

Joseph Saved his People (Genesis 42:1-45:8)

I. Introduction

A. ***This Week in Clear Living***

1. Critiquing Jacob as a Father
2. Critiquing the Youthful Joseph (Genesis 37:1-36)
3. Critiquing Joseph's Brothers (Genesis 37:1-36 and Genesis 45:1-7)
4. The Lord's Use of Esther (Esther 7:1-10)
5. Seeing How the Lord is always near those that Trust Him

Question: Why did Jacob show so much favoritism to Joseph? Was Jacob a good father? Had he been a good brother to Esau?

B. Jacob preferred Joseph and Benjamin to his other ten sons.

1. He had been tricked into marrying Leah by her father.
2. He really wanted to marry Rachel instead, but Laban required him to work another seven years for her hand in marriage.
 - a. Genesis 29:18 says, "And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, ***I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.***"
 - b. Genesis 29:23 says, "And it came to pass in the evening, that ***he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him***; and he went in unto her."
 - c. In Genesis 29:27, what did Laban mean when he said, "Fulfill her week"?
 - d. ***How is that word for "week" used to interpret Daniel 9:24-27?***
3. Leah got a bad deal, and she competed with Rachel for Jacob's love. Of course, she lost.
 - a. Jacob had six sons and a daughter with Leah (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, ***Judah***, Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah).
 - b. He had two sons with Zilpah, who was Leah's handmaiden (Gad and Asher).
 - c. He had two sons with Bilhah, who was Rachel's handmaiden (Dan and Naphtali).
 - d. He had two sons with Rachel, his true love.
 - 1) ***Joseph*** was the older of the two.
 - 2) Benjamin was the younger.
 - 3) Jacob loved them above the others.
4. Reuben lost the right of the firstborn because of his promiscuous behavior (Genesis 49:3-4).
5. Simeon and Levi did not receive the birthright because of their mistreatment of Shechem.
6. Judah became the path to Jesus (Genesis 49:10).
7. Joseph's sons received and shared a double inheritance of property in Canaan (I Chronicles 5:1).

C. Did the Lord also prefer Rachel to the others? **Why or why not?**

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1. Acts 10:34 says, "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that **God is no respecter of persons:**"
 2. The Bible does not give any indication that the Lord preferred Rachel.
 3. He probably did not like that Rachel had brought some of her idols with her from her father's house.
 4. Leah was Judah's mother, and Jesus was born from that line.
 5. Rachel was Joseph's mother, and Joseph oversaw the food shortage during a bad famine throughout the land.
 6. Both women did well with the Lord.
 7. Leah clearly got it right after a while. Attitude is important.
 8. Genesis 29:35 says, "And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, **Now will I praise the LORD:** therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing."
- D. Jacob had not been a good brother, and he was not a good father.
1. The Lord blessed Jacob because Jacob wanted the blessing.
 2. Esau did not care about the blessing until after he had lost it.
 3. Deuteronomy 4:24 says, "For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God."
 4. He is jealous for us, and He wants us to be jealous for Him.
 - a. Exodus 20:5 says, "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for **I the LORD thy God am a jealous God**, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;"
 - b. The Lord wants our full devotion.
 - c. In the same context, Jacob wanted God's best for himself.

Question: Why did the Lord use Jacob and Joseph when they both had so many obvious character flaws? How did the Lord humble Joseph?

- II. Despite their character flaws, God used Jacob and Joseph.
- A. Both wanted God's best for themselves.
 - B. Both were determined to get the best for themselves.
 1. Jacob refused to fail.
 2. Genesis 32:24-26 says, "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, **I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.**"
 3. What Jacob wanted Esau could not have cared about.
 4. Along with faith, both had a personal relationship with the Lord.

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- a. Genesis 35:9-12 says, "And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; ***a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins***; And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, ***to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.***"
- b. The Lord revealed many things to Joseph in dreams.
- c. Genesis 37:5 says, "And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and ***they hated him yet the more.***"
- d. Genesis 37:9 says, "And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me."
5. God gave Joseph the interpretation to his own dreams and later to the dream of Pharaoh.
- C. ***The two dreams that Joseph had concerning his family both came true. But God had to bring him down to where he would praise the Lord for what would be done in his life rather than praise himself.***
 1. Joseph had to deal with his brother's hatred of him (Genesis 37:34).
 2. He had to deal with Pharaoh's lying wife (Genesis 39:14).
 3. He had to deal with a forgetful chief butler (Genesis 40:23).
- D. Through his trials, Joseph learned that his gifts had been given to bring glory to the Lord, not attention and glory to himself.
 1. Once this was done, Joseph was ready to be used to that thing for which he had been born.
 2. He handled the food supply before, during, and after a severe famine that threatened to kill many people.
 3. Genesis 45:4-8 says, "And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. ***And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.*** So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt."
 4. Through it all, Joseph learned that God is in control of everything.

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Question: In examining Jacob and his sons, how did the Lord deal with them as a Father rather than as a super Cop?

III. God dealt with them and with us as a loving Father.

- A. If He dealt with us as a super Cop, we would all be condemned.
 - 1. He grew Jacob and Joseph into the men that they became.
 - a. Jacob was humbled by his uncle Laban.
 - b. He was further humbled by Esau and wrestling with the angel.
 - c. Joseph was humbled by an unjust accusation and unwarranted imprisonment.
 - 2. *He also lets us be humbled by the normal circumstances of life.*
- B. Both men started out in life thinking that it was all about them.
- C. Their circumstances taught them that it is all about the Lord.
- D. Their circumstances matched their needs for change.
 - 1. Laban tricked Jacob just as Jacob had tricked Esau. Then, he had to return home to face Esau.
 - 2. Pharaoh's prison showed Joseph how easily he could be brought down from his pedestal.

Question: How did the Lord use Esther to save Her people?

IV. Joseph and Esther were types of Christ.

- A. He used Joseph in a time of severe famine.
- B. He used Esther against the evil Haman.
- C. Just like Jesus, both are types of saviors.
 - 1. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
 - 2. Romans 5:6-8 says, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
 - 3. Matthew 20:26-28 says, "But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

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Question: When he was given the opportunity, what important economic principle did Joseph use to ensure that the known world would not be wiped out by the approaching famine? What can we learn from that?

- V. Joseph was a smart economist.
- A. Pharaoh had a dream, and God used Joseph to interpret it for him.
 - 1. Genesis 41:1-8 – Pharaoh was very troubled by his dream.
 - 2. No one could interpret the dream, but then the chief butler remembered Joseph.
 - 3. Joseph was summoned from prison, and he told Pharaoh the meaning of the dream.
 - B. Save during the good times.
 - 1. Genesis 41:25-27 says, "And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be *seven years of famine.*"
 - 2. Prepare for hard times (Gen 41:33-36).
 - 3. At age 30, Joseph was put in charge of storing for the famine.
 - C. Have enough during the lean times.
 - 1. During the famine, he was in charge of distribution.
 - 2. Jacob's twelve sons survived.
 - D. For the past few decades, our nation has not done that (Business Week, April 2009).
 - 1. People spent their excess and even their future earnings during prosperous times.
 - 2. Then, when economic turmoil came, they did not have any savings to help them.

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Next week's lesson: "One of God's Names is Jehovah" (Exodus 3:1-15)

Five Day Recommended Reading:

Monday:	Genesis 1:1-31
Tuesday:	Genesis 18:1-33
Wednesday:	Exodus 3:1-15
Thursday:	John 8:48-59
Friday:	John 1:1-3 and Colossians 1:16

Study questions:

1. How do theologians know that each Person of the Trinity was at Creation? How does Genesis, chapter one, specifically argue against evolution? By using the words that Moses used, do you think that God might have had Moses telegraph a special message to Christians of the last two hundred years?
2. By what name was God usually known before He called Himself Jehovah?
3. Why did Moses want to know God's name?
4. Why did the Lord come to Moses at the burning bush?
5. How does the name Jehovah confirm God's deity? How did Jesus make the same claim in John 8:48-59?
6. How does God show His character in the Bible to His people? What do you think God was saying about Himself with the names Elohim, El Shaddai, and Jehovah?