



Joseph

THE RETURN FROM EXILE

The Genesis Scroll

The original scrolls that form what we now call the Bible weren't broken up by chapters and verses but by movements which portray distinguishable themes, literary patterns, and repeated words and phrases. The Genesis scroll is made up of four of these movements.



Movement I: Adam to Noah (Genesis 1:1-11:26)

The first movement begins with God creating order, beauty, and goodness out of disorder, chaos, and darkness. He creates a world where life can flourish.

This movement begins with God creating humans in his image (Genesis 1:27) and breathing his own life into them. He makes them reflections of his own good character in the world and the humans are given a choice to either trust God's truthful definition of good and bad, or seize autonomy and define good and bad for themselves. Unfortunately, humanity listens to the deceptive voice of a mysterious snake figure in the garden, and takes their future into their own hands.

Chapters 3-11 trace the ripple effect of the rebellion and the fracturing of human relationships at every level.



Movement 2: Abraham (Genesis 11:27-25:18)

As God's rescue plan unfolds, the scope goes from including the entire human race to focusing on one man and his family.

This covenant relationship with Abraham is a key moment for understanding the rest of the biblical story: God's plan is to rescue a rebellious humanity and his entire world through Abraham's family. Abraham's family would then become the carrier of the original blessing and vocation given to humanity in the garden. Through Abraham's family, every nation on Earth might one day be blessed by being reconnected to God and returning to his original calling for humans.



Movement 3: Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 25:19-37:1)

The story continues Abraham's son, Isaac, and the birth of Isaac's twin sons, Esau and Jacob. From birth, Jacob lives up to the meaning of his name, "deceiver." He tricks his father into giving him the family inheritance and blessing that should have been given to his older brother, Esau.

The predominant pattern in this movement is a blessing and curse relationship, and it focuses on God's invitation to both experience real life and steward his blessing for the rest of creation.

God freely blesses Jacob from birth (Genesis 25:19-34), but Jacob lives as if God's blessing depends on his own scheming and skill and he's willing to sabotage anyone to get what he wants. In spite of this, God will not abandon Jacob, instead, God commits himself even more to Jacob, and at a key point in the narrative, God visits him in person to wrestle it all out. God wounds Jacob in the struggle, and it's precisely this wound that helps Jacob finally receive God's blessing as a gift. It is here that God renames Jacob, changing his name to Israel, which means "wrestles with God."

We continually see how God is committed to fulfilling the promise he's made to his stubborn people.



Movement 4: The Exile (Genesis 37:2-50:26)

In the final movement of Genesis, we find the story of Jacob's sons. In this movement, the predominant pattern is exile and it is seen throughout the story of Jacob's son Joseph.

Jacob loves his son Joseph more than his other sons and he gives him special treatment as well as a colorful coat. The ten older sons come to hate Joseph, and they kidnap him and plan to kill him. However, at the last minute, they decide instead to sell him into slavery in Egypt. Through all of this, God is with Joseph and he orchestrates not only Joseph's release from prison but also his rise to power. Pharaoh discovers Joseph and elevates him to second in command over all of Egypt. Then, during a famine, Joseph saves all of Egypt and also his brothers who had betrayed him. Once again, the folly and sin of Abraham's family is met with God's faithfulness.

Joseph's story is strategically placed at the end of Genesis. They summarize not only the story of Joseph and his brothers but also the entire scroll of Genesis. From Genesis 3 onward, humans continue to act selfishly and do what is good in their own eyes. But God is not going to leave the world to its own devices. He said his creation is "good" at the beginning of the story, and here at the end, we see that God brings about his good purposes even in the midst of human evil. In both cases, the Hebrew word "tov," meaning good, beautiful, and right-functioning, grounds the idea of God's goodness in creation. God remains faithful and determined to bless people despite their failure.

Have you ever felt like you're in exile?

Have you experienced feeling disconnected from your peers due to different life experiences, feeling out of place in unfamiliar surroundings, or struggling to find a sense of belonging? Or maybe you feel like you're living in an unfamiliar and isolating world.

The Bible is full of stories of people who felt exiled or out of place. In this study, we will walk alongside Joseph as he experiences displacement and feelings of alienation. Joseph was exiled from his home and family due to his brothers' jealousy and fear, leaving him to wander in a foreign land.

Joseph's story illustrates the pain of being an exile, as he was forced to confront the harsh realities of being displaced and isolated. Joseph's story also provides us with a sense of hope, as despite the difficult circumstances Joseph faced, God was ultimately able to use Joseph's exile to save a nation and its people.

Land of Canaan in Context



Geography

The land of Canaan in Bible times was situated in the area of modern-day Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, and parts of Syria. Canaan was bounded by the Mediterranean Sea in the west, the Jordan River in the east, the desert in the south, and the mountains of Lebanon in the north. The land was full of lush vegetation and was known for its abundance of fruit trees, vineyards, and olive groves. The terrain was also marked by numerous rivers and streams, which would have provided a source of water for the people living there; the mild and humid climate made it ideal for growing crops. Canaan was known for its trade routes, agriculture, and its strategic location as it served as the only land bridge between Mesopotamia and Egypt.

Land of Canaan in Context

History & Culture

The land of Canaan was home to a number of different peoples, including the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites. All of these people groups shared similar religious beliefs, practices and culture that they were all considered to be “Canaanite”. The Canaanites were polytheistic and believed in a pantheon of gods, goddesses and spirits. They also practiced divination, astrology and the use of magical charms. Canaan was also a major center of religious practice, with temples and shrines dedicated to the various gods and goddesses. The main Canaanite cults were that of the storm god Baal, the goddess Asherah, and the sun god El. The Canaanites also practiced ancestor worship, and believed that the spirits of their ancestors watched over them and provided for them.

Biblical Significance

The Land of Canaan was the promised land given to the Israelites by God as an inheritance, in accordance with the covenant God made with Abraham and his descendants. It is not merely the land where the Israelites would live, but the sworn inheritance of God’s chosen people: “The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God” (Genesis 17:8). This land was significant because it became a beacon of hope and a future for the once nomadic Israelite community and it would be the place where God would establish Israel as a mighty nation.

Week 1: Favoritism and Jealousy
Gen 37

Week 2: Resisting Temptation
Gen 39:1-20a

Week 3: Overcoming Bitterness
Gen 39:20b-40:23

Week 4: Walking in Humility
Gen 41

Week 5: Reconciliation & Restoration
Gen 45

Week 6: Power of Forgiveness
Gen 50:15-26

1 Favoritism and Jealousy

GEN. 37

CONTEXT

This passage tells the story of the relationship between Joseph and his brothers. We see that Joseph is shown as a favored son of his father, Jacob, and is given a special coat of many colors. His brothers become jealous of Joseph and plot to kill him, but instead sell him into slavery. Joseph's brothers lie to their father, telling him that Joseph was killed by a wild animal. This passage shows how Joseph's brothers betrayed him and how the conflict between them shaped the rest of his life. Through this passage, we see how the favoritism from Jacob and jealousy of Joseph's brothers led to dramatic consequences for him and the entire family.

GENESIS 37

Joseph's family has been in Canaan for about three generations.

Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.

² This is the account of Jacob's family line.

Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

³ Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. ⁴ When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. 6 He said to them, “Listen to this dream I had: 7 We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.”

Canaan is significant because it served as the only land bridge between Mesopotamia and Egypt and became a hub of military and trade activity.

8 His brothers said to him, “Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?” And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

9 Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. “Listen,” he said, “I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.”

10 When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, “What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?” 11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

12 Now his brothers had gone to graze their father’s flocks near Shechem, 13 and Israel said to Joseph, “As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them.”

“Very well,” he replied.

14 So he said to him, “Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me.” Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron.

When Joseph arrived at Shechem, 15 a man found him wandering around in the fields and asked him, “What are you looking for?”

16 He replied, “I’m looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are grazing their flocks?”

17 “They have moved on from here,” the man answered. “I heard them say, ‘Let’s go to Dothan.’”

So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. 18 But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him.

19 “Here comes that dreamer!” they said to each other. 20 “Come now, let’s kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we’ll see what comes of his dreams.”

21 When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. “Let’s not take his life,” he said.

22 “Don’t shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don’t lay a hand on him.” Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father.

23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing— 24 and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

25 As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt.

26 Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? 27 Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed.

28 So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

29 When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes. 30 He went back to his brothers and said, “The boy isn’t there! Where can I turn now?”

31 Then they got Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. 32 They took the ornate robe back to their father and said, “We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son’s robe.”

33 He recognized it and said, “It is my son’s robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces.”

34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days. 35 All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. “No,” he said, “I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave.” So his father wept for him.

36 Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard.

Verse 27

*The Ishmaelites
are decedents
from Abraham’s
other son,*

*Ishmael, so
Joseph and his
brothers are
distant cousins to
the caravan.*

Verse 28

*Twenty shekels is
about 8 ounces*

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Observation & Interpretation

Application

- What does this chapter say about God’s character?
- What does Joseph’s actions regarding his dreams say about his character? In what ways was he exerting control over his future?
- Looking at the actions of Joseph and his family; how has Joseph’s family of origin shaped and impacted him?
 - How has your family of origin shaped and impacted you?
- When in your life have you responded out of jealousy? What was the result?
 - On the flip side, have you experienced favoritism in your own life? If so, how did it impact you and those around you?
- Read James 3:14-16 & Proverbs 14:30
 - How does scripture call us to address jealousy in our lives?
- How can this part of Joseph’s story encourage us to be aware of our own actions and reactions to jealousy and favoritism?

Living Rooted

This week take inventory of how both favoritism and jealousy has impacted your life. Read James 3:14-16 and Proverbs 14:30 again and then take some time to reflect and pray about seeking forgiveness and restoration in areas the Holy Spirit brings to mind. Share your findings and thoughts with a friend.

2 Resisting Temptation

GEN. 39:1-20A

CONTEXT

After Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers we see that God gave him favor in the eyes of his master, Potiphar. Joseph was hardworking, honest and dependable and these qualities earned him a place of trust and responsibility in Potiphar's house. The story takes a turn when Potiphar's wife takes a liking to Joseph, but he refuses to succumb to her advances. His integrity and faithfulness to his master is tested, but Joseph remains steadfast in his commitment to God. This story demonstrates the power of faithfulness in the face of temptation.

GENESIS 39:1-20a

Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there.

Potiphar was a well respected and important Egyptian military official.

² The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. ³ When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, ⁴ Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned.

5 From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the Lord was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. 6 So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

The fact that Potiphar gave Joseph full reign of his household was significant because it was uncommon for a slave to hold that much power and influence in a household.

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, 7 and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"

8 But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. 9 No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" 10 And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

11 One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. 12 She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

13 When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, 14 she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. 15 When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

Because Joseph was a slave, when Potiphar's wife accused him of sexual assault, his word held little weight in the eyes of the law; whereas, Potiphar's wife would have nearly an equal weight to that of her husband.

16 She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. 17 Then she told him this story: "That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. 18 But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

19 When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, "This is how your slave treated me," he burned with anger. 20 Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined.

Observation & Interpretation

- Summarize Joseph's situation. How would one respond to this moment of injustice? How did Joseph respond to his situation?
- What does Joseph's fall from favor say about the cost of living a righteous life?
 - How did God honor Joseph's righteousness?
- In your own words, how would you define temptation? Is temptation a sin?
- In the midst of consistent temptation, how did Joseph respond?
- What does Joseph's response say about how we should respond to temptation in our own lives?

Application

- How do we see God's movement in Joseph's life even in the midst of the temptation that he faced?
 - How do you see God's movement in your own life even in the midst of your own temptation?
- How have you seen God change a difficult situation to good in your own life?

Living Rooted

This week, take some time to reflect about times where you saw God's faithfulness even in the midst of temptation or difficult situations; refer to 1 Corinthians 10:13 and 2 Corinthians 12: 7b-10 as you pray and reflect. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the strength to flee temptation when you face it. Reach out to a friend and share what the Lord is doing in you.



3

Overcoming Bitterness

GEN. 39:20B-40:23

CONTEXT

In this passage, we see a change in Joseph, from a proud man, to one of great faith and righteousness. After being sold into slavery by his brothers, Joseph is falsely accused of a crime and thrown into prison. While there, Joseph relies on God to guide him, and eventually, he finds favor with the prison warden. Throughout Joseph's two years in prison, it is revealed to us that his imprisonment and subsequent rise to power reveals the power of faith and trust in the Lord, even in the face of great adversity.

GENESIS 39:20b-40:23

But while Joseph was there in the prison, ²¹ the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. ²² So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. ²³ The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

Some time later, the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their master, the king of Egypt. ² Pharaoh was angry with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, ³ and put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the same prison where Joseph was confined.

The outcome of Joseph's sentence was a testament to the favor he had with Potiphar, Ancient Egyptian law would have seen Joseph executed for an offense of this magnitude, but he was spared death and sentenced to prison.

Joseph's favor with the prison warden is completely counter cultural and a testimony to God's hand on his life because the warden would have never given that much freedom and power to a prisoner.

4 The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, and he attended them.

After they had been in custody for some time, 5 each of the two men—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were being held in prison—had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own.

6 When Joseph came to them the next morning, he saw that they were dejected. 7 So he asked Pharaoh's officials who were in custody with him in his master's house, "Why do you look so sad today?"

8 "We both had dreams," they answered, "but there is no one to interpret them."

Then Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams."

9 So the chief cupbearer told Joseph his dream. He said to him, "In my dream I saw a vine in front of me, 10 and on the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, it blossomed, and its clusters ripened into grapes. 11 Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup and put the cup in his hand."

12 "This is what it means," Joseph said to him. "The three branches are three days. 13 Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand, just as you used to do when you were his cupbearer. 14 But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison. 15 I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon."

16 When the chief baker saw that Joseph had given a favorable interpretation, he said to Joseph, "I too had a dream: On my head were three baskets of bread. 17 In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head."

18 "This is what it means," Joseph said. "The three baskets are three days. 19 Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and impale your body on a pole. And the birds will eat away your flesh."

20 Now the third day was Pharaoh's birthday, and he gave a feast for all his officials. He lifted up the heads of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker in the presence of his officials: 21 He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, so that he once again put the cup into Pharaoh's hand— 22 but he impaled the chief baker, just as Joseph had said to them in his interpretation.

23 The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.

Observation & Interpretation

Application

- What do you think the significance of Joseph's favor with the prison warden is?
 - What different ways did Joseph demonstrate his faithfulness to God while in prison?
 - How did Joseph's interpretation of the dreams inspire faith in him and those around him?
 - How did Joseph's character and wisdom help him through his time in prison?
- What lessons can we learn from Joseph's story about trusting God in difficult times?
 - What areas in your life is God calling you to practice perseverance and trust?
 - How have you navigated "prison moments" in your life? Looking back would you say you allowed bitterness to take root? Are you still harboring that bitterness?

Living Rooted

This week, reflect on your answers from the questions above. How have these experiences affected your relationship with God and others? If there's bitterness in your heart, take some time to talk with God and ask him to show you the next steps in overcoming bitterness. Talk with a friend or discipler about your reflections.



Walking in Humility

GEN. 41

CONTEXT

In Genesis 41, the Pharaoh of Egypt is troubled by two dreams. He summons all the wise men of Egypt, but no one is able to interpret them. Then Pharaoh's chief cupbearer, who had been in prison for two years with Joseph, remembers Joseph and tells Pharaoh about his ability to interpret dreams. Pharaoh sends for Joseph and he interprets the dreams accurately. Joseph explains to Pharaoh that the dreams signify seven years of abundance followed by seven years of famine. Joseph is appointed by Pharaoh to be in charge of preparing for the famine, and soon he is in charge of all of Egypt. Through his wisdom and ability to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, Joseph is able to save Egypt from the famine and establish himself as a powerful figure in the land.

GENESIS 41

When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing by the Nile, ² when out of the river there came up seven cows, sleek and fat, and they grazed among the reeds. ³ After them, seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, came up out of the Nile and stood beside those on the riverbank. ⁴ And the cows that were ugly and gaunt ate up the seven sleek, fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.

⁵ He fell asleep again and had a second dream: Seven heads of grain, healthy and good, were growing on a single stalk.

During the two years of imprisonment, God refined Joseph in that season of waiting from being a man controlled by his pride and ego, to a humble servant of God.

6 After them, seven other heads of grain sprouted—thin and scorched by the east wind. 7 The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads. Then Pharaoh woke up; it had been a dream.

8 In the morning his mind was troubled, so he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for him.

9 Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, “Today I am reminded of my shortcomings. 10 Pharaoh was once angry with his servants, and he imprisoned me and the chief baker in the house of the captain of the guard. 11 Each of us had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own. 12 Now a young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams, and he interpreted them for us, giving each man the interpretation of his dream. 13 And things turned out exactly as he interpreted them to us: I was restored to my position, and the other man was impaled.”

14 So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from the dungeon. When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh.

15 Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.”

16 “I cannot do it,” Joseph replied to Pharaoh, “but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires.”

17 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “In my dream I was standing on the bank of the Nile, 18 when out of the river there came up seven cows, fat and sleek, and they grazed among the reeds. 19 After them, seven other cows came up—scrawny and very ugly and lean. I had never seen such ugly cows in all the land of Egypt. 20 The lean, ugly cows ate up the seven fat cows that came up first. 21 But even after they ate them, no one could tell that they had done so; they looked just as ugly as before. Then I woke up.

22 “In my dream I saw seven heads of grain, full and good, growing on a single stalk. 23 After them, seven other heads sprouted—withered and thin and scorched by the east wind. 24 The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven good heads. I told this to the magicians, but none of them could explain it to me.”

25 Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh are one and the same. God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. 26 The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads of grain are seven years; it is one and the same dream. 27 The seven lean, ugly cows that came up afterward are seven years, and so are the seven worthless heads of grain scorched by the east wind: They are seven years of famine.

28 “It is just as I said to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. 29 Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt, 30 but seven years of famine will follow them. Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ravage the land. 31 The abundance in the land will not be remembered, because the famine that follows it will be so severe. 32 The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon.

33 “And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. 34 Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. 35 They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food. 36 This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine.”

37 The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. 38 So Pharaoh asked them, “Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?”

39 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. 40 You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.”

41 So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.” 42 Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph’s finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. 43 He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and people shouted before him, “Make way!” Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt.

44 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt.” 45 Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah and gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, to be his wife. And Joseph went throughout the land of Egypt.

46 Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from Pharaoh’s presence and traveled throughout Egypt. 47 During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully. 48 Joseph collected all the food produced in those seven years of abundance in Egypt and stored it in the cities. In each city he put the food grown in the fields surrounding it. 49 Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure.

50 Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. 51 Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh and said, "It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household." 52 The second son he named Ephraim and said, "It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering."

53 The seven years of abundance in Egypt came to an end, 54 and the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said. There was famine in all the other lands, but in the whole land of Egypt there was food. 55 When all Egypt began to feel the famine, the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Then Pharaoh told all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph and do what he tells you."

56 When the famine had spread over the whole country, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout Egypt. 57 And all the world came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe everywhere.

Observation & Interpretation

Application

- How does the story of Joseph's rise to power illustrate the magnitude of God's love for us?
- What lessons can be learned from Joseph's approach to interpreting Pharaoh's dream?
- How does Joseph's life serve as an example of resilience and perseverance in the face of adversity?
- In your own words, how would you describe humility?
- Read Colossians 3:12-14 and Philippians 2:3-4
 - How does scripture define humility?
 - Do these passages challenge your perception of what humility is? If so, how?
- When have you experienced a season of waiting in your life? How was your character tested during that time of waiting?
- In what ways is God calling you to trust him?
- In what ways is God using the events in your life to humble you?

Living Rooted

This week, take some time and reflect on Colossians 3:12-14 and Philippians 2:3-4. What would it look like for you to humble yourselves before the Lord this week? Ask the Holy Spirit for areas in your life where you have allowed pride to reign unchecked. Share your thoughts with a friend.

5 Power of Forgiveness Pt.1

GEN. 45

CONTEXT

After seven years of blessing and abundance, the famine across Egypt was in full bloom. The famine even reached the land of Canaan where Joseph's family lived. People from the surrounding lands came to Egypt for grain — including Joseph's brothers. This chapter serves as an example of the power of forgiveness and grace as Joseph, who had been wronged by his brothers, shows mercy and compassion instead of seeking revenge. This passage is a reminder that with faith and courage, even difficult situations can be overcome and relationships can be restored.

GENESIS 45

Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. ² And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it.

³ Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence. ⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! ⁵ And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.

Joseph was able to look back at his life and see the hand of God leading him to where he needed to be. Despite the hurt, abuse, and discouragement he faced, he had submitted his whole life to the Lord and in return, God honored his sacrifice and devotion.

Joseph's reunion with his brothers can serve as a reminder of the strength of forgiveness and the power of love.

6 For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. 7 But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8 “So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. 9 Now hurry back to my father and say to him, ‘This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don’t delay. 10 You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me—you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. 11 I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.’

12 “You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you. 13 Tell my father about all the honor accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly.”

14 Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. 15 And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

16 When the news reached Pharaoh’s palace that Joseph’s brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased. 17 Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Tell your brothers, ‘Do this: Load your animals and return to the land of Canaan, 18 and bring your father and your families back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you can enjoy the fat of the land.’

19 “You are also directed to tell them, ‘Do this: Take some carts from Egypt for your children and your wives, and get your father and come. 20 Never mind about your belongings, because the best of all Egypt will be yours.’” 21 So the sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them carts, as Pharaoh had commanded, and he also gave them provisions for their journey. 22 To each of them he gave new clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five sets of clothes.

23 And this is what he sent to his father: ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and other provisions for his journey. 24 Then he sent his brothers away, and as they were leaving he said to them, “Don’t quarrel on the way!”

25 So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. 26 They told him, “Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of all Egypt.” Jacob was stunned; he did not believe them. 27 But when they told him everything Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. 28 And Israel said, “I’m convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”

Observation & Interpretation

Application

- What emotions do you think Joseph felt as he revealed his identity to his brothers?
 - How do you think Joseph's brothers felt when they realized that Joseph was alive and the ruler of Egypt?
 - How might Joseph's story have been different if his brothers had not sold him into slavery?
 - How did Jacob's reaction to the news of Joseph's survival demonstrate his growth in faith?
 - How do you think Joseph's story of reconciliation with his brothers reflects the power of forgiveness?
- Think of a time where you were wronged by someone. What would it take for you to walk up to that person and say "I forgive you"; taking all that has happened and rejoicing in the Lord for bringing good out of the situation?
 - Do you believe you could ever get to that place of reconciliation and restoration?
 - How do you think they would react to those words?
 - At this point in Joseph's life, he has recognized that God has used the hurt and hardships in his life to place him where he needed to be. Where do you see God's movement in your own life? In your classes, suites, and labs?
 - If you are struggling to think of those moments, that's okay! Take some time and pray that God would open your eyes to see His purposes in placing you where you are.

Living Rooted

This week, take some time to take inventory of your current and past relationships. How has God shown you the power of forgiveness and love in your relationships? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you one small way that you can serve and honor a friend this week. Share your experiences with a friend.

6

Power of Forgiveness Pt.2

GEN. 49:29-50:15-26

CONTEXT

We come to the end of the story of Joseph. He has successfully led the nation of Egypt and its surrounding areas through the devastating seven year famine. Now we have the nation of Israel permanently settling in Goshen, the best land in all of Egypt, and prospering in their new home. Joseph had finally been reunited with his family, restored the relationship with his brothers, and now they get to watch him rule with authority and integrity. We come to the death of Jacob and into the final stages of Joseph's life, a compelling example of how God has power and authority over both the difficult and prosperous times in our life.

GENESIS 49:29-50:15-26

29 Then he gave them these instructions: "I am about to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite, 30 the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre in Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite. 31 There Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried, there Isaac and his wife Rebekah were buried, and there I buried Leah. 32 The field and the cave in it were bought from the Hittites."

33 When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people.

Chapter 50

15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" 16 So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: 17 'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

18 His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said.

19 But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? 20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. 21 So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

22 Joseph stayed in Egypt, along with all his father's family. He lived a hundred and ten years 23 and saw the third generation of Ephraim's children. Also the children of Makir son of Manasseh were placed at birth on Joseph's knees.

24 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." 25 And Joseph made the Israelites swear an oath and said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place."

26 So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.

The time of mourning that all of Egypt participated in was specifically how they mourned the death of a Pharaoh. This shows just how much power and influence Joseph had in Egypt.

You can see that Joseph's brothers are struggling to come to terms with how they sold Joseph into slavery. They feared that, now that their father was dead, Joseph would retaliate.

Observation & Interpretation

- What does Joseph's response show us of who He knew God to be?
- What do Jacob's blessings on his sons reveal about their roles in the Israelite nation?
- What does Joseph's request for his bones to be taken back to Canaan reveal about his faith?
- How does Joseph's relationship with his brothers demonstrate forgiveness?

Application

- What can we learn from Jacob's approach to death and dying?
- How can we use the example of Joseph's faithfulness to God to help us remain faithful in our own walk with the Lord?
- In your own words, how would you define forgiveness?
 - Read Matthew 18:21-35
 - What does this passage say about forgiveness?
- What does Joseph's story tell us about how we should approach forgiveness in our own lives?

Living Rooted

This week, reflect on these questions:

Is there someone from whom you need to seek forgiveness?

Is anything keeping you from seeking forgiveness?

If you were to die tomorrow, would everyone in your life have assurance that you hold no grudges?

Is there someone you need to forgive?

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal people to you whom you need to pursue forgiveness or seek forgiveness from. Talk with a trusted friend or discipler on how to navigate these crucial conversations.

More Than Conquerors

31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8: 31-32, 37-39