

Genesis Part 3

Chapter 28

Jacob

Verses 1-5

Isaac called his son Jacob to him and blessed him. Not the simple blessing he had received before from his father but the full blessing in a spiritual sense. Now Jacob was given the same blessing of his father Isaac and was heir to the promised land of Canaan. Jacob was also charged as his father was by Abraham. Jacob was not to marry a Canaanite woman but to return to the family of his mother Rebekah to find a wife from her brother Laban. The Canaanites were to be driven out of Canaan by the Israelite nation, therefore he was not to mix the blood of the righteous with the unrighteous, as God's chosen people should be pure. Isaac was sixty years of age when Jacob was born and is now one hundred thirty seven years of which would make Jacob seventy seven at this time of departure.

Verses 6-9

Padanaram is four hundred eighty miles from Beersheba to Rebekah's brother Laban. Jacob set out on his journey with the blessings of his father Isaac. It is thought that Esau was happy to see Jacob leave as this might give him the chance to regain the favor of his father Isaac. Because Jacob was going to the family of his mother Rebekah to take a wife because the Canaanites were displeasing to his parents, probably thought it best not to marry a Canaanite also. Esau went to the house of Ishmael to find a wife from the daughters of Heth who was the eldest son of Ishmael the son of Abraham. Esau married Mahalath, also known as Bashemath, the sister of Nebajoth. Esau probably married his father Isaac's brother Ishmael's son's daughter in order to advance more favor from his father. It was a mistake for Esau as he had married a daughter of the son of Abraham that had been cast out of his grandfather's house. Esau had also married the daughter of a bondmaid's son and could not inherit the land promised to Abraham and Isaac.

Verses 10-15

Jacob having left the comfort of his father's house was now out on his own. Jacob traveled about forty miles and the sun set on his journey. Jacob who was used to the comfort of home was now in the wild and open country. He took a stone for a pillow and slept beneath the canopy of the heavens. Being a warm climate probably protected him from a cold or sickness but still he was exposed to the elements. To this point in scripture Jacob is not seen as a one who simply feared and trusted in the Lord. Now away from the security of his father's house perhaps he felt the need to be more reliant upon the Lord.

As Jacob slept he had a dream, not a normal dream but a supernatural dream of the Divine nature. Any believer would take Jacob's place on the ground with a stone for a pillow for the privilege of the vision that God gave him through his dream. Jacob envisioned a ladder reaching from heaven down to the earth with angels ascending and descending upon it. God Himself was at the head of the ladder. This is the providence of God that He keeps a constant intercourse between heaven and earth. Thus Jacob would know that he both had a good guide and was under the protection of God's providence. Jacob's vision is also a meditation of the Christ. Jesus is the ladder between heaven and earth. Jesus Christ is the way. All of God's grace comes to us and all of our services to God go back to Him through Jesus. (John 1:51) Jesus is the way that sinners can draw near to the throne of grace. By faith we know Jesus is the way and by prayer we make our approach. By the way of Jesus our prayers ascend and by the way of Jesus our prayers descend to us in the needed providence and blessings. There is no way other than Jesus that we can reach Heaven. When our soul by faith can realize this truth then every place becomes pleasant and every prospect becomes joyful. Jesus is with us always until every promise made to us has been fulfilled and we at last rest in everlasting happiness. God spoke to Jacob from the top of the ladder in Heaven. It is through Jesus that God speaks to us. God renewed the promises given to Abraham and Isaac and gave them to Jacob also. That through Jacob the Messiah would come and all nations of the earth would be blessed through him. Jacob was on a journey to a strange land and is given the promise that God would never leave him, whom God loves He will never leave.

Verses 16-19

Whether we are at home, work or play, in the city or in the country, our station can be also the house of God. The world is God's creation and all belongs to Him. God is everywhere man is and therefore we can worship Him where we are.

Verses 20-22

In Jacob's amazement he made a vow to God. In Jacob's vow we see an expression of his faith that God will keep him and Jacob can depend on that and promises his trust in the Lord. Jacob shows moderation in his desires, as he asks not for soft clothing or scant meat. If God gives us as much we are to receive and use it for him with thankfulness. If God give us little, we are to be content and cheerfully share it in Him. Jacob's piety and regard for God where what he desired in God, that God would keep him and be with him and through His provision care for him. There is nothing more needed to make us happy. Jacob's resolution is to draw close to the Lord, and remain in covenant with God. When we receive the exceeding mercies of God we should abound in gratitude towards God. The tenth that Jacob promised to God is a fitting portion that must be returned to God. This portion is for the support of worship, maintenance of the church, for the relief of the poor, and whatever good work that glorifies God.

Key Verses

Hebrews 11:9-10, Hebrews 11:13, Hebrews 11:16, John 1:51, 1Corinthians. 16:2

Chapter 29

Verses 1-8

Jacob traveled on in earnest encouraged by the promises that the Lord had made with him. Jacob finally reached the land to the east which was Mesopotamia or present day Syria. In a field Jacob came to a well which he probably knew the location of, as his grandfather's servant had met Rebekah, his mother, there many years before. Three flocks of sheep laid about waiting to be watered when the stone on the well was removed. Water was in small supply and wells were protected so that there would be water for all the neighbors.

Jacob called out to the shepherds and asked from where they had come and they answered Haran. It is probable that Jacob was aware of where he was but needed to start a conversation in order to gain intelligence of his surroundings. Jacob inquired of Laban his mother's brother whom had come to see. The Shepherds knew him and noted that his daughter was now coming with the sheep. Once all the shepherds had gathered the stone would be removed and sheep would be watered.

Verses 9-14

As Jacob was having his discussion with the shepherds Rachael came up with the sheep that she was in charge of. Once Rachael had arrived it is most likely that she was the one the rest of the shepherds were waiting for. Jacob either to show great favor to a relation of his or by being taken in by Rachael and wanting to impress her removed the Stone, either by himself or with the help of the other shepherds, and cared for Rachael's flock as they watered.

Jacob, after identifying himself as Rachael's relation kissed her as was customary and wept tears of joy that God had led him there safely to his relations in Haran. Perhaps too Jacob was in great hope that it was Rachael that God had appointed him to marry. Rachael ran, leaving the flock in the care of Jacob, and told her father Laban of the news that his sisters son, Jacob, was at the well.

Laban came to meet Jacob at the well and embraced him the son of his sister. Jacob told him all things. Jacob probably told him of the birthright that he had stolen from his brother Esau. Jacob probably told Laban of his dream and vision from God, and of the promises

that God had given him. Jacob also told of his flight from his home to find a wife of his mother's relations. Of how he met Rachael at the well and his hope that she might be his wife. Laban accepted Jacob's account of himself and let him stay there for a month.

Verses 15-30

Jacob was good help to Laban and he desired Jacob to remain. Laban inquired what Jacob would want for a wage for his labors from Laban. Now Jacob desired Rachael for a wife and agreed to work seven years in exchange for Laban's younger daughter. Leah was the older daughter and was weak in the eyes as they were blurred. Rachael's was more desirable to look and it was Rachael that had caught Jacob's heart. It was a custom in that day to give a dowry for the hand of a daughter which Jacob did not have. The offer of his servitude to Laban for seven was agreeable as the dowry that Laban would receive for his daughter Rachael.

With all things seeming acceptable between Laban and Jacob, Jacob worked seven years in order to receive Rachael for his wife. The time past quickly for Jacob as his love for Rachael was strong. The Lord blesses those who work diligently in our service and not forget our service in ministering to one another. (Hebrews 6:10) It is good for us in the long time of our labors to focus on the reward for our efforts. Keeping our eyes on the vision will make the trials of our journey all the less of importance.

Once Jacob had completed his obligation to Laban for his daughter he went to Laban and asked for Rachael. It was of time for Jacob as he now was 84 years of age and the twelve princes that God had promised to be born of him had yet to be fulfilled. Laban gathered the men of Haran and made a feast for the marriage so that all could witness his daughter's wedding. This compares in similarity to the wedding fest that some day we shall enjoy at the wedding banquet of our Lord as the bridegroom when he calls His bride the church. (Matthew 22:2)

The feast now over for the day and the guest all departed it was customary of that time for the groom to retire to the bed first and then the bride to come to him. Laban without the witness of others then set his daughter Leah in to Jacob instead of Rachael. Jacob now being caught in the same deceit that he had shown to his father Isaac was unsuspecting that Laban his uncle would do this. Jacob then lay with Leah unknowing of the trick that had been made against him. Laban also gave his maid Zilpah, as concubines were called in that day, to Jacob also.

In the morning light with her veil off Jacob realized that it was Leah that he had slept with and not Rachael. It is thought that Laban had convinced her that it was she that Jacob had bargained for, or that it was her right as the elder to be married first, or that she herself had desired the blessings of God that Rachael would have received through the promises

God had made with Jacob. Either way both Leah and Rachael would have to have been in on the deceit of Laban towards Jacob. Jacob arose and immediately went to Laban.

Jacob asked Laban what was the reason for this treachery against him. Jacob knew what Laban had done so the question was why had he done this sin against him and God? Jacob confirmed that he had kept his agreement with Laban and had served him for seven years as promised. Laban does not deny the deceit he had led Jacob into but said that it was the custom in his county not to marry the younger before the older. Laban requested that Jacob fulfill Leah's week. It was also the custom for the marriage feast to last a full seven days. (Judges 14:17) If Jacob did so and served another 7 years, he would also give him his daughter Rachael as his wife. At this time it was alright for a man to have more than one wife, as the law had not yet been given in Leviticus. (Leviticus 18:18 1 Corinthians 7:2) There also seems to be an act of Divine Providence in that the Messiah came from Leah and not Jacob's choice Rachael. After the seventh day Laban gave Rachael to Jacob as a wife and Jacob served Laban another seven years.

Verses 31-35

Rachael was barren but the Lord seeing that Leah was unloved opened her up and she had four sons. Leah named her son with respect to God and her husband Jacob. The first son she named Rueben, "See a Son", the second Simeon, the third son she named Levi, "Joined", and the fourth, Judah, "Praise". Affection towards each other is both the duty and responsibility of married couples. (1 Corinthians 7:33-34)

Key Verses

Hebrews 6:10, Hosea 11:12, Matthew 22:2, Judges 14:17, Leviticus 18:18, 1 Corinthians 7:2, 1 Corinthians 7:33-34

Chapter 30

Verses 1-13

Envy and jealousy is a poison to the peace of the soul. It profits one nothing to grieve over the fortunes of another. There is nothing to be gained but contention and dissatisfaction with one's own accomplishments. Envy is a sin that is hateful towards God and does great harm to neighbors and to one's self. Rachael considered not that it is God that makes the difference and in other aspects of her life she had the advantage. We should carefully watch against the workings of this passion in our own minds. Let us not

have this evil come into our hearts through the eye and harbor this evil feeling towards our neighbor, as our Lord's thoughts are pure and we should strive to be as Him. Jacob loved Rachael and reproved her for this attitude. Jacob was faithful in his love for Rachael and his loving reproof demonstrated this.

Still Jacob was swayed by Rachael's persuasion to take her handmaid Bihah for a wife and bear children. It was the custom of those times to do such a thing. Bihah bore children and they became as Rachael's. The evil thoughts that had entered into Rachael's mind would have been better if she had a greater concern for the children of Leah than that of her handmaid. In Rachael's selfishness she desired children she could rule over than children she had more reason to love. Rachael takes pleasure in giving her children by her handmaid names that show her rivalry towards her sister Leah.

Bihah bore Rachael a son and Rachael said the Lord had judged her and heard her plea and named her son Dan, which means "judgment." Bihah bore a second son and Rachael declared that she had wrestled with her sister and named the son Naphtali, which means "my wrestling."

The root of envy will grow and bring forth bitterness and strife and cause great mischief among relations. Leah unable to bear another child also persuaded Jacob to take her handmaid Zilpath. See the power jealousy can have over the lives of people. It is here that we can fully appreciate the wisdom of God in Divine appointment, which joins one man with one woman only.

Leah bore a son by her handmaid Zilpath and said that a troop cometh. As Leah named him Gad, which means "troop." Perhaps Leah expected more but it was said of Gad in Genesis 49:19 that he was a raider at the heels of his enemies. Leah bore another son through Zilpath and said happy am I. Leah named this son Asher which means "happy or blessed."

Verses 14-24

The two sisters Leah and Rachael, although with true desire of being the mother of the promised seed, and the honor of having many children, remained in a contest with each other to bare children. They both were influenced by the promises of God to Abraham, which held the richest of blessings and from whom the Messiah was to come. Leah's deal with Rachael to lay with Jacob produced another son of her own. Leah bore another son and believing God had rewarded her named the son Issachar, which means, "hire or reward." Leah then bore another son by Jacob and named him Zebulun, which means, "dwelling."

God also remembers Rachael and she also bore a son by Jacob. Rachael said the Lord has taken away her reproach and named her son Joseph. Joseph means, "Adding, or

rather, to be added; or, God shall add.” Rachael expressing her renewed faith said may the Lord give here another son.

Verses 25-43

After twenty years with his uncle Laban Jacob knew it was time for him to return to Canaan to rejoin with his family there. Jacob had spent the twenty years in service to Laban with no wage for his labors. He now had two wives and their handmaids, eleven sons and one daughter to care for. 1 Timothy 5:8 says that a man must care for his own family and household and if he does not then he has denied the faith. So Jacob struck one more deal with Laban that he would care for his flocks in exchange for the lesser of Laban’s herds. Laban had prospered greatly due to Jacob’s work for him and agreed to the deal. The Lord continued to bless Jacob as He had promised and Jacob prospered greatly also with large herds and servants.

Key Verses

Genesis 49:19, 1 Timothy 5:8

Chapter 31

Verses 1-21

Jacob continued to prosper and to have considerable wealth of his own. Jacob was faithful to the common duties of man that God teaches. We are to serve God through whom the blessings of this life are bestowed upon us. In this life we will go through various stations and in each one we are to work diligently in our duties in honor to our Lord and God.

Men of a selfish heart will consider themselves robbed of all that passes them by and their covetousness for that which others have worked for will even destroy their affection for them. Men mistakenly over value the things of this world and tend to think that what one man has worked for they have been deprived of. The love of wealth is the root of covetousness, envy, and all evil. Greed is an evil God of men in this world and men’s lust to have it all will cause them to take that which belongs to another. This evil in our hearts causes discontent, envy, and discord between men. There are possessions that can be found in this world and happy are they who seek them first. In all of our stations in life we should have respect to the command and promise of our God. If God be with us, then we should not fear for the wants of our life here or fear the perils that surround us. The perils are many in this world but knowing that we are in the providence of God and trusting Him is the greatest encouragement to our heart. To each there is a measure of good and bad in our lives and God is faithful to carry us through each of them. In the difficult times it is good to take refuge in the comfort found in the good seasons of the past. Take encouragement that God who has led us this far is faithful and able to lead us all the way

home. Keeping our communion with God is the best refreshment in time of difficulty. God is faithful to fulfill His promises so let us be faithful to fulfill ours.

The sons of Laban took notice of the increase of Jacob and became envious of his prosperity. Jacob knew that Laban's sons had reported to him and Laban was no longer friendly towards Jacob. God told Jacob to return to the land of his father and that He would be with him.

Verses 22-35

Laban's father Nahor had left the Chaldees to get away from their idolatrous practices and now Laban is chasing Jacob to regain the Idols of his Gods. It was foolish of Laban to call things which could be stolen Gods. Our enemies may steal our goods but enemies cannot steal our God. We read that Rachael stole the images belonging to her father Laban and a scene of iniquity opens up. It seems then that Laban who swore by God also swore by Malcham as well. (Zephaniah 1:5) This is so much like the time we live in as many try to serve God and mammon. Great numbers of people will acknowledge the true God but in their homes and lives serve all kinds of spiritual idolatry. When we give ourselves up to covetousness like Laban, the desires of this world becomes our God. If we reside with the idolaters of this world we will become as they are. We must not forget that we serve the one and true God and it is He whom we serve and it is He who will provide for us.

Verses 36-42

Jacob suffered the heat of the day and the cold of the night to serve Laban for twenty years. This long effort of fourteen years on Jacob's part to gain Laban's two daughters for wives. Six more years Jacob worked to gain a flock from Laban. Laban now has pursued Jacob wanting that which Jacob had earned.

Jacob testified of his faithfulness to Laban that he had cared for his flocks. Jacob had suffered the losses for himself and prospered Laban. Laban was so unjust as to require Jacob to absorb the losses himself. This requirement by Laban was in violation of God's law in Exodus 22:10-13. In Ezekiel 34 God spoke harshly towards shepherds of Israel that did not take proper care of their flock. In John chapter 21 Jesus tells Peter to tend His sheep. As members of the body of Christ we are a part of His flock. We are to love one another and care for one another. Jacob's faithfulness to Laban is an example of his faithfulness to God, trusting God for the eternal reward of the Promised Land.

God spoke to Laban and warned him not to speak bad or good to Jacob. Laban knew that Jacob was blessed by God by seeing how he had prospered him and how God had prospered Jacob. So Laban feared the God of His father Isaac and offered to make a covenant with Jacob. If man is willing to work so long for worldly possessions that will

pass away what should we refuse to endure to become the children of God whose reward is eternal?

Key Verses

Zepheniah 1:5, Ezekiel 34:3, John 21:17, Exodus 22:10-13

Chapter 32

Verses 1-8

The angels of God met Jacob and encouraged him of God's Devine protection. God often sends ministering spirits to comfort and encourage the heirs of salvation. (Psalms 91:11-12) It is probable that only Jacob saw the angels much like Elisha in 2 Kings 6:17. Jacob said this is God's host, or army, as God is often called the Lord of Host. Jacob named the place Mahaniam, which signifies two armies. Most likely one for the host of angels and the other for Jacobs own household. Or more likely there were two hosts of angels. The Jewish writers say the host of God is 60,000 and the Devine Majesty never dwells among less. If the name signifies two hosts then that would have been 120,000 angels. In later times a city by the name of Mahaniam arose near this place and was probably named after this occurrence. (Joshua 21:38)

Jacob sent messengers to Esau who had become a prince in the land of Edom. The message was sent to inform Esau that Jacob was not insisting of his birthright. Yielding pacifies great offences. (Ecclesiastes 10:4) As pacemakers we must also be respectful even to those who are unjustly angry towards us. The messengers returned with the news of Esau's warlike preparations.

Verses 9-23

In times of fear, as well as times of thankfulness, we should bow before God on our knees. Jacob had seen his guard of angels but he appealed to God. Jacob knew that angels were servants of the Lord just like he was. (Revelation 22:9) Jacob offered a great pattern for prayer. Approaching the Lord with a thankful heart for the undeserved blessing that God had given him. Expressing a humble confession of his unworthiness; a statement of his fears and distresses; and placing his hopes upon God. The best we can offer in prayer is to say unto God what He has said to us. Praying back God's Word to Him is pleasing to the Lord. Jacob did not fall into despair nor did he presume upon God's mercy without first employing his own means. God answers prayers by teaching us to order our affairs aright. Jacob sent ahead a present to his brother Esau. Reconciliation is always wise to use first with those who are angry with us. (Proverbs 18:16)

Verses 24-32

Long before the day break Jacob continued to lay his fears upon the Lord. When we find words scarce to fully state our concerns before God prayer is the best avenue to approach God. In this sense when we mean more than we can say, then we wrestle through our emotions in prayer. No matter how tired or discouraged we become, if we prevail in prayer we shall prevail against our enemies as well. Wrestling even in prayer requires much vigor and perseverance. Even as the night passed Jacob did not waver and though the struggle lasted long Jacob kept his faith and did not silence his prayer. Jacob would have his blessing and would rather have a joint dislodged than to leave without being blessed. Fervent prayer is effectual in receiving a blessing from Christ. (Exodus 32:11-13 Isaiah 62:6-7 James 5:15-16) Jacob is forever honored by the angel changing his name to Israel, a prince with God. Having God's favor Jacob also gains favor with men also. Jacob shall prevail and gain the favor of his brother Esau.

Jacob gives a new name to the place and calls it Penuel, the face of God, because there Jacob had seen the appearance of God and found His favor. In later time there was a city built there by that name, Penuel. (Judges 8:8) The Angel who wrestled with Jacob was the second person in the Trinity Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ who would be God manifested in the flesh. God dwelling in the flesh taking on the human nature was called Immanuel. (Hosea 12:4-5)

Key Verses

Ecclesiastes 10:4, Psalms 91:11-12, 2 Kings 6:17, Joshua 21:38, Revelation 22:9, Proverbs 18:16, Hosea 12:4-5, Exodus 32:11-13, Isaiah 62:6-7, James 5:15-16, Judges 8:8

Chapter 33*Verses 1-16*

God is faithful to answer prayer and holds the heart of everyman in His hand. God answered Jacob's prayer for reconciliation between him and his brother Esau. Esau greeted Jacob with the excitement of one who was truly happy to see his brother. At first Esau rejected the gifts of Jacob but after persuasion took them. Esau was excited to see his brother Jacob and wanted to travel back with him but Jacob reminded him because of the nursing animals and the youngness of his children travel would be slow, so Esau reluctantly went on ahead.

The care and attention that Jacob showed towards his family and livestock is an example to the providence and care of our Good Shepherd Jesus. The Good Shepherd who gathers and carries the lambs in his arms close to His bosom, and gently leads those that

are young. (Isaiah 40:11) We should follow this example when ministering to those we attend.

Verses 17-20

Jacob traveled on to Succoth and purchased land there for his family's home. Where he places his tent to live in, one should also provide a place to worship God, as providential care sustains us. Jacob built an altar and named it Elelohe-Israel, which means the God of Israel. God who pours out many blessings each day, more than we even know or could count, He is worthy and deserving of a place for us to worship Him.

Key Verse

Isaiah 40:11

Chapter 34

Verses 1-19

As we, the children of God, are sojourners in this world on our way to God's Kingdom, our children are in grave danger in this world of wickedness. We must be on watch for our children, especially for our daughters. Jacobs's daughter Dinah went out into the country and caught the eye of Shechem and he forced himself upon her. People who burn with the lust for fleshly pleasures do not have concern for the heart of their victim.

Hamor the father of Shechem came out to speak with Jacob to purchase Dinah for a wife to Shechem. The sons of Jacob said they could not agree with Hamor and that Dinah could not marry an uncircumcised male. Jacobs's sons said that if all the males of their family were circumcised then Dinah could marry Shechem. This was a deceitful plan on both sides of the agreement. The Hivites wanted to inter-marry in order to absorb the smaller number and gain the wealth that Jacob had brought into their land.

Verses 20-31

Blessed are those who put their trust and faith in God but those who profess faith in God falsely are judged severely. God judged Hamor and Shechem for their false act of being circumcised to be as one with the family of Israel. The deceit of Jacob's sons was to disable the Hivite men by circumcision. In their soreness Jacob's sons Simeon and Levi attracted the city of Shechem and killed all their males and looted all their wealth. We must be careful when making vows to the Lord God. God is faithful and true in His word to us and can and often does deal with us harshly when we are not truthful to Him.

Chapter 35

Verses 1-5

God tells Jacob to return to Bethel. It was at Bethel that Jacob had the vision of the ladder with angels ascending and descending from Heaven to earth. It was here at Bethel that God promised Jacob that his descendants would number the dust of the earth, and that God would watch over him and keep him until He completed all that He had promised. It was there, at Bethel, that Jacob took the stone he used as a pillow and set it up as a pillar to honor God. Jacob gathered his house and told them to prepare for the journey to Bethel, about twenty miles in distance. Jacob told them not only to prepare for the journey but also for worship of the Lord. His family was to get rid of all the idols and purify themselves. They were to remove the rings from their ears and put on clean garments.

As parents, especially the head of the household, it is a solemn responsibility to train and lead your family in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. In many families that profess to worship God there are surprisingly other Gods in those families as well. Whatever in our life that stands before our true worship of the Lord God almighty is a false God. What are clean garments or new garments if the heart is still sinful? Jacob telling them to put away their idols and changing their garments was also telling them to change their hearts towards the worship of the true God.

As they traveled to Bethel the Canaanites were wanting to seek revenge for the way the sons of Jacob had treated the Shechemites. The Canaanites were afraid to attack Jacob's family for they knew and feared the God of Jacob. The Canaanites were kept back by God's Divine power, as when we walk about in God's work we are under His protection. God is with us while we are with Him and if He be with us then who can be against us?

Verses 6-15

Jacob returned to Bethel where he had been before when traveling to his uncle Laban's many years before. It was there Jacob had the vision of the ladder to heaven and there he had received many promises from God. Jacob built another altar to worship God. God then renewed the promises He had made with Jacob before. Two important promises were that Jacob will be the father of a great nation and that he would be the master of a great land. God again said that Jacob's name shall now be Israel.

There is a spiritual significance to the two promises that God made to Israel. Jacob was probably aware of it but it was not so clear as it is today. Christ is the promised Seed, and heaven is the Promised Land; the former is the foundation, and the latter the top-stone, of all God's favors.

Verses 16-20

On the way to Ephrath Rachael began to give birth to another son. It was a very severe labor and as the child was born Rachael in her last breath named the child Benoni, which means “son of my sorrow.” How sorrowful the sons of Bethlehem, present day Ephrath, that after the birth of Jesus King Herod slaughtered all the male children 2 years and younger. Even then it is recorded in the gospel of Matthew that Rachael wept for her children. Because Israel would not want to recall the death of Rachael every time he called his son changed Benoni’s name to Benjamin.

Key Verses

Joshua 24:15, Ephesians 6:4, Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:16-18

Joseph

Joseph was the eleventh son of Jacob born of Rachael. Rachael was the younger daughter of Israel’s uncle Laban whom he had originally worked for seven years to marry. But Laban had tricked Israel and he actually had work to marry Rachael’s sister Leah. Israel worked for his father in law Laban another seven years in order to marry Rachael. Rachael was barren for most of their marriage but God opened up her womb and she bore Joseph and later she died giving birth to Benjamin.

Joseph’s ten older brothers considered him their father Israel’s favorite. For this reason they conspired against Joseph and sold him to Ishmaelite traders who took him to Egypt. Joseph had been inspired by dreams from God and this gave him strength and confidence and he endured through the trials that he faced in Egypt.

The Ishmaelite’s took and sold Joseph to one of Pharaoh’s officers and Joseph served him dutifully. The officer’s wife was attracted to Joseph and tried to seduce him but Joseph rejected her. In her anger she went to her husband and lied about Joseph and he was thrown into prison. The prison keeper befriended Joseph and learned of his ability to interpret dreams.

The Pharaoh had a dream that troubled him greatly and Joseph was called to interpret this dream for him. Joseph correctly interpreted the dream to mean there would be a time of plenty followed by a time of famine in Egypt. For this ability Pharaoh rewarded Joseph with charge of all the lands of Egypt. During the times of plenty Joseph stored up the abundance to be used in the time of famine.

It was in the time of famine that Joseph’s brothers came to Egypt to find food for the family of Joseph’s father Israel. They did not recognize Joseph as their brother and he ordered

them to return to Canaan and return with their younger brother Benjamin. When the brothers returned with Benjamin Joseph revealed his identity to them and they suffered the remorse of their deeds towards Joseph and he forgave them. As a result Joseph's family moved to Egypt and was saved from starvation. Joseph's years of steadfast reliance on God brought about not only reunion but his high position so that he was able to save a nation from starvation.

Chapter 37

Verses 1-4

There was rivalry between the sons of Israel, as the twelve of them were born of four different mothers. Eight of Israel's sons were born to Leah and her handmaid Zilpah. Four of Jacob's sons were born of Rachael and her handmaid Bilhah with only Joseph and Benjamin being born of Rachael. It was seen by the older brothers that Israel loved Joseph more than the all the others combined as Joseph was the son of his old age. Israel showed his favored love towards Joseph by providing him a multi colored coat. It is wrong for parents to make a difference between one child and another as the other will soon notice. For this reason Joseph's brothers hated him. Joseph gave account to his father of their misconduct towards him but not as a tale teller but as a restraint against their activity towards him.

Verses 5-11

Joseph had two dreams of revelation that he related to his brothers and father. It was the dream that his sheaf would rise up and the brother's sheaves would bow down to his. The other dream of Joseph's was that the sun and moon and all the stars of heaven would bow down to him. The brothers interpreted the dream correctly and it made them hate Joseph even the more. Not only that they conspired to kill him to insure that any such dream would not come true. Even Joseph's father Israel rebuked him but kept the dreams in his mind. While their plan was in order to defeat the dream from coming to truth their plan actually became an instrument for the dream to come true.

In later times the Jews reacted much the same way to the vision of Jesus and His Kingdom. The Jewish leaders determined that Jesus should not reign over them planned to kill Him and they themselves became the instruments for the work of Christ to be done by His crucifixion making way for the exaltation for what they had tried to prevent.

Verses 12-22

Joseph is sent by his father Israel to check on his brothers pasturing the flock near Shechem. Perhaps Israel was worried as this was the town that his son's Simeon and Levi and raided and Killed Simeon and all the males of the town. They had also plundered all the wealth of the town, this they did because of the rape of their sister Dinah. Joseph was obedient to his father and went to Shechem to check on the safety of his brothers.

From a distance his brothers saw Joseph coming and plotted to kill him. When we harbor hatred in our hearts Jesus said we have already committed murder in our hearts. (1 John 3:15)

God holds all hearts in His hands and Reuben, who had to most reason to hate Joseph because he was the oldest and had the birthright, proves that he is Joseph's best friend at this moment. Reuben convinces his brothers to spare Joseph and place him in a pit until he could rescue him at a later time. God overruled their wicked plans and purposes in order to use Joseph as an instrument to save many.

There is a comparison here to Jesus who was beloved by the Father and sent into the world for His chosen people which rejected and hated him. Jesus came in great humility to seek and save that which was lost. His own not only rejected Him but also crucified Him.

Verses 23-30

They stripped Joseph of his coat and placed him in a pit. Fortunately the pit was empty and not filled with water. In their lack of concern for their brother they went and ate while listening to Joseph's cries for help. (Amos 6:6)

Verses 31-36

Often when people fall to the temptations of Satan and commit sin Satan teaches them to cover their sins with yet another sin. In an effort to conceal their treachery towards Joseph they bloodied his coat and took it to their father and let him draw his own conclusion as to Joseph's fate. Israel supposed Joseph was devoured by a wild animal and mourned his death. His brothers falsely comforted their father when only the truth would have been a comfort to their father's grief. They kept their council to each other but their evil action has come to light and is recorded here in God's Word for all to know. Hearts are hardened by the deceitfulness of sin in our lives and who can know the darkest corners of the heart. The greater affection we have for our loved ones causes the greater affliction at their loss.

Throughout this whole chapter we can see the marvelous workings of God's providence. Joseph's brothers seem to have gotten their end accomplishment. The Ishmaelite merchants, who care not what they deal in, have gotten their end by a profit in selling Joseph as a slave. Potiphar has received his end also with the purchase of a fine young slave. Through the wickedness of all these players God's design in purpose will be fulfilled.

The family of Israel will go down to Egypt to escape the famine to come. Moses will deliver them and take them to the Promised Land. There the true religion of the world will have its birth and all nations of the earth will be blessed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus

the wrath of man shall praise the Lord, and the remainder thereof will he restrain. (Psalms 76:10)

Key Verses

1 John 3:15, Amos 6:6, Psalms 76:10

Chapter 38

This chapter may seem out of place, as Moses changes focus from Joseph to his brother Judah. The time frame of this chapter is the same as the amount of time that passed from when Joseph was sold by his brothers into slavery until the time his family came to Egypt for food during the famine.

First this chapter is a story of Judah who was the bloodline of the coming Messiah. Second it was Judah that persuaded his brothers not to kill Joseph but to sell him into slavery. Third Judah's immorality is the contrast to the moral purity of Joseph. Forth it sets the stage for Joseph's reunion with his brothers twenty two years later. During this time Judah leaves home and marries a Canaanite woman and has three sons, two of which are so wicked that God takes their lives.

It is not surprising that Judah left home as it must have been hard to see his father, Israel grieve over the death of Joseph and refusing to be comforted. Abraham was careful not to have his son Isaac marry a Canaanite woman. Isaac was not so careful but God provided two wives for Jacob through Rebekah's brother Laban. Judah leaves home and marries a Canaanite woman who bears him three sons. When the firstborn son, Er, was old enough Judah acquires a wife for him named Tamar, a Canaanite. Er was evil in God's sight and God took his life. Judah instructed his next born son Onan to take Tamar for a wife and raise up a descendant for his dead brother, but he prevented Tamar from bearing a son. For this act God took Onan's life also. Judah afraid to lose another son asked Tamar to wait until his third son, Shelah, was old enough to marry.

After a considerable amount of time Judah's wife died and Tamar realized that Judah would never give her his third son. Tamar disguised herself as a prostitute and stationed herself along the road she knew Judah would be passing to Timnah. Judah hired her to go in with him and gave her some of his possessions as a surety until payment could be made. Sometime later Judah was told that his daughter-in-law, Tamar, was with child. Judah became furious and insisted that she be put to death for her immorality. Tamar produced the items that he had left as surety and he realized that he had slept with her. Judah proclaimed that she was more righteous than he as she was the one that sought to preserve his bloodline.

Tamar bore twins to Judah and Perez would be the one through whom the Messiah would be born, no thanks to Judah. (Ruth 4:12 Hebrews 7:14) This is why God removed the Israelites from Canaan to Egypt. The Egyptians loathed the Hebrews and would not have any kind of relations with them, even if Judah's brothers had been as immoral as he. If the Israelites had remained in Canaan they would have probably inter-married. This episode of Judah and Tamar explains why God set the Israelite nation in Egypt for four hundred years.

Key Verse

Ruth 4:12, Hebrews 7:14

Chapter 39

Verses 1-6

If anyone could have been bitter and rebellious towards God it would have been Joseph. Joseph was faithful to his God and Lord; he was obedient to his father Israel, and he was dutifully performing the task that had been assigned to him. Yet his own family, his brothers, had taken him and sold him into slavery in the foreign land of Egypt. Our God is bigger than the universe we live in and there is no where we can be that He is not there with us. No matter what our station in life or the labors we must perform, we may be working for another person, but our work is to be done in a manner that will glorify our God. God is the one who blesses us with His provision and it is God who blesses the fruits of our labor. God prospering us in our work will also prosper the ones we work with and for. God holds the hearts of all in His hand and can cause even the hardest of hearts to find favor with us.

Joseph was put into the service of Potiphar who was in charge of the body guard for Pharaoh. Potiphar saw that God was with Joseph and placed him in charge of his whole house. Potiphar prospered because of Joseph and did not concern himself with the care of his home as Joseph had gained his trust.

Verses 7-12

The lust of the eye for the desires of the flesh is a snare that many are caught in. If we give even the lest of a foothold within our mind, how rapidly can we fall into its clutch. Once lust has gained its power decency, reputation, and conscience are all sacrificed. Potiphar's wife was fully engaged to do evil. When Satan had failed to overcome Joseph with the troubles and trials he appealed to the sensual pleasures of this world. Joseph, by the grace of God, was enabled to overcome the temptations that Potiphar's wife hurled at him repeatedly. Displeasing her could have been a danger to Joseph and violating the trust of Potiphar was just as dangerous.

Joseph responds to Potiphar's wife that he owed his loyalty to both God and his master. That her husband had placed him in charge of all that he had and that Joseph could not violate that trust. Joseph would not offend his God and urges these arguments upon himself. Joseph considers who he was that was being tempted. Joseph was in covenant with God who professed religion and relation to him. What this sin was that he was being tempted with. Others may have thought this a small matter but it was not to Joseph. Joseph saw sin for what sin is wickedness towards God. Joseph also considered whom he was tempted to sin against. Sin is against the nature and dominion of God, against His love and design. For this reason those who love God hate sin. Through the grace of God Joseph was able to resist the temptation by avoiding the tempter. He did not dwell in the thought of or remain in the vicinity of it. Joseph fled away from it as if escaping for his life.

Verses 13-18

As we experience life we to often learn, those who break the bonds of their modesty are never bound by the bonds of truth. Such was the example of Potiphar's wife when she could not seduce Joseph she sought to avenge his rejection of her. She accused Joseph of trying to lie with her to the other servants and to her husband Potiphar. In this world it seems the worst of criminals will falsely accuse the best of people of the worst of crimes. The day will come, sooner than later, when all of mankind shall appear in their true character.

Verses 19-23

Potiphar believed the false accusations of his wife and placed Joseph in prison. Joseph was a child of God and under the protection of God. God continued to use this experience in bringing honor to Joseph. Joseph was alone and away from family and relations, there were none to help him, but our God is faithful and even in prison God opened doors for Joseph. God gave Joseph favor in the eyes of the keeper of the prison. Joseph was entrusted to manage the affairs of the prison. A good man will work to his full potential no matter where his station is. A good man will even be a blessing to those around him even in prison. We have here yet another vision of the coming Messiah. Jesus also suffered being tempted and was without sin. Jesus was slandered, persecuted, and imprisoned, all without cause. It was Jesus who by the way of the cross ascended to the throne. May it be we also that are enabled to follow in the same path of submitting and suffering to arrive at the same place in glory.

Chapter 40

Verses 1-19

Joseph was not only in charge of the prison but he was a servant to the prisoners. Perhaps we see a maturing here of Joseph. When Joseph was sent out by his father Israel to check on his brothers he did not go as a servant but as a master. Now as a master in the prison he is serving his fellow prisoners.

Pharaoh's butler and baker fell out of favor with Pharaoh and were also placed in the prison. One day they were troubled and Joseph being concerned for them asked why they were troubled. They each said they each had a dream and there was no one to interpret the dream. Joseph was careful to give God the glory for his ability to interpret their dreams. The butlers dream was interpreted first and Joseph told him that in three days he would be restored to his former position. Joseph asked the butler once he was back in Pharaoh's service to remember him to Pharaoh.

Joseph then interpreted the bakers dream telling him that in three days he would be executed. When dealing with people we should be honest even if the news is bad. It is always favorable to us to deliver good news. But when the news is adverse we must in a comforting straightforward manner deliver the truth. It is our duty before God and mankind to speak in the spirit of truth.

Verses 20-23

The dreams that Joseph had interpreted for the butler and the baker came true just as he had said. The butler failed to mention Joseph to Pharaoh and forgot all about him. It is not an unusual thing in this world of the prince of the air that hatred is shown for acts of love and kind people are slighted for their good deeds. When those who once were in distress have found comfort how quick they are to forget those who aided them in their time of need.

Joseph learned from his disappointment to fully trust God for his care. We cannot expect too little from man, nor too much from God. It is a reminder of how sometimes we forget the One who hung on a Roman Cross that we might gain our freedom for sin. How could we forget our Lord and Savior we wonder, yet often when times are good we do. Our Lord is faithful to forgive and graceful to restore us, as it is not our love for Him we are saved but His love for us.

Chapter 41

Verses 1-8

The Pharaoh had two dreams which troubled his spirit. It was a vision of seven fat cows being eaten by seven skinny cows. The second vision was that of seven poor ears of corn devouring seven good ears of corn. The troubling of his spirit would be a positive indication that God produced these dreams. The wise men and magicians of Egypt were unable to interpret these two dreams for Pharaoh.

Verses 9-32

We all live in a time when the desires we have we want now. We pray and expect to have the answer in short time. But we serve an all knowing God who knows when the time is right for answered prayer. Joseph spent another two years in prison before he was called

out. I can only imagine that each day he prayed to God asking for his release. After all Joseph had committed no crime. Yet two years passed before that prayer would be answered. Suppose Joseph had been released quickly after the butler had been restored to his position. In all probability Joseph would have gone back home to his family. Joseph would not have received the blessings of his service to Pharaoh. His family would not have had a place of escape from the famine. God knows what has been, what is, and what is to come. Therefore God knows when it is the best time for blessings to come into our lives. God also knows the harm blessing can cause if received at the wrong time. God knows our needs before we even ask for them and He also knows the proper time for us to receive them.

After two years the butler remembers Joseph when Pharaoh has his two dreams. The butler tells Pharaoh about Joseph and Pharaoh sent for him. When Joseph learns why Pharaoh has called him he quickly gives God the glory for the dreams he is about to interpret for Pharaoh. Joseph interprets the dreams as one in the same. There will be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. It is wise in time of plenty to save for the times of lack. Take notice of the goodness of God to send seven years of plenty before the seven years of want. We should not disregard the abundant blessings of the Lord and prepare for the lean times that come in the cycle of our lives. There is an important spiritual message here as well. We must labor for food for our bodies but then we do not live on bread alone for all of this world will pass as well as ourselves. We live on the bread of life that comes from the Word of God. Through Him we have eternal life in His Kingdom. Let us not only labor for the food of this world but labor to store of the blessings of the world to come.

Verses 33-45

Joseph showed a great respect for the Pharaoh of Egypt by serving him in a selfless manner. Joseph didn't say I can interpret your dreams but you have to help me first. Joseph honored God by delivering His message to Pharaoh and by providing good council so they would be prepared for the famine to come. Not only would the Egyptian people be spared but also the family of Israel. In return for Joseph's faithfulness in his God Pharaoh recognized that the Spirit of God was in Joseph. Pharaoh honors Joseph with a new name, Zaphnath-paaneah, "a revealer of secrets." Pharaoh gives Joseph his ring and makes no one higher in Egypt than Joseph other than Pharaoh.

Verses 46-57

Joseph was diligent in storing up provision in the years of plenty. Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara priest of On, was made Joseph's wife and she bore him two sons Manasseh and Ephraim. Joseph named his sons according to the Divine Providence that God had shown him. Manasseh means, "Making to forget". Joseph had forgotten all the anger he had towards his brothers for selling him into slavery. The Providence of God had been so

great that now Joseph could see the blessing in it. Ephraim means, “Fruitfulness”. Joseph had been fruitful here in the land of Egypt. The famine came and Joseph labored himself to manage the distribution of the stored grain so that everyone would have according to their need. The famine spread to all the lands surrounding Egypt and even unto Canaan the land of his father Jacob and his family.

Let these events lead us to Jesus. We live in a time of famine in that many in the world today are starving for the bread of life. Without money and without price God’s grace and the free gift of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ. Let us be busy feeding the hungry lest they perish for the lack of the bread of life, which is Jesus Christ.

Chapter 42

Verses 1-6

Israel seeing that his neighbors were getting food from Egypt he sent ten of his son’s to buy food there. Israel did not send his youngest son Benjamin for fear that harm would come to him. Many are starving today for the spiritual bread that Jesus offers. Having found where help is for our souls we should seek it without delay. Jesus offers a path to life while all other roads lead to death. We all have a hunger in our spirits and only Jesus can satisfy our need. (John 6:35) Joseph was in charge of the distribution of the grain and the sons of Israel came before him and bowed down before him. Unknowingly they had fulfilled the prophecy of Joseph’s dream that they would bow before him.

Verses 7-20

Some see Joseph’s treatment of his brothers as revengeful towards them for their treatment of him when he was a young boy. This is not the case for several reasons.

First, if Joseph really wanted to cause great duress on his brothers he would have revealed that it was he Joseph their betrayed brother. This certainly would have put an undue amount of fear in their hearts.

Second, his brothers did not recognize Joseph but he recognized them. Joseph remembered the dream that they would someday bow down to him, which now they were doing. This not only showed Joseph that God had made him the leader of the family but also it was now his responsibility to do what was best for them all.

Third, we are told in verse 7 that Joseph’s actions were a disguise that he might interrogate them to learn about his family.

Fourth, several times Joseph had to leave their presence because of his emotions towards them. Joseph loved them, he did not hate them and wept over them out of his concern for them.

Fifth, Joseph's actions towards his brothers were not vindictive but gracious. Twice he had sent them back to Canaan with the grain they had purchased but had placed their money back in the packs. Even the suffering he did cause his brothers was an act of grace towards them, as its purpose was to bring them to repentance and reconcile them to him.

God sometimes deals with us harshly in an effort to get our attention, to make us aware of wrong actions, and to bring about repentance. The Lord God will discipline his children much like a good father should. (Hebrews 12:6)

Verses 21-24

Many times the evil we have done in the past make little effect upon our conscience. Yet as we travel on in life the sins of our past will catch up with us and the guilt we harbor in our conscience will conflict our inner peace. Present day afflictions often reveal to us the guilt stored up from our past. Whenever we think wrongs have been committed against us we should not fail to remember the wrongs we have also committed. Reuben alone could take comfort that he had done what he could to prevent the evil against Joseph. When we share in the sufferings of others it will be a good comfort for our conscience if we had not shared in the evil deeds but witnessed against them. Twenty years after their mistreatment of Joseph the events of that day had come back to visit them, as is the function of our conscience to bring to our mind of things long since said and done.

Verses 25-28

The sons of Israel had come to Egypt to buy corn and corn they now had along with their money returned to them. When they had discovered that their money was in the sacks of grain they had fear come over them. They questioned what had God done to them? Jesus is our supply and freely gives without money or price. But the guilt of our conscience can cause us to receive God's providence without the light of His truth that God loves us. We fail to see that God is providing good things for us but blame Him for the misfortune in our lives.

Verses 29-38

Israel was displeased with the report of his sons upon their return from Egypt. The money Joseph had returned to them in the packs of grain even caused fear for Israel. Israel accused his sons of even bringing more trouble upon him. When past behavior of children causes parents to not know how to trust their children it is a very sad thing. Israel clearly did not trust his sons, as the last time he saw Joseph was when he sent him out to his brothers and now Simeon has been held captive while in their care. Israel could not bring it to himself to trust the only other son of Rachael to them as well.

Jacob has given up Joseph for gone, and Simeon and Benjamin as in danger; and concludes, all these things are against him. We so often see the trials and tribulations of

life as working against us. So often the difficult times in our lives cause us to become discouraged and we fall into times of depression and fail to focus on our hope. Often we think life is working against us where if we would hold strong in our faith and persevere we would see that these times will also work for good. (Romans 8:28) God as our heavenly Father will train us up as His children that through the tough times in life we will learn to trust Him. When times are not as we would like then to be we should examine ourselves to ensure we are in God's will and purpose for our lives. (2 Corinthians 13:5) God will bring us to strong humbling convictions and will break the pride of our hearts leading us to true repentance. In times of trial we should not yield to discouragement but seek Him as our refuge in the storm. If we seek Him, trust and obey Him, then He will bless far more than we would expect.

Chapter 43

Verses 1-14

The Seven Flaws of Israel's Leadership

Procrastinate: Whatever problems arise today is best dealt with tomorrow. Jacob delayed acting decisively on the issue of sending Benjamin to Egypt until the situation reached crisis proportions. Genesis 43:10

Minimize: No problem can possibly be as bad as it seems. If the first principle betrays a "manna mentality," the second attempts to minimize the problem to the point where it is hardly worth thinking about. If a problem is not serious, then it can be put off indefinitely. Genesis 43:2

Lie: In a crisis, honesty is often not the best policy. Israel still had a lot of the old deceiver in him. He believed that good communication only causes problems. He thought that the less others knew about him, the better off he and his family would be. Israel's sons were thus rebuked for telling Joseph any facts about the family. Genesis 43:6

Always look out for number one. Israel's leadership was focused on seeking his own interests. It was Judah who urged his father to think of others rather than himself. Genesis 43:3

Pass the buck: As much as is possible, see to it that others receive the blame for your mistakes. Israel sought to place the responsibility for his troubles on Judah and his

brothers, because they told the truth. A good leader is one who is willing to accept responsibility for his mistakes. Genesis 43:6

Bribe: If our efforts to solve a problem fail, add money. Israel hoped that his presents, along with a double payment, would help achieve his desired ends. Genesis 43:12

Get religion: Call on God for help, but don't get your hopes up. It is no accident that Israel mentions God last. It never seemed to occur to him (as it did to Joseph) that God was actively involved in all of his troubles. His wish that God would be with his sons is only a last ditch effort, when it should have been his first line of defense. "Foxhole religion" is not new, nor is it a thing of the past. Jacob's words, "As for me, if I lose my children I lose them", is not an expression of great faith, but sounds much more like fatalism. Genesis 43:14

Israel did show prudence in three points of his instruction to his sons. Israel returned the money found in the packs of grain. 1. Honesty should cause us to not only return to others what has come by our own fault but also what has been mistakenly given to us. If we accept that which have been given to us in error, then we have kept it in deceit. 2. Israel also sent twice as much as the first time. The price may have increased for the grain or they may have to pay a ransom for Simeon. 3. Israel also sent as a present that which he had from the land of Canaan. Israel sent that which may have been scarce in Egypt as a token of his gratitude.

Men who so greatly treasure the luxuries of this world when in need of the basic necessities will trade them freely. Is it so that as we go through life we seek the pleasures of this world and deprive ourselves of what is truly needed, a right relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. How quickly we should be willing to forsake them all for the grace and goodness of Jesus. Our way to prevail with men is to first prevail with the Lord through fervent prayer. Thy will be done, should close every petition for the mercies of this life, or against the afflictions of this life.

Verses 15-25

When the sons of Israel returned to Egypt they were summoned to the house of Joseph. A conscience of guilt will make the worst of every situation. They explained to Joseph's servant that they had found the money in their packs and did not know how it was placed there. Joseph's servant encouraged them, as it is evident by the words he spoke that his master, Joseph had taught him about the God of the Hebrews.

The servant did all possible to extend the hospitality of his master house unto the sons of Israel, Joseph's brothers. He brought Simeon out to them and invited them all into Joseph's house. He brought them water to drink and their feet were washed. Their donkeys were also fed.

Verses 26-34

The sons of Israel had prepared the gifts they had brought with them at their fathers direction. They had brought a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachios and almonds. These were the very things that the Ishmaelite traders were carrying when they had sold Joseph into slavery. When they sat down to eat their food, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelite's coming from Gilead. Their camels were carrying spices, balm, and myrrh down to Egypt. (Genesis 37:25) How the sight and smell of these gifts must have pained Joseph and reminded him of what his brothers had done to him. Joseph remained resolute in his desire for reconciliation with his brothers and family.

Joseph extended all hospitality towards his brothers showing concern for their welfare and that of his father Israel. He brought them into his table to feast even in time of famine. He gave each brother a portion from his table but gave Benjamin five portions. Perhaps Joseph was trying to see if there was any envy towards him the son of Rachael. We should learn to be content with our own portion in life and not be envious of what others have.

Jesus shows those whom He loves more and more each day of our need for Him. He makes us to see that He is our only refuge from destruction. He will overcome our unwillingness and draw us to Himself. Then as we become obedient to Him He gives us a greater taste of His love and the abundance of provision from His house.

Chapter 44

Verses 1-17

Surely Joseph had a favorable love towards his brother born of his mother Rachael. Of all of Joseph's brothers only Benjamin was of the same mother as Joseph. The rest of his brothers had sold Joseph into slavery twenty years earlier. These brothers had feared the sin of that day would have brought them into judgment before Joseph Pharaoh's master of the land. To further test them Joseph had his silver cup put into Benjamin's sack of grain where Joseph's servant had found it upon his search. Now the twelve sons of Israel stood before Joseph accused of stealing his silver cup. They had offered as punishment that they should all become his slaves but Joseph refused their offer. Joseph said only the guilty one, Benjamin would become his slave. The test now was to see how his brothers would respond to the loss of another brother born of Rachael.

Verses 18-34

Judah, who had thrown Joseph's blood stained coat at his father's feet twenty years before, now pleads with Joseph to spare his brother Benjamin not only for his sake but for the sake of his father. Judah told Joseph that if Benjamin did not return from Egypt that his father would surly die from grief. Judah begged Joseph to allow Benjamin to go free and in exchange he would be Joseph's slave. It is as our Lord Jesus, who humbles

and proves His people that after they has tasted His love He brings remembrance of their sins that they will exercise repentance and know how they owe to His abundant mercy.

Key Verse

Hebrews 7:14

Chapter 45

Verses 1-15

Joseph drew his brothers unto himself much like Jesus draws us unto himself. As when he drew Paul on the road to Damascus by saying, "I am Jesus." As Jesus did when He comforted His disciples, "It is I, be not afraid," as Jesus manifest Himself to us He draws us near with a true heart. Which Joseph did to his brothers and told them not to fear, as what they had done to him God had made come to good. That is was His plan to bring all this about for the preservation of Israel's family. That He Joseph would now be able to provide for them. Joseph would now be the provider for Israel and all his family; it is the duty of children to care for their parents and their family when in need. (1 Timothy 5:4) Now the brothers of Joseph had fully repented of the sin against Joseph and reconciliation had been made and the whole of their family had been made. After the tokens of true reconciliation with the Lord Jesus, sweet communion with him follows.

Verses 16-24

Joseph bids his brothers farewell and tells them "Do not quarrel on the journey." Joseph had forgiven them and did not want this peace to be distracted by them arguing with one another. This Command our Lord Jesus has also gives to us, that we should love one another. As Jesus has forgiven each of us we should also forgive one another. It is as we too are traveling through a foreign land as they were through Egypt, to the home land of God's glory, as they to Canaan. That one day we hope to be with Him in perfect peace in God's Kingdom of glory.

Verses 25-28

The final three verses of this chapter is the essence of our hope through Jesus. Jesus whom we once had rejected and refused to believe in is now our Savior and Lord. Jesus loves us as a brother. He gives us His assurance in love by the riches of His glory through His grace. Jesus commands us to lay aside envy, anger, malice, and strife, and to live in peace with each other. Jesus supplies all that we will need to make that journey home that where He is we may also be.

Key Verse

1 Timothy 5:4

Chapter 46

Verses 1-4

Israel went and built an altar unto God to seek His blessing on moving his family to Egypt. When we are faced with small and big changes in our life, when we are contemplating new directions to take and lead our families into, to know that our path will be secure we should always take council with the Lord. Peace only comes when we are walking in the path that God has laid before us, only in that path will His presence be with us to sustain and protect. It is as our sojourn through this world, as we pass through the valley of the shadow of death we fear no evil for we are in the presence of our Lord. (Proverbs 14:26)

Verses 28-34

Shepherds were loathsome to the Egyptians and Joseph made arrangement for them to settle away from the population so they would not be hindered in their occupation. Life holds different stations for each and while we should always strive for betterment we should always be content with what we have. Joseph could have placed them in great positions in Egypt, but this would have caused the envy of the Egyptians. The family of Israel had been Sheppard's since their father Abraham and this was their calling. We should accept our calling and be diligent in our labor for it to the glory of our God.

The brothers of Joseph had in the past contrived towards Joseph's demise by selling him into slavery. Joseph was now busy contriving for the good of his father and brothers. This is the example that we should follow that it is better to return good for evil, not only for the good of those who have brought evil against us but for the blessing upon us.

Key Verse

Proverbs 14:26

Chapter 47

Verses 1-6

Joseph was the greatest man in Egypt but was not ashamed of his family. Joseph lifted them up before Pharaoh and was proud of them. Pharaoh honored his family with a land to be their own. Pharaoh even offered some of the men of Israel's family employment to care for his cattle. Jesus who is Lord and God of our lives, co-partner in all of creation is not ashamed to call us His brethren.

Verses 7-12

Joseph brought his father Israel before Pharaoh as a matter of his pride. Israel gives an account of himself before Pharaoh. Israel gave an unusual answer to a common question. What is our time here? Israel numbered his days a few, as even as they were one hundred thirty they are but a breath in eternity. His vision is that which we should have, as we are but sojourners in a foreign land. We are passing through on our way to a far grander place than this we are in. Here in this world is not our home, our habitation is in the Kingdom to come, our inheritance, and our treasures are in Heaven. Israel said his days were evil. This is true of man, as the world we live in is filled by evil. Israel's answer impressed the Pharaoh as even he must have known that all the prosperity of this world and the happiness found there-in can not last long. After a life of vanity and tribulation man goes to the grave either from the throne or the tent in the field. There is nothing in this world that can truly make us happy but the hope of an everlasting home in heaven.

Verses 13-26

The famine had now devastated the Egyptian population, all their money was spent, their livestock traded away, and their land given over. Through the wise leadership of Joseph's provision food was available to the people but not without the cost of everything they had. In desperation they had parted with all their worldly treasure for that very basic need of food for their body. Hunger can drive people to the most extreme actions to fulfill their need. They even at last traded their liberty for their daily bread. If people today would only see the devastation of their darkened hearts, they would give all their worth to restore their souls. Yet they are caught up in their greed for more of that which will not sustain them. God in His grace offers a path to their salvation and without cost it is free. How blind the hearts of men are to forsake the eternal spirit for the benefit of dying flesh. Is it then too much for us to count all but loss, and follow Him who will both save our souls, and give us a hundredfold? Surely if Jesus is willing to save us are we not willing to become his servants?

Verses 27-31

The time now draws near for the death of Israel and he can feel it approaching. He calls to his son Joseph and make him vow to bury him not in Egypt but in the promised land of the covenant. Joseph makes this vow. Israel had the vision of his father Isaac and his father Abraham that this world is just but a temporal journey to a far greater Promised Land. It was by their faith in the promise of God and their vision and trust in the truth of His Word that God would see them through to that far off shore. (Hebrews 11:13-14)

Key Verse

Hebrews 11:13-14

Chapter 48

Verses 1-7

Upon hearing that his father Israel was weakening Joseph took his sons to him to be blessed. As sad as this occasion may have been it is good for the young to hear the testimony of the aged. There is a wealth of advice to be learned from the righteous before they depart to their eternal home. Israel claimed them to be as his own and decreed that they should return with the blessing of Israel's father Isaac to the promised land of Canaan. Israel would have Ephraim and Manasseh to know that it is better to be low in the church than to be high and mighty without it.

Verses 8-22

Israel crossed his hand and began to bless the second born son over the first born. Joseph tried to intervene but Israel rebuked him. God when blessing His people often gives more to others than to some. He blesses them with more gifts, grace, comfort, and more of the good of life. God often gives more to the least in life, the weaker ones of this world, and He raises the poor out of the dust. The order of nature has no bound on God's grace. God does not seek those whom we think most deserving but as it pleases Him. How poor are they who have accumulated none of the riches of this world? How fearful is the deathbed of the one whose hope is in the Lord? How dreadful are the apprehensions of the evil in the lives of those who have no hope but evil for eternity?

There is a similarity of the two blessings between Ephraim and Manasseh and that of Jacob and Esau. Both were the will of God but Jacob seized his by deception and Joseph tried to interfere. God will bless whom He pleases and not by the merits of man. In faith in God Israel blessed the two sons of Joseph and praised the God of his father's in doing so.

Key Verses

Hebrews 11:21, Romans 9:6-13

Chapter 49

Verses 1-2

Israel gathered his sons in the land of Goshen in the midst of the Egyptians and commissioned them to remain together as one nation. These were the words of Israel spoken in the power of the Holy Spirit for this was the plan and purpose of God's chosen people. The blessings of Israel are more than his thoughts but is prophecy concerning the future of each of his sons.

Verses 3-7

Reuben had lost his first born birth right because of his wickedness. We must as we travel through this world always be repentant so that our past sins are not again revealed to us. Simeon and Levi were revengeful as demonstrated in their treatment of the Shechemites. Our souls bring us honor and are what sets us aside from the beast of the field that perish. Israel does not curse them personally but their passionate lust. Israel said that he would divide them and this was a blessing to Levi. Levi's tribe became the priest and preformed the temple worship for all the nation of Israel. It was the tribe of Levi that shown their zeal against the worship of the golden café. (Exodus 32)

Verses 8-12

Then Israel blessed Judah whose name means praise. It was Judah whom God was praised by his mother in Chapter 29:35. God was praised by him and praised through him and now his brothers would praise him. Strong and courageous was the tribe of Judah. He was compared to a lion enjoying the satisfaction of his power and success. It was from Judah that the promised Messiah would come. Shiloh, that promised Seed in whom the earth should be blessed, "that peaceable and prosperous One," or "Savior," he shall come of Judah. Israel saw from a great distance the coming of Christ's day and was a comfort to him on his death bed. Christ from Judah and in him there is much that is a blessing to the soul. Christ is the true vine and wine is the symbol of His blood, a true drink, as shed for sinners and applied in faith. The blessings of His gospel are wine and milk without cost. Substance freely given by God's grace for every thirsty soul that seeks for refreshment. (Isaiah 55:1)

Verses 13-18

Israel's blessing say that Zebulun will be a haven for ships. If prophecy says this will be then be sure providence will so plant him. Issachar was to have land that produced much for his labors. Dan by his cunning will gain advantages over his enemies.

Verses 19-21

Israel signifies the name of Gad in his blessing, which means troop. The cause of God's people at time may seem conflicted and impoverished but victory will come to them at last. Grace in the soul often times is trampled by the conflicts of this life and corruption may at time overcome it. The cause is Gods and in time grace will conquer the trials of this world. (Romans 8:37) Asher became a rich tribe as his inheritance bordered on Carmel. Naphtali was not as industrious as his brothers but took things at ease. Naphtali was more full of good words and craving of mercy.

Verses 22-27

The blessing Israel gave to Joseph was very full and many were born out by history. Through all of Joseph's trials he did not falter and bore all his labors with firmness. God's grace is sufficient for resisting our temptations and overcoming our afflictions. In Joseph's

care for his father and the family of Israel he became a good shepherd. Blessings are promised to Joseph's posterity, typical of the vast and everlasting blessings which come upon the spiritual seed of Christ. Benjamin was the warrior of the tribes of Israel. The Apostle Paul came from the tribe of Benjamin. (Romans 11:1 Philippians 3:5)

Key Verses

Exodus 32, Isaiah 55:1 Romans 8:37, Romans 11:1, Philippians 3:5

Final Thoughts

Jacob became a mirror of the nation that was named after him, Israel. Like Jacob the nation of Israel relied often upon their own efforts rather than their dependence upon God. Much of the time they opposed God and trusted on their own judgments. In spite of their many disobediences God through providence brought about good in their history and they avoided destruction. To this day the nation of Israel has yet to fully enjoy the grace of God. This period in the history will only come after they submit to their Messiah Jesus Christ. (Galatians 3:15-16)

Judah abandoned his family and took a Canaanite wife and his sons also. In spite of his disobedience towards God his bloodline to the Messiah was kept. It was Judah that persuaded his brothers to sell Joseph to the Ishmaelite traders on their way to trade in Egypt. Judah saw his sin and repented of it. Judah even realized that his Gentile daughter-in-law was more righteous than he. Judah's father Jacob failed to take on the spiritual responsibilities of the family and Judah took over that responsibility. Judah also stepped forward and took on the responsibility of caring for his younger brother Benjamin. When Joseph attempted to make a virtual replay of what had happened to him at Dothan Judah stepped forward and offered to take Benjamin's place as Joseph's slave. As one who cared little for his father Jacob he had compassion on him, knowing the effect the loss of Benjamin would have on Jacob.

We also learn from Judah and his brothers the full and complete meaning of repentance. Repentance is more than just being sorry but requires a complete change of heart. When Judah and his brothers were jailed in Egypt they were sorrowful for what they had done to Joseph their brother many years before. But when they had the opportunity to repeat that sin, when Joseph took Benjamin from them, they also had a change of heart and offer to take Benjamin's place.

If Jacob was less than a good example of spiritual leadership Joseph was an excellent example. God prepared Joseph for leadership in his suffering. God taught Joseph to endure through hardships. While in prison Joseph learned the language and culture of the Egyptians and particularly that of the high government officials. Our times of trial and

suffering if used properly are times of education, which can be employed in the service to our God and his purpose in our lives.

A second lesson in leadership was servant hood. Joseph in his youth was not a servant to his brothers as he should have been. Joseph was unwise in the use of the authority given to him by his father. While in Egypt Joseph must have reflected on the way he had used his authority over them in an abusive way. He must have realized how this must have angered them. Joseph came to understand that a position of authority is a position of service and not one of being served. When he became in charge of the butler and baker in the prison he ministered to them rather than lording over them.

Another aspect of leadership is that of sovereignty. Through Joseph's sufferings he came to learn the sovereignty of God. That through all the adversity that had come into his life that the trials and tribulations of life can be used for God's purpose. Our life's circumstances will work for the greater good of God's Will. God by His sovereignty appointed Joseph over his brother and given him the skills and gifts needed to fulfill the stations for Pharaoh and in the future provide for his family.

Another attribute of Joseph's leadership was that of good stewardship. A steward does not own the things that are under his control. An example of Joseph's stewardship is that of Potiphar's house. He did not own the possessions of Potiphar but managed them well. So much so that he was in charge of everything of Potiphar's except the misses.

Another ability of Joseph's leadership is what I call spiritual secular savvy. Joseph was a skilled spiritual leader in whatever situation he was placed. He was a "spiritual leader" in the home of Potiphar, because Potiphar saw that the hand of God was upon him. (Genesis 39:2-3) The same was true in his ministry to Pharaoh. The butler very carefully avoided any spiritual reference to Joseph's ministry to him (41:9-13), but when Joseph ministered to Pharaoh, he repeatedly gave all the glory to God. (Genesis 41:16 Genesis 41:25)

Joseph was involved in a secular task but through his spiritual leadership he made an impact on the secular lives around him. We sometimes try to view these two terms differently in our lives. We separate our secular life from our spiritual life. But this is not how we are to live our lives as Christians. We are to bring our life into a spiritual focus as we go about our secular duties. How else would the light of Jesus shine through us as we go about our daily routines?

Joseph is an example of our Lord Jesus Christ. Joseph was the object of his father's affection just as Jesus is the beloved Son of God the Father. Joseph's brothers resisted him and sought to kill him just as the Jewish leaders in the days that Jesus ministered here on earth. And it was through the suffering that Joseph received through the hands

of his brothers that he became their deliverer. As well through the hands of the Jews, Jesus' brethren, He became their deliverer, as well as for the world.

The will of God shall be done here on earth as it is in Heaven. God is not limited to the willing act of obedience from His saints, neither by the rebellious acts of the unrighteous. God is a sovereign Lord who is able to use the good works of the saints and the sinful acts of the saints and the unbelievers to accomplish his will. God is in control in spite of the wickedness and rebellious acts of man.

Key Verses

Genesis 1:28, Ezekiel 28:12-18, Exodus 25:20, 1 Kings 8:6-7, Ezekiel 10:8, Ezekiel 10:12, Ezekiel 10:14, Ezekiel 28:12-18, Isaiah 14:12-14, Revelation 12:3-9, 2 Timothy 2:25-26, Revelation 13:1-5, Revelation 16:13-14, Revelation 19:20), Revelation 20:2-3, Revelation 20:4, Revelation 20:7-10, 1 Corinthians 6:2-3, 1 John 2:14, Matthew 1:1-11, Ephesians 6:13-17., 2 Corinthians 11:3, 2 Corinthians 11:14, John 8:44, Genesis 3:7, Genesis 3:8, Genesis 3:11-12, Genesis 3:13, Genesis 3:14, Micah 7:17, Psalm 72:9, Genesis 3:15, Matthew 13:38, Matthew 23:33, 1 John 3:8-13, Luke 12:51, Genesis 3:16, Genesis 3:17, Hebrews 12:5-8, 1 Corinthians 11:9, Ephesians 5:22-25
