



Joseph certainly was hard on his brothers. If he did this to satisfy his own need for revenge then this was wrong. If he did this to cause his brothers to change or to find out whether they had changed, then what he did was positive. In the end what Joseph did worked. The total time in Egypt up to this point is 23 years.

**How else could he have played the scenario with his brothers?
Would it have worked?**



**When Joseph forgives how does he do this? v3-5
How does all of this apply to us?
Why is it important to forgive?**



"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart." Matthew 18:35

Unforgiveness hurts us, not the object of our unforgiveness.

How did Joseph understand all that had befallen him? v7-8

Jacob and his whole family move to Egypt into the care of Joseph, thus the dreams of Joseph were fulfilled. It was in Egypt that Israel grew to be a nation until the time God bought them out. Joseph can look back at his suffering and see good. He can look back and see God.

Read verse 9-21

This is what happens. Israel's whole family come to live in Egypt in fulfilment of the prophecy given to Abraham. They settle in Egypt and prosper.

Joseph gives them all robes, this must be significant considering the role robes have played in his own life.

What do you think they represent?



**Why does Joseph say "don't quarrel on the way"? v24
What might they have quarrelled over?**

How does Jacob respond to the news that Joseph is alive?

Do you think the brothers ever told their father what they really did to Joseph?

The fulfilment of the dream turns out not to be power and domination but instead provision and restoration. This is the gospel. As a 40-year-old the dream looks very different from how it must have looked to a 17-year-old.



The Climax

The most important verse in this whole narrative is found in chapter 50
But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. Genesis 50:19-20



Even what the enemy means for evil in our lives God can turn to our Good.
And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

What do you think this means?



When you consider Genesis as a literary work you realise that this 'good for evil' verse is the intended conclusion of the book. It is the same language that is used in Gen 3 of the tree of good and evil. Eating from this tree resulted in evil, but throughout Genesis, the bible and for that matter world history, God has been taking evil and turning it to good. Only God can do this.



**Is God still turning evil into good?
How does the fall of Genesis 3 fit into this?
How does the cross fit into this?**

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Joseph V - The Power of the Dream



From this point on the Bible continues the account of the famine, but this is secondary to the narrative, which turns back to Jacob's family. This part of the story is also unusually long for Hebrew narrative. This weeks study covers 5 chapters.



Promotion - Chapter 41

Read Genesis 41:41-57

Pharaoh makes Joseph the equivalent of a Prime Minister. The signet ring Pharaoh puts on Joseph's finger was the symbol of Pharaoh's authority. - So Joseph begins his task of gathering food from the abundant harvest. Joseph fulfils his job and collects surplus food from across Egypt.

Joseph is given the Egyptian name Zaphenath-Paneah. He is married to Asenath Potiphara's the priest of On's Daughter. (Not Potiphar. The Hebrew is different). Joseph has two sons Manasseh which sounds like forgotten and Ephraim which sounds like fruitful.



These names are symbolic what do you think they suggest?

How did Joseph handle success?



Often it is when we succeed that we forget God and get ourselves into trouble.

Why is this?



The First Visit - Chapter 42

Read verse 1-2

It was most unusual for Egypt and Canaan to experience famine at the same time (one was watered by the Nile and one by rainfall in the highlands of Africa, they are different weather systems). The famine must have been severe.



The Bible tells us that the whole world came to Egypt and Joseph for food. The same phrase is used in the flood account where the water the whole world.

This is also another of the places where Genesis ties up loose ends. Abraham is told that he will be a blessing to all people, at once he goes to Egypt and becomes a curse to the most powerful person on the planet. Now we find his great-grandson in Egypt being a blessing to all nations. Within Genesis, this promise is fulfilled in Joseph. From a wider perspective, this promise is fulfilled in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:8

How were all nations blessed in Joseph?

How are all nations blessed in Christ Jesus?



Read verse 3-4

Why did Jacob not send Benjamin?

Did Jacob suspect the truth about Joseph?



About Joseph's fate, not a fact had come to light, about the brothers guilt little doubt remained. Under a father's eye, their actual crimes might be covered up, but not their character. Kinder.



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Read verse 6-13

In verse 6 In this passage 10 of the brothers bow down before Joseph – only Benjamin is missing for this part of the dream to be fulfilled. The brothers have no idea they are fulfilling the dream.

Why didn't the brothers recognise Joseph?

The most likely reason, apart from his adoption of the Egyptian language, is that he looked Egyptian. It is likely that like most Egyptian officials he wore a ceremonial mask.



When it says that Joseph remembered his dream, does this mean he had forgotten it?

Why does he quiz them about their family?

Why did Joseph treat them harshly?

Why did Joseph treat them the way he did?

The idea of Canaan invading Egypt was novel, to say the least. It must seem to Joseph's brother that Joseph is being deliberately unreasonable.



What do you make of their protestations that they are honest men?

What do you think Joseph thought of this claim?

Why does he hold his tongue?

Read verse 21-23

How do the brothers interpret what is going on? Are they right?

The brothers are correct in thinking this has to do with Joseph, but for the wrong reason. All this is reported to Jacob.



Joseph first demands that their brother be brought to Egypt then he agrees to let them go, however, Simeon is left as security. Only if Benjamin comes will Joseph believe they are not lying. All but Simeon return home with the corn, but when they stop for the first night they find the silver they had used to purchase the corn is in each sack.

They realised a conspiracy was afoot.

How would they feel when they found the silver?

Is their honesty being tested or is Joseph just being generous to his own?



In verse 15, Benjamin coming to Egypt is established as proof they are not lying.

Would this be proof?

Why did Joseph want to see Benjamin?

Joseph appears to act the way he does to provoke their consciences and make them think. In turn, God is working on them to force them to change so that they can be included in the line of the promise.

Why does Simeon need to remain behind?

Ultimately Joseph wants them to return, this was probably his plan since he first discovered they had come to Egypt. But he is playing a clever game. His is putting them in the position as when they threw him down the well. Will they sacrifice one for the benefit of the rest of them or have they change? This plan will find its apex when it is Benjamin's life at stake, not Simeon. He is setting up the test. What is more, Joseph threatens his brothers with the same things that they brought into his life; prison and slavery.



The Second Visit - Chapter 43

Read verse 1-5

Their supply of grain runs out. In the first visit, Jacob has to persuade them to go. In the second they have to persuade Jacob to let them go. They are reluctant because of the condition of taking Benjamin but also because of the ominous way they had been treated.

Have they forgotten about poor old Simeon?

Read verse 11-14

Against his better judgement Jacob allows Benjamin to go, Ruben vouches for his safety and they return to Egypt. The first time they reached Egypt they were met with hostility,

this time with hospitality. Joseph invites his brothers to his house and provides a banquet for them. They are terrified believing they are about to be killed. They offer the information that they found the silver but the attendants seem unconcerned.



Read verse 26-31

What happens in verse 26 and 28?

They are sat down in order of their age

What effect would this have on them?

Benjamin's portion was five times as much as anyone else's.

How will they respond to favouritism this time?

Why does Joseph cry?

Joseph cries a lot in this account five times between here and the end of the book.

The narrator is answering the question we are all asking, what does Joseph intend to do? Is he working to reform his brothers or is he being vindictive

What kind of answer do his tears suggest?



The Third visit (under arrest) - Chapter 44

Again the 11 brothers are sent on their way with both lots of silver in the sacks of corn. But Joseph's goblet is placed in Benjamin's sack. Joseph sends men after them and to the brother's horror, the cup is found in Benjamin's sack! The brothers are distraught, their worst nightmares are coming true. They return to the city.

Could they have sacrificed Benjamin for their own lives at this point?

How do they act?



Joseph said to them, "What is this you have done? Don't you know that a man like me can find things out by divination?" Genesis 44:15

Is Joseph endorsing divination?

The word find is used 8 times in this chapter. **What things are being found out?**

The biggest thing we are going to find out is whether Judah and the brothers be responsible will they stand up. The brothers are struggling for survival, in fact, they are struggling for faith.



Read verse 16-20

Judah makes an impassioned and very long plea for Benjamin's freedom. He tells Joseph all about Jacob and his love for the boy.



"Now then, please let your servant remain here as my lord's slave in place of the boy, and let the boy return with his brothers. How can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? No! Do not let me see the misery that would come upon my father." Genesis 44:33-34



How does this compare to the Judah that sold Joseph into slavery? Genesis 37:26

What kind of things does he talk about?

Do you think he is being sincere?

Are you prepared to let the people around you change?



Joseph has bought his brothers full circle.

Do you see the irony in all this?

Does God ever bring us back to our failure to see if we have learned from them?



Forgiveness - Chapter 45

Read verse 1-7

Why did Joseph forgive his brothers?

How else could he have acted?

Did Joseph have the right to bear a grudge against them?

How well would you say Joseph handled all this?

Was Joseph too hard on his brothers? Did he draw it out too long?