

The Story of Joseph: Sold Into Slavery

A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

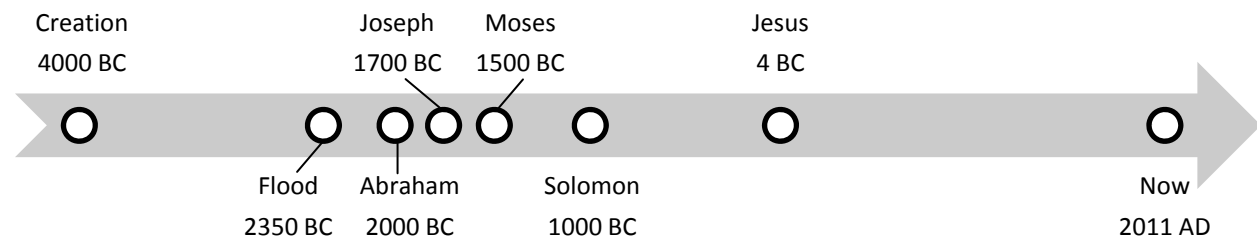
Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit e100challenge.com. Our Sunday school website is stuartheights.org/sundayschool.

The Schedule: The Story of Joseph

This is our third five-week series in the Old Testament. So far, we have looked at In the Beginning, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Now we shift to the last of the **Genesis** patriarchs, Joseph.

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
May 29	Sold Into Slavery	Genesis 37:26-28	Genesis 37	Jim Fleming
June 5	Prison and a Promotion	Genesis 41:14-16	Genesis 39-41	Jim Fleming
June 12	Ten Brothers Go to Egypt	Genesis 42:3-5	Genesis 42	TBD
June 19	The Brothers Return	Genesis 43:14	Genesis 43-44	Tim Archer
June 26	Joseph Reveals His Identity	Genesis 45:4-5	Genesis 45:1-46:7	Jim Fleming

Assuming a literal interpretation of Bible dates, the following timeline is close:



Summary: Joseph was his father's favorite son. Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers. God worked through a variety of circumstances to make Joseph the second most powerful man in Egypt. God used Joseph to spare Egypt and Joseph's family. The result of all of this is the book of **Exodus**. Through all of these events, God was building Joseph's character so he would be ready when God needed him.

Preview: Family Feud

We all know that a perfect Christian looks like Jesus Christ. The real question is, “What did Jesus Christ look like?” Jesus was the perfect fulfillment of **Galatians 5:22-23a**: **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.**

Rick Warren: God develops the fruit of the Spirit by allowing you to experience circumstances in which you’re tempted to express the exact opposite quality! (*The Purpose Driven Life*, p. 202)

The following is based on, *The Purpose Driven Life*, by Rick Warren

God develops . . .	By allowing . . .
Love	unloving people to challenge us, tempting to us be unloving
Joy	sorrow, tempting us to despair and become bitter
Peace	times of chaos and confusion, tempting us to be agitated/stressed
Longsuffering	us to wait, tempting us to get angry
Kindness	people to be inconsiderate, tempting us to be unkind
Goodness	evil to intersect our lives, tempting us to be evil
Faithfulness	problems that challenge our trust in Him, tempting us to worry
Gentleness	evil to get results, tempting us to manipulate and intimidate
Self-control	us instant gratification, tempting us to self-indulge

Key thought: God works through the events of our lives for His good and for our good

We have all been part of family arguments. Most of the time, we like to blame one or two events that, ‘broke the camel’s back,’ but more often than not, it usually takes time for tensions to get to the boiling point (example: a tea pot will rattle slightly right before it whistles and we see that in today’s lesson). Just like some of our families, the rattling of favoritism, arrogance, jealousy, and hatred plagued Joseph.

Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 37 (Author = Moses)

Joseph Dreams of Greatness

1 Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. 2 This is the history of Jacob. [Background—at this time, Jacob has 12 sons, 2 wives, and 2 sorta-wives.]

Jacob married Leah (and had Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah). Jacob then married Rachel (who he loved the most), who gave Jacob a handmaid, Bilhah (who had Dan and Naphtali). Leah then gave Jacob her handmaid, Zilpah (who had Gad and Asher). Leah then had Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah. Finally, at the end, Rachel bears Joseph and later Benjamin.

Obviously, fathering children with four different women who live together is a poor strategy for having a peaceful and harmonious family.

Joseph [Jehovah has **added**], **being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives** [notice that he did not

hang out near the sons of Leah or the son of Rachel, but the sons of the handmaids]; **and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.** [He is a tattletale]

3 Now Israel [God's name for Jacob] **loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic** [long, shirt-like undergarment; 'coat' is a poor translation] **of many colors** [literally, **flat** palm and/or sole; it was an undergarment that reached to the flat parts of his body (his palms and feet)—there is no Hebraic justification for calling this a coat of many colors]. **4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him** [you can see love because love is a verb, not a noun] **more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.** [A traditional eastern greeting is, "Peace to you," and Joseph's brothers did not say, "Peace to you," to Joseph.]

5 Now Joseph had a dream [up to this point in **Genesis**, dreams have been used by God to convey messages and directions to men, so the natural assumption on the part of the reader of **Genesis** is that this is a message from **God** (if you are familiar with the rest of **Genesis**, this foreshadowing)], **and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more.** **6 So he said to them** [Apparently, what follows is an attempt to clarify and/or reconcile—epic fail], **"Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: 7 There we were, binding sheaves** [large bundles that cereal grains are bound up in after they are reaped] **in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."** [Did Joseph sin by telling his brothers his dream? **No**. Did Joseph do himself any favors? **No**. We almost get the feeling that he was a bit of a punk. Also, notice the foreshadowing involved with the dream using food.]

8 And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign [literally, 'be a king'] **over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion** [rule, have dominion, reign] **over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.**

9 Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me."

10 So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" 11 And his brothers envied [envied, were jealous of] **him, but his father kept the matter in mind.** [Keep in mind for later lessons that Joseph dreamed two dreams.]

David Guzik: Joseph is . . . so focused on how great his dreams are for him, he doesn't begin to consider how the dreams will sound in the ears of others.

Barry Switzer: Some people are born on third base and go through life thinking they hit a triple.

Joseph Sold by His Brothers

12 Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. 13 And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them."

So he [Joseph] **said to him** [Israel/Jacob], **"Here I am."**

14 Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.

[Shechem was a few days' journey from Hebron where Jacob and Joseph were, and there is no indication that Joseph traveled with anyone, so this was a bit dangerous.]

15 Now a certain man found him, and there he [Joseph] was, wandering in the field. [Up to this point, Joseph has been stunningly unsuccessful] **And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?"**

[Jewish commentaries generally state that this is an **angel** (which it could be, but that is not proven from the text). Some think this man might have been the Man.]

16 So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks."

17 And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan [Dothan was about a day's journey from Shechem].'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan. [Finally, Joseph succeeds at something]

18 Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired [to act craftily, act/deal knavishly (read: Jack Sparrow)] against him to kill him. 19 Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming! 20 Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"

21 But Reuben [behold, a **son (not the most creative name in the world); the oldest] heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him." 22 And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"—that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.** [A ray of reason and hope]

23 So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. 24 Then they took him and cast him into a pit [pit, well, cistern]. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it.

25 And they sat down to eat a meal. [They were callous. Twenty-two years later, **Genesis 42:21** implies that Joseph was pleading for his life and his brothers ignored him. They remembered those cries for help for **22** years.] **Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites [their great uncle's descendants], coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt. 26 So Judah [the fourth] said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? 27 Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brothers listened. 28 Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver [a small payoff for so great a crime]. And they took Joseph to Egypt.** [Many people make a big deal out of the Ishmaelite/Midianite terms. Either (1) these people were Ishmaelites by heritage (being a descendant of Ishmael and Midianites by geography (where they lived), or (2) the caravan that came by them was comprised of Midianites and Ishmaelites. The Bible has no errors.]

29 Then Reuben returned to the pit [apparently Reuben was busy doing something else from [Genesis 37:23-28](#)], and indeed Joseph *was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes*. **30 And he returned to his brothers and said, “The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?”** [If Reuben really knew the true implications of this act of selling Joseph—the fact that his descendants would ultimately be slaved to the Egyptians for centuries, he would have done more than just torn his clothes]

31 So they took Joseph’s tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood [When I sin, something has to **bleed**; Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: *The commission of one sin necessarily leads to another to conceal it*]. **32 Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, “We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son’s tunic or not?”**

33 And he recognized it and said, “It is my son’s tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces.” **34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days.** [Coffman: *Jacob was completely deceived. . . . Jacob himself was the deceiver of his father Isaac, in the matter of procuring the blessing. And now, the deceiver is deceived.*] **35 And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, “For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning.” Thus his father wept for him.** [The consequences of sin always involve mourning and tears.]

36 Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar [belonging to the sun], **an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.**

Coffman: Here, then, is the conclusion of the events of this chapter, leaving Reuben filled with remorse, Jacob in perpetual mourning, and Joseph (the future savior of the nation) a slave to one of Pharaoh's officers in Egypt! The fortunes of Israel appear very low at this point.

You will have to come back next week to find out what happens to Joseph. On the other hand, you could just read [Genesis 39-41](#).

Apply (What is the point?)

1. Over communicating good things can sometimes be a **bad** thing
2. A house divided against itself cannot stand
3. God is working even when we cannot **see** Him working or know that He is working

Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Show tact when sharing truth (we do not have to use bullhorns or baseball bats)
2. Insure there is no **favoritism** in my family
3. Grow from the challenges in my life (because they are opportunities from God)

The Story of Joseph: Prison and a Promotion

Preview: No Fair! (Or, Crock-Pot Character)

Joseph has been sold into slavery by his brothers and now he is in Egypt. When we looked at Joseph's life last week, he was an egotistical teenager who irritated his family. This week we will see Joseph mature. His life will seem unfair, but remember that God is interested in developing our character.

David Guzik: Egypt had been a large and thriving kingdom for at least a thousand years before Joseph came there. They were wealthy and had massive natural resources. They were educated and had no real enemies at the time. When Joseph came to Egypt, some of the pyramids already looked old, and the Sphinx had already been carved.

Key thought: God is not in a **hurry** (no matter how badly we want Him to be)

Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 39-41 (Author = Moses)

Genesis 39

Joseph a Slave in Egypt

1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt [Joseph is **17** at this point]. **And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there.** **2 The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful** [prosperous, successful] **man** [(1) God is behind Joseph's success]; **and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.** **3 And his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand** [(2) God is behind Joseph's success]. **4 So Joseph found favor** [favor, grace, charm—we will see this many times in the Old Testament] **in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority.** **5 So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field** [(3) God is behind Joseph's success]. **6 Thus he left** [departed from, left behind, abandoned, forsook, neglected] **all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate** [serious trust].

Now Joseph was handsome [fair, beautiful, handsome] **in form** [shape, form, outline, figure, appearance] **and appearance** [sight, appearance, vision]. [Why was Joseph attractive? Probably Rachel (the same was said about her)]

7 And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie [have sex] with me."

8 But he refused and said [he refused first and **explained** second] **to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand.** **9 There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin** [sin, miss the goal, miss the

way] **against God?"** [David Guzik: We want to call sin by another name. Hostility and temper are "self-expression." Pride is "self-esteem." Gluttony is "the good life." Covetousness is "trying to get ahead." Perversion is "an alternative lifestyle." Adultery is "a cry for help in a bad marriage."]

Friedman: It was to see whether he was truly fit to become ruler of Egypt. By passing the test, he proved that he would be able to rule over the land of impurity and immorality without succumbing to its corrupting influence himself.

10 So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.

11 But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, 12 that she caught [seized, arrested, caught] **him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left** [departed from, left behind, abandoned, forsook, neglected] **his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside** [perfectly fulfilling 2 Timothy 2:22. David Guzik: God provides a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13), but you have to **take** the way out.]. **13 And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled** [fled, escaped, took flight, departed, disappeared] **outside, 14 that she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, "See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us** [do not miss the fact that she is slandering her husband]. **He came in to me to lie with me** [lie], **and I cried out with a loud voice** [lie]. **15 And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me** [lie], **and fled and went outside** [truth]." [Coffman: One of Satan's cleverest clichés, "Wherever there's smoke, there's bound to be fire!" Well, here, there was a lot of smoke, and no fire at all!]

16 So she kept his garment with her until his master came home. 17 Then she spoke to him with words like these, saying, "The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me [this is a different version of the story she told the men of the house]; **18 so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside."**

19 So it was, when his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, saying, "Your servant did to me after this manner," that his anger [wrath, anger, nostrils] **was aroused. 20 Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison. 21 But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy** [Hebrew, **cheched**: goodness, kindness, faithfulness; this is a word that we will see almost 250 times in the Old Testament and a word that I believe is the theme of the Old Testament], **and He gave him favor** [favor, grace, charm] **in the sight of the keeper of the prison** [(4) God is behind Joseph's success]. **22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison** [we see a pattern of masters giving Joseph responsibility]; **whatever they did there, it was his doing. 23 The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper** [(5) God is behind Joseph's success]. [David Guzik: As it was in the house of Potiphar, Joseph rises to the top, becoming the chief administrator of the prison. Through his experience in both places, God is honing administrative skills in Joseph so one day he can save his family, and the whole world.]

Genesis 40

The Prisoners' Dreams

1 It came to pass after these things [Joseph is now **28**] *that the butler* [literally, the irrigator (the giver of drink)—this was the same position that Nehemiah] **and the baker of the king of Egypt offended** [sinned, missed the goal, missed the way] **their lord, the king of Egypt. 2** **And Pharaoh** [another title (not name) for the king of Egypt] **was angry with his two officers, the chief butler and the chief baker. 3** **So he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison, the place where Joseph was confined. 4** **And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; so they were in custody for a while.**

5 **Then the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison, had a dream, both of them, each man's dream in one night and each man's dream with its own interpretation. 6** **And Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them, and saw that they were sad** [fretting, sad, wrath, vexed, enraged, angry perplexed, troubled]. **7** **So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in the custody of his lord's house, saying, "Why do you look so sad** [evil (totally different Hebrew word)] **today?"** [David Guzik: This is a window to the heart of Joseph. Men who are consumed with anger and bitterness do not take a concern for the personal problems of others like this. I do not know when or where it happened, but this Joseph is very different from the 17-year-old in [Genesis 37](#).]

8 **And they said to him, "We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it."** [**two** dreams]

So Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? [To whom do interpretations belong? God. Do not try to interpret your dreams unless God interprets them for you.] **Tell them to me, please."**

9 **Then the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "Behold, in my dream a vine was before me, 10** **and in the vine were three branches; it was as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes. 11** **Then Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand."** [His prior job]

12 **And Joseph said to him, "This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days. 13** **Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his butler. 14** **But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. 15** **For indeed I was stolen away** [by stealth] **from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon** [pit, well]."

16 **When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, "I also was in my dream, and there were three white baskets on my head. 17** **In the uppermost basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them out of the basket on my head."**

18 **So Joseph answered and said, "This is the interpretation of it: The three baskets are three days. 19** **Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from you."** [Joseph spoke **directly** when giving God's messages. Blurred truth is no truth.]

20 Now it came to pass on the third day, *which was* Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. **21** Then he restored the chief butler to his butlership again, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. **22** But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. **23** Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot [cease to care] him. [David Guzik: God orders both your *steps* and *stops*!]

Genesis 41

Pharaoh's Dreams

1 Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years [Joseph is now **30**], that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river ["Nile" in some translations]. **2** Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows, fine [fair, beautiful, handsome] looking [sight, appearance, vision—the same words used to describe Joseph] and fat [really fat—like Moto Moto in Madagascar]; and they fed in the meadow. **3** Then behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ugly and gaunt, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the river. **4** And the ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke. **5** He slept and dreamed a second time; and suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, plump [fat] and good. **6** Then behold, seven thin heads, blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. **7** And the seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads. So Pharaoh awoke, and indeed, *it was* a dream. **8** Now it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled [disturbed], and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but *there was* no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh. [How many dreams did Pharaoh have? Two. Coffman: Only one voice speaks throughout Genesis. Only one power controls its events. That voice and power are those of God.]

9 Then the chief butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying: "I remember my faults [sin] this day. **10** When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, *both* me and the chief baker, **11** we each had a dream in one night, he and I. Each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his *own* dream. **12** Now there *was* a young Hebrew man with us there, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him, and he interpreted our dreams for us; to each man he interpreted according to his *own* dream. **13** And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him."

14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly [running] out of the dungeon; and he shaved [Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: The Egyptians were the only Oriental nation that liked a smooth chin], changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh. [Coffman: The shaving and dressing of Joseph were required by the rules for those appearing before Pharaoh] **15** And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and *there is* no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you *that* you can understand a dream, to interpret it."

16 So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "*It is not in me* [Loosely paraphrased, "It's not **about** me"]; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace [Hebrew is *shalom*: completeness, soundness, peace]."

17 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: "Behold, in my dream I stood on the bank of the river. **18** Suddenly seven cows came up out of the river, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. **19** Then

behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt. **20** And the gaunt and ugly cows ate up the first seven, the fat cows. **21** When they had eaten them up, no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they *were* just as ugly as at the beginning. So I awoke. **22** Also I saw in my dream, and suddenly seven heads came up on one stalk, full and good. **23** Then behold, seven heads, withered, thin, *and* blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. **24** And the thin heads devoured the seven good heads. So I told *this* to the magicians, but *there was* no one who could explain *it* to me.”

25 Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh *are* one; God has shown Pharaoh what He *is* about to do: **26** The seven good cows *are* seven years, and the seven good heads *are* seven years; the dreams *are* one [Joseph **repeats** himself for clarity]. **27** And the seven thin and ugly cows which came up after them *are* seven years, and the seven empty heads blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine. **28** This *is* the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He *is* about to do. **29** Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; **30** but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land. **31** So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it *will be* very severe. **32** And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing *is* established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. [Joseph could have stopped talking in **Genesis 41:32**. Pharaoh did not ask for a solution. However, Joseph has an opportunity.]

33 “Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man [and since none of Pharaoh’s other wise men could possibly qualify at this point, Joseph is creating his own **job** description], and set him over the land of Egypt. **34** Let Pharaoh do *this*, and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years [David Guzik: It was customary for the Pharaoh to take 10% of the grain as a tax. Essentially, he doubled the taxes over the next seven years]. **35** And let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming, and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. **36** Then that food shall be as a reserve [store, supply, deposit] for the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land may not perish during the famine.”

Joseph’s Rise to Power

37 So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. **38** And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find *such a one* as this, a man in whom *is* the Spirit of God?”

39 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, *there is* no one as discerning and wise as you. **40** You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.” **41** And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.”

42 Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand [so Joseph could sign/**seal** public documents]; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen [the second time in Joseph’s life he has been given fine clothing] and put a gold chain around his neck. **43** And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, “Bow the knee!” So he set him over

all the land of Egypt. **44** Pharaoh also said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” **45** And Pharaoh called Joseph’s name Zaphnath-Paaneah [treasury of the glorious rest]. And he gave him as a wife Asenath [belonging to the goddess Neith], the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On [the center of the worship of the sun-god Ra]. So Joseph went out over *all* the land of Egypt.

46 Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. **47** Now in the seven plentiful years the ground brought forth abundantly. **48** So he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities; he laid up in every city the food of the fields which surrounded them. **49** Joseph gathered very much grain, as the sand of the sea, until he stopped counting, for *it was* immeasurable.

50 And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. **51** Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh [causing to forget]: “For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father’s house.” **52** And the name of the second he called Ephraim [double ash-heap: I shall be doubly fruitful]: “For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.” [He is not fully Egyptian since he gave both his sons Hebrew names]

53 Then the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Egypt ended, **54** and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. The famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. **55** So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, do.” **56** The famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians. And the famine became severe in the land of Egypt. **57** So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy *grain*, because the famine was severe in all lands. [God used him to help spare the world]

Challenge: Be patient with God in everything (He is always working: [Romans 8:28](#)). David Guzik: Joseph is a good example of man who seemed to have all the gifts and talents for leadership, but God put him in a place where his character would be developed, and this took many years. Gifts and talents may be impressive and immediate, but character is what God looks for and always takes time to develop.

Apply (What is the point?)

1. Timing is everything (and God’s timing is sometimes impossible to understand)
2. Faithfulness is always rewarded (either here and in heaven, or just in heaven)
3. God will use anything to accomplish His will (pagans, family, plenty, famine, etc.)

Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Be content with the timing and leave the timing up to God (just be [1 Peter 3:15](#) and [Luke 12:11-12](#))
2. Be faithful in everything God puts in front of you, no matter how small, annoying, or meaningless it may seem ([1 Corinthians 4:2](#))
3. Be looking for God at work and thank Him when you see His hand ([1 Peter 5:6](#))

The Story of Joseph: Ten Brothers Go to Egypt

Preview: Remember, remember

Summary: Joseph was his father's favorite son with his father's favorite wife. Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers because he told them they would bow down to him. God worked through a variety of painful circumstances to make Joseph the second most powerful man in Egypt. Last week, we saw Joseph transform from an egotistical teenager into a mature man. Joseph's life seems unfair, but God used all of these things to develop Joseph's character. However, the sin of Joseph's brothers still has to be dealt with. Now, we see Joseph with the opportunity to do anything he wants to his brothers.

Key thought: Character development takes **time** (last week was Joseph, this week is his brothers)

Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 42 (Author = Moses)

Joseph's Brothers Go to Egypt

1 When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another [literally, look questionably at one another (it was because they were guilty)]?" **2 And he said, "Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt** [mention of Egypt made them **nervous**; **Barnhouse: The word Egypt in their ears must have sounded like the word rope in the house of a man who has hanged himself**]; **go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die.**" [A guilty conscience can keep you from doing what needs to be done. We see a pattern here in **Genesis** of going to Egypt before being used greatly—the same thing happened with Abram in **Genesis 12** (and we will see it repeatedly in the Bible that God uses a tough place to prepare His people).]

3 So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. 4 But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin [son of the right hand] **with his brothers, for he said, "Lest some calamity befall him."** [exactly the same verbiage as Don Corleone used in *The Godfather* about his son Michael: "If some unlucky accident should befall him"; Joseph was Jacob's favorite, now Jacob thinks that Joseph is dead, Benjamin is now Jacob's favorite—Jacob never saw the **folly** of picking favorites in his family; Jacob missed God's hand in all of this—God had been working for over 20 years to allow Joseph to provide for his family] **5 And the sons of Israel went to buy grain among those who journeyed, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.** [Canaan was close to Egypt and famine in Egypt meant famine in Canaan]

6 Now Joseph was governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with their faces to the earth [Do you remember Joseph's dreams in **Genesis 37**? His first was that he and his brothers were sheaves and that they would bow down to him—and here it happens (because of corn, nonetheless). **David Guzik: When Joseph's brothers plotted murder against him and sold him into slavery, they did it specifically attempting to defeat his dreams (Genesis 37:19-20). Instead, by sending Joseph to Egypt, they provided the way the dreams would be fulfilled!**] **7 Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly** [cruelly, severely] **to them. Then he said to them, "Where do you come from?" And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food."**

8 So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. [EasyEnglish: There were many reasons why the brothers did not recognize Joseph. These are some of the reasons.

- They believed that Joseph was dead. This may or may not be true, but if you repeat a lie long enough to yourself and others, many times you end up believing it yourself
- Joseph had shaved his beard off.
- Joseph spoke in the Egyptian language and an interpreter translated. [We find this out in v 23]
- Joseph wore Egyptian clothes.
- Joseph had an Egyptian name.]

9 Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them [John Wesley: The laying up of God's oracles in our hearts will be of excellent use to us in all our conduct], **and said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land!"** [This may sound strange in our ears, but spying out the land this way was a common technique for invading armies to use]

10 And they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. 11 We are all one man's sons [How can one small family take over the whole country of Egypt? What man would risk ten sons to spy out a land?]; **we are honest men; your servants are not spies."**

12 But he said to them, "No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land."

13 And they said, "Your servants are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest is with our father today, and one is no more [they told this story for 20+ years]."

14 But Joseph said to them, "It is as I spoke to you, saying, 'You are spies!' 15 In this manner you shall be tested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. 16 Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether there is any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies!" [Coffman: Every accused was considered guilty until proved innocent, and the burden of proof was always upon the defendant] **17 So he put them all together in prison three days.**

18 Then Joseph said to them the third day, "Do this and live, for I fear God [this is the generic word for god and not a specific word for the Hebrew God, Jehovah, so Joseph's brother's thought that he was just religious, but Joseph knew what he was saying]: **19 If you are honest men, let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house** [Joseph changes his directions—in Genesis 42:16, he tells them he is only going to send one of them, but now he says he is going to send nine of them (maybe nine sons would convince Jacob more effectively?)]; **but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses. 20 And bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die."**

And they did so. 21 Then they said to one another, "We are truly guilty [Adam Clarke: God combines and brings about those favourable circumstances which produce attention and reflection, and give weight to the expostulations of conscience; Their consciences were killing them] **concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish** [Hebrew, *tsarah*; straits, distress, trouble; used of the relationship between a first wife and a second wife] **of his soul when he pleaded with us** [when Joseph cried for his

life in the **pit** they threw him in], **and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us.**" [This was probably the worst skeleton in their closets—and it was haunting them. I think they thought about Joseph all those years and their consciences were pricked. God uses many things to quicken my conscience to my sin. It is almost as if God is saying, "You might have forgotten about this sin, but I have not." Dad: **Galatians (6:7). David Guzik: A guilty conscience sees every trouble as sin's penalty.**]

David Guzik: Some have described the conscience as the "sundial of the soul." It tells time well enough when there is light, but in darkness it is of no use. At night, you could shine a flashlight on a sundial and make it read any time you want it to. When the light of God's word shines on our conscience, it is reliable and trustworthy. Otherwise, our conscience can be like a circus-trained poodle. Whistle once, it stands up. Whistle twice, it rolls over. Whistle a third time, and it plays dead.

22 And Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not speak to you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us." [In any group, there is usually someone who is just waiting to say, "I told you so."] **23 But they did not know that Joseph understood them, for he spoke to them through an interpreter. 24 And he [Joseph] turned himself away from them and wept** [Joseph was probably learning for the first time that Reuben tried to save him over 20 years ago—this would be overwhelming news]. **Then he [Joseph] returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.**

Can you imagine Joseph's brother's emotions at this point? This would have been almost unbearable. Many of the commentators believe that Simeon was the one that bound Joseph and put him in the pit in **Genesis 37** (due to his unconscionable actions in **Genesis 34** with the Dinah incident). I think Simeon can represent the prison of our past—sometimes we feel bound by prior actions (sin does that).

The Brothers Return to Canaan

25 Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man's money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. Thus he did for them. [This is a beautiful picture of what the **trinity** does for us—Jesus is the bread of life, we have us the treasure of the Holy Spirit, and the Father gives us gifts to help us along the way] **26 So they loaded their donkeys** [probably a hundred or more (think about the fact that these brothers all had wives and children and servants and animals)—this was a big caravan] **with the grain and departed from there.** [EasyEnglish: To give honor to one's father was very important in those days. Joseph would never take money from his own father. But the money that his brothers brought belonged to their father. Therefore, Joseph could not take the money from them. But he could not refuse the money. If he refused it, he would need to explain his reason. He would need to say that he was their brother. And he was not yet ready to say that. So he returned the money to them secretly.] **27 But as one of them opened his sack** [from the Hebrew, **sak**] **to give his donkey feed at the encampment** [some of your translations say, 'inn,' and this is incorrect as there were no inns at this time—the word means the place you stop (usually at a well)], **he saw his money; and there it was, in the mouth of his sack. 28 So he said to his brothers, "My money has been restored, and there it is, in my sack!" Then their hearts failed them** [their hearts dropped] **and they were afraid** [literally, they trembled], **saying to one another, "What is this that God has done to us?"** [EasyEnglish: The brothers did not understand what was happening. Therefore they were **afraid**. They

did not understand why the ruler of the country himself spoke with them. They expected to buy grain from a less important person. They did not understand why Joseph spoke severely to them. They did not understand why he called them spies. . . They did not understand why he put them in prison. They did not understand why Joseph wanted to see Benjamin. They did not understand why Joseph kept Simeon in Egypt. And they did not understand why the money was in the sack.]

29 Then they went to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan and told him all that had happened to them, saying: **30** “The man *who is* lord of the land spoke roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. **31** But we said to him, ‘We *are* honest men; we are not spies. **32** We *are* twelve brothers, sons of our father; one *is* no more, and the youngest *is* with our father this day in the land of Canaan.’ **33** Then the man, the lord of the country, said to us, ‘By this I will know that you *are* honest men: Leave one of your brothers *here* with me, take food for the famine of your households, and be gone. **34** And bring your youngest brother to me; so I shall know that you *are* not spies, but that you *are* honest men. I will grant your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.’”

35 Then it happened as they emptied their sacks, that surprisingly each man’s bundle of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid [in awe]. **36** And Jacob their father said to them, “You have bereaved me: Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me.” [Easy English: We may sometimes be in a situation that is similar to this. It seems to us that God’s promises are failing. It seems that God’s plan is not working. And God has not told us what to do. . . . We must trust him, especially when it is difficult to trust him. Actually, God’s plan was working well. . . . Joseph was ready to save them all. David Guzik: Jacob’s heart sang this song: “No one loves me, this I know. My misfortunes tell me so.”]

37 Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, “Kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you; put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you.” [What strange volatility this is! When Jacob is talking to his sons at the end of his life in [Genesis 49](#), he calls Reuben, ‘unstable as water.’]

38 But he said, “My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone [Again with the favorites! Rachel died in childbirth with Benjamin, so Joseph and Benjamin were all that Jacob had to remind him of Rachel. The thought of losing Benjamin was too great to comprehend.]. If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.” [Jacob seems relatively unconcerned about going back to get Simeon]

Apply (What is the point?)

1. David Guzik: God can, and must, sometimes use ways we think are harsh to call us to where He wants us to be
2. People can change (and if you do not believe this, then you have missed Christianity)
3. [Numbers 32:23b](#): Be sure your sin will find you out.

Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Examine my heart to see if there is any sin that needs to be uncovered
2. Allow the space and time necessary for people to change (it does not happen immediately)
3. Be on the lookout for ways to show meekness (strength under control)

The Story of Joseph: The Brothers Return

Review

Joseph has allowed his brothers to return home with the grain they purchased. Simeon is being held hostage in Egypt until the youngest of the sons is brought back to meet Joseph/Zaphnath-Paaneah. The sons arrived home to discover that the money they had bought the food with was in their grain sacks.

Primary Character Review

Jacob/Israel: "Fearful" and aging patriarch

Joseph: Original favorite son of Jacob born to Jacob's wife Rachel who has been (or so his family thought) dead to his family for over 20 years, moonlighting as Zaphnath-Paaneah, Vizier and second in command to the Pharaoh/King of Egypt

Benjamin: "New" favorite son of Jacob, born to Jacob's wife Rachel and Benjamin is Joseph's full brother (all of the other brothers were half-brothers)

Reuben: Firstborn son and rightful family leader

Judah: Led brothers into selling Joseph into slavery

Simeon: Half-brother to Joseph, being held hostage in Egypt

Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 43-44 (Author = Moses)

Genesis 43

1. Hunger is a **motivator** (1-2)

1 Now the famine was severe in the land. 2 And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, "Go back, buy us a little food." [No mention of Simeon, just of the food]

2. Judah takes a **lead** role (3-5). This is ironic because Judah took a lead role in the selling of Joseph (but do not miss the fact that Reuben had already offered to go and retrieve Simeon).

3 But Judah spoke to him, saying, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.' 4 If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. 5 But if you will not send him, we will not go down; for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.'"

3. Jacob/Israel is **motivated** by fear and begins accusing others (6-7). Fear can motivate us to do positive or negative things. Joseph reached a point in his life where he was overly protective of what he had.

6 And Israel said, “Why did you deal so wrongfully with me as to tell the man whether you had still another brother?”

7 But they said, “The man asked us pointedly about ourselves and our family, saying, ‘Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?’ And we told him according to these words. Could we possibly have known that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down?’”

4. Judah’s sales pitch (8-10)

8 Then Judah said to Israel his father, “Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones [Judah brings up the hungry kids—who could resist hungry kids?]. 9 I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. 10 For if we had not lingered, surely by now we would have returned this second time.”

5. Jacob’s plan revealed (11-15)

- a. Doubled money
- b. Additional gifts to be sent
- c. Supplication to God Almighty

11 And their father Israel said to them, “If it must be so, then do this: Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man—a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. 12 Take double money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. 13 Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. 14 And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!”

15 So the men took that present and Benjamin, and they took double money in their hand, and arose and went down to Egypt; and they stood before Joseph.

6. Zaphnath-Paaneah’s/Joseph’s reaction: plan a **party** (16-17)

16 When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, “Take these men to my home, and slaughter an animal and make ready; for these men will dine with me at noon.” 17 Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph’s house. [This is personal, as this meeting did not occur in the grain market, but in Joseph’s house]

7. Fear caused **excuses** (18-22)

18 Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph’s house; and they said, “It is because of the money, which was returned in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may make a case against us and seize us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys.”

19 When they drew near to the steward of Joseph's house, they talked with him at the door of the house, **20** and said, "O sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food; **21** but it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there, *each* man's money *was* in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand. **22** And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks."

8. Important **hints** are missed (23-25)

23 But he said, "Peace *be* with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

24 So the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave *them* water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed. **25** Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there.

9. The brothers are reunited and prophecy is fulfilled (26-34)

26 And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which *was* in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth [fulfillment #1]. **27** Then he asked them about *their* well-being, and said, "*Is* your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? *Is* he still alive?"

28 And they answered, "Your servant our father *is* in good health; he *is* still alive." And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves [fulfillment #2].

29 Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "*Is* this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son." **30** Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought *somewhere* to weep. And he went into *his* chamber and wept there. **31** Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, "Serve the bread."

32 So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, for that *is* an abomination to the Egyptians. **33** And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another. **34** Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

Genesis 44

10. The **trap** is set (1-6)

1 And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, “Fill the men’s sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man’s money in the mouth of his sack. **2** Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money.” So he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. **3** As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. **4** When they had gone out of the city, *and* were not yet far off, Joseph said to his steward, “Get up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good? **5** *Is not this the one* from which my lord drinks, and with which he indeed practices divination? *You have done evil in so doing.*’” [Joseph may or may not have practiced pagan worship. In any case, Joseph is playing a role here that is obviously not being completely transparent.]

6 So he overtook them, and he spoke to them these same words.

11. The **trap** is sprung (7-13)

7 And they said to him, “Why does my lord say these words? Far be it from us that your servants should do such a thing. **8** Look, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord’s house? **9** With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord’s slaves.”

10 And he said, “Now also *let it be* according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and you shall be blameless.” **11** Then each man speedily let down his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. **12** So he searched. He began with the oldest and left off with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack. **13** Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.

12. Judah’s **character** is revealed (14-17)

14 So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph’s house, and he *was* still there; and they fell before him on the ground [fulfillment #3]. **15** And Joseph said to them, “What deed *is* this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination?”

16 Then Judah said, “What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; here we are, my lord’s slaves, both we and *he* also with whom the cup was found.”

17 But he said, “Far be it from me that I should do so; the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father.”

13. The **maturity** of Judah is complete (18-34)

18 Then Judah came near to him and said: “O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord’s hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you *are* even like Pharaoh. **19** My lord asked his servants, saying, ‘Have you a father or a brother?’ **20** And we said to my lord, ‘We have a father, an old man, and a child of *his* old age, *who is* young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother’s children, and his father loves him.’ **21** Then you said to your servants, ‘Bring him

down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.’ **22** And we said to my lord, ‘The lad cannot leave his father, for *if* he should leave his father, *his father* would die.’ **23** But you said to your servants, ‘Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.’

24 “So it was, when we went up to your servant my father, that we told him the words of my lord. **25** And our father said, ‘Go back *and* buy us a little food.’ **26** But we said, ‘We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man’s face unless our youngest brother *is* with us.’ **27** Then your servant my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife bore me two sons; **28** and the one went out from me, and I said, “Surely he is torn to pieces”; and I have not seen him since. **29** But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.’

30 “Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad *is* not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad’s life, **31** it will happen, when he sees that the lad *is* not *with us*, that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. **32** For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, ‘If I do not bring him *back* to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.’ **33** Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. **34** For how shall I go up to my father if the lad *is* not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?”

Apply (What is the point?): Psalm 27:1; Proverbs 3:5-6

1. Hardships bring opportunity
2. Growing up is tough sometimes
3. Things are not always as they seem (God is not yet finished)

Personalize (What do I do with that?): 2 Timothy 1:7

1. How often does fear cause me to miss God-given opportunities?
2. What relationships do I need to offer and/or ask forgiveness in?

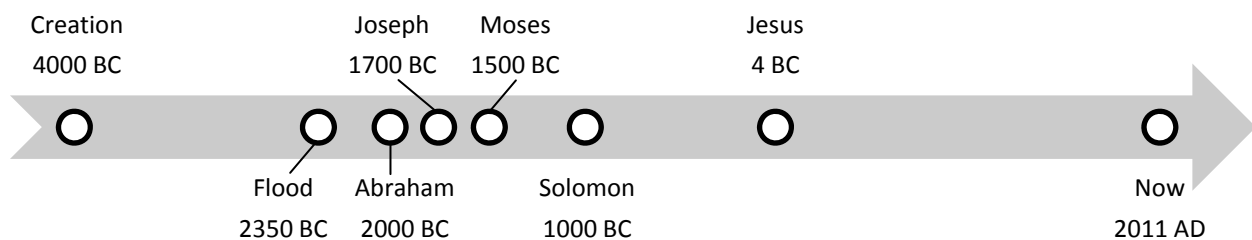
The Story of Joseph: Joseph Reveals His Identity

Review: Genesis

Today we finish not only the story of Joseph, but also the 15 weeks we have spent in **Genesis**. We looked at creation, the fall of man, the flood, the God's covenant with Noah, the Tower of Babel, as well as the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Here are some things we have learned from **Genesis**:

1. God sets the stage for the rest of the Bible concerning His word (**Genesis 1:7c**: "and it was so")
2. God takes the initiative (**Genesis 1-46**)
3. God fills (**Genesis 1**)
4. **Sin** changes everything (Adam & Eve)
5. God provides (the sacrifice for Adam & Eve's sin)
6. Unity without proper direction is unprofitable (Tower of Babel)
7. God uses people who do not deserve to be used (Abram)
8. God does the impossible (Abram & Sarai)
9. Blood is required in covenants (Abramic Covenant)
10. Faith is complete obedience to God's word (Abraham & Isaac)
11. Favoritism in families is toxic (Jacob & Esau)
12. The ends do not justify the means (it is never right to do wrong in order to get a chance to do right)
13. Reconciliation requires change (Jacob & Esau)
14. God is working even when we cannot see Him working (Joseph)
15. God is not in a **hurry** (Joseph)
16. God can use almost anything in character development (Joseph)
17. People can change (Joseph's brothers)
18. God is not yet **finished**

Assuming a literal interpretation of Bible dates, the following timeline is close:



What is remarkable to me is the sheer volume of time that **Genesis** takes up in our world history. Almost **40%** of the history of the entire world occurs in **Genesis**. That is the reason we spent 15 weeks there.

Now, to summarize where we are with Joseph: Joseph was his father's favorite son. Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers because he was a punk. God worked through a variety of painful circumstances to make Joseph the second most powerful man in Egypt. Joseph's brothers are sent to Egypt to get food (because there is a famine) and Joseph recognizes them but they do not recognize him. Joseph tests them to see if they are repentant and today the big reveal: Joseph tells them who he really is.

Aside: Typology

It would not be fair to modern theology to leave the story of Joseph without mentioning types. Many of you that grew up in church were taught that Joseph was a type of Christ. For those of you not familiar with types, listen to this definition from [Wikipedia: Typology . . . is a doctrine or theory concerning the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. Events in the Old Testament are seen as pre-figuring events or aspects of Christ in the New Testament.](#) If you were to go back, reread Joseph's story, and watch for parallels between Joseph's life and Jesus' life, you would see many examples of this. I chose not to mention typology in this series as it takes significant time and can get painfully complex.

Preview: Move That Bus

Many of you know about my involvement in February in the Extreme Makeover: Home Edition. It was a week filled with opportunities to help a family. The TV show ends with, "MOVE THAT BUS!" When the bus is moved and families see their new homes for the first time, they are overcome with emotion, generally fall to their knees, and begin to weep. Everything is going to be all right now. They cannot begin to express how grateful they are to the community who made this happen.

That is what we see in today's text. There is a, "MOVE THAT BUS," moment right up front and the rest is the reaction. We left off last week with Joseph's brothers standing in front of him and Judah gave a speech about how they cannot go back to their father Jacob with news that he has lost another son.

Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 45:1-46:7 (Author = Moses)

Genesis 45

Joseph Revealed to His Brothers (immediately after Judah's speech)

1 Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one [of the Egyptians] stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 2 And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it.

3 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" [This is a question that Joseph has asked them several times, showing his love for his father] **But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed** [disturbed, dismayed, terrified, anxious—lots of emotions bundled up in one word] **in his presence. 4 And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me."** [Because they were standing a short distance away from him] **So they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life** [WOW. Now that is **perspective**. I have been thinking about this statement for a few weeks and real forgiveness is forgiving those that have wronged you and seeing God's hand working in, through, and despite all things for good]. **6 For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. 7 And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity** [God promised Abram, Isaac, and Jacob that He would build up their family line and He has not done it yet—but He is going to do it in an unanticipated location: Egypt] **for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance** [literally, great escape—ironic words for what would happen next in

Exodus]. 8 So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh [i.e., I take care of everything for him (a term describing the chief minister of Egypt)], **and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.** [Question: Why was Joseph in Egypt? Was it because his brothers were evil or because God was good? **Yes**]

9 “Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph: “God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry. 10 You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children’s children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. 11 There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for there are still five years of famine.””

12 “And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you. 13 So you shall tell my father of all my glory [glory, riches, abundance—do not necessarily interpret this as arrogance on the part of Joseph] **in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here.”**

14 Then he fell on his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. 15 Moreover he kissed all his brothers [forgiveness and reconciliation are stunningly beautiful] **and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.**

16 Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh’s house, saying, “Joseph’s brothers have come.” So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well [because Pharaoh treasured Joseph]. **17 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. 18 Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. 19 Now you are commanded—do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. 20 Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.””**

21 Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them carts, according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey. 22 He gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver [30 pieces would buy you a slave, so this was **10** slaves’ worth of money—a large amount] **and five changes of garments. 23 And he sent to his father these things: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey.** [Why so much? To make sure the 11 had enough for the journey back to Canaan and enough for the journey back to Egypt (for their entire family and all of their belongings); The trip home would take nearly two weeks and the trip back to Goshen would take closer to a week and a half] **24 So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, “See that you do not become troubled along the way.”**

25 Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. 26 And they told him, saying, “Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt.” And Jacob’s heart stood still, because he did not believe them. 27 But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him [the carts and food and animals helped to convince Jacob that Joseph was alive], **the spirit of Jacob their father revived. 28**

Then Israel [We switched to Israel from Jacob. Typically, when the Old Testament uses, “Israel,” he is being more obedient and when the Old Testament uses, “Jacob,” he is being less obedient.] **said, “It is enough.** [Have you ever had a time in your life where you were totally overwhelmed with the goodness of God and you had to say, “It is enough”? **Boice: To return to Canaan with 'carts from Egypt' was the cultural equivalent of landing a jumbo jet among a tribe of isolated savages. It would be the stuff legends are made of.] Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”**

Genesis 46

Jacob’s Journey to Egypt

1 So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. 2 Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, “Jacob, Jacob!”

And he said, “Here I am.”

3 So He said, “I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. 4 I will go down with you to Egypt [Jacob could have been internally wondering if this was really God’s plan. So kind of God to assure Jacob that this was, in fact, God’s plan.], **and I will also surely bring you up again** [this is prophecy concerning the future]; **and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes** [i.e., he will be the one to close your eyes when you **die**—a great way to go: with family].”

5 Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives, in the carts which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. 6 So they took their livestock and their goods, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him. 7 His sons and his sons’ sons, his daughters and his sons’ daughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt. [Do you want to know the rest of the story? Joseph lived happily ever **after**. Really! If you want a summary of the story of Joseph, **Acts 7:9-16** is where Stephen preaches a great sermon that summarizes the entire Old Testament history of Israel in one chapter.]

Epilogue

David Guzik: The total number of males of this clan was 70: 66, plus Jacob himself, Joseph, and his two sons. . . . Like many great works of God, Israel had a slow beginning. From the time God called Abraham, it took at least 25 years to add one son, Isaac. It took Isaac 60 years to add another son of Israel, Jacob. It took 50 or 60 years for Jacob to have 12 sons. . . . But in 430 years, Israel will leave Egypt with 600,000 men. It took this family 215 years to grow from one to 70. In another 430 years, they grew to two million. The moral of the math story? When God is ready, He is ready.

Apply (What is the point?)

1. God is faithful to do what He said
2. Reconciliation is worth the effort
3. Forgiveness is **beautiful**

Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Be faithful to what God has told you to do
2. Look for opportunities to reconcile with others and to help others reconcile
3. Forgive as often as possible and as **quickly** as possible