christ live in you richly in all Wisdom (Sophia) (Col. 3:16a; UTV) For the new believer, it is far better to concentrate on these clear commands rather than to search the Scriptures for something to imitate.

There are rituals and doctrines from the Old Testament, many of which applied to Israel as a people of God; and others which looked forward to the Messiah—those do not apply to us in the Church Age. We study them and understand them; but we do not necessarily obey all of them. Moses, prior to his return to Egypt, circumcised his sons. This does not mean that we circumcise our own sons prior to an important trip. The Passover is a marvelous ritual with great theological import—but believers today do not observe the Passover. There is a great deal to be learned in the Old Testament; but we must also learn to understand God’s plan in different eras.

As an aside, it is a good idea to recognize that what we are discussing—here and in the Old Testament—is a literal circumcision. Also realize that, if some uncircumcised gentile has some interest in this Jesus Person, and then finds out, part of the package deal is circumcision, do you think he will be intrigued or unnerved?

1Cor. 7:20 Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called.

Here, in this verse, Paul gives the overriding principle. In whatever state we were called, that is how we ought to remain (unless, of course, Bible doctrine convinces you to make some changes).

We all have things in our life which define us. The Christian life is not about changing our external characteristics or circumstances. Being circumcised or uncircumcised is not anything in the Christian life (that is, it is irrelevant and unimportant). The idea is, Paul does not want new believers laden down with a false legalistic approach to the Christian life.

In context, it appears that Paul is talking about circumcision, when he says, *Remain in the condition in which you are called;* but he means far more than that.

Now Paul leaves this Jewish ritual, and moves into the area of social status:

1Cor. 7:21 Were you a bond-servant [slave] when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.)

If you were a slave when called, don't worry about it; don't try to change it. Now, if God gives you your freedom, then certainly accept that and use it. After all, the Christian life is all about the exercise of your free will. A free man has much more opportunity to express his freedom. Salvation and the Christian life are all about the expression of God-given human freedom (aka, volition).

1Cor. 7:22 For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ.

Your calling in Jesus Christ is far more important than your current station in life. Your spiritual life trumps whatever your human life is. A person might be born a slave; but faith in Christ makes him a freedman of God. Similarly, a person who was free when he exercised faith in Christ has become the servant of Jesus Christ (as we are bought with a price).

1Cor. 7:23 You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men.

Jesus Christ died for our sins; He paid for our salvation by means of His (spiritual) blood. We are servants of God.

This phrase, *do not become bond-servants of men* is not to be taken literally. It is possible to imagine a circumstance where, you have believed in Jesus Christ, and yet, at that point in time, you are so poor that you must sell yourself into slavery—you have no other options. Paul is *not* warning the believer, *don't do that, no matter what!* In other words, there are circumstances which we could imagine, where a person believers in Jesus Christ and then, also finds himself enslaved soon thereafter. Paul is not warning against that kind of thing happening. Why do I know that? Paul is not going to address the one-thousandth of 1% of believers who may fall into this category (the percentage of believers who are in this circumstance are so small, percentage-wise, as to be almost non-existent).

Paul has neatly gone from actual human enslavement to a different sort of slavery. The true slavery in this life is slavery to human viewpoint, to the simple or complex philosophies of men. We are not to subject ourselves to the thinking of men. We are not to be enslaved by the thinking of man; or by this fallen world.

In this age, humanism and liberalism and hedonism are rampant in the United States. Paul is *not* warning the modern-day believer, *do not become the employee of anyone else!* Almost all of us will be *employees;* and many of us will struggle to make ends meet (at various times in our lives). But the gist of this verse in our era is, *do not follow the tenets of humanism or liberalism; do not become a hedonist, concerned only with your own pleasure*. We are not to become slaves to the thinking and philosophies of men, because

we have been made free from that in Jesus Christ. We have been set free from the bonds of human viewpoint thinking.

When Paul says that we have been bought with a price; that means we are to be slaves to the *thinking* of God instead.

1Cor. 7:24 So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God. (ESV; capitalized)

Paul here gives a general statement of principle.

When you are saved, do not look to make sudden, major changes in your life. Do not move into a cult commune, do not desert your wife (or husband); do not get married the next day; do not quit your job and go into *full time Christian service*. When you are saved, you have a certain sort of life going on—be careful about what you suddenly change. For most of the big things, it is a good idea not to change them.

You need time to orient to your new status; and time to orient to your life as it is in this new status. That takes time and Bible doctrine.

Now, so that you do not misapply this, if you are called by God when in alcoholism or suffering from drug addiction. This verse does *not* tell you, "Just keep on taking drugs and keep on getting drunk until God convinces you to stop." One of the immediate benefits of the newly saved is a removal of scar tissue from their souls. Have you known the believer who was an alcoholic or druggie, but after he believed in Jesus Christ, his desire for alcohol or drugs diminished dramatically (or disappeared)? You may have experienced that yourself. That is the removal of scar tissue from your soul which allows you to more easily put those things behind you.

Very often, a person is pushed toward salvation through faith in Jesus Christ because of their own personal hedonism and how completely unhappy and unsatisfied they are with their lives despite the fact that they fill their lives with various pleasures. They have found out that experiencing some pleasures in life (such as, a drug-induced high) does not result in a life of happiness. In other words, personal pleasure is not the same thing as happiness or contentment.

When such a person reaches out to Jesus Christ because they recognize that there is something in their lives causing them great misery (such as, drug, alcohol or sexual addiction—which can include the homosexual lifestyle); they are not to return to that life which caused them all of this misery in the first place. Many people who are saved out of this sort of hedonism understand that their actions were not leading them to happiness, but to abject misery.

Most people, at salvation, recognize that there are certain things in life which are sinful; and that setting them aside from the outset is prudent. This often frees up your time and your ability to think.

We are taking a brief jaunt through 1Cor. 7. The primary reason is to show that a new believer should not participate in any big life decisions if at all possible.

1Cor. 7:25 Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy.

1Corinthians is a part of the Word of God. Paul is making a comment here based upon the doctrine in his soul. Whatever teaching he received *directly* from Jesus Christ did not include, *what do you do about marriage when you first get saved?*

Paul is not qualifying his answer as just probably a good one. What Paul is *not* saying is, "Okay, let me take a stab at this question. I am going to give you my best guess." From a human standpoint, it is possible that, this might actually be what Paul was thinking. However, God the Holy Spirit led Paul to provide correct advice in this area, given the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture (and given the doctrine in Paul's soul).

The person who is married when saved might be married to a believer or to an unbeliever. Does he stay with the one person but desert the other? Paul answers that question. Also, bear in mind, some people used Christianity as an excuse to get out of a bad marriage (or even out of a so-so marriage). What Paul is going to say, is this: "If you are married, stay married; if you are single, stay single." In other words, do not become a Christian one day, and then completely change your life the next day.

This makes complete and perfect sense. As a believer, your norms and standards are going to change; as a believer who takes in doctrine, you will begin to grow spiritually; and that will change your norms and standards. Prior to salvation, you may have determined that you only want to marry a dark-haired, brown-eyed girl; but once you grow spiritually, you learn to develop some standards which are somewhat deeper than a woman's external appearance. In either case, do not marry or seek to divorce simply because you have become a believer in Jesus Christ.

1Cor. 7:26 I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is.

The *present distress* refers to the great deal of persecution going on in that part of the world at this time. Paul is telling the Corinthians, "Do not add to this stress; do not make your life more complex than it needs to be." Sometimes, this is the case and sometimes it is not. However, we ought to be guided by the general principle, do not make any hasty changes in your life as a result of believing in Jesus Christ or immediately after believing in Jesus Christ.

We have been studying 1Cor. 7, and making big decisions about your life immediately after being saved. In v. 29, Paul seems to go off on a weird tangent.

Let me take a simple example removed from marriage. Let's say you are just saved. Does it make sense to, on the very next day, to buy your airline ticket to Cambodia in order to be a missionary there? Doing something like that would be insane! Now, maybe after you have been a Christian for 5 or 10 years, you want to consider becoming a missionary, that is commendable.

Becoming a Christian changes so many things, but these changes do not all occur overnight.

Back to Paul's train of thought:

1Cor. 7:27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife.

Getting married *represents* an extremely important, life-changing decision that a person makes. The important decision that the believer made was to believe in Jesus Christ. After that point, until you get some doctrine in your soul, do not make important, life-changing decisions (this is a general principle; not a hard-and-fast rule).

The principle here is fairly simple. At the moment of salvation, your norms and standards are pretty much the same as they were prior to salvation (exception to this rule is the addict who recognizes that his addiction is his big problem). As a believer in Jesus Christ, you will (hopefully) grow spiritually, meaning that your norms and standards will change. A decision that you make today is not the same decision that you would make 5 years from now (assuming spiritual growth).

Let's consider an analogous situation. A 5 year old might see $20 as a considerable amount of money; and spend it according to his 5-year-old standards. An 18 year old might see $500 as a considerable amount of money, but he will spend that money much differently than a 5 year old. A 40 year old might view $20,000 as a considerable amount of money, and the way he spends it will be very different from his 5 year old and 18 year old counterparts). I sold my comic collection for $150 at around age 18 or so, and spent the money in a couple of weeks (it was a *lot* of money at that time). I could not tell you anything about what I spent it on; but I am aware that the comic collection I sold could be worth in excess of $100k today (this is the worst financial decision that I have ever made). Around my middle 40's, I won $5000 in a contest, and most of that got invested, with dividends which are paying off today. I had different values at those stages of my life.

Therefore, it is a good idea for a believer to grow spiritually before making major decisions.

Sometimes, we believe in Jesus Christ and, the next day, we are faced with a life-changing decision (involving marriage, work, moving, etc.). The principle here is, when you are saved, set aside these life-changing decisions (if possible) and focus on the teaching of the Word of God. Grow spiritually first before you begin to change your life around. Let your norms and standards naturally evolve as the result of taking in Bible doctrine. How

you think 5 years from now will be considerably different than how you think today, if you are a new believer.

1Cor. 7:28 But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that.

It is not sinful to take a wife. You may be promised to marry someone. It is not a sin to be saved on one day and, on the next day, marry the man (or woman) that you are betrothed to (I am assuming here, marriage to the opposite gender and that neither of you is plagued by gender confusion). With marriage, there comes a whole host of new and different problems, and Paul is simply stating, "I am simply looking to keep you from a myriad of problems which come with marriage." —especially a marriage which has been based on a lot of human viewpoint (which is the only viewpoint which we have prior to salvation and doctrine).

1Cor. 7:29 This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none,...

I know that this is the verse that many married Christians had hoped for. "Now that I have become a Christian, I can ignore my wife! Maybe this whole Christian thing might end up being better than I expected it to be."

The Bible must be interpreted in the time that it was written. The Christian faith was under a great deal of persecution at this time. All of the Apostles, save one, would be executed for their faith.[66] Many of their disciples would be martyred as well. Rome decided that the best way to deal with this bourgeoning movement of Christians is to kill as many of them as possible, with the intent of discouraging others from believing in Jesus Christ.

Paul is going to make some odd statements, so let me give you the gist of what he is saying, right up front: when you believe in Jesus Christ, then you have just re-ordered your priorities. Your life has just changed. In life, in a marriage, it is normal for your opposite number to be the primary focus of your life. Once you are saved, your relationship with Jesus Christ and your spiritual growth become your primary considerations. This does not mean that you ignore your wife (or husband). This simply means that, spiritual growth is now your main priority; and your wife—who logically used to be #1, is now #2 (but, as the husband, you are to lead her to salvation and then to spiritual growth, if possible).

The key to Paul's statements is the first thing which he says: *the appointed time has grown very short*. For the believer in the first century, their actual faith changed their situation in the Roman world (Paul's evangelism was primarily broadcast throughout the Roman empire). The person who believed in Jesus Christ was put on a time clock (we live only

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[66] This is based upon tradition. I don't know that there are any actual historical accounts. I have heard that there are historical accounts for 5 or 6 executions; but I have not looked into that.

so many years as believers before we die). In Paul's time, there was great persecution; and a believer, in that day, was not assured of a long life.

Now, even though we happen to live in a country which allows Christian evangelism and the teaching of the Bible, we still have only so many years to live. Therefore, we are on a time clock once we believe in Jesus Christ, even though our spiritual advance is much easier to achieve, as we are not worried about persecution (certainly, some Jewish people who become Christian might face some personal persecution in their lives from their friends and relatives, but it is rarely a life and death situation).[67]

1Cor. 7:30 ...and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods,...

Paul is not saying, "From hereon out, this is opposite day." Nor is he saying, "Now that you have become a believer in Jesus Christ, you need to act as if you live in Bizarro world." He is *not* saying, "You used to wear sandals on your feet; now wear them on your hands!" Becoming a believer in Jesus Christ changes our priorities; it turns some of our values upside down. That is his point here. That is our takeaway from this passage.

You used to think with human viewpoint. There were a set of human philosophies and views that you have adopted in your life, and that you lived by (more or less); and now, since you have believed in Jesus Christ, your human norms and standards need to be set aside. The new believer has stepped into a brand new world, as it were. Everything around you looks to be the same, but it is not.

1Cor. 7:31 ...and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

We are part of a new world; we have a place in the coming kingdom; we will spend eternity with God. Our focus needs to be transformed to eternal things. Our lives used to always be about temporal concerns; now they are about eternal things. This does *not* mean that you become a monk and join a monastery. As a believer, you do not withdraw from the world. In fact, the tenor of this passage is just the opposite.

1Cor. 7:32 I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord.

Paul is simply telling us that we may find ourselves conflicted in marriage. During his era, there was a great deal of persecution. Sometimes, the believer found himself in the midst of a national crisis (say, a believer in Jerusalem; or a believer suddenly facing the wrath of Rome). Sometimes, the believer, in that era, needed to be light on his feet. He needed

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[67] On the other hand, someone raised as a Muslim who believes in Jesus Christ may face life and death circumstances—particularly those in Muslim-majority countries. Some may face life and death situations from their own family members.

to pursue a variety of options. It is much harder to do this if you have a wife; and even more so if you have children. This is not, however, an out offered to a man with a wife and children. A man with a wife and children has responsibilities toward his family and becoming a believer does *not* release him from those responsibilities. He cannot simply desert his family because life has become difficult. Paul will also write, *a man who does not provide for his own is worse than an infidel*. We must temper our interpretation of this passage with the complete Word of God. The tenor of this passage is, do not make a major change in your life right after salvation. This would obviously include, do not divorce or desert your wife (or husband).

1Cor. 7:33 But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife,...

The married man has to have consideration for his wife. That is normal. As a believer, he cannot tell her, "I am a Christian now; so don't expect much from me." Paul does not want the believer to become a total doofus in marriage.

Paul is not telling the believer to desert his wife or to ignore her or to make certain that she understands that she is now #2 in his life. He is stating some principles here.

1Cor. 7:34 ...and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband.

This marriage thing works both ways. Women have a place in the plan of God just as men do. In marriage, the godly man (or woman) can find himself (or herself) pulled in different directions by their ungodly spouse. Sometimes, a person can be pulled into the wrong direction by a believing spouse. However, at salvation, you do not start making big decisions about marriage or divorce, moving from one city to another, changing jobs, etc. There are, of course, exceptions to this. Quite obviously, if you were a drug dealing prior to salvation, then after salvation, you try to find gainful employment—you do not continue a life with drugs.

Lesson 460: Genesis 46 by 1Cor. 7:35–36 — 1Corinthians 7 Interlude Part III

We continue with this brief discussion of 1Cor. 7 and cover a special doctrine in this lesson:

In the first couple centuries, the world was being turned upside down. The Roman government was doing everything possible to persecute Christians and to destroy Christianity. Furthermore, what remained of the Jewish religion also looked to destroy this new faith (what they viewed as a new faith). Because the religious Jews had corrupted their faith, Christianity *appeared* to be a replacement theology for Judaism. However, as we have already studied in Genesis, Christianity is a natural follow-on to the Old Testament worship of Y^{e}howah. Christian faith is the natural evolution of the Old Testament faith.

Once the Messiah has come, that changes things. It is the same God; but life before the Messiah is naturally going to be different from life after the Messiah.

On top of this, God began to work through another entity, the church (the church universal is the collection of the body of believers, unrelated to their genetic origins). God was no longer working through nation Israel. However, this does *not* mean that God somehow spiritualized Abraham's promises and passed them on to the church. There is a new program, but God's people will still be the Jews and God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and to David; and to nation Israel; all still stand. This people of God are set aside for a time, but God has not abandoned them. Even though most Jewish people do not believe in Jesus Christ, God still preserves them as a race and as a people.

Before the Messiah simple refers to the Dispensation of Israel; *after the Messiah* is another way or referencing the Dispensation of the Church. Most of the differences listed below can be attributed to the natural conditions which result from the Messiah having come and lived upon this earth.

Life Before and After the Messiah

Before the Messiah	After the Messiah
The Word of God was written[68] by believers in the Age of Israel, over a fairly long period of time (over 2000 years).	The Word of God was written by believers during the first century after the Messiah, mostly by those who actually witnessed the Messiah.
Most of the authors of Old Testament Scripture were Jewish (there were no Jews when the first 10+ chapters of Genesis were written; and the book of Job is hard to place in time).	All of the authors of the New Testament were Christian, most of whom also happened to be Jewish. Luke is the only gentile Christian. He and Mark appear to be the only authors who did not see Jesus.
God placed spiritual responsibility upon a specific nation and upon specific individuals within that nation. That nation, Israel, was to show the wisdom of God to the world. Deut. 4:6–8 1Kings 4:34	The spiritual responsibility is placed upon all believers in the Church Age. A person's gender, station in life and nationality were inconsequential to the Christian life. Gal. 3:28
Those of the Jewish faith continued to preserve their Scriptures (the Old Testament).	Those of the Christian faith also preserved their Scriptures (the Old and New Testaments).
The Old Testament has been preserved in the original Hebrew language from its inception in the Hebrew by the Jewish people, before and after the Messiah. Some of the copyists believed in the Revealed God; some did not.	

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[68] I use the term *written,* but we could also be talking about the passing down of information verbally, which may have been how much of Genesis was passed along.

Life Before and After the Messiah	
Before the Messiah	**After the Messiah**
The Old Testament has also been preserved in the Greek (the language of the New Testament) and in the Latin (the language of the church from the 3rd or 4th centuries A.D.) by believers after the Messiah (often, it is the Septuagint that is quoted in the NT).	
The Old Testament has been preserved in other languages as well. We can compare these various records and most of the differences are quite superficial and have absolutely no effect upon the doctrines of Scripture.	
The careful preservation of Scripture allows us to be 99% certain of the accuracy of the Old Testament text. The Jewish version, written before Messiah and preserved by the Jewish people, is no different from the Christian version of the Old Testament, which was specifically preserved by various groups of Christian believers (after the Messiah).	
There was such a respect for the Word of God, the Jews did not distort the Old Testament test to fit their theology and the Christians did not distort the text to suit their theology.[69]	
There is little difference between the ancient versions of the Old Testament. There are more significant differences between the Contemporary English Version and the King James Version of the Bible than there are between the Hebrew, Latin and Greek versions of the Old Testament[70]. The only appreciable difference is, the Catholics, who take their Bible from the Latin, include the apocrypha as a part of their Scriptures. Although those are religious writings by Jewish people, they should not be in the canon of Scripture.	
Rituals look forward to the Messiah. The animal sacrifices were typical of the *Suffering Servant*.	Our only ritual, the Eucharist, looks backward to the cross and the offering up of the Lord for our sins.
When I say that these animal sacrifices were *typical,* this means that they were real sacrifices as described in the Old Testament; but they represented the Lord Who would be sacrificed for our sins.	
Typology is a fairly recent science (although it has existed in a nascent form since the time of our Lord). I do not think that believers in Israel realized that, when they offered up a bull or a lamb that this looked forward to their Messiah dying for their sins.	

[69] On the other hand, some translations into the English might have a specific Jewish flavor to them.

[70] There are Greek, Latin, Aramaic and Arabic versions of the New Testament. There are also Aramaic and Arabic versions of the Old Testament.

Life Before and After the Messiah	
Before the Messiah	**After the Messiah**
Obviously, believers in the Age of Israel looked forward to the coming Messiah (although they did not have a full and complete understanding of Who He would be).	Believers in the Church Age look backward, to the Jewish Messiah Who came to His people and died for the sins of the world. We understand Jesus to be the suffering Servant of Isaiah 53.
Interestingly enough, the information about the many faceted Messiah is found in the Old Testament; some Jewish believers simply chose to ignore that which did not make sense to them. Admittedly, the way Messiah is portrayed in the OT is at times seemingly contradictory; but the Lord still fulfilled the prophecies about Him.	Interestingly enough, believers in the Church Age who look backwards to Jesus have equally warped views of Him. There are a considerable number of believers who picture Jesus as the first hippie socialist (one person I know believes Jesus to be the first anarchist).
There are still a set of prophecies which need to be fulfilled; when Jesus returns, He will fulfill the remaining prophecies, nearly all of which apply to nation Israel (the rapture is the only prophecy which applies specifically to the church).	
Certain days and weeks are given over to religious[71] celebration. Some of these celebrations look back on historical events (like the Passover; the Feast of Unleavened Bread); some of the celebrations look forward to the future of Israel; and nearly all[72] of these celebrations are typical of future events. The celebrants rarely (if ever) appreciated the concept of types.	In the Church Age, typology is a science which matches up events, actions, celebrations in the Old Testament with persons and events in the New (and future from the NT). So, our understanding of Abraham's offering up of Isaac or of the Passover, is much different from the understanding of believers during the Age of Israel. However, we understand Abraham's offering of Isaac to be an actual event; and for the Passover to be an actual, historical event. We understand that these events looked forward to the crucifixion of our Lord.

[71] *Religious* in the good sense.

[72] I think all of the celebrations probably are typical.

Life Before and After the Messiah

Before the Messiah	After the Messiah
When Abraham offered up his son Isaac, this was understood in the Old Testament to be a great act of faith and obedience on Abraham's part. I find nothing to indicate that Old Testament believers understood how this would parallel future events. See Gen. 22.	We look back on Abraham's offering of Isaac as typical; it looked forward to God the Father offering up God the Son on behalf of our sins. We covered this in great detail in a previous study. See **Typology: Abraham's Offering of Isaac/God's offering of Jesus** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
Before the Messiah, few if any understood that these actual Old Testament events actually had a sort of fulfillment in the future. The Jews generally understood which passages prophesied the Messiah; but not which were typical of Him.	There are some allusions made to typology in the New Testament—particularly in the book of Hebrews. However, this extensive understanding and matching up of past events with future events is actually a relatively recent development in Christian theology.

Abraham offering up his son Isaac is known as a type; God the Father offering up His Son Jesus for our sins is the antitype. Abraham acted in obedience to God. At no time did Abraham think that he was doing something that would have a future counterpart. He was simply obeying God's orders. God, knowing the end from the beginning, knew that believers in the Church Age would read and study Abraham's offering and recognize that it is a type.

Typology was developed extensively by a fellow named Dake who is from the 20th century. Typology goes back to the New Testament, and it is mentioned in the book of Hebrews; but Dake seems to have done very impressive work on this topic. To me, it is quite amazing that so much of the Word of God is confirmed with greater evidence today than at any other time in the Church Age. See the **Doctrine of Typology** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

I should point out, there has been a great deal of development of Christian doctrine even in the past 200 years. Obviously, we have to be careful about the development and exploration of Bible doctrine in our day. What is cannot do is contradict the fundamentals of the faith which have been held to for the past 2000 years.

The *Apostles' Creed* is a good first statement of the basic faith:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; He ascended into heaven, He is seated at the right hand of the Father, and He will come to judge the living and the dead.

Life Before and After the Messiah

Before the Messiah	After the Messiah
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen. See wikipedia for more information on this.	
Catholic (small *c,* when used as an adjective) means *universal*. We should understand this to refer *not* to the Catholic Church as we commonly understand it today; but to *the church universal, the body of believers, the collection of all those who have believed in Jesus Christ*.	
The Passover is a very specific and important ritual for the Old Testament believer. When the people of Israel were in Egypt, a lamb was slaughtered and its blood was splattered on the side post and upper frame over the door; and the Angel of Death would see this blood and *pass over* that house, not killing anyone inside. If the Angel did not see the blood, He would kill the firstborn inside. This was the final judgment of God against Egypt, which caused the Pharaoh to send the sons of Israel out of his land.	Today, when we have been *covered by the blood of Jesus,* we are spared the punishment (eternal death) that we deserve. Jesus Christ is our Passover (1Cor. 5:7). However, even though we do not celebrate the ritual of Passover, we should be aware of it and what it means. Believers in the Church Age need to understand what is in the Old Testament. The Old Testament is the foundation for all that we believe.
The Passover looks back to that specific event in Egypt; but also, it becomes apparent that the Passover is typical of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross for our sins. So, it looks forward to the Messiah, even though those who celebrated the Passover, did not necessarily understand it in that way.	Today, we celebrate the Eucharist instead, which specifically looks backward to the cross and our Lord's death for our sins. Sometimes, a pastor officiating the Eucharist will draw parallels between the two rituals, as one looks forward and the other looks backwards to the same Person and the same event.
Circumcision was a sign of regeneration and designed to be common to all Jews (indicating that they had been regenerated, just as Abraham had been sexually revived in order to produce the first Jewish child). Gen. 17:10–14 Ex. 12:48	Circumcision no longer has any spiritual meaning or impact. The circumcised believer has no superiority over the uncircumcised one. We do not belong to a specific earthly nation coming from the loins of Abraham, as it were. Gal. 5:1–3 Rom. 2:28–29
The Jews continue to have a genetic identify which will, in the end times, become a national entity again.	

Life Before and After the Messiah	
Before the Messiah	**After the Messiah**
The Holy Spirit is given only to a select few believers. Although some are named specifically when the Tabernacle was built, not every Old Testament saint who was given the Spirit was so identified.	The Holy Spirit is given to all believers. There are no second-class believers in the Church Age, lacking the Holy Spirit. Although the world is divided between believers and unbelievers; it is not further sub-divided between those with the Holy Spirit and those without. 1Cor. 12:13 Eph. 1:13–14 Rom. 8:9
Believers who were given the Holy Spirit could lose the Holy Spirit. Psalm 51:11	We lose fellowship with God when we sin; this fellowship is restored when we name our sins to Him. 1John 1:9
The spiritual life is defined by the rituals of nation Israel and actions are defined by the Law of Moses and the writings of the prophets. Client nation Israel was a sign of God's intelligence. Deut. 4:6–8 1Kings 4:34	The spiritual life is defined by being filled with the Spirit or not. The person who is in fellowship (who has confessed their known sins to God) is in fellowship, and, therefore, controlled by the Holy Spirit.
The people of Israel were always looking forward to the coming Messiah and to the fulfillment of the promises which God made to them.	We in the Church Age stand firmly upon the Person of Jesus Christ, His death on the cross[73] being an historical fact. However, we also look forward to eternity and our actions ought to be informed by the eternal impact of our lives.
The origin of the Messiah was very specifically Jewish, coming from the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and later, David. The purity of this line was representative of the purity of Jesus Christ, having been born without a sin nature.	Our genealogies today are certainly an area of fascination (to some), but without any spiritual import. Jesus Christ died for all men and we appropriate our salvation by faith in Him. My racial or national background is not a factor in any way.

Let us return to our digression into 1Cor. 7:

1Cor. 7:33–34 But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about

[73] Apparently the means of Roman execution looked more like a *T* than a *cross;* so even though I will use the word *cross,* I recognize that they symbol we almost universally recognize is not really accurate.

the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband.

Paul is teaching the Corinthians about marriage in the Church Age; and the problems of marriage during that particular time of great persecution. Believers, when married, obviously have some divided interests.

1Cor. 7:35 I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

Paul is looking out for his congregation, from whom he is absent. He is not trying to heap on them another set of commandments or prohibitions; he is not even trying to run their lives. Paul is simply attempting to guide the congregation of Corinth in a way that will result in their spiritual growth and happiness; and in the production of divine good during an era of great persecution.

The Jewish religion, at this time, taught a massive number of laws and regulations, which came from a rich tradition of rabbinical legalism; and so deviated from the Scriptures. The scribes and pharisees many times accused the Lord of not obeying the Law; when He simply was not obeying their tacked-on rabbinical laws and traditions.

Paul tells the Corinthians that he is not like that; he has not come to give them a whole new set of laws to follow. By implication, there is no person or church with the authority to develop a whole new set of rules and regulations, as the Jewish rabbis did (and their additions and modifications were *not* Biblical).

1Cor. 7:36 If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin.

My intent was to cover this passage briefly and return to the narrative in Genesis. However, I have found myself writing and quoting others for another 5 pages on this one verse alone. That was not my intent. When it comes to translating, understanding and interpreting this verse, there is a great deal could be said, and without coming to the correct meaning.

First, a reasonable translation/interpretation of this verse:

1Cor. 7:36 If, however, a father thinks that he is not acting fairly by his unmarried daughter, when she is past her youth, and if under these circumstances her marriage ought to take place, let him act as he thinks right. He is doing nothing wrong—let the marriage take place. (TCNT)

Let's understand that Paul is addressing a father of an unmarried daughter, who has the authority over that daughter. Therefore, he can impose his will on the daughter to remain unmarried, as her authority. However, Paul is saying that, even in these desperate times, the father can allow his daughter to marry and he has not sinned.

The idea is, Paul is not leveling a whole new set of rules and regulations upon Church Age believers. He is not saying, "You can only allow your daughter to marry *if* she fulfills the following conditions." His only concern is for the life and safety and focus of believers during that period of time, which period of time was quite dangerous.

Their lives were far more precarious than the lives of believers in the United States. The Christians of that era suffered persecution similar to Christians today who live in an unstable, Muslim-majority nations.

Insert: An examination of 1Cor. 7:36 **This can be skipped over**

This is a very difficult verse to unravel and to interpret.

Translating 1Corinthians 7:36

The first problem is determining to whom this verse is addressed:

Translations where it appears to be addressing a fiancee:

1Cor. 7:36 But if any man thinks he is [being tempted to] behave improperly toward his virgin [fiancée], and she is past prime [marriageable] age, and feels the need [to get married] [Note: The Greek says "and so it has to be"], he should do what he wants; they should get married --- that man has not sinned. (AUV)

1Cor. 7:36 But suppose you are engaged to someone old enough to be married, and you want her so much that all you can think about is getting married. Then go ahead and marry. There is nothing wrong with that. (CEV)

1Cor. 7:36 A man might think that he is not doing the right thing with his fiancée. She might be almost past the best age to marry. So he might feel that he should marry her. He should do what he wants. It is no sin for them to get married. (ERV)

1Cor. 7:36 But if a man thinks he's behaving improperly with the woman he's engaged to, and if he thinks he will give in to his strong sexual desire, and if he thinks he ought to get married, he is not sinning by getting married. (FBV)

1Cor. 7:36 But if anyone thinks that he is not treating his fiancée with respect—if she is beyond the age of marriage and it must be so—he should do what he wants. He is not sinning. They should marry. (ULLB)

1Cor. 7:36 Now, suppose one of you feels that he's not treating his virgin girlfriend right [This could be for a few reasons: e.g. there might be an unsustainable level of sexual tension in the relationship, or there might be some kind of family or social cost that she has to bear.]. If he's fully mature [I think Paul is talking about a young man being old enough in years and in personal maturity to marry. But he might well mean, "if he's too full of the juice of life," i.e. having trouble controlling himself sexually.], and it has to be that way, let him do what he wants. He's not sinning-let them get married. (SENT)

Translating 1Corinthians 7:36

Translations where it appears to be addressing the father of an unmarried daughter:

1Cor. 7:36 But if anyone thinks he is behaving in an improper way towards his virgin *daughter*, if she is passing the prime *of life,* and *if he thinks* it has to be this way, let him do what he wants – he is not sinning – let them marry. (FAA)

1Cor. 7:36 But if any man thinks he is shamed by the behavior of his virgin daughter if she is beyond her prime, and he has not given her in marriage and that he should give her, let him do what he desires; he does not sin; let her marry. (HRB)

1Cor. 7:36 But if a man thinks he is disgraced by his virgin who is past her time and he has not given her to a man, and it is fitting to give her as he chooses to do, he does not sin; she may be married. (OANT)

1Cor. 7:36 If, however, a father thinks that he is not acting fairly by his unmarried daughter, when she is past her youth, and if under these circumstances her marriage ought to take place, let him act as he thinks right. He is doing nothing wrong—let the marriage take place. (TCNT)

1Cor. 7:36 But if any man [adopted father, biological father, legal guardian; the decision maker of a household] considers it he is acting unfairly toward his virgin [daughter] (if she is beyond her prime, and so it [her marriage] ought to come to pass), then let him do what he wishes; he does not sin; let them marry. (R. B. Thieme, III)

1Cor. 7:36 If - and it is true - [ei - 1st class conditional if] any one to think that he behaves himself unbecomingly/"without nobility" toward his "unmarried daughter"/virgin [in context refers to the case where a father won't give his daughter permission to marry] if - maybe she will, maybe she will not [ean -3rd class conditional if] she may pass the flower/prime of her age {means she is stabilized emotionally and is not making choices based on libido} and it ought to come to pass . . . let him do what he will . . . he sins absolutely not [ouk]. 36b~~Let them marry. [if she is ready and the father gives his consent, the father did not sin based on Paul's teaching above] (R. B. Thieme, Jr.)

Translations where it could go either way:

1Cor. 7:36 Now if anyone thinks [he is] acting shamefully [or, behaving improperly] towards his virgin, if she is past marriageable age, and it is obligated to happen, what he desires let him do; he does not sin, let him marry. (ALT)

1Cor. 7:36 But if any man thinks that he is behaving inappropriately toward his virgin, if she is past the flower of her age, and if need so requires, let him do what he desires. He doesn't sin. Let them marry. (WEB)

1Cor. 7:36 But if any man thinks he is acting improperly toward his virgin, if she is past marriageable age, and so it must be, he can do what he wants. He is not sinning; they can get married. (HCSB)

Translating 1Corinthians 7:36

1Cor. 7:36 If a man thinks he is not behaving properly toward his virgin, [I.e. virgin fiancée, but possibly virgin daughter] and if his passion is so strong that he feels he ought to marry her, let him do what he wants; he isn't sinning. Let them get married. (ISV)

Adam Clark on 1Corinthians 7:36

Uncomely towards his virgin - Different meanings have been assigned to this verse; I shall mention three of the principal.

1. "In those early times, both among the Hebrews and Christians, the daughters were wholly in the power of the father, so that he might give or not give them in marriage as he chose; and might bind them to perpetual celibacy if he thought proper; and to this case the apostle alludes. If the father had devoted his daughter to perpetual virginity, and he afterwards found that she had fixed her affections upon a person whom she was strongly inclined to marry, and was now getting past the prime of life; he, seeing from his daughter's circumstances that it would be wrong to force her to continue in her state of celibacy; though he had determined before to keep her single, yet he might in this case alter his purpose without sin, and let her and her suitor marry."

2. "The whole verse and its context speaks of young women dedicated to the service of God, who were called παρθενοι, virgins, in the primitive Church. And a case is put here, 'that circumstances might occur to render the breach of even a vow of this kind necessary, and so no sin be committed.'"

3. "The apostle by παρθενος, does not mean a virgin, but the state of virginity or celibacy, whether in man or woman." Both Mr. Locke and Dr. Whitby are of this opinion, and the latter reasons on it thus: -

It is generally supposed that these three verses relate to virgins under the power of parents and guardians and the usual inference is, that children are to be disposed of in marriage by the parents, guardians, etc. Now this may be true, but it has no foundation in the text, for τηρειν την ε᾽αυτου παρθενον is not to keep his daughter's, but his own virginity, or rather his purpose of virginity; for, as Phavorinus says, He is called a virgin who freely gives himself up to the Lord, renouncing matrimony, and preferring a life spent in continency. And that this must be the true import of these words appears from this consideration, that this depends upon the purpose of his own heart, and the power he has over his own will, and the no necessity arising from himself to change this purpose. Whereas the keeping a daughter unmarried depends not on these conditions on her father's part but on her own; for, let her have a necessity, and surely the apostle would not advise the father to keep her a virgin, because he had determined so to do; nor could there be any doubt whether the father had power over his own will or not, when

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no necessity lay upon him to betroth his virgin. The Greek runs to this sense: if he had stood already firm in his heart, finding no necessity, viz. to change his purpose; and hath power over his own will, not to marry; finding himself able to persist in the resolution he had made to keep his virginity, he does well to continue a virgin: and then the phrase, if any man think he behaves himself unseemly towards his virgin, if it be over-aged, and thinks he ought rather to join in marriage, refers to the opinions both of Jews and Gentiles that all ought to marry. The Jews say that the time of marriage is from 16 or 17 to 20; while some of the Gentiles specify from 30 to 35. If any think thus, says the apostle, let them do what they will, they sin not: let them marry. And then he concludes with those words applied to both cases: so then, both he that marries doeth well, and he that marries not, does better.

This last opinion seems to be the true sense of the apostle.
It may be necessary to make a few general observations on these verses, summing up what has been said.

1. Παρθενος here should be considered as implying not a virgin, but the state of virginity or celibacy.

2. Υ῾περακμος, over-aged, must refer to the passing of that time in which both the laws and customs of Jews and Gentiles required men to marry. See above, and see the note on 1Cor. 7:6.

3. Και ου῾τως οφειλει γινεσθαι, And need so require; or, if there appear to be a necessity; is to be understood of any particular change in his circumstances or in his feelings; or, that he finds, from the law and custom in the case, that it is a scandal for him not to marry; then let him do what he wills or purposes.

4. Instead of γαμειτωσαν, let Them marry, I think γαμειτω, let Him marry, is the true reading, and agrees best with the context. This reading is supported by D*EFG, Syriac, in the Arabic, Slavonic, one of the Itala, and St. Augustine. Si nubat, if he marry, is the reading of the Vulgate, several copies of the Itala, Ambrose, Jerome, Ambrosiaster, Sedulius, and Bede. This reading is nearly of the same import with the other: Let him do what he wills, he sins not, let him marry; or, he sins not if he marry.
5. The whole of the 37th verse relates to the purpose that the man has formed; and the strength that he has to keep his purpose of perpetual celibacy, being under no necessity to change that purpose.
6. Instead of ο῾ εκγαμιζων, he who giveth her in marriage, I purpose to read ο῾ γαμιζων, he who marries, which is the reading of the Codex Alexandrinus, the Codex Vaticanus, No. 1209, and of some others: with Clement, Methodius, and Basil. Την ε῾αυτου παρθενον, his own virgin, is added after the above, by several very ancient and reputable MSS, as also by the Syriac, Armenian, Vulgate, Ethiopic, Clement, Basil, Optatus, and others; but it seems so much like a gloss, that Griesbach has not made it even a candidate for a place in the text. He then who marries, though previously intending perpetual virginity, does well; as this is

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agreeable to laws both Divine and human: and he who marries not, does better, because of the present distress. See 1Cor. 7:26.

Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible;* from e-Sword, 1Cor. 7:36 (slightly edited).

Interpreting 1Corinthians 7:36

Barnes probably provides the best phrase-by-phrase interpretation:

That he behaves himself uncomely - Acts an unbecoming part, imposes an unnecessary, painful, and improper constraint, crosses her inclinations which are in them selves proper.
Toward his virgin - His daughter, or his ward, or any unmarried female committed to his care.

If she pass the flower of her age - If she pass the marriageable age and remains unmarried. It is well known that in the east it was regarded as especially dishonorable to remain unmarried; and the authority of a father, therefore, might be the means of involving his daughter in shame and disgrace. When this would be the case, it would be wrong to prohibit her marriage.
And need so require - And she ought to be allowed to marry. If it will promote her happiness, and if she would be unhappy, and regarded as dishonored, if she remained in a state of celibacy.

Let him do what he will - He has the authority in the case, for in the east the authority resided with the father. He may either give her in marriage or not, as he pleases. But in this case it is advisable that she should marry.
He does not sin - He errs not; he will do nothing positively wrong in the case. Marriage is lawful, and in this case it is advisable, and he may consent to it, for the reasons above stated, without error or impropriety.[74]

The Cambridge Bible does a respectable job of breaking it down:

his virgin] i.e. his daughter. The advice here given is to parents. In St Paul's time, and in most continental countries now, it is the parents who decide on the marriage of their children. In France, and in some other foreign countries, the young people very often do not even see one another before they are contracted. But St Paul thinks it might in some cases be 'unseemly' conduct on the part of a parent to refuse a proposal of marriage for a daughter who desired to serve God in the married state.

if she pass the flower of her age] Rather, If she have fully attained it.

[74] Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament;* from e-Sword, 1Cor. 7:36 (slightly edited).

Interpreting 1Corinthians 7:36

and need so require] Literally, and so it ought to be; that is, if it be fair and reasonable that the wish of both parties should be carried out, and it would be harsh to act otherwise. Some think that the reference is to the disgrace incurred by a maiden, especially a Jewish maiden who had passed the age of maturity, and was still unmarried—a disgrace which also attached to a Jewish father who had not provided a suitable marriage for her. Cf. Sir. 7:25, "Marry thy daughter, and thou hast performed a weighty matter." See also Sir. 42:9. The Rabbins advised rather that a slave should be released as a husband for the daughter, than that she should remain unmarried. Others, again think that the danger of sin (1Cor. 7:2; 1Cor. 7:5; 1Cor. 7:9) is here referred to. See Sir. 42:10.

let them marry] i.e. the daughter and her lover.

I got so far afield that I simply stopped working on this verse; made a summary; and did not take it any further than you see above.

Given the study, I lean toward the idea that Paul is addressing a father of an unmarried daughter, who has the authority over that daughter. Therefore, he can impose his will on the daughter to remain unmarried, as her authority. However, Paul is saying that, even in these desperate times, the father can allow his daughter to marry and he has not sinned.

In any case, marriage is not a sin in itself. Sexual desire, in itself, is not a sin either (as long as a person does not concentrate upon that or act on it outside of marriage).

Lesson 461: Genesis 46 by 1Cor. 7:37–40 **1Corinthians 7 Interlude Part IV**

We will complete our digression with this lesson.

1Cor. 7:37 But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well.

The believer has to have his thinking and priorities straight. His natural desire needs to be channeled in the appropriate ways (towards one's spouse). The fiancee is not to let his sexual desire override all else; but he is to come to a decision based upon his heart. In the modern era, when we hear the word *heart,* that often carries with it a strong emphasis upon one's emotions; but in the Old and New Testaments, it refers to the thinking of a person.

1Cor. 7:38 So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better.

Remember the historical context of this overall passage—when a person is saved, he is not to make any life-changing decisions soon thereafter. Here, the believer has his sexual desire under control, but he has determined in his thinking to marry this woman. The man who marries the woman he is engaged to does well; but the man who refrains from it does better. If a person is able to solely focus on his life as a believer, that is great; but it is fine to be married.

Monasteries, Cults, Cultic Behavior: Now, Paul is not, in any way, advocating for monasteries. That is a confusion of what it means to be wholly given over to God. We are saved in the world but we do not give ourselves over to organizations which separate us away from the world (cults and monasteries are famous for that). *No one* in the Christian life, is called to a monastery. You are not called by God to live in a *Christian* commune (there is no call for such a thing in the New Testament). We are not called to physically separate ourselves from the world.

As an aside, if a cult is trying to isolate you from your family and friends, remove yourself from that cult. A good church can orient you to the plan of God and towards your place in this world as a Christian without having to isolate you from all other influences. If a church emphasizes that your new relationships to believers are so important, that your old relationship with family and friends must be completely set aside, you need to exit that cult. There is not a problem if a church emphasizes the new relationships that a person has in Christ; but no church ought to cut you off from family and friends.

Any group which is primarily a self-contained commune is a cult.

Berachah Church is not and has never been a cult: Now, I was spiritually raised up in Berachah Church; and some people have thought that is was a cult because the pastor had an unusually strong personality and we, as a local church, strongly support the military (many liberal groups think it is incongruent for a local church to be pro-military). In church, when the Bible was being taught, there was strict discipline, which is for the benefit of those sitting around you. The doctrine taught from the pulpit was precise, Biblically-based, and straightforward. A person visiting the church would see many people frantically (or casually) taking notes. Although the taking of notes occurs in many churches, it is more pronounced in Berachah. However, a church which is pro-military, believes in strict discipline, favors the teaching of the Bible, and has many people taking notes is not a cult or even cultic.

Here are two places where the cutoff was: (1) Berachah Church was not a paramilitary group; we did not have paramilitary groups in the church, although many members were pro-2nd amendment (some did attend self-defense classes, shooting classes, and possibly even survival classes, but not as a part of the church). (2) No one monitored anyone else. We were always in charge of our own lives, which was the point of the Christian life. Becoming a Christian is a matter of free will—we *choose* to believe in Jesus Christ (and, I cannot emphasize enough that this is a *choice*). After we have believed, then the

remainder of our lives is related directly to a series of free will choices. Including which local church we attend.

From the Berachah pulpit, it was clearly taught that being pressured or browbeaten into a course of action was wrong. If I wanted to leave the church, I could have done so at any time. I would not be excommunicated, I would not be harassed, I would not be visited, I would not receive mailings, or calls from someone assigned to that task of *bringing me back into the fold*. It is possible that a personal friend from the church would have called me, just to visit, to see if I was okay. But no one from Berachah was ever charged with the solemn duty of getting Charlie Brown back into the fold; no one caused problems for any person who left the church. Even people who talk badly about the church are not confronted. I come across blogs and postings from time to time which are anti-Berachah and I will sometimes post my 2 cents; but there is no concerted effort by the church to stop such postings from appearing and no effort, legal or otherwise, to confront those who did not like it at Berachah (many times, these are children whose parents brought them to Berachah and they simply did not like it).

The recommendation from the pulpit of Berachah is, when you leave a church, you leave it quietly, without personally attacking the pastor or the church; and without an attempt to bring other members with you. Primarily, this recommendation is made to those who attend some local church, hear the teaching of Berachah, and become very enthusiastic about Berachah's ministry. If a group of people decide to leave their respective local churches and form a "taper's group" (originally, a group of people who gathered around a tape recorder where the teaching of R. B. Thieme, Jr. was played), or even to move to the *promised land* of Houston, they were expected to leave their own churches quietly and without incident.

Every believer is in charge of his own Christian life. Pastor R. B. Thieme, Jr. taught Bible doctrine and gave us the guidelines for our lives; he did not follow us around to make sure we met some set of standards. Apart from the teaching received in class, no one ever tried to make me conform to a set of norms or behaviors; no one ever followed me around; no one ever reported anyone else for wrong behavior. If any person did something like that, they would have received a stern warning; and the second time, they would be gone from the church. It is not my job to monitor your life; nor is it your job to monitor mine. It is before our own master that we stand or fall (Rom. 14:4).

Let me give you a very overt example of such non-interference in Berachah. Because of the pastor's own norms and standards, and because of the teaching of the Bible, long hair on males was anathema to our pastor. However, if some long-haired hippie-looking person showed up to church, he was never treated any differently; no one was in charge of taking him aside and talking to him; and the pastor did not suddenly launch into an anti-long hair sermon. My point being, there was no policing, inside or outside of Berachah, of personal behavior or choices. If it was not illegal, then no one said or did anything (well, obviously some people may talk, but that was never encouraged). In fact, gossiping and spreading rumors and the like was shut down when it was known about.

This does not mean that we live as believers without friendships or various connections to other believers in a local church; it simply means, there was no policy to monitor any particular believer's behavior or life in Berachah Church (nor should there be). What I mean by this is, let's say I stopped coming to church; if a close friend noticed that, he might have called me up to see if I was ill or without transportation or something like that. If I told him, "Naw, I am just sick of that church;" that would have been the end of it. He would not have figured it was his duty to place his volition over mine; he would not have placed a call to Berachah to tell on me. Now, this hands-off approach, is complained about by some former members of Berachah Church. I have read posts on the internet of some believers who left Berachah Church and then they wondered why no one chased them down to convince them otherwise. Such complaints make my point for me—it is the policy of Berachah Church to let individuals be responsible for themselves and their own lives. In some cases of friendships or close associations, another person might attempt to influence me (to come back to reconsider, whatever); but none of this would involve that person going to Crazy town (that is, following me around, calling me ever 15 minutes, etc.), unless, of course, that person himself was a bit crazy. Nor would someone try to harm me for leaving the church; or warn me about sharing church secrets (the big secret being, there are no official church secrets).

Furthermore, there were no side-groups or in-groups that the truly faithful at Berachah might end up joining (like an armed para-military group). Our pastor, a staunch supporter of the Constitution and the 2nd amendment, was very much against para-military groups. On the other hand, this did not mean that those interested could not learn how to use their weapons or gun safety—but there were no such adjunct courses specifically for those going to Berachah.

There are cults out there which intentionally seek to remove you from your family and friends. If you sense that is part of your church's program, then you need to run toward the nearest exit. A church ought to not be in the business of determining who you may and may not associate with. A church ought not pull you into some sort of communal living arrangement. A church is not to encourage you to join a para-military group; a church is not to get you politically activated. A church should have no adjunct organizations which lead you into those activities either. A church may teach doctrine to guide us in that direction; but no one and no committee in a church has that personal responsibility to follow you around and make sure that you are doing the right thing.

Now, back to the topic at hand, which is, after you are saved, you do not make any major decisions in your life, if you can help it. However, so that there is no misunderstanding, if you were saved from a life of drugs, then for most people, it may be a good idea to disassociate yourself from that world. A church which teaches that is not necessarily a cult. Most former drug users tend to do better when disassociated with other drug users; most former alcoholics do better not associated with those who engage in heavy drinking. A church may teach this; and they are not exceeding their boundaries (some churches simply have a large number of former addicts in the congregation). It is even possible that your family members and friends are all drug users; and it is often to your benefit to avoid

them. So, if separating all new members of a church from their family and friends is a major teaching of your church; then you are in a cult. But if teaching a former druggie or alcoholic to avoid other druggies or alcoholics; that is just good common sense. A church with a large contingent of former drug abusers or alcoholics will probably speak to this; a church where this is less apparent may not.

To be clear, this is not necessarily a directive to completely and forever cut yourself off from the *wrong* people; as some believers are able to go back into their former lives in order to evangelize old acquaintances. Throughout the years, I have had former friends and acquaintances who had sketchy lives. I maintained some of those friendships; but I never associate with them while they are committing illegal acts.

If you are a former Muslim, and you come from a family devoted to Islam, this may require some separation; or, at the bare minimum, careful consideration regarding those in your family who may become violent towards you (not as much of a problem in the United States; but certainly a concern in any Muslim-majority country). Obviously, not all Muslims are given over to violence; but there are some which are.

There are churches where there is some sort of monitoring which occurs (often called *discipleship*). If you find yourself in a church where you are actually monitored, then find the nearest exit door and use it. Although we might be able to formulate some sort of scenario where there might be one-on-one training, that would be the exception, not the rule, in a doctrinal church. 99% of the time, teaching and training is impersonal, it comes from the pulpit, and this sort of teaching always preserves your privacy and your free will. In salvation, your free will is necessary—you must consciously choose to believe in Jesus Christ. In the Christian life, your free will is necessary, in order to plot out each decision of your life. It is these decisions, resulting from the exercise of your free will, which result in eternal divine good. Being manipulated or bullied into a course of action is not spiritual growth; nor is it divine good.

Back to Corinthians:

1Cor. 7:39 A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

The wife being bound to a husband is true, whether they are believers or unbelievers. This statement ought to be a sobering thought. This is why marriages and other big decisions are to be put off by the new believer. 5 years from now, you might have experienced some really big changes in your life. About 7 years after I was saved, I found myself living in a whole different state (and I know without a doubt, that was God's will).

If a woman's husband dies (don't get any ideas, ladies), then she is free. She can even remarry. The final phrase, *only in the Lord,* means that a believing widow can only marry another believing man.

1Cor. 7:40a Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is.

Paul says, “I think that she would be better off to remain unmarried and therefore she can devote more time to spiritual growth and Christian service.”

As a believer, we do not focus on the same things that the gentiles (unbelievers) focus on. Most unbelievers consider marriage or a relationship the most important thing in their lives; and they are unable to function normally unless they are in some sort of relationship. *That,* by the way, is normal—this is how almost all people feel. God has designed natural marriage for the human race (God did not design homosexual marriage, however).

Paul tells the Corinthians, don’t worry about this. You may find that you do not need to be married.

1Cor. 7:40b And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

This final comment of Paul is him asserting his spiritual authority in this matter. The believers in Corinth were not very authority oriented. They kept going off on spiritual tangents. Paul had to continually guide them in the correct direction, and that involved, from time to time, him opposing some of the church leaders at Corinth, who were often wrong.

This concludes the brief study of 1Cor. 7. The purpose was, to show that, if you have just believed in Jesus Christ, then you ought not make any life-changing decisions, if you can possibly manage that.

Lesson 462: Genesis 46:1–15 — The Sons of Leah

A Review of Genesis 46:1–4: So far, this is what we have studied in Gen. 46:

Genesis 46:1–2 So Israel took his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am."

Jacob decided that he would go to see his son; and he was willing to move his entire family to Egypt. However, this was an extremely important decision, as God had given the Jewish people (that is, the sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) the land of Canaan. The Jewish people, at this time, numbered about 70 or so; plus their wives. Jacob was willingly leaving the land of Canaan. That was, therefore, a very big deal.

God speaks to Jacob prior to leaving the land, to reassure and guide him. God indicates to Jacob that leaving the land of Canaan, at this point in time, is okay for him to do.

That Jacob is called *Israel* suggests that he is in fellowship and doing the right thing.

Gen 46:3–4 Then he said, "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. I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again, and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes."

God assures Jacob that He will go with him down into Egypt (meaning that Jacob will be in the geographic will of God in Egypt); and that He will bring him back up to the land of Canaan again.

Jacob's body would be buried in Canaan (Gen. 49:29–32); and Joseph's bones will be preserved and carried with the Israelites when they return to Canaan (Ex. 13:19) and then later buried in Canaan (Joshua 24:32). The patriarchs (and their descendants) took God's promises very literally. At no time, did God say to any Israelite, "Listen, you are taking My promises a bit too literally." (my point being, these are literal promises being made to literal people)

Genesis 46:5 And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba. And the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.

Jacob is now assured that he is doing the right thing; that he is making the right move. They are still in the Land of Promise; but at this point, they will leave that land and travel to Egypt. Every one and everything goes with them; all of the family members. There will not be any sons or grandsons left behind. God will preserve, protect and isolate the sons of Israel. Another word for this is *set apart* or to be even more religious: *consecrate, dedicate* and even *sanctify*. Much of the Bible is all about making a distinction between groups of people—in particular, the clean and the unclean, the saved and the unsaved; the elect and the fallen. One group is set apart from the other, because that will be their eternal end.

So God does far more than simply preserve the sons of Israel; He also sets them apart; He saves them; they are His elect. This is very much a theme of the laws which God will give to Moses. God will move all Israel to another country; but there will not be a mixture or a commingling of the peoples. At some point, the Egyptians will enslave the sons of Israel, and there will not be any difficulty when it comes to figuring out who is a slave and who remains free.

Gen 46:5 Then Jacob set out from Beersheba. The sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him.

Every descendant of Jacob's went to Egypt. This included their children and their wives. They will be enumerated by name later in this chapter. The Bible is very precise about this; every male who moves to Egypt will be mentioned by name. No one will be left behind. There will be no wandering Jews, as it were.

Genesis 46:6 And they took their cattle, and their goods which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his seed [that is, his descendants] with him.

Jacob takes all that he has acquired in the Land of Promise; and all of his sons and their sons; and he travels to Egypt. Their wives came with them, but are not named here. However, women taken in by the sons of Jacob assumed the faith of Jacob (or so we assume).

Genesis 46:7 His sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed, he brought with him into Egypt.

So that there is no misunderstanding, everyone related to Jacob moves with him to Egypt. There are no stragglers; no one is left behind. No son says, "You know, I really like Canaan, so I think I will hang back here." Everyone with the genes of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will exit Canaan and enter Egypt together. And to make certain that this is clearly understood, they will all be specifically named here (in this chapter) and in the book of Exodus (Ex. 1:1–5).

Semites entering Egypt, ca. 1870 BC, from the tomb of Khnumhotep, Beni Hasan, Egypt. Carl R. Lepsius, Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien, Vol. IV, Ab. II, Bl. 133, Berlin: Nicolai, 1949. I took this from Bible Archeology; accessed November 15, 2016.

This would be a logical place to include all of the names of the sons of Israel and their sons; and that is what the Bible does. This confirms to us that all of the sons went with Jacob to Egypt.

No chiasmos is available for the vv. 8–27, as this is simply a list of the families who moved with Jacob to Egypt. All of the sons were descended from Jacob. The list of sons are organized, but not as a chiasmos. First we have the sons of Leah.

Genesis 46:8 And these were the names of the sons of Israel who came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons: Reuben, Jacob's first-born.

Reuben is Jacob's firstborn, and he should have assumed the mantle of leadership, but he was not a natural leader; and he did not learn any of the characteristics of a leader. He was too willing to compromise; he was too willing to give in to peer pressure. Even though he often knew the right thing to do, he did not do it. However, he is named first because he is the firstborn. At several points in Genesis, it will be clear that the firstborn Reuben would be supplanted; but he is generally named first nonetheless.

We know, because of our careful study, informed by future Scriptures, that the rights and privileges of the firstborn will not belong to Reuben, but would be passed on down to Judah (Judah will assume the leadership position) and to Joseph (Joseph will have the double-portion). This is why we have seen these final chapters of Genesis focus on Reuben, Judah and Joseph (and secondarily on Simeon and Levi, because if Reuben is skipped over, then these are the next two sons).

Genesis 46:9 And the sons of Reuben: Hanoch, and Phallu, and Hezron, and Carmi.

These 4 sons are also named in 1Chron. 5:3, and they begin the line of Reuben.

The first half of 1Chronicles is genealogies. 1Chron. 1 takes us from Adam to Abraham (and his son and grandson are named as well). Logically, 1Chron. 2 should have been the line of Reuben, but it is, instead, the line of Judah, the royal line of the Israelites. By the time of Chronicles, some perspective had been gained on these tribes. At the time that Genesis was written, there was not enough perspective to recognize that Reuben would not have all of the rights and privileges of the firstborn. Therefore, in Genesis, Reuben is listed first because he is the firstborn, despite the fact that portions of Genesis indicate that he will be set aside and that Judah would become the dominant tribe.

Genesis 46:10 And the sons of Simeon: Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a woman of Canaan.

Simeon is Leah's second-born child.

Shaul seems to be the only son of Simeon who is the son of a woman in Canaan. Whether she is a mistress or a second wife, we really do not know (a remaining son of Judah is the son of a Canaanite woman). We do not know if she is a mistress or if she became associated with Simeon after the death of his wife (all of this is speculation). We do not even know if the Canaanite woman went with Simeon to Egypt.[75]

Since the sons of Israel lived right in the middle of Canaan, we would have logically expected most of them to have Canaanite wives; but this is the only place where a woman of Canaan is mentioned (besides the first wife of Judah). Her name is not given, which I believe often indicates that she is not a believer in the Revealed God (not necessarily in every case in the Bible; but this is a section which is big on names).

We assume, in general, that the wives of the patriarchs move with them down to Egypt; it is not clear if the mistresses do as well, although that would make sense. Once a woman was taken in, whether as a wife or mistress, the husband assumed responsibility for her—this is how the ancient world worked; and this is how the Bible teaches marriage to be.

1Chron. 4:24 The sons of Simeon: Nemuel, Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, Shaul;...

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[75] The Canaanite wife of Judah dies before they take this caravan to Egypt.

Preserving the names over such a period of time must have been difficult. We have only 5 sons named in Chronicles; and 6 in Genesis. These chronologies were assembled hundreds of years apart. I believe that Genesis was written about the time of the actual events, so this would have been written around 1875 B.C. (another source[76] suggests 1677 B.C., which is 200 years later). Chronicles may have been written as late as 500–400 B.C. For many, the records of lists of names can be tiresome; so it is not out of the question that copyists, over the years, did not always preserve the accuracy of every name. Obviously, most of them are very close.

This in itself is not necessarily a mistake. Chronicles might be preserving the families which came from Simeon; the missing name in Simeon could simply refer to a clan which all but disappeared.

Genesis 46:11 And the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

These 3 tribes are very well-known; and they are preserved exactly here and in 1Chron. 6:1, 16.

The priestly line went through Kohath and then through the two sons of Aaron (Aaron is Moses' brother). The priestly line is often called the Levitical line; but it is more properly called the Aaronic line. Those in Aaron's line could even tell you which son of Aaron they were descended from.

Genesis 46:12 And the sons of Judah: Er and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez, and Zarah. But Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Pharez: Hezron and Hamul.

We studied this back in Gen. 38, one of the most unusual chapters of Genesis (along with Gen. 34)[77]. Judah had 3 sons by a Canaanite woman; and he chose a wife, Tamar, for his first son (apparently at a very young age). The first son dies (without fathering a child), so the second son, Onan, steps into the marriage (a Levirate marriage) and he died because he *intentionally* did not raise up seed to his deceased brother (as the tradition requires). As we studied, a son raised up in his brother's name would have actually reduced Onan's inheritance, and that probably figured into Onan's calculation.

Judah apparently thought that this widow was bad luck; so, even though Judah promised his 3rd son to her, he did not deliver on that promise. After a few years went by, Tamar (his daughter-in-law) tricked Judah into impregnating her. The line of Jesus Christ will go through this one-time union (which produced the second set of twins named in the Bible). Although Judah was made to see that it was he that impregnated his one-time daughter-in-law and although he did take her and their twin children with him to Egypt, he did not have

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[76] *The Reese Chronological Bible;* KJV translation; Editor: Edward Reese; ©1977 by Edward Reese and Klassen's dating system ©1975 by Frank R. Klassen; ℗1980 by Bethany House Publishers, South Minneapolis, MN; pp. 18–19, 54–74.

[77] Don't misunderstand me; these were not odd in terms of being inexplicable as to why they are found in the Bible; they make perfect sense, and explain a great deal when it comes to the Jewish race.

relations with her again. That is clearly one of the more unusual of the marriage arrangements among the children of Jacob.

There was a period of time where Leah did not get pregnant. We do not know how long that was—but given that she had one child after another, I suspect the time of infertility was only a year or two. Her final two sons were Issachar and Zebulun.

Genesis 46:13 And the sons of Issachar: Tola, and Phuvah, and Job, and Shimron.

All of these sons and grandsons of Jacob will make up seed for the Jewish nation.

The Chronicles list is:

1Chron. 7:1 Of the sons of Issachar: Tola, and Puah, Jashub, and Shimron, four.

The name of the 3rd son is obviously somewhat different. The line of Tola is followed out in 1Chron. 7.

Genesis 46:14 And the sons of Zebulun: Sered and Elon and Jahleel.

Zebulun and Issachar were both born to Leah after an interlude during which she did not become pregnant.

Although Zebulun is named in Chronicles (1Chron. 2:1 6:63, 77 12:33, 40), his line is not followed there.

Genesis 46:15 These were the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Padan-aram, with his daughter Dinah. All the souls of his sons and his daughters were thirty-three.

Leah had 4 sons by Jacob (Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah), then there was an interval of time, and she had 2 more (Issachar and Zebulun)

The sons, daughters and grandchildren born to or descended from Leah prior to this move total 33.

Jacob's descendants by Leah: Reuben and his 4 sons; Simeon and his 6 sons; Levi and his 3 sons; Judah and his 5 sons (two which died) and 2 grandsons; Issachar and his 4 sons; Zebulun and his 3 sons. This actually gives us 31 sons and grandsons and great grandsons. Dinah makes 32 and, since we have *daughters* mentioned; I would guess that there is one additional daughter by Leah (this gives us 33). Some include Jacob in this group of 33 (but I would not).

Lesson 463: Genesis 46:16–34 The Sons of Zilpah, Rachel and Bilhah

We continue with the names of the sons of Jacob who moved with him to Egypt.

Leah had a personal maid, Zilpah. You may recall that Leah stopped having children for a period of time (probably less than 6 months); and also that her sister was using her personal maid as a surrogate by which to have children. Therefore, Leah brought her personal maid, Zilpah, into the picture, to act as a surrogate. Zilpah's 2 sons are named next:

Genesis 46:16 And the sons of Gad were Ziphion, and Haggi, Shuni, and Ezbon, Eri, and Arodi, and Areli.

Gad and Asher are both sons of Zilpah, Leah's personal maid. There was a short period of time when Leah was not becoming impregnated, so she called upon her personal maid to step in on her behalf. Such surrogacy was common in those times, but it was not codified in the Mosaic Law.

Interestingly enough, Gad's line is not found in 1Chronicles. Gad is mentioned in 1Chron. 5:11; and sons are named there, but they do not appear to match up in any way with the sons here in Genesis (it appears that tribal leaders are named in Chronicles). However, his sons are named again in Num. 26.

Genesis 46:17 And the sons of Asher: Jimnah, and Ishuah, and Ishvi, and Beriah, and their sister Serah. And the sons of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel.

Gad and Asher were both sons of Zilpah, Leah's servant. Although Zilpah was used as a surrogate on behalf of Leah to give birth to Gad, it is possible that she was utilized a second time simply to keep up with Rachel. This understanding more easily allows all of these sons to have been born in the time allotted by Scripture.

Asher's sons are named in Chronicles:

1Chron. 7:30–31 The sons of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah. Serah was their sister. The sons of Beriah: Heber, and Malchiel, who fathered Birzaith.

The final 3 words are not found in Genesis. However, that does not indicate a contradiction. The family of Birzaith may have been known by the time of Chronicles; but that person could have been born in Egypt during the 400 years.

Altogether, Zilpah's 16 sons and grandchildren moved from Canaan to Egypt. Despite being used as a surrogate on behalf of Leah, these sons are always presented in the Bible as Zilpah's sons.

Genesis 46:18 These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter, and these whom she bore to Jacob, sixteen souls.

The 16 count does not include the wives of Gad and Asher. This is true of the line of Jacob through Leah—Leah is not included in the total either. The idea is, only those who are genetically related to Jacob are being counted.

That so few women are named suggests that, so far, Dinah and a sister and Serah may have only been the female children thus far.

Genesis 46:19 The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife, were Joseph and Benjamin.

Rachel only had two sons: Joseph and Benjamin. She died when giving birth to Benjamin.

Most of our recent study has been centered on Joseph, about his brothers selling him into slavery, and about his time in Egypt, where he rose to the level of prime minister. Smaller sections are devoted to the sons of Jacob.

Genesis 46:20 And to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath the daughter of Potipherah the priest of On bore him.

Joseph has two sons born to him in Egypt. It seems reasonable and likely that his wife is Egyptian, of noble birth; but very possibly a believer, given that she is named here and the fact that her father is a priest. There is no need to suppose that everyone other than the sons of Abraham were heathen with heathen gods. Moses will marry the daughter of a priest of Midian, and it seems very likely that he was a priest to the True God, based upon the information given on him in the Book of Exodus.

Judah and Joseph's preeminence are spoken of in Chronicles:

1Chron. 5:1–2 The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (for he was the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's couch, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel, so that he could not be enrolled as the oldest son; though Judah became strong among his brothers and a chief came from him, yet the birthright belonged to Joseph),...

The birthright refers to the double portion; so the line of Manasseh is given as an independent line in 1Chron. 7:14–19; and the line of Ephraim is found in 1Chron. 7:20–29.

Judah became the leader of his brothers, as we have previously studied; and his tribe will become the preeminent tribe. Judah is both the last tribe standing and the source of the term *Jew*.

> From Rochel Chein (at Chabad.org): *The term "Jew" is derived from the name of Jacob's fourth son, Judah--Yehudah, in the Hebrew--and may have originally applied only to Judah's descendants, who comprised one of the twelve tribes of Israel...In the 5th century BCE, the Kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyrian King Sennaherib, and the ten tribes were exiled and lost. The only remaining Israelites were the residents of the Kingdom of Judah, and the term "Yehudi" or "Jew" came to refer to all the Israelites, regardless of their tribal ancestry*.[78]

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[78] From Chabad.org; accessed September 13, 2017.

Interestingly enough, this displacement of firstborn Reuben in favor of Judah and Joseph is *only* directly spoken to in this passage of Chronicles. I see Reuben's loss of status as a very important topic of the last quarter of Genesis. Jacob would prophesy Reuben's loss of preeminence in Gen. 49:3–4 ("Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, and the firstfruits of my strength, preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power. Unstable as water, you shall not have preeminence, because you went up to your father's bed; then you defiled it—he went up to my couch!"—ESV). Nevertheless, Reuben will typically be named as the first tribe throughout the Torah (the first 5 books of the Bible). We have already studied Reuben's great sin in Gen. 35:22.

So, even though there is no specific statement elsewhere to indicate that Reuben (and Simeon and Levi) were set aside in favor of Judah and Joseph, this is, nonetheless, an important theme of the final quarter of Genesis.

Genesis 46:21 And the sons of Benjamin: Belah and Becher, and Ashbel, Gera, and Naaman, Ehi, and Rosh, Muppim, and Huppim, and Ard.

Benjamin had one of the larger families, siring 10 sons. We know very little about Benjamin, apart from being the youngest son and Jacob's favorite (when Joseph was *lost*). It would be very likely that Jacob married off Benjamin early; and encouraged him to have children (so that Jacob would have grandchildren). This is speculation on my part.

You may wonder, since Benjamin is younger than Joseph, *how is this physically possible?* Joseph was 30 when he stood before Pharaoh, which is at the beginning of the 7 years of prosperity (Gen. 41:46). Then, there were 7 years of prosperity and 2 years of famine before Joseph called for his family to come to Egypt.

If Benjamin is 10 years younger than Joseph, then he is age 29 when moving to Egypt. He is certainly able to have 10 children during that time period. Furthermore, based upon Jacob's personality, he probably married Benjamin off early in life and then did not allow him to leave the compound to work (as his brothers did). As a result, Benjamin spent a lot of time having kids. Although that is speculation, it is reasonable speculation.

Genesis 46:22 These are the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob. All the souls were fourteen.

The total number 14 again excludes the wives of Joseph and Benjamin. Joseph has 2 sons; Benjamin has 10 sons; and adding in Joseph and Benjamin, that is 14 in all. These sons all have the genes of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. As we know, Rachel died when giving birth to Benjamin.

Genesis 46:23 And the sons of Dan: Hushim.

The sons are not given in order of their births, but first by their mothers, and then by the order of their births. When Rachel did not have any children, she had her personal

servant, Bilhah, act as a surrogate. Bilhah had 2 sons, Dan and Naphtali. At this point, Dan had but one son.

There is no genealogy for Dan in the book of Chronicles. He is mentioned only once in the genealogical portion of that book (1Chron. 2:2). It is possible that Dan's entire line is mentioned in 1Chron. 7:12. There appears to be two very different readings of this verse:

NASB	And Shuppim and Huppim *were* the sons of Ir; Hushim was the son [lit., *sons*] of Aher.
New English Bible	The sons of Dan: Hushim and the sons of Aher.

Some discussion of this discrepancy may be found in **1Chron. 7** (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Genesis 46:24 And the sons of Naphtali: Jahzeel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shillem.

Naphtali had 4 sons move with him to Egypt.

1Chron. 7:13 The sons of Naphtali: Jahziel, Guni, Jezer and Shallum, the descendants of Bilhah. (ESV)

Chronicles gives us almost an entire match, with some differences in the vowels.

Genesis 46:25 These were the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter, and she bore these to Jacob. All the souls were seven.

Rachel, worried that she may have no children, gave her personal maid, Bilhah, over to Jacob. He had two sons by her. Even though the intention was for Bilhah to act as a surrogate for Rachel, these two sons are always identified as the sons of Bilhah.

The 7 people listed leave out the wives of Dan and Naphtali.

Genesis 46:26 All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, who came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were sixty-six.

The wives are excluded from this total. The totals given above are 33+16+14+7 = 70. At this point, there would be 70 people who have Jacob's genes, including Jacob, in the land of Egypt. All the souls that came *with Jacob* to Egypt would have been 66. Joseph and his two sons are already in Egypt; and Jacob is not included in this count of 66.

Genesis 46:27 And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two souls. All the souls of the house of Jacob, who came into Egypt, were seventy.

So, when we add in Jacob, Joseph, and Joseph's two sons, that gives us 70 as the total number of people with the genes of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who have moved to Egypt.

Barnes gives us a quick explanation of the numbers: *All the souls that went with Jacob into Egypt, "that came out of his loins," were eleven sons, one daughter, fifty grandchildren, and four great-grandsons; in all, sixty-six. Jacob, Joseph and his two sons, are four; and thus, all the souls belonging to the family of Jacob which went into Egypt were seventy. This account, with its somewhat intricate details, is expressed with remarkable brevity and simplicity*.[79]

There are quite a number of genealogies in Scripture.

Why there is this genealogy in Genesis 46

1. There is a purpose for each genealogy in the Bible.
2. This genealogy specifically lists all of those who went to Egypt, which is every single person directly descended from the loins of Jacob.
3. God instituted a new race, beginning with Abraham. Every person who is a member of this new race must have the genes of Abraham, Isaac, *and* Jacob. The original promises were made to Abraham, but it is all of those descended from Jacob who make up the Hebrew people. Both Abraham and Isaac had descendants who were not Hebrew but Arabic.
    1) This new race comes down to us today. Most of us know Jewish people personally (many times, we may not be aware of that); and they play an important part in the culture, industry and financial sectors of the United States.
    2) This new race will play a part in the end times (the Tribulation). Rev. 7
    3) Of all the various groups of people, Jews and Christians are the most persecuted groups of people in the world. Even after 9/11, there were more hate crimes against Jews in the United States than against Muslims (there are roughly the same number of Jews and Muslims in the US). See 2014 or 2015.
4. We have already studied one attack on the purity of this people in Gen. 34, where a small family of Canaan wanted to synch up with Jacob's family, and give their daughters and sons back and forth (as Esau apparently did with the family of Seir as per Gen. 36). This is clearly outside of the plan of God, where the Hebrews are to be kept separate.
5. We follow the births of the sons of Jacob and we see that each and every child is accounted for in this move to Egypt.
6. Women from other peoples and nations could marry into the Jewish family, and their sons would all have the genes of Jacob.
7. There will be a headcount given in Exodus which will confirm that all 12 sons of Jacob and their descendants remain intact and isolated as the people of Israel (Jacob's other name).
8. We have every son of Jacob and nearly every grandson of Jacob confirmed in the book of Chronicles, which is written 1000 years after the books of Genesis and

[79] Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament;* from e-Sword, Gen. 46:26–27.

Why there is this genealogy in Genesis 46

Exodus.

9. This genealogy confirms to us the racial purity of the Jewish people going into Egypt. There are none who are left behind; there are no additional *adopted* children added into the mix.

The isolation and purity of the Hebrew people is a major theme of Genesis.

Lesson 464: Genesis 46:26–27 Acts 7:14 **Possible Contradiction**

We have just studied this in the past few lessons:

Genesis 46:26–27 All the persons belonging to Jacob who came into Egypt, who were his own descendants, not including Jacob's sons' wives, were sixty-six persons in all. And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two. All the persons of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were seventy. (ESV)

Jacob was the patriarch of the family; Joseph and his two sons already were living in Egypt; so 66 people who were descended from Jacob moved to Egypt with him. Altogether, there were 70 people in Egypt who were Jacob or descended from Jacob (including Joseph and his two sons). There were also wives and mistresses, who are not counted in the numbers above, as they do not have Jacob's genes.

The Greek Bible reads differently from the Hebrew Bible.

Genesis 46:26–27 And all the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, who came out of his loins, besides the wives of the sons of Jacob, even all the souls were sixty-six. And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in the land of Egypt, were nine souls; all the souls of the house of Jacob who came with Joseph into Egypt, were seventy-five souls. (Brenton's translation of the Septuagint)

During the time of the Apostles, in the 1st century, there was the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament) which was being read and preserved by the Hebrews, even though the Jews did not all speak Hebrew (for a time, this language was dying).

Most people in Jerusalem and the Roman world spoke Greek (Koine, or *common,* Greek). Many spoke Aramaic as well (there is a great deal of disagreement about what language Jesus and the disciples used; but when Jesus spoke Aramaic in the New Testament, it is pointed out and translated for us—in Matthew 27:46 Mark 5:41 7:34 14:36 15:34). Koine Greek, at this time, was very similar to English today—it was a universal language for the places where Jesus and the Apostles taught (Jesus taught in a very small geographical area for a very short time; His disciples taught a much larger geographical area for a much greater period of time).

In any case, there were two versions of the Old Testament being used in the first century A.D.: the Hebrew and the Greek. The former was primarily used by the Jews (particularly by the religious class); and the latter, called the Septuagint or the LXX, was primarily used by the early Christians.

Regarding the number of those who came to Egypt, there is a problem when we compare this passage to Acts 7:14. Saint Stephen is given a message, and in it, he says, "And Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five persons in all." This is a problem because we have just counted up all the sons and daughters moving to Egypt with Jacob and we know them total up to be 70 people altogether (again, excluding wives and mistresses). Stephen apparently took his number from the LXX.

This is quite a difficult problem and I found little help among commentators on this possible contradiction, despite there being volumes written about this particular difficulty.

What About Saint Stephen's Number of 75 Souls?

1. There is the problem of Acts 7:14, where Saint Stephen, in a sermon, says, "And Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five persons in all." (ESV) The Greek appears to be quite specific here, using the word *all* twice. This makes it very difficult to read this passage as meaning *about, almost* or *at least*.
2. What appears to be the case is, Saint Stephen took this number from the Septuagint. Brenton's translation of Gen 46:27 And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in the land of Egypt, were nine souls; all the souls of the house of Jacob who came with Joseph into Egypt, were seventy-five souls. This is the English translation from the Septuagint (also called the LXX), which is the Greek version of the Old Testament. This is one place where it is significantly different from the original (there are many differences between the LXX and the Hebrew, but few significant differences). Because Stephen and most believers in the 1st century read and spoke Greek, they adopted this version of the Old Testament as the accepted translation of their Bible (although there were New Testament Scriptures floating about in the 1st century, it took awhile for people to recognize these writings as being on a par with the Old Testament).
3. This number is justified by going into Chronicles (1Chron. 7:14–21) and adding in 5 grandsons of Joseph into the mix. The problem with this is, Joseph's sons, when his family comes to Egypt, are less than 9 years old. They were born to him during the 7 prosperous years; and we are in the 2nd year of the famine.
4. The Septuagint still has the 66 number as well: Gen. 46:26–27 And all the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, who came out of his loins, besides the wives of the sons of Jacob, even all the souls were sixty-six. And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in the land of Egypt, were nine souls; all the souls of the house of Jacob who came with Joseph into Egypt, were seventy-five souls. (Brenton) So, for whatever reason, additional sons/grandsons of Joseph were added into the mix, even though they would not have been alive *when* Jacob came to Egypt.
5. **Possible Solution #1:** The first possible solution to the disparity between the

numbers 70 and 75 is, the 5 grandchildren of Joseph are included in Stephen's numbering, as they were "in Joseph's loins" (so to speak). Stephen simply takes the number of people who came to Egypt and adds in Joseph, his sons and his grandsons, which is what the Greek version of Genesis (and Chronicles) appears to do. Stephen is not looking at this from the standpoint of, how many sons of Jacob are in Egypt on day one; but accepting the LXX version and their addition of Joseph's grandsons (who were born sometime after Joseph's brothers moved to Egypt). Stephen's focus was on those who came into the land with Jacob and those born to Joseph (including his grandchildren). This number is very incidental to the points which Stephen is making. Stephen may have no idea exactly how this number is justified.

1) A problem with this explanation is, even though it appears that this number of 75 given in the LXX seems designed to accommodate Joseph's sons and grandsons who are named in the LXX. This does not appear to be the way that Stephen uses that number.
2) Stephen says, "And Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five persons in all." (ESV) This sounds more like the number of people that came with Jacob (which would have excluded Joseph, his two sons, and Jacob).

6. **Possible Solution #2:** Another solution (not found anywhere else) is this: Acts 7:14 records exactly what Stephen said; and he took the number 75 out of the Septuagint (which is the Greek Old Testament commonly used in that day). The number used by Stephen is the number of those descended from Jacob in Egypt. So, Stephen used a number which was not really correct; but it is preserved in his sermon. His sermon, apart from this (and his listeners used the same Greek Bible), was accurate. This minor mistake would be akin to Stephen mispronouncing one of Jacob's grandchildren's names while speaking. It is not really an issue when it comes to the content of the sermon.
   1) On the one hand, we are left with the problem that the Bible records a sermon which contains an numerical error; on the other hand, this error does not really affect any of what Stephen is saying. Furthermore, the Bible is merely recording accurately what Stephen said.
   2) So, if we accept Stephen's number of 75 as a mistake, but one that does not really change the gist of what he is teaching, then this seems to allow for occasions where Church Age pastors sometimes have some inaccuracies in their sermons and yet, still end up teaching enough truth so that their congregation grows spiritually. My own personal intent is to post accurate material about the Bible and about the books and passages which I cover. My expectation is, the inadvertent inaccuracies which my work contains does not negate the power of the Word of God where it is accurately explained.
   3) Remember, not everything that Jacob said or did was 100% accurate. The Bible records his words and actions accurately, but without vouching for Jacob in every case. Recall his scheme to breed animals—this was totally

his idea, it was unrelated to God and unrelated to the outcome of the breeding of his sheep.

4) I believe this to be the correct explanation.

7. **Possible Solution #3:** There is a third possible explanation. Perhaps the number named by Stephen was accurate, even though he did not realize that it was accurate in the way that it was. Perhaps the 75 includes 9 women who are wives of the sons of Jacob. However, the sons (in Canaan) of Jacob would account for 11 women and one concubine (Simeon apparently had a Canaanite mistress—v. 10); and two sons had already married and had two sons (vv. 12 & 17); making the number of women 14 in all. Jacob had a surviving wife and two mistresses, bringing that total to 17. That would have meant 8 wives had died or stayed behind in Canaan, in order to give us this exact number of 75 (which seems to be called for here; the sense does not seem to be *at least 75*). This seems like quite a large number have died or have been left behind.
   1) The repetition of the word *all* would suggest that the meaning here is not *at least*.
   2) I present this solution, as it is not found anywhere else; but I consider it to be one of the least-likely of the solutions suggested in this doctrine.
8. **Possible Solution #4:** There is a fourth explanation, which requires us to literally understand the two verses in question.
   1) Acts 7:14 Joseph sent, and summoned Jacob, his father, and all his relatives, seventy-five souls. (WEB) Joseph sent for his father and his family from Canaan; and this is added to, in Stephen's speech, to Joseph's relatives, referring to all of his sons and grandsons.
   2) According to Brenton's translation of Gen 46:27 And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in the land of Egypt, were nine souls; all the souls of the house of Jacob who came with Joseph into Egypt, were seventy-five souls. 9 sons are added to the 66 (previously discussed) to make 75.
   3) We would have to assume that Joseph had 9 sons (or, sons and grandsons) (*not* at the time that his father Jacob moved to Egypt, but eventually). As far as I know, this is only confirmed in the LXX (the Greek Old Testament). That does not mean that it is inaccurate.
   4) So *all* of Joseph's relatives totaled 75, taking into account those who moved to Egypt added to Joseph's sons born to him in Egypt.
   5) The biggest problem with this is, these sons and grandsons of Joseph are not found anywhere in the Hebrew Bible (insofar as far as I know). Furthermore, this explanation excludes additional sons or grandsons of Joseph's brothers.
9. **Possible Solution #5:** The number of daughters born to Jacob and to his sons was 9. This would give us 75 souls in total who came to Egypt, apart from Jacob, Joseph, and Joseph's two sons.
   1) We do not know exactly the number of daughters who moved to Egypt with Jacob. We know that there are at least two; and one of the sons of Jacob has a daughter who is named.

What About Saint Stephen's Number of 75 Souls?

2) There is no reason to assume that all of the daughters are named, as, at least one is not named in the genealogy.
3) Whereas Stephen may have been thinking about the passage in the Greek Septuagint, and taken his number from there; that number could have been accurate nevertheless, based upon the number of daughters who are ultimately from Jacob.
4) The biggest problem with this solution is, the number of sons and daughters are carefully totaled up in Gen. 46. Leah's daughter is included from Gen. 46:15; Asher also has a daughter who is named and added into the Gen. 46 totals (Gen. 46:17). Since these two daughters are named and numbered; that makes it unlikely that there were 9 additional daughters, not named and not numbered, but who went into Egypt.
5) Therefore, I do not see this as a legitimate solution.

10. **Possible solution #6:** Joseph simply quoting from the LXX version, but without giving all of the details. He is taking the beginning and end of vv. 46–47 and throwing them together, as this is not really a big part of what he is teaching.

I have read and studied quite a number of alleged contradictions in the Bible. I found this to be perhaps the most difficult, which is why I devoted so much time to it.

I read through a number of explanations for this (a half dozen or more), and none of them struck me as being reasonable explanations for the disparity of the numbers. I have provided the 6 best explanations that I could come up with and lean toward Acts recording Stephen's sermon accurately but without vouching for its complete accuracy. I reject even most of those explanations, except for #2, which allows for an error in Stephen's speech; and #6.

Lesson 465: Genesis 46:28–34 — Joseph Speaks to his Brothers

Pharaoh has ordered Joseph to send wagons to Israel in order to move his family to Egypt; and his family is on route at this time, only a few hours away. Judah will be sent out ahead to tell Joseph that they were about to arrive. Then Joseph will go out to meet them.

At this point, we *ought* begin a new chapter, starting with Gen. 46:28 and then take that chapter through to Gen. 47:12. William Ramey begins this new section at Gen. 46:31 and would have run that chapter through to Gen. 47:27.

The end of the list of people who moved to Egypt with Jacob ought to have marked the end of Gen. 46—but it did not. The chapter divisions are not inspired in anyway, and they occurred long, long after the text was settled. There are certain places where it is clear where a narrative begins and ends; but there are also problem areas.

Just giving the chapter and verse numbers is sometimes unhelpful. The darker sections would logically be placed together:

A Wide-Angle View of Genesis 45–47

Scripture	Text/Commentary
Genesis 45:1–15	Joseph makes himself known to his brothers.
Genesis 45:16–20	Pharaoh insists that the family of Joseph be brought to Egypt.
Genesis 45:21–25	A fleet of ancient U-haul's are sent to Canaan, courtesy of Pharaoh.
Genesis 45:26–28	Jacob is told that his son is alive in Egypt and wants him to come down to see him.
Genesis 46:1–4	God appears to Jacob and tells him that this move to Egypt is legitimate.
Genesis 46:5–27	Every person descended from Jacob is brought to Egypt. All of his sons and grandsons are named.
Genesis 46:28–30	Jacob sees his son Joseph after 20 years.
Genesis 46:31–34	Joseph tells his brothers what to say to Pharaoh, regarding their occupation.
Genesis 47:1–6	Pharaoh speaks to 5 of Joseph's brothers and inquires of their occupation.
Genesis 47:7–10	Pharaoh speaks to Jacob, Joseph's father.
Genesis 47:11–12	Joseph places his family in the land of Rameses (aka, *Goshen*).
Genesis 47:13–26	Joseph deals with the people of Egypt for the remainder of the famine.
Genesis 47:27–31	As Jacob moves closer to death, he calls in Joseph and directs him as to where he is to be buried.

As you can see, these various sections could be placed in whatever chapter; but Gen. 46:31–47:10 really belongs in the same chapter.

We have just studied the names of the sons and grandsons of Jacob. It will be followed by Joseph speaking to his brothers and telling them what to say in Gen. 46; followed by them going in and speaking to Pharaoh in Gen. 47. Those two incidents would have reasonably been placed together in the same chapter.

At this point, Jacob and his sons have arrived in Egypt, and there will be a number of conversations which take place. If you will look at Murai's chiasmos below, it is quite obvious that this material from two chapters would logically be placed together in one chapter. This information all fits together quite well. The sons of Jacob arrive in Egypt; there are 4 specific conversations related to their arrival; and they are given a place to live in.

There are two very different chiasmi for this section. Murai treats Gen. 46:28–47:12 as properly a singular portion of Scripture. Although most of the chapters of the Bible are reasonably divided up, there are very notable exceptions to this.

Hajime Murai's Chiasmos of Genesis 46:28-47:12

A	(46:28)		Arrival at Egypt
	B	(46:29-30)	Conversation of Joseph and Jacob
		C (46:31-34)	Conversation of Joseph and his brothers
		C' (47:1-6)	Conversation of Pharaoh and Joseph's brothers
	B'	(47:7-10)	Conversation of Pharaoh and Jacob
A'	(47:11-12)		Migration to Egypt

A: To Egypt. B: Dialogue of Jacob. C: Dialogue of the brothers.

From Hajime Murai's Literary Structures of Genesis; accessed January 24, 2017 (slightly edited).

Ramey's Chiasmos is coming up.

The sons of Jacob have all gathered their families and belongings and have left Canaan; at v. 28, they are entering into Egypt.

Genesis 46:28 And he [Jacob] sent Judah before him to Joseph, to direct his face to Goshen.

Jacob is now treating Judah is his lead son (you may recall that he has taken over the leadership position when the brothers are together). It is possible that only Judah was able to quickly ride a quadruped (camel, horse or mule), as he apparently did a great deal of traveling back in Gen. 38. So Jacob may have been simply choosing the one son who is able to most quickly go from point A to point B. Jacob could have also made this choice based upon the fact that Judah offered himself in Benjamin's stead.

A long time will pass before Judah is universally recognized as the lead tribe by the people of Israel. Most of the time when the tribes are listed together in the Pentateuch, Reuben's name will be listed first. That will change in the book of Chronicles.

In between vv. 28 and 29, Judah apparently meets up with Joseph and directs him to where their father is. It seems likely that Judah rode ahead unfettered and on a single animal; while the families of Jacob followed behind at a much slower pace, as there were many wagons, animals and children involved. So Judah will first meet up with

Joseph—perhaps an hour or two ahead of the caravan, so that Joseph will know that his father is not far behind.

Recall that it was Judah's willingness to take Benjamin's punishment which caused Joseph to reveal his identity to his brothers.

Joseph, knowing that all of his family is here, including his father, goes out to them.

Genesis 46:29 And Joseph made his chariot ready, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself to him. And he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.

Joseph decides to take his best sports car out to meet his father. In that era, that would have been a horse-drawn chariot (I am presuming that it is pulled by horses).

It has been over 20 years since they have seen one another. The last time that Jacob saw Joseph, he was about 17 years old. Joseph, at age 37, is still going to be very recognizable to his father.

Genesis 46:30 And Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive."

This was a wonderful moment for Jacob, something that was quite unexpected.

It is also obvious that Jacob is using a figure of speech. He is not wishing to die; he is not asking Joseph to kill him; he is simply saying that, this is the great moment of his life, and he could die at this time, and he would feel fulfilled.

This is also another obvious place to end Gen. 46. In vv. 31–34, Joseph will guide his brothers when speaking to Pharaoh; and in Gen. 47:1–6, they will meet Pharaoh and speak to him, saying the things which Joseph tells them to say. Logically, these two related incidents should have been in the same chapter and not split apart as they are.

Ramey begins a Chiasmos with Gen. 46:31 and takes this up to almost the end of Gen. 47.

William Ramey's Chiasmos of Genesis 46:31–47:27

Reference: Genesis 46:31--47:27

A Joseph prepares his family to receive Pharaoh's favor (46:31-34)
B Joseph chooses five brothers to present before Pharaoh (47:1-2)
C Brothers' reason for being in Egypt: the famine is severe (47:3-4)
D Pharaoh's decree that Joseph's family may settle in Egypt (47:5-6)
X Jacob blesses Pharaoh (47:7-10)
D' Joseph settles his family in Egypt (47:11-12)

William Ramey's Chiasmos of Genesis 46:31–47:27

C' Joseph's reason for collecting money: the famine is severe (47:13-19)
B' Joseph collects one-fifth from all the people [except priests] (47:20-26)
A' Israel (as a people) prosper and greatly multiply in Egypt (47:27)

From https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html accessed September 19, 2015.

Genesis 46:31 And Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's house, "I will go up and show Pharaoh, and say to him, 'My brothers and my father's house, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me.

Although we literally have the words, *a house of his father;* this phrase simply refers to Jacob's sons and grandsons; it does not, of course, refer to their physical dwelling place. This is one of the most common metonyms in the Old Testament.

Pharaoh had ordered Joseph to bring his family down to Egypt and provided him with a fleet of ancient world u-hauls for the trip. So, here they were, Jacob and his sons and their families; along with all of their livestock and most of their possessions.

Joseph speaks to his family and tells them how he will present them to Pharaoh. He will first announce that they have all arrived.

Vv. 31b–32 is what Joseph will say to Pharaoh regarding his family.

Genesis 46:32 And the men are shepherds, for they have been men of cattle. And they have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have.'

Then Joseph will tell Pharaoh that his brothers are all shepherds and that they have brought their flocks and herds with them. This is the truth; but this also appears to be something that Joseph wants his brothers to emphasize.

Genesis 46:33 And it will be when Pharaoh will call you, and will say, 'What is your occupation?'

The most normal initial conversation between two men is, "What do you do for a living?" True today just as it was true 4000 years ago. This would be one of Pharaoh's first questions.

When assigning territory to Joseph's brothers and father, they will take into consideration what the family business is. Joseph is not telling his brother to lie; he is telling them to be truthful, and he has a reason for this.

Genesis 46:34 Then you will say, 'Your servants have been men of cattle from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers,' so that you may live in the land of Goshen, for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians."

It is quite interesting that Joseph wants his family to live in Goshen. He is not asking his brothers to lie; he is simply telling them to tell Pharaoh who they are (some of them may be aware of the negative views Egyptians have of shepherds, and possibly would have fudged on their occupations).

> Barnes suggests that there may be an historical basis for this emphasis: *About seventeen or eighteen centuries before the Christian era it is probable that the Hyksos, or shepherd kings, were masters of the southern part of the country, while a native dynasty still prevailed in lower Egypt. The religion of these shepherd intruders was different from that of the Egyptians which they treated with disrespect. They were addicted to the barbarities which are usually incident to a foreign rule. It is not surprising, therefore, that the shepherd became the abomination of Egypt*.[80]

I would have thought it would be related to the lack of cleanliness of the animals; and, as a result, of their keepers as well. However, when we come to Gen. 47, it will be clear that a number of Egyptians have farm animals of some sort. Perhaps the difference is in numbers. The sons of Jacob had much larger flocks than was found elsewhere in Egypt (this is speculation). Perhaps the difference is the kind of animals kept by the Hebrews.

There are many people who like eating beef, mutton or chicken; but could not stomach all that is necessary in order to provide meat. It is reasonable to suppose that Egyptians were similar in this regard and did not like close association with ranching and shepherding. This will help to isolate the Hebrew people while they are in Egypt.

There will be people in Egypt who have livestock (Gen. 47:16–17). Perhaps they will be off in one direction and Jacob's family will be placed elsewhere, to keep the people and their animals separate. This may be the reason that their vocation is emphasized.

The end result is, the sons of Israel will be separate from the Egyptian ranchers and probably from the royal cities. Or, it is possible that Goshen was very convenient to Joseph's home. Or, Goshen may have been located on the very border of Egypt, which would allow the Jews to leave Egypt without passing through Egypt. When they came to the end of their territory, they would also be at the border of Egypt.

Joseph can obviously state a preference where he would like his family to be situated, but this is the final decision made by Pharaoh. It is even possible that Pharaoh had previously spoken of finding someone to oversee his own livestock. Joseph's brothers could assist him in that; and therefore, be placed in nearby Goshen.

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[80] Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament;* from e-Sword, Gen. 46:28–34.

Exactly why Joseph wanted his brothers to unequivocally call themselves shepherds, going way back, is no doubt related to the land of Goshen, where he would like them to live. Exactly how that squares the circle is a matter of speculation.

In any case, moving to Goshen would result in the sons of Jacob being placed in a fairly isolated area, possibly so that the smells and filth of their profession was far enough away so that they did not offend the general populace of Egypt (if that is the reason that they were separated from the rest of the population). Joseph apparently had Goshen in mind as the ideal place. We may reasonably assume that Goshen would be fairly isolated from the rest of Egypt. Joseph has enough background in this area to recognize that he is choosing land appropriate for shepherding. Looking ahead into the future, Joseph may have also seen this land is the quickest exit from Egypt.

Lesson 466: Genesis 47:1–6 Standing Before Pharaoh/The Land of Goshen

As we have noticed throughout these final chapters of Genesis, the chapter divisions often seem unnecessary or incorrectly placed. In the previous chapter, all of Joseph's relatives have moved to Egypt, and that last thing that happened was, Joseph told his brothers to be honest about their profession of keeping animals. We begin this new chapter by those brothers standing before Pharaoh and telling him about their profession. It would have made sense for Gen. 46:31–34 (where Joseph tells his brothers what to say to Pharaoh) to be in the same chapter as Gen. 47:1–11 (where Pharaoh meets and interviews the brothers of Jacob, hearing about their profession, and assigning them specific land in Egypt where they might live).

Gen. 47:11 (or 12) is the conclusion of the wonderful narrative which begins with Joseph as a young man, age 17, being sold by his brothers into slavery in Egypt; to this point where the family of Joseph (his father and brothers) have arrived in Egypt to live, and have met with Pharaoh. This continuous narrative began in Gen. 37:1 and takes us to Gen. 47:11 (or 12) (there was an intermission in Gen. 38).

At various times, this narrative is probably delivered by two men, Joseph and Judah, each one taking turns, speaking before their families (which would make perfect sense, as these men together assume the rights and privileges of the firstborn). It is possible that Leah originally spoke a portion of this narrative as well, telling about the birth of her sons and her sister's sons.

It is my educated guess that their father Jacob spoke Gen. 1–36 from memory, at various times, while in Egypt. Reading the Torah aloud seems to be very much in line with current Jewish traditions and Jewish traditions from the time of Jesus Christ. The only difference is, Jacob and his sons would have done this from memory.

Coming to the end of this continual narrative does not mean that we leave Joseph and his family. However, the narratives from Gen. 47:13 and forward tend to be more episodic (as were the chapters on Abraham). Same people, same family, same location (for the most

part); but a clear diverging from the continuous narrative which we have enjoyed up to this time.

In Gen. 47, Joseph stands before Pharaoh to introduce to him his father and some of his brothers.

Genesis 47:1 Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, "My father and my brothers, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, have come out of the land of Canaan."

You will notice how Joseph prepares Pharaoh for the fact that his brothers are all ranchers. They arrive with their flocks and herds. Joseph makes this announcement before the court of Pharaoh.

It is reasonable to assume that Pharaoh has no little knowledge of geography and that he knows where Canaan is. Most or all of the Pharaohs of Egypt would know geography and history.

Genesis 47:2a And behold, they are in the land of Goshen."

This suggests that Goshen has to be on the border of Egypt, as this is where Joseph's fathers and brothers stopped their caravan.

Genesis 47:2b And he took some of his brothers, five men, and presented them to Pharaoh.

Joseph chose 5 of his brothers to meet Pharaoh (which I find interesting in itself). It would be my guess that this is about the maximum number of brothers that Pharaoh could meet and keep easily differentiated in his head.

Genesis 47:3 And Pharaoh said to his brothers, "What is your occupation?" And they said to Pharaoh, "Your servants are shepherds, both we and our fathers."

You will note that conversation between men has not changed much in 4000 years. When you meet some new people, almost inevitably, one of the first questions asked—particularly of males—is, *what do you do for a living?*

This appears to be Pharaoh's first question to the brothers.

When they claim to be shepherds, *we and our fathers;* they are referring back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This suggests that they are unlikely to adopt a new profession.

Genesis 47:4 And they said to Pharaoh, "For we have come to live in the land. For your servants have no pasture left for their flocks. For the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. And now please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen."

You will note that immigration has not changed much either. The brothers have come to a well-organized national entity; they are speaking to the head of that national entity; and they ask for permission to live there. This is the proper way to immigrate to another country. *The land* is a reference to *Egypt*.

The reason for their immigration is, they are no longer able to support their livestock in Canaan, due to the drought. At this point, we are two years into the drought.

Genesis 47:5 And Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, "Your father and your brothers have come to you.

Pharaoh had called for Joseph to bring his family into Egypt. In fact, he ordered Joseph to call for his family—so that there was no mistaking Pharaoh's intentions.

At this point, Pharaoh is providing a summation of what has just occurred, along with his orders (which are an official acceptance of Joseph's family into Egypt). He will assign to them a particular place to live as well.

Genesis 47:6 The land of Egypt is before you. Make your father and brothers to live in the best of the land; in the land of Goshen let them live. And if you know men of ability among them, then make them overseers of livestock, over what is mine."

Even though the Egyptians may not have appreciated close proximity to shepherds and livestock, it was still a necessity. The Pharaoh had his own livestock; and he was putting Jacob's family in charge of it.

My take is, this is a privilege yet also a serious responsibility which the brothers are to assume, as guests of the Pharaoh in his land. Based upon what I have read, this would be considered one of those dirty jobs that you give over to immigrants (jobs that Egyptians won't do). This is not slave labor, however; as this is the lifelong occupation of Joseph's brothers.

The Pharaoh is not much different from most people today. Most of us love a good steak; but we are less than fond of the smell of animals being raised for food. The smell of a steak on the barbeque is one of the greatest smells in the world; the smell of a ranch—well, some people can appreciate that, but most cannot.

Some dynasties of Egyptians tend to be extremely clean; and people who work farms and keep animals tend not to be (in their eyes). It is possible that Pharaoh had been looking to move his livestock elsewhere; and this affords him the perfect way to do that.

There appears to be a real emphasis on the place called Goshen. I would guess that it is somehow isolated from the rest of Egypt—perhaps by some natural barriers.

What we do know about Goshen.

Goshen and the Hebrews

1. The land of Goshen was fairly close to where Joseph lived, so that he could keep in close contact with his family. Gen. 45:10 46:28
2. When the sons of Jacob first came to Egypt, they must have come into the land by Goshen or entered in close to Goshen, as their primary dealings were with Joseph. Gen. 42–43
3. When they entered Egypt, they waited in Goshen for Pharaoh to tell them where to live. Gen. 47:2
4. Goshen is where Joseph wanted his family to live. Gen. 46:34
5. The family of Jacob temporarily stayed in Goshen when they first arrived, but were then permanently assigned to that area by Pharaoh. Gen. 47:1–6
6. Goshen turned out to be an ideal area for the family of Jacob; they greatly prospered there. Gen. 47:27
7. By the time of the Exodus, it is likely that some Egyptians lived in this area as well. Exodus 3:22 11:2 12:35–36
8. God isolated the sons of Jacob from some of the plagues of Egypt. Whether this was done by supernatural means or simply because of the isolation of Goshen, we do not know. Ex. 8:22 9:26
9. While living in Goshen, the children of Israel grew to a population of 2 million in the space of about 400 years. This is not a miraculous amount of growth; but it is a very healthy growth rate—particularly for people who were enslaved.
10. Goshen is also called the *land of Rameses* in Gen. 47:11 Ex. 12:37.
11. Once the sons of Israel leave Egypt, Goshen will never be mentioned again (the name is found in Joshua, but it refers to a different place).
12. Commentators are still discussing today exactly where Goshen is in Egypt. Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature spent 4 full pages on this topic alone. Few commentators gave it this much discussion.
13. Fausset: *Joseph naturally placed his family on the border land between Egypt and Palestine, the promised land, and at the same time near himself at Tunis or else Memphis the capital of Egypt*.[1]

Goshen and the Hebrews

14. ISBE: *The region thus very clearly indicated was not of any great extent, having an area of only about 900 square miles, including two very different districts. The western half, immediately East of the Bubastic branch of the Nile, stretches from Zoan to Bubastis (at both of which cities records of the Hyksos ruler Apepi have been found), or a distance of about 35 miles North and South. This region is an irrigated plain which is still considered to include some of the best land in Egypt. The description of the land of Rameses (see RAAMSES), in the 14th century B.C., shows its fertility; and Silvia says that the land of Goshen was 16 miles from Heroöpolis, and that she traveled for two days in it "through vineyards, and balsam plantations, and orchards, and tilled fields, and gardens."*[2] ISBE makes the assumption that they knew exactly where Goshen is; the Cyclopedia referenced above spends more than 3 pages discussing the various places where Goshen might have been located.

Map of Goshen in Egypt from News You Can Believe; accessed September 19, 2017. Some maps places Goshen further south. This location seems logical, as the sons of Jacob would have traveled through this general area in order to buy grain, encountering their brother Joseph there. If you are thinking ahead to the Exodus, and the Jews crossing over the Sea of Reeds, it is possible that leg of the Red Sea came further up.

As an addendum to the location of Goshen, there have been recent archeological discoveries in Egypt, in the location noted on the map above. *Avaris* is the name given to this city/area where they believe evidence of a Semitic city has been found.

Goshen and the Hebrews

Map of Avaris is from Patterns of Evidence; accessed September 19, 2017.

From Patterns of Evidence: *When speaking about Avaris, Professor John Bimson from Trinity University in Bristol, England mentioned that many other Semitic sites from the Middle Bronze Age also exist in the area nearby. Bimson noted that, "If we go back to the 18th-19th centuries BC, we've got settlements of Semitic groups, or what the Egyptians called Asiatics. We don't know exactly when they started arriving or exactly when these settlements stopped, because many of these sites have not been fully excavated yet. You've got a good many settlements, twenty or more, which would fit the land of Goshen where the Bible says the Israelites were settled*.[3]

One certainly needs to be careful about touting the latest archeological discovery, as it does not always turn out the way that we expect it to. Nevertheless, this is a set of promising discoveries.

[1]Andrew Robert Fausset, *Fausset's Bible Dictionary;* from e-Sword, topic: Goshen.
[2] *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia;* James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; ℗ by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Goshen.
[3] http://patternsofevidence.com/blog/2016/06/02/new-archeological-discoveries-about-to-hit-overdrive/ accessed September 19, 2017.

Joseph has brought his brothers in to speak to Pharaoh; and now he brings in his father to speak with him.

Genesis 47:7 And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

Jacob would have blessed Pharaoh in the name of the Revealed God; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Genesis 47:8 And Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How many are the days of the years of your life?"

This question would suggest that Pharaoh is considerably younger than Jacob, but that he respects his age.

A less common question today, posed to those who are older, is, *how old are you?* In our culture, which worships youth (something which is driven, in part, by Hollywood and the media), this is seen as an impolite question. However, in the orient, a person is valued for their age and wisdom. Their time on earth counts for something and it was honored in ancient times. They have seen a lot, and they have experienced a lot. They can make recommendations and observations based upon all that they have observed over a long period of time. Such a person is less affected by cultural trends and today by technical innovations. They have observed and noted truths which have stood for the ages—truths which are unaffected by cultural shifts, the introduction of new cultures, or technological improvements.

For example, Solomon, King David's son, went somewhat awry during his life, marrying 700 women and taking another 300 as concubines (mistresses). But, at the end of his life, he did a lot of writing, and sometimes his wisdom came from a place of failure. Solomon wrote, in Eccles. 9:9 Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that He has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun. My point being is, Solomon was very confused about this particular topic as a young and middle aged man, as he allowed himself to be subject to his desires. However, as he grew older, he became wiser about life and about the choices he had made. Prov. 5:18 Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth,... (ESV; capitalized) My point being, with age, Solomon acquired some wisdom and common sense which he apparently had set aside for much of his life.

Genesis 47:9 And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and I have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."

This is one of the markers of the life of Jacob—he is 130 years old when he comes to Egypt with his family. Recall that he left Canaan around age 77; returned some 20 years

later, and therefore has continued to live in the land for 33 years after returning from Paddan-aram.

Jacob's father Isaac lived to the age of 180; his grandfather, Abraham, lived to the age of 175. So, by comparison, Jacob was still a kid. He says that his days are few, indicating that he has lived considerably fewer years than his fathers; and he calls his life evil. However, remember that we have studied Jacob's life, and we know that most of his problems were self-induced (which is true of most people—we often tend to be our own worst enemy). It is certainly a truism that, for the most part, a person is his own worst enemy. He does not appear to have come to that point in his understanding of himself and the world.

The Jews were taken out of the land of Canaan for several reasons. Most importantly, the Canaanites were becoming more and more degenerate; and, as we have studied, were having a negative impact upon the sons of Jacob. This degeneration would continue for some time (the next 400 years), to a point where, God will have the Jews return to the land and destroy those who live in the Land of Promise. However, there is a separation which must take place in order to protect the Hebrew family from cultural corruption. The Hebrews have to be made separate from the heathen living in Canaan.

Also, the Jews will be segregated, to some degree, from the Egyptians—due in part, I believe, to their vocation of cattle and animal raising. The divine purpose of the separation is to keep the sons of Israel racially pure. However, given the warm relations which begin between the Egyptians and Jacob's family, there must have been more Egyptian women who entered into the family of Jacob.

Interestingly enough, there is only one thing that Jacob says to Pharaoh which is recorded in Scripture:

Genesis 47:9 And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and I have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."

This tells us two things, primarily: (1) Jacob's age and (2) his maturity level, which is not so high, given that he calls the days of his life as *few and evil*. We have noted throughout what Jacob has done, the many mistakes he has made, and how he liked it when matched up with a more experienced manipulator. What he does not appear to appreciate is how big God's hand has been in his life. We know that; we have seen God's will everywhere in Jacob's life, whether he does good or wrong. Furthermore, every one of his children would become the Hebrew nation; and God would keep them isolated.

What Jacob needs to do is stop for just a moment, think of all the boneheaded decisions that he has made, and then to open his eyes and look where he is. He is in the palace of the king of Egypt—a guest of the king of Egypt. It is year 2 of the famine and likely millions of people in Canaan would continue to die due to this famine; but Jacob and all of his

children would live and not feel any of the effects of the famine over the next 5 years. Now Who placed Jacob there but the Providence of God? God has not just protected his son Joseph, but God elevated Joseph to #2 man in all of Egypt.

God has been in Jacob's life and has guided and taken care of him and his family; and Jacob—at least to this point in his life—does not appear to recognize that.

Genesis 47:10 And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

Jacob blesses Pharaoh again, and exits.

Jacob's eventual death would be a sad day in Egyptian history, and he would be mourned by his family and Egyptians alike. This would suggest that Jacob became fairly well-known among the Egyptians during his sojourn there.

This also suggests that, for a time, Jacob and his family were recognized as being blessings to nation Egypt.

Finally, based upon Jacob's words in Gen. 48–49, it sounds as if he did grow spiritually over the next few decades.

Genesis 47:11 And Joseph placed his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh commanded.

I would assume that the best in the land indicates that the soil and moisture are both good, so that there are meadows and grasslands for the livestock to graze upon and a lot of space for them to expand onto. It may not have been ideal farmland; but it was ideal for ranchers.

Joseph and Jacob, although fully aware of the promises of God, do not know when they will return to the land given them by God. However, both assuming that they would die in Egypt, made provisions for their bodies to end up in Canaan, as an act of faith in their God. Both men understood that the time spent in Egypt was only temporary and that God's promises to the Hebrew people was eternal.

Genesis 47:12 And Joseph nourished his father and his brothers, and all his father's household, with bread, for the mouth of the little ones.

Joseph saw to it that his brothers and their families received enough food to eat. Recall that this move takes place during or after the 2nd year of a 7 year famine. Therefore, for another 5 years, Joseph's brothers will struggle with farming in Egypt as they would have in Canaan. However, Joseph will see to it that they are given enough grain for themselves and their livestock.

A New Theory of the Authorship of Genesis: Another theory of authorship has occurred to me during this study of Genesis, and I have alluded to it in previous lessons. As we have read, the brothers were told by Joseph who he really is; and the entire family moved to Egypt. They would all live in Egypt; and they will have children and grandchildren—born both in Canaan and in Egypt.

Their history and their relationship with God are very important, and these things would have been taught to their children and grandchildren. One of the brothers—perhaps it would be Judah—at a gathering, at a sacrifice, would describe what happened to them at the beginning of the great famine in Canaan. "We were all hungry, and our father, Jacob said to us, "Why are you all sitting around looking at each other? I understand that there is grain in Egypt." And Judah would also describe the events leading to them entering into Egypt and coming face to face with Joseph. "We did not know that this was our long, lost brother Joseph, whom we had sold into slavery..."

And then Joseph picks up the narrative at that point, saying, "But I knew who they were. I knew that these are my 10 brothers who had come from Canaan to buy grain. After looking them over, I said to them, "You are spies coming into my land to spy it out!' " Joseph would continue with the narrative of the brothers all being in Egypt, and how he first put them all in jail; then decided to keep 9 in jail and sent one man back; and finally decided, to send 9 men back and keep just one man in jail.

At that point, Judah would take up the narrative again, and tell the sons and grandsons of his brothers, about their trip home and the discovery of the silver, etc. Anytime that all the brothers gathered together in one place, all of them having sons and grandsons; and they would worship Y^{e}howah, their God. At such a time, their history would have been very important to them, given that God called Abraham and He spoke to Isaac and to Jacob as well.

This sort of understanding does not require anyone to gather up disparate narratives and weave them together at a later day; each man simply recalls what happened to him as it happened. As the point of view goes from the brothers to Joseph, Joseph picks up the narrative; as the point of view returns to the brothers, exclusive of Joseph; then Judah picks up the narrative. Their sons and grandsons would hear this on many occasions, and it would come across to them as a singular narrative, despite there being 2 or more people telling them what happened.

Jacob most certainly had memorized and would begin all of this by reciting the first 36 chapters of Genesis, which each patriarch had done during the time that he was a spiritual leader for his people. As chapters were added, the next patriarch would have more to say.

So, in telling their sons and grandson about their history and how they had come to Egypt, several brothers (I would guess Judah and Joseph, primarily[81]) would tell different parts of the narrative, but in chronological order—so they would trade off—Judah would speak, then Joseph, then Judah, then Joseph. Judah would talk about the periods of time where it was just him and 9 or 10 of his brothers in Canaan or in between Canaan and Egypt; and Joseph would speak about the historical events which took place while the brothers are all in Egypt. As these events were recalled, along with the more ancient Scriptures, they would be remembered and repeated by their children and then grandchildren in future generations.

At some point, this narrative would have changed into the 3rd person. Perhaps, with the next generation, sons of Joseph and Judah would speak of Judah and Joseph in the 3rd person. Each generation would repeat what had been added to the narrative. By the time Jacob and Joseph both die, we have the completed 50 chapters of Genesis, some unknown person being chosen to speak of the details of Joseph's death and his specific directions for the disposition of his body (which we will study in the future).

As I have stated on many occasions, I do not believe that Moses wrote the book of Genesis (he may have been the first to commit it to writing, but none of it would have been original with him); but the patriarchs themselves recorded the events of their lives, and each man added additional chapters to this narrative which I like to call "The History of God and Man." (that is, the *book of Genesis*). By *recording the events of their lives,* I simply mean that they recited what happened to them, which text eventually became standardized so that the next generation could hear in the same way and learn it.

From time to time (perhaps every month), this narrative (or portions of the narrative) would be repeated (or, perhaps each week, with their sacrifice, a portion of Genesis would be given from memory). At some point, the text would become standardized, so that it is easy for the children and grandchildren to learn and memorize (I also believe that the mental capacity of the men in that era was superior to our mental capacity, so that the average person could memorize and retain the entire narrative of Genesis[82]).

When Judah and Joseph first presented the history of how they all came to live in Egypt, the narrative may have been more free form, some of it given in the 1st person, sometimes with more and sometimes with fewer details. However, at some point, it would become clear to that generation that they have added their own chapters of life to the book of Genesis, so that they would standardize the text, so that successive generations can hear and learn it. By standardize it, I mean that when it comes to their turn of telling their story, they soon begin to tell it in the same way each time, so that their children and grandchildren can hear and more easily memorize their family history.

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[81] I believe that Leah would have spoken to her children being born; as well as to the other children of Jacob who were born.

[82] I recall struggling to memorize the preamble to the constitution.

For the people of Israel to know and memorize their personal history, along with the intersection of God's Person in some events, there is no need that they understand these words to be God's Words. The development of this text I believe would have been quite organic—a preservation of who they were and their origins and their interactions with God. After all, God established the Jewish race.

This understanding also easily explains glosses. A particular place may have an ancient name; that name may be changed over the years; but we sometimes find the more recent name used during the time that the ancient name would have been more appropriate. So, when the name *Luz* is used, there may have been some blank stares. The person reciting the text might then say, *which place we call Bethel today*. At some point in time, in some passages, the person reciting the text (from memory) might eventually just say, *Bethel*.

It would be clear to them that the words spoken by God to Moses were *inspired,* as it were (they had no technical definition for *inspiration* as we do today). Eventually, the rest of the narrative became to be understood to be the Word of God as well—perhaps by the time that Moses speaks the book of Deuteronomy.

I don't know if this theory of the authorship of Genesis has ever been presented before, but it is simple, organic and it fits in well with long-standing Jewish customs.

Lesson 468: Genesis 47:13–15 The famine continues; their silver is spent

In the previous lesson, I offered what I believe is the definitive explanation of how the book of Genesis was preserved. When it came to the family of Jacob, Jacob probably, on various occasions—the offering of animal sacrifices, for instance—spoke the first 36 chapters of Genesis from memory. Then, other members of the family—namely Joseph, Judah and Leah—would stand before the rest of the family and tell their stories, Joseph and Judah trading off several times. It is possible that one of their sons, at a later time, stood up in place of Joseph and Judah, and continued speaking the narratives of their lives. After the deaths of Judah and then Joseph, the narrative continued to be remembered and spoken, but nothing was added to it.

Evidence that the history of Genesis was known to the Hebrew people early on:

Ex. 1:1–13 begins with the 12 sons of Jacob and tells us how they came to be slaves in Egypt. In this short narrative, we actually are given a synopsis of the 400 year history of the sons of Israel in Egypt.

The midwives of Ex. 1:17 fear the God of Israel, and therefore would not kill the male-children of the Hebrew women. So something must have been known, even then, even to the midwives, of the God of Hebrew people. And they feared the Hebrew God more than they feared the Pharaoh (despite the fact that the sons of Israel were now enslaved

to Egypt). This would have required some understanding and faith in the Hebrew God on the part of these midwives. We are not aware of any supernatural activity on the part of God as it relates to Egypt at this time (prior to Moses calling for the exodus). So, the power and reality of the Hebrew God, as the True God, had to be known in some way for these midwives to so respond as they did. So, let me suggest that, even though a *pharaoh* arose *who did not know Joseph,* that does not mean that he was unknown to the Jews or even to some Egyptians. Clearly, the God of the Israelites was known to the midwives.

In Ex. 2:1–2, we have a Levite man marrying a Levite woman. Therefore, these people have to know which tribe they belong to. From this point forward through the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel and Kings, people know which tribe they belong to. Apart from knowing some of the history of Genesis, this sort of knowledge would lack meaning.

In Ex. 2:6, the daughter of Pharaoh fetches a male child from the river, floating in a small ark (this would be Moses), and she knows immediately that this is an Hebrew child. Now, how does she know? The male child would have been circumcised, which ritual begin with Abraham, which set him apart to God. I am not saying that circumcision was exclusive to the Jews; but in Egypt, the Jews were (presumably) circumcised and the Egyptians were not.

In Ex. 3:6, God speaks to Moses and tells him: "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." (ESV) Unless Moses knew who these people were, this statement by God would have meant little to Moses. An omniscient God would know what Moses understands and what he does not understand.

Admittedly, we do not have passages from Genesis quoted in the subsequent books of Moses (which would have been reasonable); the simple mentioning of the names would make great sense if the background of these men was known. When God speaks to Moses, for instance—if Moses knows about Abraham and God's appearances to him—then what God says to Moses is quite meaningful. When God says, "I am the God of Abraham;" Moses is not confused, asking, "Now, who is this Abraham character again?"

It is the custom even today of some religious Jews or Jewish families to, for instance, recount the history of Moses bringing the Jews out of Egypt. We do not know when these customs actually begun; but we also have Jews in the time of our Lord meeting at the synagogue and various people would recite passages of Scripture (and these passages were so well known that, when Jesus stops in the middle of a verse, everyone there knows it and looks at Him). It is possible that this sort of tradition of reading the existing Scriptures goes all the way back to Egypt (the book of the Law tells them to recount these events to their sons and to their sons' sons) and even before that. Surely, the people of God, with such an amazing history, would want to preserve it from generation to generation.

Before entering into the Land of Promise, Moses told the people: "You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth." (Deut. 11:18–21; NIV) It is reasonable to assume that many of the people of Israel did what Moses told them to do.

So, what I have suggested here, as a possible explanation of the authorship of this portion of the Word of God is not out of character with the Jewish people and their customs. This is also a very organic, natural record of the book of Genesis. There are portions of Exodus, for instance, which were clearly dictated; but the book of Genesis does not have that same feel. In fact, it is fairly easy to distinguish between the writing styles of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and Joseph.

Explaining the origins of Scripture in such a way that suggests that the writings arose naturally, organically, if you will, I think is the best way to explain them. There are many other explanations which are both complex and weird. One of the most famous of these is, two men, writing down this information long after the events occurred. One favors the name of Y^{e}howah and the other Elohim. Then someone comes along later and weaves these narratives together, along with the narrative of someone else. And then, even though all of this takes place long after the events take place, somehow this tapestry of two (possibly fake) histories being woven together by some third guy, who lived hundreds of years later. Then the finished product is then sold as the Word of God to some generation of Hebrews hundreds of years later. So, on one day, there is no Word of God among the Hebrew people; and the next day, there is the Word of God, and it is written in such a way to seem as though it has been with them all along. This is, more or less, an actual theory of the origin of the Pentateuch, which many seminaries (unfortunately) believe and teach.

My theory of the authorship of Genesis fits in well with the Jewish culture and would explain how each new generation would preserve these words and come to regard them as being from God.

Now let's return to the text of Gen. 47:

At this point, in Gen. 47, we have somewhat of a change of focus. In Gen. 47:1–12, the family of Joseph comes to Egypt and where they are to live is decided (this would have been better placed in Gen. 46). The first 12 verses would have occurred in the 2nd year of the famine. There are 5 more years of the famine which remain.

In vv. 13–25, we have an overview of these 5 years followed by some cultural changes in Egypt which took place as a result of this 7 year famine (vv. 26–27). After that, we will study the final years (or days) of Jacob (beginning in Gen. 47:28, but continuing into the

next 2 chapters). In fact, it would have made far more sense to have placed Gen. 47:28–31 with Genesis 48 (for reasons which we will discuss later).

It is certainly a reasonable question, *why do we hear more about the famine?* However, it is logical that this mega-event in Egyptian (and Canaan) history be taken out to its completion, which also reveals the character of Joseph and the gratitude of the Egyptian people. Their response to Joseph's actions is far different from the Egyptians who later enslaved the Jewish people—which enslavement took place many decades later.

Gen. 47:13–26 will show us how Joseph dealt with the people of Egypt over the next 5 years of famine.

Hajime Murai's Structure of Genesis 47:13-26

A	(47:13-14)			Silver was paid to the palace of Pharaoh
	B	(47:15)		Give us food or we shall perish under your eyes (47:15)
		C	(47:16)	Joseph commanded to change livestock to food
			D (47:17)	Joseph changed livestock to food
			E (47:18-19)	The Egyptians say, "We will become Pharaoh's slaves." (47:19)
			D' (47:20-22)	Joseph bought all farms
		C'	(47:23-24)	Joseph gave seeds and commanded to bring harvests
	B'	(47:25)		You have saved our lives! (47:25)
A'	(47:26)			Products were gathered to Pharaoh

A: Paying to Pharaoh. B: Death and salvation. C: Proposal of Joseph. D: Exchange. E: Pharaoh's slave.

From Hajime Murai's Literary Structures of Genesis; accessed January 24, 2017.

With v. 13, we resume with the famine, but it is unclear what year we are in. Logically, this is after the 2nd year, but it is not necessarily the 3rd or 4th year. We will simply study how Joseph dealt with this famine to its completion.

Genesis 47:13 And no bread was in all the land, for the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted because of the famine.

This appears to be a very general statement about the famine and where it was occurring. The famine was quite destructive to Canaan. Egypt and Canaan are treated somewhat differently here—when speaking of Canaan, the text reads, *all the land of Canaan*.

Again, we do not know which year this refers to, but I see it as more of a general statement, which takes in every year of the famine.

Genesis 47:14 And Joseph gathered up all the silver found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the grain which they bought. And Joseph brought the silver into Pharaoh's house.

At some point, all of the silver in the land had been pocketed by Joseph (actually, it became the property of Pharaoh). Joseph made the Pharaoh rich, a millionaire many times over. The Pharaoh became one of the richest men in human history as a result of what Joseph did.

Genesis 47:15 And when silver failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, Give us bread, for why should we die in your presence? For the silver has failed.

The silver *failing* simply means that, there came a time when the people no longer had silver enough to purchase grain. This would not have happened all at once; that is, one family may have run out of silver in year 4, another in year 5. This is why we are no longer speaking about which particular year is in view.

At this point, Canaan is no longer mentioned. Egypt was an empire; and Canaan was a geographical area inhabited by various tribes (their names are ticked off from time to time—as in Gen. 15:19–21 Ex. 3:8, 17). There does not appear to be an overall confederation among the indigenous peoples of Canaan, which suggests that they would not have been united and strong enough to invade Egypt, to simply take the grain.

Based upon the list of names in Gen. 15 and Ex. 3 (and elsewhere), the people of Canaan did survive the famine, but we may assume that it was still quite destructive, killing off many of them. Still, most of these original Canaanite tribes did survive, although there was a later incursion of the land by Philistines.

So, the Egyptians continued to come to Joseph to get grain; the Canaanites, at some point, stopped. They no longer had the wherewithal to purchase Egypt's grain (or Egypt stopped providing grain for those from Canaan).

Lesson 469: Genesis 47:16–26 — Joseph and the great famine

At this point in the study, we are looking at Joseph's interactions with the Egyptians throughout the rest of the 7 years of famine. Although the famine is never described precisely, it appears that there was a lack of rain which led to a lack of grain being grown. However, Pharaoh had a dream about this, warning him that there would be 7 years of prosperity followed by 7 years of famine; and Joseph interpreted the dream. Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of preparing Egypt for the great famine.

At some point, people ran out of silver—even in Egypt—and they had to work some kind of a deal with Joseph in order to continue to get grain for their family and their animals. As we have reasoned, this running out of silver would have happened at different times for

each family. For some, they had enough silver for a year or two; for others, perhaps for 3 or 4 years. However, there was a point where everyone ran out of silver with which to purchase the grain that Joseph stored; and the verbiage used here is, *silver has failed*.

Genesis 47:16 And Joseph said, Give [me] your cattle, and I will give you [grain] for your cattle, if silver has failed.

Joseph, who is in charge of dealing with the famine, has collected grain from the Egyptians during the years of prosperity and he placed it into silos throughout Egypt. Now he is dealing with the Egyptian people and the sale and distribution of this grain. Joseph does not consider welfare payments. He continues to require that some sort of payment be made for the grain that he originally collected from the people who actually produced the grain in the first place.

The mental attitude of the people was such that, they did not expect welfare payments. They did not see their government as an entity which should be handing out grain to everyone for free. We know this because there is no revolt against Joseph or against the current Egyptian government.

The people, I would assume, knew what was going on throughout those 7 preparatory years. When Joseph began to collect the grain, there must have been some explanation given for this. That is, I believe that the dreams of Pharaoh and the solution offered by Joseph became known throughout Egypt (although I do not have clear evidence of this). Otherwise, Joseph would have been introduced to the public as, "This is Joseph; you need to start bringing him your grain." It seems like an honest explanation would have been a part of his introduction to the Egyptian nation. If this is true, then no Egyptian would have been prevented from setting aside grain for himself. They all enjoyed record prosperity; so even after paying the tax that Joseph required, the people would have still had an abundance of grain during the 7 years of prosperity, which grain could have been stored. In such times of prosperity, it would have been easier to store grain than it would have been to sell it, as the prosperity was throughout Egypt and the land of Canaan.

That reasoning would be as follows: "Joseph predicted, by the dream of Pharaoh, 7 years of great prosperity followed by 7 years of devastating famine. Maybe I should take this to heart and set grain aside for myself." If this happened with some families, we are not aware of it. We have no Biblical record of that. Perhaps many of them had silver because they sold their excess grain for silver. In fact, it is possible that some had 2 or 3 years worth of silver, partially as a result of heeding the warning of the 7 years of famine to come. Bear in mind, I am speculating here, but with a degree of logic.

There were some Egyptians and others who will leave Egypt with the Jews during the exodus; and it is reasonable to suppose that a small number of them in individual families began to pay attention to what the God of the Jews said and what He did. Even though a pharaoh will arise who did not know Joseph, there were apparently some Egyptians who believed in and respected their God. As previously discussed, the midwives feared the God of the Hebrews more than they feared Pharaoh (and it does not sound, from the

passages in Exodus, that the midwives are Hebrew women—see Ex. 1:16–21). So, even though most of Egypt was clearly against the Hebrew people during the exodus, it appears that there was some positive volition among their numbers at that time.

During the time of Joseph, it is clear that the Egyptian people have a special fondness for Joseph and his family (this will come up in subsequent passages); which means, they would have believed in their God.

As a Christian without any Jewish blood (insofar as I know), I will always have a great and abiding respect for the Jewish people and nation Israel. I have a concern for their nation second only to my concern for my own nation. They remain God's people, even though they have temporarily been set aside. God has a future for the descendants of Abraham after the rapture. No believer with any knowledge of the Old Testament should have an ounce of antisemitism in his soul.

Genesis 47:17 And they brought their cattle to Joseph. And Joseph gave them food for the horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses. And he fed them with food for all their cattle for that year.

Once the people ran out of silver, Joseph sold the grain to them in exchange for their livestock. All of this accumulated to Pharaoh. Pharaoh first collected *all* of the silver of his people; and now he had all of their livestock. Joseph's brothers were in charge of Pharaoh's livestock; so these herds continued to grow larger as the people of Egypt had less and less to offer up for the grain.

There is the possibility that Pharaoh took possession of their livestock on paper, but allowed them to take care of their flocks and cattle. Since Joseph gives them food for all their cattle that year, that suggests that they kept physical possession of their livestock.

Genesis 47:18 When that year was ended, they came to him the second year and said, We will not hide it from my lord, that our silver has failed, also our herds of cattle, going to my lord. Nothing is left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies and our lands.

Here, we need to be careful about the translation. It sounds as if we are in year two. However, this may be understood to be the *following year*. The key word here is shênîy (יִנֵּשׁ) [pronounced *shay-NEE*], and it does mean *second,* but it also means *again (a second time); another, other (something as distinct from something else)*. The meanings are from BDB and confirmed by Strong. Strong's #8145 BDB #1041. This verse has also been translated:

And when that year was ended, they came to him the following year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent. The herds of livestock are my lord's. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our land. (ESV)

When that year had ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, We will not hide from my lord that our money is gone; my lord also has our cattle and livestock. Nothing remains before my lord but our bodies and our lands. (VW)

The following year, they came to him and reminded him, “We won’t hide from you, your Excellency, that we’ve spent all of our money, and that our livestock all belong to you. There’s nothing left to trade with you, your Excellency, except our bodies and our territories. (ISV)

These are all good, reputable translations. To be sure, most translators say that this is the *second year;* however, let me push back on that understanding: in the previous narrative, we have the sons of Jacob coming to Joseph in the 1st year of the famine and then they come to him in the 2nd year of the famine, having silver enough to purchase grain in both years. Although there is no absolute requirement that these events be listed chronologically, that appears to be the way that this narrative is set up. So, if the people of Egypt have traded their silver to Pharaoh and then their livestock, we have to be in at least the 3rd or 4th years of the famine, if not later.

Literally, this verse reads: And so is completed the year the that, and so they come unto him in the year the second [or, *the following, the next*]. The year that seems to completed is at least the 2nd year (or the 3rd or even 4th), as the year during which the sons of Jacob and their families came to Egypt is the 2nd (Gen. 47:1–12).

A reasonable question would be, *why don’t we have the simple words for third, fourth, if indeed, we are in these years?* If we are taking all of this in chronological order, there is a time period during which the Egyptians paid in silver (v. 14). There is nothing in the text which confines this to a single year (recall that the family of Jacob had enough silver to come back for 2 years at least). It is possible that the people of Egypt had enough money (silver) for 2, 3 or even 4 years. This is not laid out specifically. But, when the people began to run out of silver, then they brought their livestock. Let me suggest that this occurred in years 3, 4 and/or 5. There is no reason to assume that each and every Egyptian family had the exact same amount of silver; so their payments in silver would not have come to an end in the exact same year. Perhaps many of them ran out of silver around the same year; but once they ran out of silver, then they offered up their livestock to be exchanged for grain. Since no ranch would have the exact same amount of livestock as another ranch, some would have used their livestock to pay for one, two or even three years of grain; others would have used up their livestock in one year. In any case, once a family had used up their silver and then their livestock, *in the following year,* they only had themselves and their land with which to bargain.

That is all that is being said here, without specifying exactly which year is being spoken of (or years, as I think it is far more likely that Egyptian families ran out of money at different times). Similarly, they would have run out of livestock at different times as well. So, the people of Egypt first offered their silver for grain, for as many years as they could; and then they offered their livestock for grain, for as many years as they could. Finally, they will offer up themselves and their land.

Each year, the people of Egypt give up more and more of their possessions to Pharaoh in order to exchange for grain—the grain that they desperately needed for themselves, their families and their livestock. First they brought money; then livestock; and now they are bringing the deeds to their property.

Genesis 47:19 Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants for Pharaoh. And give us seed, that we may live and not die, that the land be not desolate.

The subsequent years are being discussed here; which years would have come at different times for different Egyptian families. Once they had spent their silver and had traded all of their livestock, then the Egyptians were left with nothing else other than themselves and their property.

Genesis 47:20 And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them and the land became Pharaoh's.

This entire series of events which have transpired is quite fascinating. Pharaoh has a dream; one of his aides suggests that he knew a man, Joseph, while in prison; and Joseph is sent for, while he is still in prison. Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams and says that Egypt will enjoy 7 years of prosperity followed by 7 years of great economic devastation. He suggests that Egypt organize granaries and tax the people grain during the years of prosperity, and then to sell the grain in subsequent years. All of this rings true to Pharaoh. He had already talked to a number of people within his realm about his dreams, and what they said did not ring true to him.

None of this precluded the Egyptian people from following suit and putting away grain themselves. However, most (or all?) of them did not; so when they ran out of grain during the famine, they had to really hustle in order to buy grain from Egypt. Eventually, it got to a point where all they had left to bargain with was the land upon which they lived—so their land was sold to the state in order to buy enough grain to survive on. Joseph has made Pharaoh one of the richest men in human history (wealth being a completely relative concept, as poor people in the United States today have many more conveniences and ease of life than this Pharaoh did).

Genesis 47:21 And as for the people, he caused them to go into the cities, from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end of it.

This is somewhat confusing, given that these people will remain on their properties. What I believe to be occurring here is, the people go into the cities in order to sign proper paperwork to transfer ownership of their land over to Pharaoh; but then they return to their land to work that land, as per v. 26, setting aside a portion of it for Pharaoh.

It is likely that offices were set up in cities—near the granaries; and paperwork was signed. The people would go to these cities, where they had gotten the grain, bringing with them

whatever legal paperwork that they have on their property, and they sign it on over to Pharaoh. This is not stated exactly, so I am speculating at this point (I have not studied other commentators, but I am sure they have their own speculations). However, at the end of this narrative, it is clear that Pharaoh has ownership over all of their land and cattle; but that the people are still working their own land.

Genesis 47:22 Only he [Joseph] did not buy the land of the priests, for the priests had a portion from Pharaoh, and ate their portion which Pharaoh gave them. Therefore they did not sell their land.

Interestingly enough, the priests of Egypt are not seen by Joseph as different from priests to the God that he worshiped. Apparently, Joseph had a huge impact over all Egypt. I believe that we may reasonably assume that there were a great many people in Egypt in this generation who believed in the Revealed God. The priests of Egypt very likely represented the people before the Revealed God. This would explain why God is protecting and preserving the Egyptians but not the Canaanites.

However, this good relationship between the Hebrews and the Egyptians would come to an end at some point. And as the Egyptian people turn against God, they will turn against the people of God. That seems to be the general direction of the Egyptians over a few hundred years period of time; and their negative volition is why they were under such great judgment at the time of the exodus.

Genesis 47:23 And Joseph said to the people [of Egypt], "Behold, I have bought you this day, and your land, for Pharaoh. Lo, here is seed for you, and you will sow the land.

The seed here suggests to us that we are at the end of the 7 year famine, and that the seed which Joseph sold them would be good in the upcoming years. Seed would not be of much help during the famine itself.

Genesis 47:24 And it will be, as you gather you will give the fifth part to Pharaoh, and four parts will be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for those of your household, and for food for your little ones."

Joseph institutes a forever 20% tax upon all the people, based upon their indebtedness to Pharaoh for grain and seed (the grain got them through their final year and the seed was to be used for the upcoming year).

We do not know the first nation with an income tax, but Joseph's actions here make Egypt easily one of the first nations with an income tax of sorts. Here, the Bible equates taxation with some kind of slavery to the state, insofar as, in this case, the state did own their land now. These people essentially were now leasing their land from the government of Egypt.

It is interesting that, in Egypt, there is a 20% tax and in future Israel, there will be a 20% tax (the people of Israel paid *two* tithes to their government—one for the government and the other to support the priests and their Tabernacle). In Egypt, this appears to be the

same thing. Even though 20% would from thereon be paid to the Egyptian government, the Egyptian government also maintained their priesthood, never charging them for the grain to keep them and their animals alive.

If we were to apply that to modern-day America, this would suggest that 10% would be an ideal tax and that all Christian churches (and even Jewish synagogues) should be allowed to live a tax-free life. About the only thing that the government does which is in line with the Bible and our Constitution is maintain a military.

Genesis 47:25 And they said, "You have saved our lives. Let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants."

Unlike people today, where they seem to believe that they are entitled to be fed, housed and clothed at public expense, simply because they are alive and breathe in air; the people of Egypt were far more humble, and they recognized that Joseph went out of his way in order to make certain that they all survived. He planned for the famine for the entire country. They understood that they had no legal claim upon the grain that Joseph had accumulated; and they understood that this was graciousness for them to live and for their families to live. We could learn a lot from this society.

Also bear in mind that this is a society which welcomed the Hebrew people into their midst and there will be a number of incidents that we will study to indicate a close relationship between the people of Jacob and the people of Egypt (in *this* generation).

Genesis 47:26 And Joseph made it a law of the land of Egypt to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part, excepting only the land of the priests, which did not become Pharaoh's.

This verse tells us that, the income tax collected by Pharaoh was a very popular policy with the people in charge, and they were not willing to let go of it.

Lesson 470: Genesis 47:26–31 Removing Joseph from Egyptian History

The end of this chapter looks at the final years of the famine and how Joseph wheeled and dealed with the people in order to come to a final solution. We have already discussed what Jacob did with most of the Egyptians in the previous few verses. They traded their silver, their livestock, their land and eventually themselves in order to be fed. However, there was an exception to this.

Genesis 47:26 And Joseph made it a law of the land of Egypt to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part, excepting only the land of the priests, which did not become Pharaoh's.

The priests of the land were exempt from the taxation of Pharaoh, and they apparently received some sort of support from the Egyptian government. Obviously they had to have

grain to survive on; and Pharaoh—possibly at the urging of Joseph—did not enslave the priests of his land. Insofar as we know, Egypt may be the first country to institute an income tax but to not tax the *churches*. They gave their priests a tax-free life. At this time, the priests appear to be state supported; and the Levites also received state support in nation Israel (the priests came from the tribe of Levi).

This suggests to me that the priests in Egypt were priests of the True God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Simply because God chose a peculiar people and was with them for many centuries, this does not mean that God was unknown in the world. With Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God is playing the long game. From them would come the Person of Jesus Christ, God's Son.

As an aside, one might think that, given all that Joseph did and his loyalty to Pharaoh—why don't we have an Egyptian record of this? Why isn't there come a time when Joseph is set aside as a national hero? Where are the Egyptian statues of Joseph?

We only need view our current view of history in the United States (I write this in 2017). 20 years ago and earlier, Christopher Columbus, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson were seen as great American heroes (Columbus is obviously *not* an *American* hero, but a revered man). We set aside a day called Columbus Day which many have celebrated throughout our history. However, during this past year (and earlier), not only are radicals attacking and tearing down the statues of Confederate soldiers and generals; they are beginning to deface the statues of Columbus and those of our founding fathers. Even though the majority of people think that this is wrong, if not bizarre; it is still happening. Even city councils are taking part is this removal of our history; and the radicals keep expanding their anger towards statues unrelated to the Civil War (they will literally pull down statues and then try to *stomp* them). Our media plays a part in all of this, and, for a time, pretends that this is the most important national issue before us.

What these radicals are doing is, they choose a particular person in our history, and then they isolate him from everything except for one aspect of his life (perhaps he owned slaves). Then his entire life is defined by one thing and one thing only—owning slaves, and therefore he is considered to be in favor of slavery (whether this person was or not). The conclusion is, anyone who does not repudiate this person is a supporter of slavery (too bad the Democrat party did not have these same feelings 150 years ago when it actually counted). This is a method made popular by Saul Alinski, who wrote *Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, and polarize it*.[83] His 13 rules for radicals may be found in Wikipedia and his evil, radical tactics ought to sound very familiar, for those who follow the news.

In any case, not only are Confederate soldier statues being attacked; but so are the statues and plaque related to Christopher Columbus, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. My point is, all it takes is a single generation to go from respecting and revering a hero or a founder, to hating and disrespecting that same hero or founder. Why would subsequent generations hate Joseph and the current Pharaoh? Well, they took away all

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[83] From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rules_for_Radicals accessed October 10, 2017.

of their land and livestock and instituted a 20% tax forever more on the people (in paying this tax, they got to keep their livestock and work the land which used to belong to them). The people of another generation could view Joseph and this Pharaoh with hatred because of their current situation. If statues had been erected, they may have removed them. If plaques had been made, another generation may have destroyed them. Just as Satan inspires the revolutionaries in the United States today, he would have inspired subsequent generations of Egyptians to reject heroes from their own history and then to enslave God's people. When we view various cultural shifts, it is important to remember that, underneath them is always a spiritual war.

My point in this tangent is, it is very likely that Joseph was either villainized by later generations and then removed from their *history books* altogether. Satan does not want anything which is related to God remembered, and he seeks to destroy that history. Americans in 2017 have seen this same sort of thing occur with their very own eyes in a nation known for its freedoms.

Back to our narrative:

Genesis 47:27 And Israel lived in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen. And they had possession in it, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly.

The children of Jacob also prospered in Egypt. God continues to bless His people; and part of that blessing was a population explosion.

The final verses of Gen. 47 should have been placed with Gen. 48. However, vv. 28–31 do stand on their own, somewhat separately from what comes before and after.

William Ramey's Chiasmos of Genesis 47:28–48:22

Reference: Genesis 47:28--48:22

A Joseph promises to carry Israel back to Canaan (47:28-31)
B Joseph brings Manasseh and Ephraim for Israel's blessing (48:1-12)
C Israel crosses his hands to bless the children (48:13-14)
X Israel blesses Joseph (48:15-16)
C' Joseph protests Israel's crossing of his hands (48:17-18)
B' Israel blesses Ephraim and Manasseh (48:19-20)
A' Israel's promise that God will bring the people back to Canaan (48:21-22)

From https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html accessed September 19, 2015.

Genesis 47:28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. And the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were a hundred forty-seven years.

Given that Jacob moved to Egypt and lived there for 17 years; he lived to age 147. This means that Jacob moved to Egypt at age 130. Joseph would have been approximately 39 years old when Jacob moved to Egypt (30 years old when he stood before Pharaoh + 7

years of prosperity + 2 years of famine). Then Joseph would be age 56 when his father passes. He will live another 54 years after that (Gen. 50:26). However, we have no idea how old his brothers got to be. Abraham lived to the age of 175, Isaac was 180, Jacob was 147 and Joseph will die at age 110. This represents a clear reduction in the ages of the patriarchs.

Genesis 47:29 And the days of Israel to die drew near. And he called his son Joseph, and said to him, "If now I have found grace in your sight, please put your hand under my thigh and deal kindly and truly with me. Please do not bury me in Egypt.

As we have studied, Jacob was not always the greatest spiritual leader. However, at this time in his life, he clearly understands that God has a future for his family in the land of Canaan. The words which Jacob speaks here clearly reveal a faith in God and in His promises. Otherwise, where he is buried would make no difference.

I believe in Jacob's final years, there was significant spiritual growth. In Egypt, he was no longer striving to get over on anyone else; he did not find himself in circumstances where he felt a need to be competitive. I think at some point, Jacob recognized just how much God had done for him in his life; and therefore, he took all of God's promises seriously. Now Jacob extracted a promise from his son Joseph that he would be buried in Canaan rather than in Egypt.

Back when Jacob was living in Haran and under the authority of Laban, he spoke about returning to Canaan, but that was just a bargaining chip used in order to get a higher salary (in my opinion). When Laban said, "Okay, name your salary," Jacob stopped talking about Canaan and named his salary (which seems to have been fairly well thought out). My point being, do you see just how different Jacob is at this time compared to his time in Paddan-aram?

The hand underneath the thigh is apparently part of an oath, an ancient tradition. I have heard a number of very weird interpretations for this—and perhaps they are true—but it is simply a tradition of that era and not something which we are required to imitate. The Bible is very careful to list commandments and to keep them separate from various traditions which come and go as cultures evolve and change.

Genesis 47:30 But I will lie with my fathers. You will carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying-place." And he [Joseph] said, "I will do according to your words."

Jacob has a great deal on his plate at this time, even though this is the end of his life. He plans out his own burial in the land of Canaan (v. 30); he gives blessing to Joseph's two sons (Gen. 48); and he gives blessing to all of his sons (Gen. 49). Therefore, he needed to gather up all of his strength and all of his wisdom, so that he could perform these very important final tasks at the end of his life. What Jacob does at the end of his life is quite remarkable, and stands in stark contrast to many of his self-serving actions when younger. We often viewed things that younger Jacob did and said with skepticism and criticism.

However, what he says and does in the remainder of Genesis will be quite remarkable; and his words will clearly be inspired. He is a man who has enjoyed no little spiritual growth.

It is my opinion that Jacob finally took stock of his life while in Egypt and that he thought about how God was involved in his life—as he now had a life of perspective. Jacob no doubt recognized that God had been protecting him, his family; and fulfilling all of His promises. In other words, Jacob began to really hear and understand the Word of God and apply it to his life (the Word of God for Jacob would have been Gen. 1–40 or so).

There will also be great respect afforded him from the Egyptian people and that leads me to believe that Jacob was engaged in some interactions with the Egyptian people which they appreciated. He may have done nothing more than, when offering up an animal sacrifice, tell what God had done in his life (essentially, he would be reciting words from the book of Genesis, words which he himself *wrote*).

The positive relationship between the people of Egypt at this time and Joseph would be indicative of their relationship with the True God. The accumulated wisdom which Jacob had—which was the book of Genesis—would have been of great interest to Egyptians who loved and respected Y^{e}howah God.

Here, Jacob asks to be buried back in Canaan. This suggests (1) Jacob believes that God will raise him up from the dead and (2) he knows that God will give him and his descendants the land of Canaan, just as has been promised. We know that Jacob believed these things; otherwise, where he is buried would make no difference.

Furthermore, when his burial takes place, many Egyptians will take part in this burial, which would have been an action unprecedented in Egyptian history (they will travel to the land of Canaan with Joseph and his brothers to bury Jacob).

Genesis 47:31 And he [Jacob] said [to Joseph], “Swear to me.” And he [Joseph] swore to him. And Israel bowed on the head of the bed.

At least 4 times, Israel’s (Jacob’s) physical position (as related to his bed) is noted. When he realized that he was dying and he called for Joseph, Joseph arrives, and Jacob assumes whatever position is proper for Joseph to take an oath (v. 29). Here, he bows his head, suggesting that he is submissive to God and God’s will (v. 31). Later, Jacob will sit up in the bed when Joseph comes back into his room with his two sons (Gen. 48:2). All of this requires great strength on Jacob’s part, but he is the patriarch, and he must play that part. However, at the very end, Jacob will draw his feet up into the bed and die (Gen. 49:33). Jacob must perform these duties at the end of his life, and he must show strength and confidence. Remember, the old Jacob that we remember from past chapters would have cried out, “Oh, woe is me! I am going to die!” Throughout his life, Jacob made everything about himself. This new Jacob, this man with some spiritual growth, is not thinking about himself, but he is thinking about the next generation (those who are with him), and also, he is thinking about the resurrection in the far future.

I don't know if there is any significance to this, but this chart by Wenstrom is interesting.

The Many Pairings of the Patriarchal Age (by Wenstrom)

1) Two lines: Abraham and Lot.
2) Two lines: Isaac and Ishmael.
3) Two lines: Esau and Jacob.
4) Joseph has two dreams (Gen. 37:5-10).
5) Joseph has two problems with his brothers (Gen. 37:2-11; 12-36)
6) Tamar marries two sons of Judah.
7) Tamar's successful seduction of Judah is followed by Potiphar's wife's unsuccessful seduction of Joseph (Gen. 38:1-30; 39:1-23).
8) Joseph interprets two dreams of his prison mates (Gen. 40:1-23).
9) Joseph interprets two dreams of Pharaoh (Gen. 41:1-40).
10) Joseph's brothers devise two plans to deal with him (Gen. 37:21-27) and he devises two plans to deal with them (Gen. 42:14-20).
11) Joseph's brothers make two trips to Egypt (Gen. 42:1-38; 43:1-34).
12) Joseph's steward tests Joseph's brothers and then Joseph himself tests Judah (Gen. 44:1-13, 14-34).
13) Narrator twice records Jacob's family's migration to Egypt (Gen. 46:1-27; 46:28–47:12).
14) Jacob blesses Joseph and sons (Gen. 48:1-22) and then all his own sons (Gen. 49:1–28). Jacob will *adopt* Joseph's sons as his own (so Jacob is giving his blessing to two sets of sons).
15) Jacob dies (Gen. 49:33-50:13) and Joseph dies (Gen. 50:22-26).

This is probably more a chart of interest, as many of those things named above are expressed in a duality for a specific reason. For instance, there is the line of promise and the line which does not lead to the Messiah, which covers points 1–3. Two dreams of Pharaoh suggest the these dreams are from God and they are a twofold witness as having come from God.

Nevertheless, there is much in life which can be expressed as a duality: life and death; saved and lost; elect and fallen; etc.

When it comes to the two dreams of Joseph or the two dreams of Pharaoh, these dreams act as dual witnesses, indicating that their content is accurate.

From Wenstrom.org; accessed April 12, 2016 (appended).

What is coming up is, Jacob will bless Joseph's two sons and adopt them as his own; and Jacob will then Jacob will bless his 12 sons.

Lesson 471: Genesis 48:1–10 Joseph brings his sons in to be blessed by Jacob

In Gen. 48, Joseph brings in his two sons to be blessed by his father Jacob. Jacob will adopt those sons (not as we think of as *adoption*), and therefore, it will be as if these sons

came from Jacob. Therefore, there will be two tribes Israel which will come from Joseph: Ephraim and Manasseh (we never almost hear about the *tribe of Joseph,* except, interestingly enough, in Rev. 7:8). Joseph's reward for his great faithfulness is, he will have the double portion. The blessing of the double portion—usually a blessing reserved for the firstborn—falls upon Joseph.

All that we have studied about Reuben, Joseph and Judah now comes into play. Reuben, as the firstborn, should have been the ruling tribe and the double-portion. However, Judah will become the ruling tribe and Joseph will receive the double-portion.

Murai divides up the 48th chapter into a chiasmos.

Hajime Murai's Structure of Genesis 48:1-22

A	(48:1-7)		Manasseh and Ephraim become Jacob's sons
	B	(48:8-12)	Jacob wants to bless Manasseh and Ephraim
		C (48:13-14)	Israel put right hand on Ephraim (ונימיב)
		D (48:15-16)	Blessing for Joseph
		C' (48:17-19)	Joseph protested that Israel put right hand on Ephraim (ונימי)
	B'	(48:20)	The blessing of Manasseh and Ephraim
A'	(48:21-22)		Joseph is given a blessing above his brothers (48:22)

From Hajime Murai's Literary Structures of Genesis; accessed January 24, 2017 (slightly edited).

Genesis 48:1 And it happened after these things, that one told Joseph, "Behold, your father is sick." And he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

The language used here suggests a succession of events. What occurred in Gen. 47 happened previous to this passage (there are no chapter divisions in the original text).

Joseph goes to Jacob with his two sons. Jacob is going to bless these two sons as if they were his own. In this, Joseph receives the double-portion which is usually reserved for the firstborn son.

Near the end of the life of a patriarch, he would gather his sons and bless them (or *son;* Abraham blessed Isaac and then Isaac blessed who he *thought* was Esau). Jacob would bless his 12 sons; but first, he would adopt and then bless Joseph's two sons.

Genesis 48:2 And one spoke to Jacob, and said, "Behold, your son Joseph comes to you." And Israel strengthened himself, and sat on the bed.

The man meeting Joseph at the door and speaking to would have been one of Jacob's servants; and the one speaking to Jacob would have been one of his servants (probably the same man).

The word for *strengthen* here is the Hithpael imperfect of the verb châzaq (חָזַק) [pronounced *khaw-ZAHK*] which means, *to strengthen oneself* (among other things). Strong's #2388 BDB #304. The Hithpael is the reflexive, intensive stem—so this Jacob does to himself and the intensive stem suggests that it requires great effort on his part.

The reason that I mention this verb here is, we will encounter this same verb many times in the chapters 7–14 of Exodus (9 times, actually), where it is translated *to harden* (in the KJV). Whereas, this is not a bad translation, as it applies to the thinking and the volition of the Pharaoh of the exodus (the subject or the object of the verb is always *heart*); just as Jacob *strengthens* his body in order to sit up and receive guests; so Pharaoh will *strengthen* his own *resolve* in opposing God (similarly, when Pharaoh has little strength left, God gives him strength—Ex. 9:12 10:20, 27 11:10 14:8—so God is not changing Pharaoh's free will; but giving him the strength or ability to exercise his negative volition towards God). This may help to show just how important the original languages are to understanding Scripture.

Genesis 48:3 And Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me.

Jacob recalls being blessed by God at Luz (Bethel)—this is the first time that God spoke to Jacob. That Jacob says this suggests that *Luz,* which he renamed *Bethel,* was still *Luz* in Jacob's mind. The actual changing of that name in the popular culture apparently took a significant amount of time.

It is my theory that, originally, the book of Genesis was all transmitted orally. Although there was a great respect for the text (I believe that it was memorized from generation to generation), it was quite easy to change the name of a location to help the understanding of the audience (who would have been the sons of those speaking[84]). These words may have been spoken when sacrifices were offered.[85]

There is a great Jewish tradition which reaches back thousands of years, where the words of God are spoken in a group setting (as was done in the synagogues), or paraphrased (as they are when Jews celebrate the Passover[86]). Let me suggest to you that this tradition of speaking the Word of God goes back prior to the synagogues or the Seder. Let me further suggest to you that synagogues were built for the expressed purpose of reading the Word of God publically, something which was already taking place.

> The Jewish Encyclopedia tells us: *The origin of the synagogue, in which the congregation gathered to worship and to receive the religious instruction connected therewith, is wrapped in obscurity. By the time it had become the central institution of Judaism (no period of the history of Israel is conceivable*

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[84] Children would not have been the only people there.

[85] So far, this is conjecture on my part; I have not found direct evidence of this.

[86] This very organized time of worship is called the *Seder,* during which an explanation and a history are given for the Jews walking out of Egypt. This tradition, still observed today, is thousands of years old.

without it), it was already regarded as of ancient origin, dating back to the time of Moses.

Yet, in the same paragraph, they write: *The synagogue as a permanent institution originated probably in the period of the Babylonian captivity, when a place for common worship and instruction had become necessary*.[87] There may not be a contradiction here; something like synagogues goes back to the time of Moses (the Tabernacle); and the synagogue as a well-defined institution probably goes back to the Babylonia captivity.

Genesis 48:4 And He said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you. And I will make of you a multitude of people, and will give this land to your seed after you for an everlasting possession.'

Jacob is speaking to Joseph. Joseph's sons are there, but sitting behind and on both sides of Joseph. Jacob recounts what God said to him; as these promises continue to the many generations of Jacob that will follow. These promises of God were first made to Abraham (Gen. 13:16 22:17), then to Isaac (Gen. 26:4) and finally to Jacob (Gen. 28:3, 14 32:12 35:11). Apparently, Jacob, of the patriarchs, needed the most reassurance and guidance.

In Egypt, at this time, there were probably 80–150 descendants from Jacob (remember, they began with 70 + their wives). So, there was not a multitude of people when Jacob said these things to Joseph. I have suggested early on that the sons of Jacob gathered and heard the book of Genesis spoken orally by Jacob, Joseph, Judah and possibly even Leah. They were replaced by sons and grandsons as time progressed.

Let me further suggest that, Jacob when he spoke most of the book of Genesis, that Egyptians also came to here him speak, and were moved and affected by these words of God. This would explain the great respect that Jacob received in Egypt (which we have not studied yet, but which will be quite remarkable).

There will be early indications of God's promises beginning to be fulfilled in Ex. 1:7 (And the children of Israel increased and multiplied, and became numerous and grew exceedingly strong, and the land multiplied them.—ESV).

Genesis 48:4 And He [God] said to me [Jacob], 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you. And I will make of you a multitude of people, and will give this land to your seed after you for an everlasting possession.'

What we have here is not a direct quote from a previous passage of Genesis, but a summation of the many times God gave Jacob this promise.

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[87] From http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14160-synagogue accessed November 8, 2017.

Genesis 48:5 And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who are born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you into Egypt, are mine; like Reuben and Simeon, they will be mine.

Now Jacob is speaking very directly to Joseph, telling him that his two sons now belong to Jacob, just as Reuben and Simeon are his sons. Even though Ephraim and Manasseh were born to Joseph in the land of Egypt, they will belong to Jacob, just as Reuben and Simeon, his first children born, belong to him. Jacob is *adopting* them (as per the ancient-world understanding of *adoption*). They are of the same flesh; they are of the same line. These promises of God will extend to Ephraim and Manasseh.

As Joseph's double portion, Ephraim and Manasseh will become primary tribes or clans. Ephraim and Manasseh will be considered among the patriarchs. They will be treated as if they were direct sons of Jacob, placed on an equal footing with Reuben and Simeon. This does not mean that Jacob is going to take them into his house or anything like that. This does not mean that Jacob is their father now and Joseph is not. Remember, Jacob is about to die, so he is not taking on some new responsibility with these young men. Adoption means that Ephraim and Manasseh would become tribes side-by-side the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, Levi, etc.

In the ancient world, sometimes a king would get getting old, and he looks at his sons and thinks to himself, "How did these idiots proceed from my loins? Making any one of them king would be a great mistake and my name will ever be associated with that mistake." That same king might have a faithful servant, one who has served him from his youth. This servant is young, strong, intelligent; and would make a perfect future king. So the king adopts him. The servant might by 40 years old; but this adoption would be the first step in making the servant king, after the passing away of the present king.

Genesis 48:6 And your issue [lit., *children, offspring, lineage*], which you father after them, will be yours, and will be called after the name of their brothers in their inheritance.

Many, many years ago, when I began to do these lessons in Genesis, I chose the Modern King James Version; and that is the version which I have used throughout these 500+ lessons (with some modifications; I have added in quotation marks and names in brackets when the identification of a speaker is not given). Most of the time, the MKJV is a good translation; however, I personally find the ESV or the NKJV to be better translations, overall. Therefore, there are many times when I need to further explain the translation.

This verse is a tad bit confusing, so let me explain. *If* Joseph had additional children, they would be his, but their inheritance would be as a part of Ephraim's and Manasseh's inheritance. Let's say that Joseph had the son *Joey*.[88] Joey would not be a new tribe, like Ephraim and Manasseh; he would not head a primary tribe, like Ephraim or Manasseh. And, in the future, when the land of promise is divided up, and Ephraim is given some of

[88] I do not recall Joseph having any more children, but there is a tradition of him having 5 more sons (this is found in the LXX but not in the MT, if memory serves).

the land and Manasseh is given some of the land, those people descended from Joey will live either with the people of Ephraim or Manasseh.

Genesis 48:7 And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan in the way, when there was still but a little way to come to Ephrath. And I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; it is Bethlehem."

Jacob speaks of his wife, Rachel; who was Joseph's mother. Joseph would have been quite young, at this point. Rachel gave birth to Benjamin, Joseph's younger brother, and she died while giving birth. Rachel only had 2 sons.

Joseph, as we have studied, has stood head and shoulders above his other brothers in terms of his personal integrity. The primary difference in his upbringing is, Rachel would have been much more directly involved Joseph's upbringing. Leah had 6 sons and a daughter; the personal servants had 2 sons each; and Rachel had only one son that she raised. Jacob would have also been more involved in raising this son, as this is the woman he most loved. Apparently, Joseph was greatly benefitted by this unique upbringing among his brothers. In addition, we must take into account Joseph's obvious positive volition toward the truth. Positive volition towards the truth goes hand-in-hand with exposure to the truth of God. In other words, if you will respond positively to divine truth, then God will provide it to you; if you have no real interest in the truth, then an omniscient God is not impelled by His Own perfect character to provide truth to you.

Genesis 48:8 And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, "Who are these?"

Jacob is not confused at this moment, looking at these two sons, and saying, "Who are these kids?" He is not suffering from a *senior moment*. He just named them previously in v. 5. Therefore, we would understand this to be a part of the ritual of the end-of-life blessing. Joseph will formally give the names of his sons.

Genesis 48:9 And Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me in this place." And he [Jacob] said, "Please bring them to me, and I will bless them."

Jacob asks for Joseph's two sons to be brought closer to him in order for them to receive his blessing. Now, most of the time, Jacob would have blessed Joseph; or Joseph and Benjamin. However, because the double-portion blessing is will go to Joseph, this blessing will be placed upon his two sons instead (the sons of Jacob will receive their blessings in the next chapter; and Joseph will be included among them).

Many artistic renderings show Joseph and two very young sons before Jacob on a bed. Actually, the sons of Joseph would have been in their early 20's at this time. Recall that, when Jacob had moved to Egypt, Joseph's sons would have been less than 8 years old (they were born to Joseph during the 7 years of prosperity; and Jacob moved to Egypt in the 2nd year of famine, 8 or 9 years after Joseph became prime minister). So, if Joseph immediately married and immediately impregnated his wife, the first child would be 8 at Jacob's arrival in Egypt. However, time has passed since then, and Joseph's children have

grown (as children are wont to do). Jacob will live for 17 years in Egypt before he dies. This means that Joseph's eldest child could be as old as 25. The youngest he could be is 21 or 22.

Genesis 48:10 And the eyes of Israel were dim for age; he could not see. And he brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them.

Near the end of his life, Jacob suffered from eye problems—probably cataracts—as did his father, Isaac. Joseph, no doubt, was aware of this, and he will take his father's poor vision into account when his sons are blessed.

Lesson 472 Genesis 48:11–16a Jacob gives the greater blessing to the younger

Jacob has called in his son Joseph; and he also asked for his two sons to come in with him.

Genesis 48:11 And Israel said to Joseph, "I had not thought I would see your face, and, lo, God has showed me also your seed."

Jacob (Israel) is remarking that, he never expected to see Joseph again; but how he has the great blessing of seeing not just Joseph, but Joseph's children. Jacob would spend about 17 years of his life in Egypt, and would become a very well-respected elder in that era.

Children and grandchildren are a great blessing. My mother has 4 sons and 8 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren (if I have added them up correctly), and all of her descendants are good, hard-working, successful people. Alcohol and drugs have not destroyed our family, as they have so many families. No one of her descendants is on welfare. This is a great blessing to her; and a great blessing to me to be a part of such a wonderful family. For those who enjoy being a part of an extended family, they know what a blessing it is. I am able to go to any family gathering and always enjoy myself there.

Similarly, Jacob is greatly blessed by seeing his favorite son again—the son he believed to be dead—and he has been blessed in knowing his two grandsons by Joseph.

Genesis 48:12 And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed his face to the earth.

What appears to be the case is, Joseph's sons were still both young men. When he became prime minister, this was at the beginning of the 7 years of prosperity. During those prosperous years, Joseph married and had two sons. At the end of those prosperous years, the children might have been 3 and 4 years old. However, this takes place near the end of Jacob's life; and Jacob would have spent 17 years in Egypt. Adjusting for the first two years of famine, that places the sons of Joseph in their early or mid 20's.

It sounds like, in the MKJV, that Joseph has two very young, small children sort of tucked between his knees. Based upon the MKJV text, Joseph's two children were between his knees, probably bowed down, listening to what was going on. One would assume, not having done the math, that these are still very small boys—maybe 7 and 8—to fit in such a confined space. However, this does not square with the Hebrew text elsewhere, where ages of Joseph and Jacob are given, and integrated with specific events.

What solves this problem is, the Hebrew text does not mean *from between his knees*. Literally, this reads *Joseph brought them out from with his knees*. The words *from with* (two very common particles) can actually have the meanings *from with, beside, from being with, away from, far from, from among, from the possession of, from the custody of, from the house of, from the vicinity of, out of the power of, from the mind of* (many particles when combined in the Hebrew have their own special set of meanings). Therefore, there is no reason to assume that these boys are so young as to fit between Joseph's knees (as they are portrayed by some paintings); they are in their 20's. They appear to simply be on both sides of Joseph, and kneeling back a ways. Since the text speaks of them being near his knees, this simply suggests that all 3 of them were prostrated before Jacob, the grand patriarch, who was in bed.

"Jacob Blessing Ephraim and Manasseh" painted by Benjamin West (1766–1768); information from Wikimedia; graphic from Bible image; accessed November 1, 2017. This is one of the many pictorial representations of this time where the sons are presented as being too young.

This is a very solemn occasion. Joseph is bowing before his father out of respect; he is not worshiping him.

Genesis 48:13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left, and Manasseh in his left toward Israel's right hand. And he brought them near to him.

Joseph brings the two sons forward so that his oldest son would be under Jacob's right hand. The oldest would often receive the greater blessing, symbolized by the right hand. This was simply standard procedure that Joseph was following. He was aware of his father's vision problems, so he was lining up his sons to be blessed by the order of their births.

Genesis 48:14 And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left on Manasseh's head, crossing his hands. For Manasseh was the first-born.

Most of the time that we find the name *Israel* rather than *Jacob,* it is because Jacob is doing something right (God gave Jacob the name *Israel;* and his people, the Israelites, bear this name). Contemporary nation *Israel* also bears his name.

Jacob, instead of following Joseph's lead, crosses his hands, so that his right hand would be upon Ephraim's head; and, in effect, give him the blessing of the firstborn (Ephraim was the second son born). As a result, Jacob was giving the youngest son, Ephraim, the greater blessing of the two sons.

There are many actions which believers take in Scripture for which we never have a reason given. Was Jacob always planning to place Ephraim above Manasseh? Did this just suddenly happen? We have no idea.

Apart from this being a deliberate action on Jacob's part, we have no idea as to how he came to make this choice. All we could speculate is, Jacob came to this conclusion by either observing his grandchildren or through hearing about them from Joseph. Perhaps he saw their births as similar to his and Esau's. Esau was the older brother, yet Isaac gave Jacob the greater blessing (the first time, Isaac was deceived; the second blessing, given perhaps a day later, was from Isaac's full cognizance).

In any case, this carries the tradition which seems to have been established in the early Jewish family, that it is not always the oldest son who is blessed. Isaac was blessed over Ishmael; Jacob was blessed over Esau; Joseph was blessed over Reuben (but it will turn out the Judah is blessed over both of them); and here, Ephraim is blessed over Manasseh. No matter what your heritage or birth order is, *every tub must stand on its own bottom*.[89]

Jacob Is Blessing Joseph and His Sons from Illustrators of the 1897 Bible Pictures and What They Teach Us by Charles Foster; graphic from Wikimedia;

[89] I believe that this is a quotation from R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s grandmother; obviously a saying or proverb not original with her; but reflective of her generation's thinking.

accessed November 1, 2017. We notice here that the artist (unknown, unless C. Foster did this) got the ages of Joseph's sons right; but Jacob is not crossing his hands to bless them.

Genesis 48:15 And he [Jacob] blessed Joseph and said, "May God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who fed me all my life to this day,...

Jacob, whose life has been anything but exemplary, is showing great wisdom here; recognizing that it is God who has sustained him all of his life. There are quite a number of clues in these few chapters to suggest that Jacob—better late than never—has matured as a believer and is making wise decisions during the time that he was in Egypt.

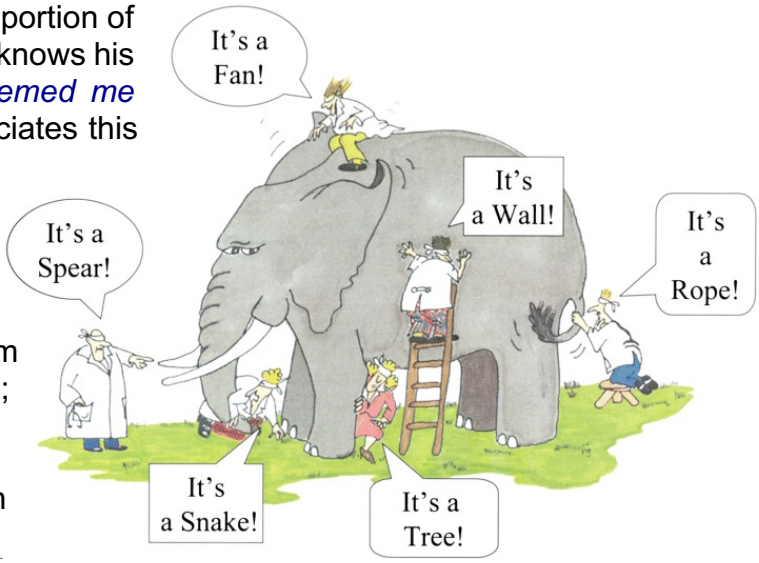
It is my estimation that, when Jacob was reunited with Joseph, and when, during the midst of a famine, God had seen to the needs of his entire family, and God had blessed and prospered them—when all this occurs, Jacob suddenly recognizes just how much God's hand has been in his life. In fact, Jacob was beginning to see God bless him and his sons and his grandsons in a great way. I think that, Jacob took this experience and could see how God had been with him all of these years; and he is able to lay this side-by-side with the promises that God made to him, to his father and to his grandfather. In other words, I believe that late in life, Jacob began to genuinely appreciate his physical and spiritual blessings. He began to better recognize how God had been faithful to him throughout his life. He was beginning to mix doctrine with experience, and see how everything was playing out, just as God had promised (recall that Jacob twice left the land, and God came to him and told him that it was okay to do that).

Even though Jacob says that God fed him for all of his life, this does not mean that God showed up in some form or another, 2 or 3 times a day, to deliver Jacob a sack of food from the local McDonald's. Although God did appear to Jacob, it was only a handful of times—at very critical times. God mostly allowed Jacob to live out his life—despite the fact that he made some terrible choices along the way. In fact, many of Jacob's choices were so bad, it was as if he was wrestling against the Lord.

Genesis 48:16a ...the Angel Who redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.

The *Angel* refers to Jesus Christ, Who has been with Jacob all this time and who has redeemed him from all evil. We studied the Angel of Jehovah back in lesson #157, so I will not repeat that doctrine here. However, by the time that we complete the book of Genesis, we will have covered nearly all of the major doctrines of Scripture.

Personally, I do not believe that Old Testament saints had a full understanding of the Messiah to come (Psalm 2:2 John 1:41), the Prophet Who would be greater than Moses (Deut. 18:15); David's Greater Son (Psalm 110 with Matt. 22:41–46); the Suffering Servant (Isa. 53). If you have heard of the parable of the six blind men and the elephant, I believe that describes the understanding of the Messiah by various ancient prophets of the Old Testament. At different times, different prophets could see this or that aspect of the Messiah to come, but without having a complete understanding of Jesus. We are able to see the many facets of our Lord in retrospect through the gospels and the rest of the New Testament, but believers of the Old Testament were only able to see a portion of what we know today. Here, Jacob knows his Messiah as *the Angel Who redeemed me from all evil*. Perhaps Jacob associates this Angel with one of the Angels who visited Abraham before Isaac was born.



The Six Blind Men and the Elephant (graphic); from balajiviswanathan.quora.com; accessed October 11, 2017.

In fact, even the gospels each present a specific take on the Lord Jesus Christ. Luke sees him as very much a man and John presents the Lord as divine. Mark concentrates on the Lord's actions; Matthew sees Jesus as the fulfillment of many Old Testament prophecies. There is overlap, of course; but each gospel presents Jesus through a slightly different lens.

Similarly, each prophet who spoke of Jesus (Who can be found in virtually every book of the Old Testament), presents a different aspect of Him. It is fascinating how the Old Testament presents the Lord in a variety of ways, looking prophetically into the future; and the gospels also present the Lord also from each man's specific view, but looking back on Him historically. When we put it all together, we get a fuller view of our Lord.

Lesson 473 Genesis 48:15–19 Jacob gives the greater blessing to the younger

In the previous lesson, we discussed the idea that Old Testament believers—even those who wrote Scripture—did not have a full and complete understanding of the Person of Jesus Christ. They all believed in the Future Messiah and they believed in David's Greater Son, but the writers of Scripture and believers in general just did not have a full and comprehensive understanding of exactly Who this Person is (or would be).

Even today, Salvation does not require a full apprehension of our Savior, whether in the Old Testament or the New. We hear the gospel (today, we hear about Jesus Christ; in the Old Testament, they heard about the Revealed God, the God of Israel, the God Who created the universe); and we grab onto whatever small amount of information is available to us and we believe that.

I have heard that some people take this or that passage and make the claim that all of this information has to be in the gospel message (that He died for our sins, that He was raised from the dead by God the Father, that He appeared to many disciples, and that He finally ascended into heaven). It is certainly reasonable that your explanation of the gospel to an unbeliever has elements of these things, but a new believer in Jesus Christ does not have to sign a statement acknowledging all aspects of Christology in order to be saved (just as the Old Testament believer was not converted by fully apprehending and then believing upon the Messiah to come).

If those who actually wrote Scripture did not fully understand the Messiah to come (remember the blind men and the elephant parable), then it would be illogical for any unbeliever in the Old Testament to be saved only after fully understand and believing in the Messiah to come. Then, logically, if Old Testament people became believers without a full apprehension of Messiah-to-come, then why does anyone think that the new believer in the Church Age must understand every element of Christ's sacrifice for our sins? What is required is positive volition toward the Lord Jesus Christ; and faith in Him. Exactly how much we know about Him is not the issue.

When I was saved, I honestly did not understand, at that time, what happened *after* the cross. Somehow, even after going to various churches over a period of time prior to salvation, I did not really know about the resurrection and the ascension (I am sure I heard that at one time or another, having celebrated Easter for so many years—but somehow, exactly what Jesus did after the cross escaped me). So, at that time, I understood a small amount of information about Jesus Christ, and I believed in Him. I did not know much about Him, but I believed in Him. Subsequent to my salvation, I have learned much more about Him (including, quite obviously, what happened after the crucifixion).

As the believer grows, we learn much more about Jesus Christ. And, unlike many Old Testament saints (Jacob, for instance) we are privy to a great deal more information about just Who Jesus is.

On the other hand, I know a several unbelievers who know a great deal more information about Jesus Christ, but refuse to believe in Him. In fact, many of them have to develop a fairly detailed understanding of Jesus Christ, Who He is and what the Bible says in order to argue that it is all a myth, a fairy tale, or (my favorite excuse) a plan by powerful men in government to keep the masses under control. They have an intellectual understanding, but they have not believed in Him.

And, as an aside, these unbelievers that I know are not lacking in faith. Most of them believe in evolution and that the world is in danger of no longer being inhabitable due to

global warming. Many of them believe in socialism. So, it is not as if they require actual proof in order to believe what they believe. They simply exercise their faith in these things, without undeniable proof.

Allow me another tangent, if you will: there are some believers who feel that they were short-changed because they did not see the miracles of Moses in the desert; or they were unable to be followers of Jesus Christ, to see Him and His great works. They have not seen a blind man healed; or a lame man made whole. If you believe that, then you do not really understand your place in this world as a Christian. We live in the greatest era of mankind, up to this point in time. Everything that we need to know about our spiritual heritage and the foundation of our faith is available to us. In fact, in this internet age, if you are positive towards the Word of God, there are ways to have your every question answered (or very nearly every question).

In this age, we get to understand every aspect of Jesus Christ, insofar as it is possible to know Him. Right prior to the crucifixion, His disciples did not really understand what was going on or what He was going to do, or what was going to happen, even though He told them many times what to expect. At the time of the crucifixion, all of Jesus' disciples except for one, ran for their lives. Even though Jesus had told them on several occasions—including the night before—what would happen; when Jesus was taken and tried, His disciples left as quickly as they could. They were told this would happen; they should have known that it would happen; and yet, they did not.

However, in this age, we have all of that. We are able, through our own mind's eye, to enjoy the great exodus of Israel out of Egypt, the ministry of Elijah, and the 3 or 4 years of the very short public ministry of our Lord. There are so many things which we get to study, know and understand, which believers in the past just did not have access to.

God has placed us in a wonderful time and place; we need to appreciate it and enjoy it.

Back to our narrative.

Genesis 48:15 And he [Jacob] blessed Joseph and said, "May God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who fed me all my life to this day,...

Jacob, by the end of his life, has clearly begun to understand and appreciate God's hand in his life. We have seen him throughout his entire life, from birth all the way to his deathbed (which is what we are studying right now). We have had the privilege of following Jacob on this great journey. We have seen him go from being a deceptive manipulator, to some level of spiritual growth in Paddan-aram, and finally, to some level of spiritual maturity here in Egypt. All that Jacob needed to know was right there; it was available to him; but he spent most of his life in rebellion against God (recall that when Jesus wrestled with Jacob in the desert, that was a metaphor for Jacob's entire life—it really happened, but the incident was descriptive of what Jacob had been doing).

When Jacob speaks of God feeding him, that is a recognition of logistical grace. Logistical grace is the divine planning, divine support, divine provision and divine blessing which are designed by God to keep the believer alive so that we can properly execute or fulfill God's plan. We studied this back in lessons #118–119.

Genesis 48:16a-b [Jacob is still speaking] ...[Let] the Angel Who redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads. And let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac,...

The Angel is Jesus Christ in His preincarnate form. Jacob is asking for blessing for his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

Jacob's name being upon Joseph's sons simply means that they are a part of the blessing that God has given to the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They will be treated as if they are Jacob's direct sons, meaning that they will form two of the tribes of Israel.

Some people are confused by this because, Jacob had 12 sons and we often speak of the 12 tribes of Israel; but, in all actuality, there are 13 tribes. Each son of Jacob (save Joseph) is the patriarch of his tribe (and they are named throughout the Pentateuch); and there are Joseph's two sons, who make up 2 additional tribes, which is 13 in all. Now, in some passages, like Revelation, where it speaks of there 12 tribes of Israel, one of the tribes is not named (Dan; also, Joseph is named rather than Ephraim in that passage). When it comes to having possession of the land, 12 tribes are given their portion in the Land of Promise; but Levi, the 13th tribe, is not. The sons of Levi will not have an actual land inheritance but they will be spread out throughout the land of Israel.

Genesis 48:16 ...[Let] the Angel Who redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads. And let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and let them grow like the fishes into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

Jacob, by calling for his name to be named on them, is simply identifying these boys as if they were his own sons.

The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were to grow into a multitude, just like the fishes in the seas. They were to become full-fledged tribes in Israel.

Genesis 48:17 And Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, and it was evil in his eyes. And he held up his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head.

Joseph tries to correct his father, so that his right hand (the hand of the greater blessing) would be upon Manasseh, the oldest son.

We have the phrase, *and it was evil in his eyes*. Joseph is not staring daggers towards his father, but he believes that his father has it wrong. *The oldest,* thinks Joseph, *ought to be*

receiving the greater blessing. But Jacob gives the greater blessing to the youngest, by putting his right hand on his head.

Genesis 48:18 And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father. For this is the first-born. Put your right hand on his head."

Joseph corrects his father and tells him that his right hand should be upon Manasseh's head. Joseph set it up so that his father should have automatically rested his right hand over the head of his eldest boy. But Jacob switches hands.

This might be the only time in their lives when Jacob was right and Joseph was wrong.

Genesis 48:19a And his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also will become a people, and he also will be great, but truly his younger brother will be greater than he is,...."

Here, Jacob gives the reason for crossing his hands and giving the greater blessing to the younger son. "Both sons will be great, but the younger son will be greater," is what Jacob says. So, somehow, God allows him to see into the future in order to determine this. We do not know exactly what he saw or how he determined to do this.

The key difference is always what is in the soul. All of the people named above believed in the Revealed God (including Ishmael and Esau). However, the descendants of the second named person eventually went to crap. From Jacob came the entire Hebrew people; from Esau came a few generations of believers; but his descendants eventually became quite hostile towards the sons of Jacob (and, therefore, hostile to God and His plan). In fact, it is these rejected lines which have become the Arabs of today, so many of whom are Muslim. The rejected lines have chosen to worship Satan rather than God.

So, Jacob tells Joseph that he is aware of what he is doing; and that Ephraim would be greater than Manasseh. However, the line of promise would not go through either son, but through Judah.

> Thomas Constable: *This was the fourth consecutive generation of Abraham's descendants in which the normal pattern of the firstborn assuming prominence over the second born was reversed: Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Joseph over Reuben, and Ephraim over Manasseh*.[90]

This does not mean that the key to any family is the second-born son. Human viewpoint is, the firstborn son is the preeminent one; divine viewpoint is, the sons who believe in the Lord and then grow in doctrine are the preeminent ones—regardless of their birth order. It is what is in the soul that determines preeminence in a family and in a family line.

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[90] Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable;* ©2012; from e-sword, Gen. 48:12–20.

Genesis 48:19 And his father refused and said, “I know, my son, I know. He also will become a people, and he also will be great, but truly his younger brother will be greater than he is, and his seed will become a multitude of nations.”

Jacob has switched hands, and he is not taking it back. He then reassures Joseph that Manasseh will be great as well; just not as great. There will be a great leader to come out of Ephraim—Joshua; I don’t know that there will be any great leaders who emerge from the tribe of Manasseh.

The most difficult part of this verse to understand is the final phrase, *and his seed will become a multitude of nations*.

The Cambridge Bible sees this as hyperbole.[91] Perhaps the idea is, the people of Ephraim will become by themselves the size of a multitude of nations (that is, comparing the size of nations in this time that Jacob spoke to the future, Ephraim would have a significant population).

> Dr. Thomas Constable writes: *Under the inspiration of God, Jacob deliberately gave Ephraim the privileged first–born blessing and predicted his preeminence. This was the fourth consecutive generation of Abraham's descendants in which the normal pattern of the firstborn assuming prominence over the second born was reversed: Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Joseph over Reuben, and Ephraim over Manasseh. We can see this blessing in the process of fulfillment during the Judges Period when the tribe of Ephraim had grown very large and influential. The combined tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh increased from 72,700 in the second year after the Exodus (Num. 1:32–35) to 85,200 40 years later (Num. 26:28–37). By contrast the tribes of Reuben and Simeon decreased from 105,800 to 65,930 during the same period. The Ephraimites took the lead among the ten northern tribes and flourished to the extent that the Jews used the name Ephraim equally with the name Israel. The Ephraimites occasionally demonstrated an attitude of superiority among the tribes that we can trace back to this blessing (e.g., Judges 12:1; et al.). The Hebrew phrase translated "a multitude (group) of nations" (Gen. 48:19) appears only here in the Old Testament and probably means a company of peoples, namely, numerous. The reference to Israel in Gen. 48:20 applies to the nation in the future from Jacob's viewpoint*.[92]

This exact phrase—a multitude of nations—is unique; and even though it may sound like Gen. 17:4–5 (which may sound similar, but it is not—in this passage, God promises Abraham that he will be the *father of many nations*).

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[91] *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges;* 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Gen. 49:19.

[92] Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable;* ©2012; from e-sword, Gen. 48:12–20.

Gill understands this phrase to mean *a multitude of families*.[93]

Lesson 474 Genesis 48:20 Ephraim's Preeminence over Manasseh

Jacob is giving an end-of-life blessing Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. He gives preeminence to Ephraim, the younger son. As with many prophetical writings (or public statements), there is no information given to us *why* Jacob chose to bless Ephraim as he did. Some of the blessings which Jacob will give in the next chapter seem to be based upon, for the most part, the actions of his sons that he has observed combined with the meanings of their names. Obviously, the influence and guidance of God the Holy Spirit is there, as these things are recorded in Scripture for us.

We do not appear to have a lot of instances where God takes over the mind and vocal cords of a person, although an argument could be made for this occurring when Baalim was called upon to curse Israel (Num. 23–25). For the most part, speakers in the pages of the Bible and writers of Scripture seem to be fully in charge of their mental facilities. As a result, a chapter of the Bible written by John sounds much different than one written by Paul. The chapters of Genesis written by Jacob and Joseph appear to be very different in vocabulary and in literary merit (Joseph is one of the great writers of all time); and Moses' dissertation found in Deuteronomy appears to be very much based upon his experiences and thinking as influenced by God's actions in his life.

Genesis 48:20 And he blessed them that day, saying, "In you will Israel bless, saying, God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh." And he put Ephraim before Manasseh.

Jacob intentionally placed Ephraim (the younger brother) over Manasseh.

This includes material from Gill, Keil, Guzik, Barnes and Clark and Henry.

The Preeminence of Ephraim over Manasseh

1. The population of Ephraim would exceed the population of Manasseh. When they came out of Egypt, the population of the tribe of Ephraim was 8300 more than the tribe of Manasseh. Num. 1:33, 35 However, these numbers would change in Num. 26:34, 37
2. The great conqueror and leader Joshua is from the tribe of Ephraim. Under Joshua, the people of Israel would take the Land of Promise.
3. When the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom divided, the northern kingdom is often referred to as Ephraim; and there were kings in the northern kingdom from the tribe of Ephraim.
4. Interestingly enough, Manasseh would occupy two significant territories in Israel, on both sides of the Jordan River.
5. Keil and Delitzsch: *As a result of the promises received from God, the blessing*

[93] Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible;* from e-Sword, Gen. 48:19.

The Preeminence of Ephraim over Manasseh

was not merely a pious wish, but the actual bestowal of a blessing of prophetic significance and force.

Portions of this were taken from:
Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible;* from e-Sword, Gen. 48:19.
Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament;* from e-Sword; Gen. 48:17–22.

Comparing Ephraim and Manasseh

	Ephraim	Manasseh
1.	Ephraim was Joseph's second-born (Gen. 48:14)	Manasseh was Joseph's first-born (Gen. 48:14)
2.	Ephraim is ʾEphrayim (אֶפְרַיִם) [pronounced *ef-RAH-yim*] and it means *double-fruit, double portion*. He was so-named because Joseph had been so blessed in Egypt (Gen. 41:52). Joseph did not know at this time, that this son would be the recipient of double-blessing.	Manasseh is Mᵉnashsheh (מְנַשֶּׁה) [pronounced *mehn-ahsh-SHEH*] means *causing to forget*. Joseph so named his son because he caused Joseph to forget the hardship that he had been through and the loss of his family (Gen. 41:51).
3.	When Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh, he gave pre-eminence to Ephraim, the younger (Gen. 48:14–20)	Nevertheless, Manasseh would become a great people (Gen. 48:19)
4.	At the first recorded census taken by Moses, Ephraim numbered 40,500 men who were over twenty and able to go to war (Num. 1:32–33)	During this same census, there were found to be 32,200 able-bodied men from the tribe of Manasseh (Num. 1:34–35)
Before the Israelites *wandered* in the desert for 40 years, they came up to the southern border of Israel and 12 spies were sent into the land to make a determination about going in and taking the land.		
5.	Joshua, from the tribe of Ephraim, was ready to lead his army into the Land of Promise and take it. He believed God gave this land to Israel.	Gaddi was Joshua's corresponding representative from the tribe of Manasseh (Num. 13:11). Gaddi, along with 9 other spies, opposed taking the land promised them by God, concerned about the stature and foreboding presence of the natives of the land. .

Comparing Ephraim and Manasseh		
	Ephraim	**Manasseh**
6.	The new generation census 40 years later has the second generation of men of Ephraim at 32,500 (Num. 26:37)	Manasseh: 52,700; which is a remarkable change (Num. 26:34)
7.	Despite this inequity in population, Ephraim later surpassed Manasseh in population, wealth and power.[94] This was not a *result* of Jacob's blessing, but a *fulfillment* of same.	
8.	Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin marched together on the Western side of the Tabernacle together during the desert wanderings (Num. 2:18–24)	
9.	Joshua was from the tribe of Ephraim and he is one of the great leaders of Israel (Num. 13:8). He personified grace orientation and authority orientation.	There were some prominent men from this tribe, however—Gideon (Judges 6:15) and Jephthah (Judges 11).
Interestingly enough, Gideon speaks of himself coming from the weakest clan in Manasseh, and that he is the least of his own family (Judges 6:15). Gideon will strongly test God to make certain that He is God (Judges 6:36–40). As a result, God will test Gideon's faith.		
10.	Ephraim's portion of Canaan was directly northwest of the Dead Sea at the bottom of the Jordan. Its boundaries did not extend all the way to the Mediterranean (Josh. 16)	Manasseh possessed the land from the middle of the Jordan, extending to the Mediterranean. Manasseh also occupied a large disjoint plot of land east and northeast of the Sea of Chinnereth (now the Sea of Galilee) (Josh 17)
11.	Ephraim would live in the land assigned to them by God but did not completely drive out the Canaanites, so the Canaanites lived among them (Judges 1:29)	Manasseh did not fully possess the land that God had given them by the time of the judges (Judges 1:27)
12.	During the time of Joshua, throughout the days of the judges, Shiloh, which is in Ephraim, was the spiritual center of Israel (Josh. 18:1 22:12 Judges 18:31 21:19 1Sam. 1:3, 9, 24 2:14 3:21[95])	Interestingly enough, King David chose prominent members of his cabinet from Manasseh (1Chron. 26:31 27:20, 21)

[94] ZPEB p. 62 Vol. 4.

[95] I have not looked these verses up yet (nor many of the verses quoted).

Comparing Ephraim and Manasseh		
	Ephraim	**Manasseh**
13.	The tribe of Judah became pre-eminent during the time of David and Solomon, eventually moving the political and spiritual center to Jerusalem	
14.	Ephraim, at Solomon's death, seceded along with most of the other tribes to form the northern kingdom under King Jeroboam I of the tribe of Ephraim. 1Kings 11:26–39	Despite being a part of the Northern Kingdom, Manasseh was involved in the revival under Asa, during the passover celebration during Hezekiah's rule and in the reform measures of Josiah and the restoration of the temple (2Chron. 15:9 30:1, 10, 11, 18 31:1 34:6, 9)
15.	Ephraim became a synonym for the Northern Kingdom, particularly in the books of Chronicles, Isaiah and Hosea. So, many times when we see the word *Ephraim* in those books, we are not speaking of this tribe alone, but of the northern kingdom as a whole.	Manasseh eventually became assimilated by conquering peoples and the tribe of Manasseh degenerated into worshiping idols (1Chron. 5:25)
Both tribes (along with all the northern tribes) were removed from the land of promise as a matter of discipline by God (called the 5th stage of discipline).		
16.	Ephraim will be reunited with Judah in the millennium under the rule of Judah (Ezek. 37)	Manasseh is loved by God (Psalm 4:7 108:8) and has a future in God's plan (Ezek. 48:4 Rev. 7:6)
It is clear that Ephraim was ahead of Manasseh.		

Map of Ephraim and Manasseh; from Dwelling in the Word; accessed September 5, 2017.

This chapter has been all about Jacob blessing Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. This

is how they will look when they are assigned territory in the Land of Promise. Manasseh clearly had the most property.

Genesis 48:20 And he [Jacob] blessed them that day, saying, "In you will Israel bless, saying, God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh. And he put Ephraim before Manasseh."

We are never told specifically why Jacob chose to do this. But then, Jacob will bless his other 12 sons in the next chapter (Joseph will also be blessed), and he does not explain why he blesses them all in the way that he does (some of them, he will give a blessing, related to their name or related to what they have done). So, what appears to be the case is, Jacob thought about his sons and he thought about their names and what they had done, and he spoke. Obviously, as this is a part of the Word of God, we may reasonably assume that Jacob is inspired by God the Holy Spirit.

So, Jacob crosses his hands with regards to Joseph's children, and blessed them in reverse order, but without necessarily having a specific reason, apart from being inspired by God the Holy Spirit. He placed the blessing of the youngest over the blessing of the eldest. Perhaps he was motivated by Ephraim's name, which is *double portion*.

Lesson 475: Genesis 48:21–22 Jacob's final words to Joseph about his land

We are at the end of Gen. 48, and Jacob has two more things to say to Joseph.

Genesis 48:21 And Israel [that is, *Jacob*] said to Joseph, "Behold, I die. But God will be with you [all], and bring you [all] again into the land of your fathers.

Jacob is not saying, "I am going to die right this second." But he knows that he is close to death; and he has a few more things to say. Actually, Jacob has a great deal still to say.

All of the *you's* and *your's* in this verse are plural. So, this is not about Joseph personally, or even about Joseph and his sons, but Joseph's descendants—and, by reasonable application, to Joseph's brothers and their descendants as well.

We have studied the life of Jacob, from birth until now and I have been very critical of him throughout. However, based upon this and the following chapter, Jacob is finally squared away on the doctrines of his era and the future of his people. Jacob knows that God will bring all of his people back to the land which God has promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jacob has gone through some periods of time where he lost his strong trust in God (when he believed his son Joseph to be dead). Now, in Egypt, his faith has been restored.

Joseph left this land of his fathers against his own free will at age 17. His older brothers had sold him into slavery to the Egyptians. However, at some point in the future, the people of Israel would return to this land promised them by God and they will take it.

God has removed His people from the land because of the great degeneracy of the people of Canaan. We have had only a few instances where the degeneracy of the people of Canaan is suggested: (1) God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of their sexual degeneracy (Gen. 19); (2) Shechem raped Dinah, a daughter of Jacob, and then asked to marry her (Gen. 34); and (3) there was the tremendous jealousy of the Philistines of Isaac and his prosperity (Gen. 26). Those Philistines would rather rid themselves of Isaac and his wealth (which would have positively impacted the economy of their own city) than face the disparity of his wealth every day. You think the wealth inequality movement is a new thing? Although the founding and funding of the wealth inequality movement in the United States is primarily communist propaganda, many of the *useful idiots* in this movement are filled with irrational economic jealousy—just like the Philistines.

Israel was removed from the land so that they would not be overpowered by the influences of the people of Canaan, who would descend much farther into degeneracy over the next few hundreds years (you may recall that Judah originally married a Canaanite woman). When the time is right (Gen. 15:16), God would bring all of His people out of Egypt and He would guide them to take the land of Canaan by killing the people living in Canaan (Joshua 1–12). Any city that would be willing to subjugate themselves to the God of Israel would be spared (Deut. 20:10–12). There are some people who object to this, but this is simply God judging and destroying a very degenerate people.

Back to the conversation between Jacob and his son Joseph. With v. 22, we come to a verse which is rather oblique:

Genesis 48:22 And I have given to you one portion above your brothers, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow."

So, there appears to be a portion of land in Canaan which Jacob took from the Amorite by force; and this land he gives to Joseph. This is a matter of no little controversy among Bible scholars.

Gen. 48:21–22 Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you again to the land of your fathers. Moreover, I have given to you rather than to your brothers one mountain slope that I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow." (ESV)

When studying this doctrine, bear in mind, the city spoken of is named *Shechem* and the man who raped Dinah is also named *Shechem*. Context will be clear as to which is being referenced.

Jacob Gives Some Land to Joseph (Commentators/Discussion)

The word *mountain slope* in the ESV is actually the word sh^{e}kem (שְׁכֶם) [pronounced *shehk-EHM*], which means *shoulder, shoulder-blade; back (in general)*. Strong's claims that it may be used figuratively for *the spur of a hill*. In any case, this is same Hebrew word as is transliterated *Shechem*.

Jacob Gives Some Land to Joseph (Commentators/Discussion)

Interestingly enough, one of the few Bible translations to reveal this is the Good News Bible: Then Jacob said to Joseph, "As you see, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will take you back to the land of your ancestors. It is to you and not to your brothers that I am giving Shechem, that fertile region which I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow." (Gen. 48:21–22).

Other translations which reference *Shechem* (by translation or by footnote) are the International Children's Bible, the Living Bible, the New Century Bible, the American English Bible, the Translation for Translators, the Ferrar-Fenton Bible, the New American Bible (2011), the New RSV, the Complete Jewish Bible, Kaplan's Translation, Rotherham's Expanded Bible, the Concordant Literal Version and the New Advent (Knox) Bible. Apart from the Living Bible and the new RSV, most of these translations tend to be somewhat obscure to the average Christian.

Whatever happened here may or may not be a mystery. Some do not believe that this particular incident was recorded in the Bible. Many commentators offer their explanations below, some of them believing that this is a reference to Shechem, which city the sons of Jacob took.

One passage which will be referenced is Gen. 33:18–20 And Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, on his way from Paddan-aram, and he camped before the city. And from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, he bought for a hundred pieces of money the piece of land on which he had pitched his tent. There he erected an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel. (ESV)

In Gen. 34, Jacob's daughter, Dinah, would be raped by Shechem, after which, he would go to Jacob and propose marriage to her (she appears to have been kept in his city under his control after the rape). The brothers of Dinah agree to this and require circumcision of the sons of Hamor (Hamor is Shechem's father) in order to agree to the merging of their families. The men of Shechem go along with this. While these men of Shechem are recovering from being circumcised as adults, Simeon and Levi come into the city and kill every male and take all of their stuff, enslaving their wives and children. Jacob was quite upset after all this took place, worried that other peoples of the land would find out and attack and kill his family. Soon after, God tells Jacob to move to Bethel (Gen. 35:1).

There are commentators who believe that, in the passage before us, Jacob is referring to the taking of Shechem, which he apparently still has claim to.

Jacob Gives Some Land to Joseph (Commentators/Discussion)

Barnes: *At the point of death Jacob expresses his assurance of the return of his posterity to the land of promise, and bestows on Joseph one share or piece of ground above his brethren, which, says he, I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow. This share is, in the original, שכם shekem, Shekem, a shoulder or tract of land. This region included "the parcel of the field where he had spread his tent" Gen. 33:19. It refers to the whole territory of Shekem, which was conquered by his sword and his bow, inasmuch as the city itself was sacked, and its inhabitants put to the sword by his sons at the head of his armed retainers, though without his approval Gen. 34*.

Barnes continues: *Though Jacob withdrew immediately after [and went] to Bethel (Gen. 35), he neither fled nor relinquished possession of this conquest, as we find his sons feeding his flocks there when he himself was residing at Hebron Gen. 37:13. The incidental conquest of such a tract was no more at variance with the subsequent acquisition of the whole country than the purchase of a field by Abraham or a parcel of ground by Jacob himself. In accordance with this gift Joseph's bones were deposited in Shekel (Gen. 24:32), after the conquest of the whole land by returning Israel. The territory of Shekem was probably not equal in extent to that of Ephraim, but was included within its bounds*.[96]

Benson believes that Jacob first paid for a portion of Shechem, but later took this land by force, the taking of which is not recorded in Scripture:

Benson: *This seems to have been the parcel of ground near Shechem, which Jacob purchased of Hamor, the prince of the country (Gen. 33:19), and which, it is probable, he took or recovered with his sword and bow, that is, by force of arms, from the Amorites, who had seized on it after his removal to another part of Canaan, although this is not mentioned in Scripture. This parcel of ground he gave to Joseph, as is mentioned, John 4:5, of whose sons we find it was the inheritance, Joshua 17:1; Joshua 20:7. And in it Joseph's bones were buried, which perhaps Jacob had an eye to as much as to any thing in this settlement. It may sometimes be both just and prudent to give some children portions above the rest; but a grave is that which we can most count upon as our own in this earth*.[97]

There are also very learned scholars who question that this is Shechem; or have a difficult time squaring what we know in the Bible and what Jacob says to Joseph.

Clarke: *We have already seen the transactions between Jacob and his family on one part, and Shechem and the sons of Hamor on the other. See Gen. 33:18–19, and Genesis 24. As he uses the word "shechem" here, I think it likely that he alludes to the purchase of the field or parcel of ground mentioned Gen. 33:18–19*.

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[96] Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament;* from e-Sword, Gen. 48:22 (slightly edited).

[97] Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments;* 1857; from e-Sword, Gen. 48:22.

Jacob Gives Some Land to Joseph (Commentators/Discussion)

Clarke continues: *It has been supposed that this parcel of ground, which Jacob bought from Shechem, had been taken from him by the Amorites, and that he afterwards had recovered it by his sword and by his bow, i. e., by force of arms. Shechem appears to have fallen to the lot of Joseph's sons; (see Joshua 17:1, and Joshua 20:7); and in our Lord's time there was a parcel of ground near to Sychar or Shechem which was still considered as that portion which Jacob gave to his son Joseph, John 4:5; and on the whole it was probably the same that Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of money, Gen. 33:18–19*.

Clark concludes: *But how it could be said that he took this out of the hand of the Amorite with his sword and his bow, we cannot tell. Many attempts have been made to explain this abstruse verse, but they have all hitherto been fruitless. Jacob's words were no doubt perfectly well understood by Joseph, and probably alluded to some transaction that is not now on record; and it is much safer for us to confess our ignorance, than to hazard conjecture after conjecture on a subject of which we can know nothing certainly*.[98]

So, even though Clarke believes that Jacob is probably speaking of Shechem, he believes that there are many unanswered questions.

Whedon rejects Shechem altogether as the land that Jacob is speaking about.

Whedon: *We have no record of any such forcible acquisition of land by the patriarchs. "Any conquest of territory," says Delitzsch, "would have been entirely at variance with the character of the patriarchal history, which consisted in the renunciation of all reliance upon human power, and a devoted trust in the God of the promises." Nor could Jacob have here referred to the vengeful slaughter of the Shechemites by Simeon and Levi, (Gen. 34:25–29,) which he ever reprobated as accursed and cruel, (Gen. 34:30; Gen. 49:5–7.)*.

Whedon continues: *The context shows the aged patriarch to be speaking with his eye upon the future, and calling things that are not as though they were. The promise of the land of Canaan had been made so repeatedly to the patriarchs (comp. Gen. 48:4) that it now rises up as an accomplished fact in Jacob's prophetic vision, and is spoken of accordingly. The iniquity of the Amorite was not yet full, (see chap. 15:16,) but its punishment is a foregone conclusion in the Divine mind. A like use of the prophetic perfect may be seen in the prophecy concerning Ishmael. Chap. 17:20. Jacob here identifies himself with his descendants, and speaks as doing in person what his posterity will certainly accomplish in the after time*.[99]

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[98] Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible;* from e-Sword, Gen. 48:22.

[99] *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments;* Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ℗1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 48:22 (slightly edited).

So, it seems to come down to several possible choices: either Jacob is speaking of land which he has already taken which is to be given to Joseph (we appear to have a fulfillment of this in Joshua 17:1 20:7 21:21); or Jacob is speaking prophetically of taking the land by force, and giving a very large portion of the land to Joseph (the land occupied by Judah and the sons of Joseph will be approximately half of the land conquered by Joshua).

Manasseh, Joseph's son, will occupy two chunks of land, on each side of the Jordan River. Perhaps the portion which they first claim, east of the Jordan, is prophetically the land Jacob is giving to them.

Whereas, it would be impossible to nail down all of the details regarding the fulfillment of this verse, if we are referring to the territory of Shechem; it is quite remarkable that two of Jacob's sons—Joseph and Judah—live in about half of that land that God gave to Abraham.

Whatever the case, Joseph's bones will be buried in Shechem, which suggests that this is the land that Jacob is speaking of; which section of Shechem had been purchased (Joshua 24:32).

The city of Shechem is in West Manasseh.

Tribal Allotments of Israel (Map); from [WordPress Map Collection]; accessed November 1, 2017. The land occupied by Judah, East and West Manasseh and Ephraim is well over half of Israel (assuming that this map is accurate). Judah is treated as the firstborn and Joseph is given the double portion.

At this point, we have come to the end of Gen. 48, so that there is no additional material to be found which may inform us of this somewhat confusing verse. However, since much of what Jacob said was prophetical, it reasonably follows that these words of his could be prophetical as well. The descendants of Jacob would take the land of Canaan by sword and bow over a period of 7 or so years (Joshua 1–12). Afterwards, a considerable portion of the promised land will belong to the sons of Joseph (more than a third and less than a half).

This particular chapter was divided up correctly, unlike many previous chapters. This chapter is all about Jacob blessing the two sons of Joseph.

Matthew Henry Summarizes Genesis 48

The time drawing nigh that Israel must die, having, in the former chapter, given order about his burial, in this he takes leave of his grandchildren by Joseph, and in the next of all his children. Thus Jacob's dying words are recorded, because he then spoke by a spirit of prophecy; Abraham's and Isaac's are not. God's gifts and graces shine forth much more in some saints than in others upon their death–beds. The Spirit, like the wind, blows where He wills. In this chapter,

I. Joseph, hearing of his father's sickness, goes to visit him, and takes his two sons with him (Gen. 48:1, Gen. 48:2).
II. Jacob solemnly adopts his two sons, and takes them for his own (Gen. 48:3–7). Their inheritance will be as if they were actual sons of Jacob.
III. He blesses them (Gen. 48:8–16).
IV. He explains and justifies the crossing of his hands in blessing them (Gen. 48:17–20).
V. He leaves a particular legacy to Joseph (Gen. 48:21–22).

It is quite fascinating to follow Jacob's entire life, from his birth to his deathbed, something that we did not do with Abraham or Isaac. We know nothing about Abraham's birth; and we do not have any detailed information about Abraham or Isaac immediately prior to their deaths (recall that Isaac's end-of-life message was given many decades too soon).

Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible;* from e-Sword, Gen. 48 (chapter comments) (edited and appended).