
Day 10 Joseph: Genesis 37-50

How he was tested, tried, and proved to be the worthy birthright son?

Questions to think about:

What can we learn from Joseph? How many times did things go bad for him? What can we learn from his journey? What are his motives in these dealing with his brothers? What are his brothers going through?

Lived Religion Assignment Explain

Central to the Bible is the need to change ourselves and the world around us as motivated by the Word of God. Consequently, for three weeks in this class, you will have the opportunity to specifically choose three objectives (one for each week) that you want to work on. These objectives may be personal or community based, but they should in some way help you live better some aspect of the BYU aims: spiritually strengthening, intellectually enlarging, character building, leading to lifelong learning and service. They should also be in some way motivated by what we have learned in our study of the Old Testament. Possible objectives could be working on prayer, forgiveness, service, empathy, noticing others, or courage. Or it could be becoming more informed on an issue or helping a particular organization or individual.

The write up for this assignment is very easy, but the assignment itself should be something that challenges you. The successful application assignment will be one where the individual carefully (and hopefully prayerfully) chooses something to work on that stretches them, and then every day for a week they do something to achieve their objective. The finished assignment will be 4 to 5 double-spaced pages, Times New Roman 12 pt font 1 inch margins. The first 3 to 4 pages will consist of three write ups, one for each week, where you begin by telling me very briefly what you chose to work on and what in the scriptures motivated your choice. The bulk of each write up will be an explanation of what you did each day to work on the objective. The last page will be a reflection on what you learned from working on your objective and how it helped you live better some aspect of the BYU's aims. Late papers will be accepted until the last day of coursework, but will be penalized one-third of a grade for every class period it is late.

Covenant Renewal Genesis 35:9-12

9-12 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.

- Abraham's and Isaac's righteousness could not transfer to Jacob.
- He needed to keep the covenant himself.
- "They are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit." (Alma 5:46)

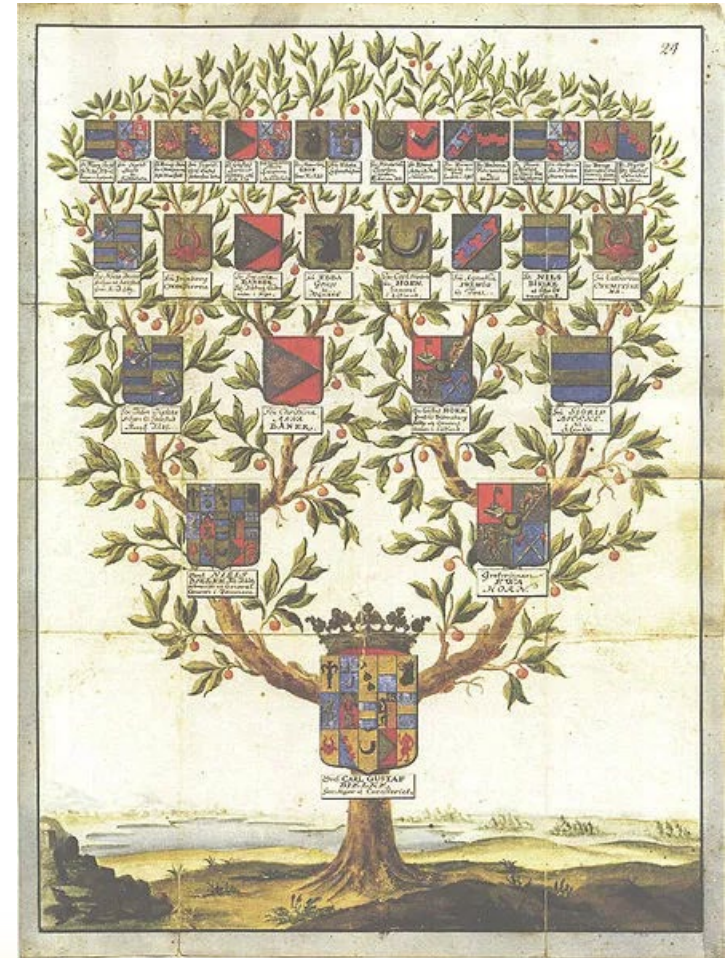


What should we understand about the House of Israel?

Why is it important? Is it exclusive or inclusive?

Ye are the children of the prophets; and ye are of the house of Israel; and ye are of the covenant which the Father made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham: And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. (3 Nephi 20:25)

We of modern Israel are among the covenant people of the Lord. And, most remarkably, the Abrahamic covenant will be fulfilled only in these latter days. The Lord bestowed this Abrahamic covenant upon the Prophet Joseph for the blessing of him and posterity after him. Did you know that Abraham is mentioned in more verses of modern revelation than in all the verses of the Old Testament? Abraham – this great patriarch of the Old Testament – is inextricably linked to all who join the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. . . . Ancient Israel and Modern Israel are linked arm in arm. -President Russell M Nelson





“In this gospel view there is no room for a contracted, narrow, or prejudicial view... There is no underlying excuse for smugness, arrogance, or pride.... Latter-day Saints have a positive and inclusive approach toward others who are not of our faith. We believe they are literally our brothers and sisters, that we are sons and daughters of the same Heavenly Father.... But more than that, we also seek the true and the beautiful wherever it may be found. And we know that God has blessed all his children with goodness and light, in accordance with the conditions in which they find themselves.”

President Howard W. Hunter, “The Gospel—A Global Faith,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 18–19

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Questions to think about:

What can we learn from Joseph? How many times did things go bad for him? What can we learn from his journey? What are his motives in these dealing with his brothers? What are his brothers going through?

History of Joseph

- Joseph Dreams of Greatness (37:1–11)
- Joseph is Sold by His Brothers (37:12–36)
- Judah and Tamar (38:1–30)
- Joseph and Potiphar's Wife (39:1–23)
- Joseph Interprets the Dreams of the Butler and the Baker (40:1–23)
- Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dream (41:1–36)
- Joseph's Rise to Power (41:37–57)
- Joseph's Brothers in Egypt (42:1–45:27)
- Jacob Settles in Goshen (45:28–47:12)
- Famine in Egypt (47:13–26)
- The Last Days of Jacob (47:27–31)
- Jacob Blesses Joseph's Sons (48:1–22)
- Jacob's Last Words to His Sons (49:1–28)
- Jacob's Death and Burial (49:29–50:14)
- Joseph Forgives His Brothers (50:15–21)
- Joseph's Last Days and Death (50:22–26)

Watch for the Change and Growth in Joseph and Judah.
What are they like at the beginning? What are they like at the end?
What are the moments that seem to change them?



Joseph's Position in Jacob's Family (37:1–5)

- “These *are* the **generations** of Jacob...Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son of his old age: and he made him a **coat of *many* colours.**” (Gen. 37:2-3)
 - Note that “*many*” is in italics, the Hebrew actually means something like a “tunic with long sleeves” which implies he was not out in the field doing hard labor but possibly in the house with his father. The Greek rendering of this word is “striped”
- Why would later editors focus on Joseph considering they were likely to favor Judah or Levi?
 - Moses would have known that Joseph was the birthright son
 - Joseph was known to be the birthright son, although it should have been Reuben
 - Reuben lost his birthright in Gen 35:17 though not explicitly stated until Gen 49
 - In the Law, the birthright would go from the firstborn of the first wife to the firstborn of the second wife – but this is before the Law and in Near Eastern tradition it would have gone through all the sons first
 - Struggle between Judah and Ephraim for leadership
- Sibling Rivalry – note how often the phrases “his brothers hated him” or “his brethren envied him” occurs in these chapters.
- Joseph brought a bad report of his brothers to his father
- Joseph is seventeen

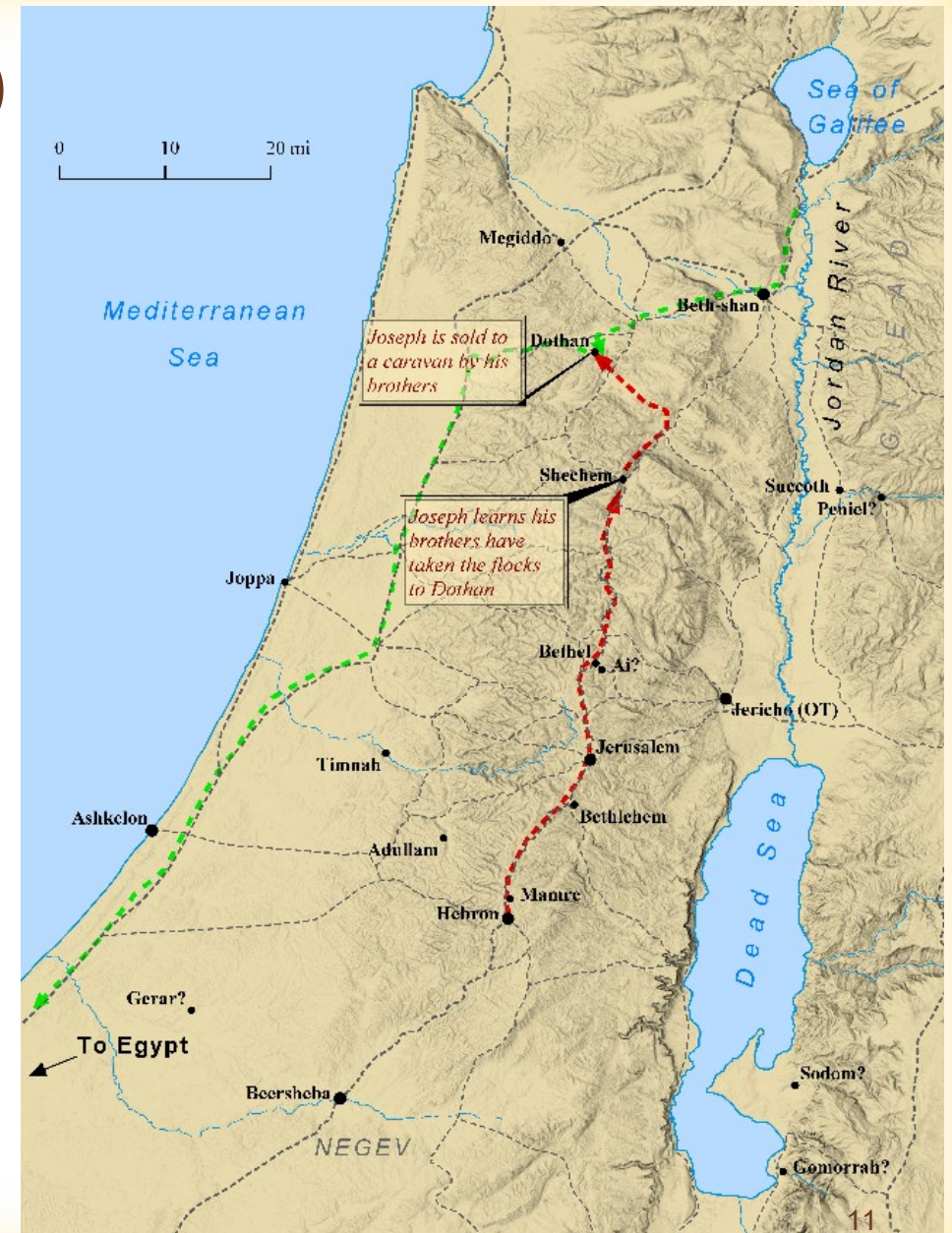
Joseph's Dreams (37:6–11)

- The eleven sheaves of his brothers bowed down to his own sheaf. In the second dream “the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me” (Gen 37:9).
- At age 17: And he told *it* to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What *is* this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall **I and thy mother** and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his **father observed the saying**. (Gen 37:10-11)
 - “Thy mother” – we don’t know the timeline of Rachel’s death, though it is assumed that Benjamin has been born and Rachel is gone
- Jacob “observed the saying”
 - Cf. Luke 2:19 “But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.”
 - Jacob himself had a dream at Peniel, he likely had some idea that Joseph was chosen
- “His brethren envied him” – “And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words” (Gen 37:8)



Joseph and his Brothers (37:12–26)

- Jacob sends Joseph from Hebron to find his brothers at Shechem – quite a distance away!
- “And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.” (37:19-20)
 - **Reuben redeems himself here, to some extent, because he convinces his brothers not to harm Joseph – also upholding the Noahic command not to shed blood**
 - **Judah suggests that they sell him into slavery rather than kill him.**
- Ishmaelites and Midianites are both descendents of Abraham, children of Hagar and Keturah
 - The Midianites lift Joseph from the pit, only to sell him for 20 pieces of silver
- The brothers stole Joseph’s coat, the symbol of his position in their father’s house, and used it to cover up their crime
 - **Another theme – clothing?**
 - Nakedness and covering
 - Rent clothes as symbol of scattering – “...let us remember the words of Jacob, before his death, for behold, he saw that a part of the remnant of the coat of Joseph was preserved and had not decayed. And he said—Even as this remnant of garment of my son hath been preserved, so shall a remnant of the seed of my son be preserved by the hand of God...” (Alma 46:23-24)
- Jacob mourns for Joseph and cannot be comforted (37:35)



Judah and Tamar (38:1–30)

- A strange interlude - Why is this story here?
 - Remember Genesis is about real people in real situations
 - *Judah here serves as a literary foil for Joseph with Potiphar's wife—larger issue of mistreatment of women*
- Judah's three sons – Er, Onan, Shelah
 - Judah marries a Canaanite woman – Shuah daughter of Hirah, and has three sons with her
 - Judah finds another Canaanite woman, **Tamar** to marry his son Er
 - Er angers the Lord and is killed – According to Middle Assyrian law, any surviving brother over ten years old should perform the levirate. If the son is younger, the father can perform the levirate or he can ask the wife to wait or he can release her to her own family.
 - Levirate marriage – *levir* is a husband's brother
 - Onan dishonors Tamar, taking advantage of levirate conjugality but avoiding the responsibility of having a child for his brother, so the Lord kills him too
 - Judah sends Tamar back to her father – and doesn't intend to have Shelah come to her. Instead he sends her back to her father's house as a widow, but she is unable to marry anyone else. **By leaving her a "widow in her father's house," Judah binds her perpetually to his family without intending to provide her a secure future.**
- **Tamar arranges to seduce Judah – but she is in the right. She knows her rights & she is seeking to enforce them.**
 - Note that Tamar is sometimes referred to as a normal prostitute but also as a ritual/temple prostitute
 - **Note that she is one of the four women mentioned by Matthew in Jesus' lineage**
 - Pharez and Zarah are the children of Judah and Tamar

Jacob 2:31-33 For behold, I, the Lord, have seen the sorrow, and heard the mourning of the daughters of my people in the land of Jerusalem, yea, and in all the lands of my people, because of the wickedness and abominations of their husbands. And I will not suffer, saith the Lord of Hosts, that the cries of the fair daughters of this people, which I have led out of the land of Jerusalem, shall come up unto me against the men of my people, saith the Lord of Hosts. For they shall not lead away captive the daughters of my people because of their tenderness, save I shall visit them with a sore curse, even unto destruction; for they shall not commit whoredoms, like unto them of old, saith the Lord of Hosts.

“And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar” (Matthew 1:3)

- **Presence of four women:** Tamar (Gen. 38), Rahab (Josh. 2), Ruth (Ruth 2–4), Bathsheba (2 Sam 11–12)
 - irregular unions and conceptions—precedents for Mary?
 - actors, not acted upon
 - “sinners” too have a part in Christ
 - Gentiles or outsiders have a part in Christ
 - Women important for God’s plan
 - Two are part of levirate marriages



Other important context for understanding the text . . .

Economic context of Onan's decision, not to be with Tamar and provide an heir for his brother Er. "As the elder surviving son, he stands to inherit two-thirds of Judah's estate. If he provides an heir for his brother, that child will inherit his dead 'father's' portion. Since Er was the eldest, his son would inherit half of the estate, and Onan would be left with only a quarter."

Text showing God's direct involvement: he kills Er, Judah's eldest son because he was evil in his sight and then he kills Onan for not acting as his brother's surrogate. Also shows God caring about levirate. Judah somehow thinking that Tamar is responsible for his sons' deaths, so he does not want to give her Shelah, his youngest son.

Family over Individual Mentality

Law of Levirate

Honor/Shame Culture & Prostitution: Designated whores, outside the family structure, are not punished and men are not condemned for sleeping with them.



“She has operated unconventionally, but within the constraints of her role as a childless widow. . . . Judah applauds Tamar’s action and God rewards it. Her boldness, initiative, and willingness to defy society’s expectations have enabled God to provide Judah with two new sons after the death of his first two sons. By continuing to consider herself a member of Judah’s family and insisting on securing her own future within its parameters, she has made it possible for the family to thrive and develop into a major tribe and eventually the Judean state” (Dr. Frymer-Kensky, 274).

38:24 And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom. **And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.** When she was brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man, whose these are, am I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff. And Judah acknowledged them, and said, **She hath been more righteous than I;** because that I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more.



Tamar is a model of grace and courage in the midst of family dysfunction

Joseph in Potiphar's House (39:1–20)

- “And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And **his master saw that the Lord was with him**, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all *that* he had he put into his hand.” (39:2-4)
 - Continuing theme from Abraham – even those outside the covenant recognize the Lord’s hand – cf Sarah with the Pharaoh and Abimelech
 - Joseph in Egypt – remember that the Lord’s plan and purpose can be brought about in seemingly worldly ways
 - **The Lord is constantly with Joseph helping and blessing him**
- Joseph is described as “goodly” and “favored” – meaning tall and handsome
- “And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.” (Gen 39:10)
 - Often used a morality tale: ie this is a pattern seen in real life – ***morality issues happen slowly and step by step, sometimes the best thing to do is emulate Joseph and flee temptation and situations.*** This is a valid principle (cf quote Joseph Smith)
 - ***More likely lesson—put God first no matter the consequences***
- When Potiphar returns, he throws Joseph into prison on his wife’s word

“The plaguing sin of this generation is sexual immorality. This, the Prophet Joseph said, would be the source of more temptations, more buffetings, and more difficulties for the elders of Israel than any other.” (See *Journal of Discourses*, 8:55.)



The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p. 227.

More likely lesson—put God first no matter the consequences. This is what each of the patriarchs prove they will do. And this is what we must do as well.

When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands on our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities. We should put God ahead of everyone else in our lives. When Joseph was in Egypt, what came first in his life—God, his job, or Potiphar's wife?... Joseph was put in prison because he put God first. If we were faced with a similar choice, where would we place our first loyalty? Can we put God ahead of security, peace, passions, wealth, and the honors of men? When Joseph was forced to choose, he was more anxious to please God than to please his employer's wife. When we are required to choose, are we more anxious to please God than our boss, our teacher, our neighbor, or our date?

Ezra Taft Benson, "The Great Commandment—Love the Lord," Ensign, May 1988, 4-5



Joseph in Prison (39:20–40:23)

- “But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing *that was* under his hand; because the Lord was with him, and *that* which he did, the Lord made *it* to prosper.” (39:23)
 - **The Lord continues to bless Joseph in his trials**
- Pharaoh's Butler and Baker thrown into prison (39:1-2)
 - They both “dream dreams”
- “And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and *there is* no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, *Do not* interpretations *belong* to God? tell me *them*, I pray you.” (40:6)
 - **Joseph recognizes the Lord's hands in his dreams**
- Joseph correctly interprets the dreams and charges the butler not to forget him but to tell Pharaoh about it: “Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.” (40:23)
- What other Joseph has similar experiences?
 - ***Joseph the Carpenter: dreams and interpretations, flees to Egypt***

Joseph and Pharaoh (41:1–45)

- Pharaoh's Dreams
 - When the king's magicians and interpreters fail to interpret the dreams, the butler finally remembers Joseph
 - 41:15-16 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.
 - *How does Joseph seem different than he did when he told his brothers of his dream?*
 - **Joseph tells Pharaoh of the coming 7 years of plenty followed by 7 years of famine and advises him to find a wise steward**
- “And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find *such a one* as this *is*, a man in whom the Spirit of God *is*? And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, *there is* none so discreet and wise as thou *art*: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.” (41:38-40)
 - The Pharaoh at this time likely belongs to a group of Semitic people who controlled Egypt from the 18th to 16th c. BC – **the Hyksos** – so it is not unreasonable that Pharaoh would choose Joseph, a distant relative, to rule in his house.
 - The Hyksos had their capital in the Egyptian Delta, and that is precisely where Jacob and his family settled—in the land of Goshen.
- Pharaoh renames Joseph “**Zaphnath-paaneah**” or “he deciphers the concealed,” like our term “revelator!”
- Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh

Joseph's Children in Egypt (41:46–57)

- “And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him.” (41:46)
 - Remember that the rulers of Egypt were a Semitic people, the Hyksos, so perhaps Joseph was not marrying outside of the extended family.
 - But this doesn't change the fact Asenath is the daughter of a Pagan priest
- **Manasseh (forget)** and **Ephraim (fruitful)**
 - Both were born in the years of plenty
 - Later when Israel is blessing his sons at the end of his life, he adopts Ephraim and Manasseh as his own.



Joseph and His Brothers Revisited (42:1–28)

- Jacob sends his sons, save Benjamin, to Egypt to buy grain
- And Joseph *was* the governor over the land, *and he it was* that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and **bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth.** (42:6)
 - The fulfillment of Joseph's prophetic dream
 - Joseph recognizes his brothers, but hides himself from them; he even uses an interpreter, although he knows what his brothers are saying (see 42:23)
- Joseph decides to test his brothers to see how they've changed—to test their loyalty to their father & Benjamin
 - He accuses them of being spies, throws them into prison for a time, then demands they bring Benjamin to see him.
 - Joseph keeps Simeon but sends the other brothers with grain to go fetch Benjamin.
 - *21-24 And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required. And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter. And he turned himself about from them, and wept.*
 - Joseph hears that his brothers feel guilty for their actions towards him.

Jacob and Benjamin (42:29–43:14)

- Jacob is understandably reluctant to let Benjamin go with his brothers to Egypt, in fact he leaves Simeon in prison until the food is gone.
- “And **Judah** said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, *and* also our little ones. I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever” (Gen 43:8-9)
 - Perhaps a way for Judah to redeem himself?
 - This is an illustration of how people can learn, change and take responsibility for their actions. Remember Genesis is illustrating people in real life situations.
 - Judah has changed. Why? Perhaps the death of his two older sons? His interactions with Tamar?
- Jacob instructs them to take double money and the best fruits of the land as gifts
 - “Fruits” is more like products, such as balm, and honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds (43:11)



Joseph Tests his Brothers (43:15–44:34)

- When Benjamin arrives Joseph is overcome and retreats to his rooms: “for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought *where* to weep; and he entered into *his* chamber, and wept there.” (Gen 43:30)
- Joseph invites his brothers to dine with him: “And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another.”
 - Joseph gives signs that he knows them, such as giving Benjamin five times the food as the others
- Joseph has one more test in store for his brothers: the Silver cup. He will be able to see if they are willing to sacrifice Benjamin in the same way that they had sacrificed Joseph or if they have really changed.
 - And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. ***Then they rent their clothes***, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.(Gen 44:12-13)
- At that moment the brothers expressed their remorse over what they had done to Joseph
- **The brothers, especially Judah, beg Joseph not to punish Benjamin for their father’s sake. They, especially Judah, have changed.**
 - ***33 [Judah Speaking] Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren***

Through the Atonement We Can Change

- “Jesus changed men. He changed their habits, their opinions, their ambitions. He changed their tempers, their dispositions, their natures. He changed men’s hearts. . . . The passage of time has not altered the capacity of the Redeemer to change lives. As He said to the dead Lazarus, so He says to you and me: *Come forth*. Come forth from the despair of doubt. Come forth from the sorrow of sin. Come forth from the death of disbelief. Come forth to a newness of life. Come forth.” (President Thomas S. Monson *Be Your Best Self* pg.112, 113)



Forgiveness & Change: forgiving and allowing others to change.

“There is something in many of us that particularly fails to forgive and forget earlier mistakes in life—either our mistakes or the mistakes of others. It is not good. It is not Christian. It stands in terrible opposition to the grandeur and majesty of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. ...

“Let people repent. Let people grow. Believe that people can change and improve. Is that faith? Yes! Is that hope? Yes! Is that charity? Yes! Above all, it is charity, the pure love of Christ” (Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Best Is Yet to Be,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2010, 25–26).



Israel in Egypt (45:1–46:34)

- Joseph joyfully reveals himself to his brothers and forgives them.
 - Joseph sees that the Lord's purposes can be accomplished in worldly ways: "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life." (Gen 45:5)
 - Joseph is seen as a Savior figure here, he preserves the life of his family through his own suffering
 - These are the perils of mortality – trials have a purpose and reason.
 - Forgiveness; changing and letting people change
- Jacob is brought to Egypt
 - On the way he stops and offers sacrifice at Beer-sheba, a location important to later Israelites
 - Gen 46:7-27 is a genealogy list of Jacob's immediate family – 70 souls
- Pharaoh gives the Israelites the land of Goshen for their flocks
 - As the famine continues, the Egyptians run out of money so Joseph begins to take cattle, land and eventually people as payment
 - This may explain how the Egyptians and Hebrews were enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt
 - This may explain how the Hyksos were able to economically take over all of Egypt

Forgiveness

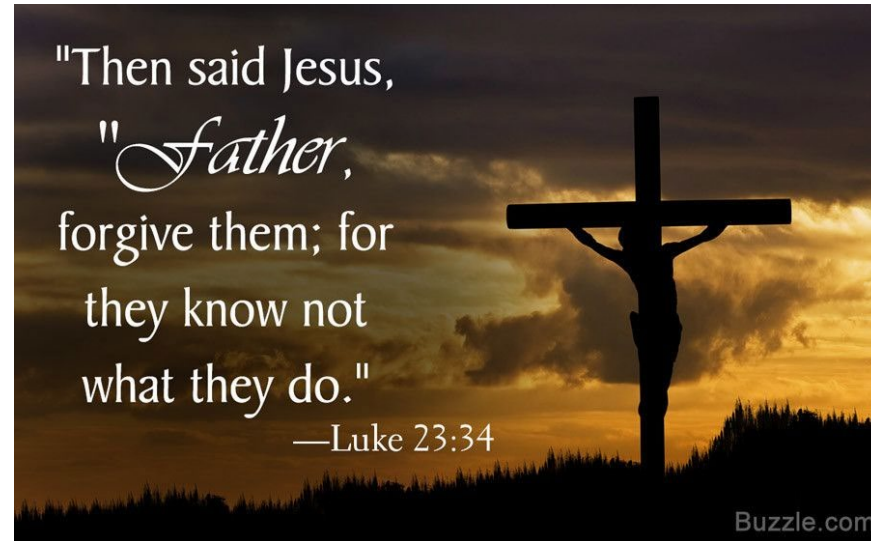
Somehow forgiveness, with love and tolerance, accomplishes miracles that can happen in no other way

I wish today to speak of forgiveness. I think it may be the greatest virtue on earth, and certainly the most needed. There is so much of meanness and abuse, of intolerance and hatred. There is so great a need for repentance and forgiveness. It is the great principle emphasized in all of scripture, both ancient and modern.

The great crowning love of the Savior was expressed when in His dying agony He cried out, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

President Hinckley, October 2005

If we can find forgiveness in our hearts for those who have caused us hurt and injury, we will rise to a higher level of self-esteem and well-being. –President James E Faust, April 2007



When we forgive others, it frees us to choose how we will live our own lives. Forgiveness means that problems of the past no longer dictate our destinies, and we can focus on the future with God’s love in our hearts. Joseph’s will to forgive changed bitterness to love. -Elder David E Sorensen, Presidency of the 70, April 2003

Seeing God's hand in our trials

Elder D. Todd Christofferson "Give us this day our daily bread," BYU Speeches Jan. 2011
There were times when I had exhausted all my resources, when I had nowhere or no one to turn to at that moment, when there was simply no other human being I could call on to help meet the exigency before me. With no other recourse, more than once I fell down before my Heavenly Father begging in tears for His help. And He did help. Sometimes it was nothing more than a sense of peace, a feeling of assurance that things would work out. . . . Though I suffered then, as I look back now, I am grateful that there was not a quick solution to my problem. The fact that I was forced to turn to God for help almost daily over an extended period of years taught me truly how to pray and get answers to prayer and taught me in a very practical way to have faith in God. I came to know my Savior and my Heavenly Father in a way and to a degree that might not have happened otherwise or that might have taken me much longer to achieve. I learned that daily bread is a precious commodity. I learned that manna today can be as real as the physical manna of biblical history. I learned to trust in the Lord with all my heart. I learned to walk with Him day by day.

What may we learn from Elder Christofferson's words and how does it relate to Joseph's story?

Jacob Blesses Ephraim and Manasseh (47:1–48:22)

- Jacob adopts Ephraim and Manasseh.
- Compare this to Isaac and Jacob – Jacob’s eyes are dimmed but he **knowingly** switches his hands so that the right hand (and presumably greater blessing) is on **Ephraim**
 - Jacob reaffirms the blessings of Abraham and Isaac on their heads
- “Moreover I have given to thee **one portion above** thy brethren” (48:22)
 - This implies the **birthright**, in the Law the birthright son receives an extra portion to take care of the family
 - This is also a play on words – “one portion” is literally “shoulder height” which is a play on Shechem
 - Shechem is the place of the Dinah incident - implicitly Manasseh and Ephraim are replacing Simeon and Levi

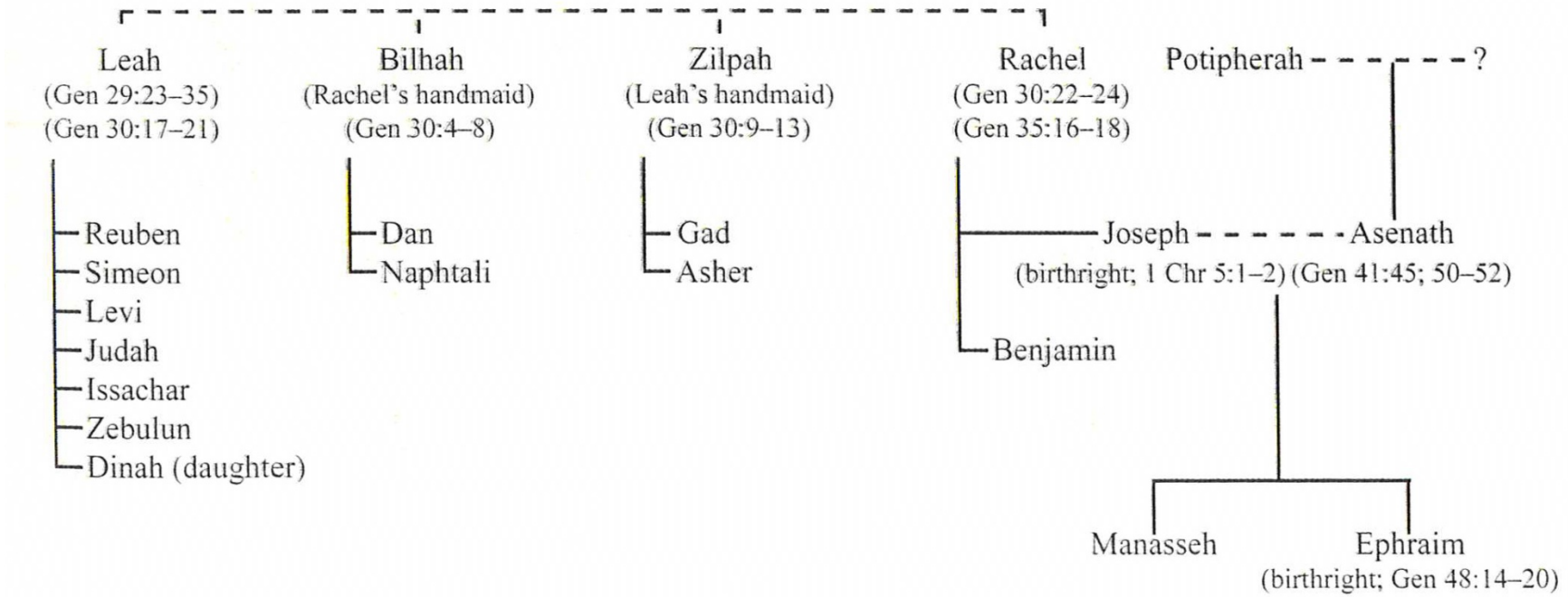
Jacob to Joseph: “The God of thy fathers shall bless thee, and the fruit of thy loins, that they shall be blessed above thy brethren, and above thy father’s house... For thou shalt be a light unto my people, to deliver them in the days of their captivity, from bondage; and to bring salvation unto them.” (JST Genesis 48:9-11)

Jacob's Blesses his other Descendents (49:1–50:26)

- These blessings are examples of the poetry genre in Genesis
 - Poetry is a conscious **use of language for effect**; different cultures use different schemes to define poetry such as meter, rhythm, repetition, sound, word choice, and parallelism
 - The language of poetry is crafted to evoke emotions and even the Spirit – it is also crafted so that it is easier to remember and pass on
 - Poetry and poetic passages especially in the context of blessings can be seen as a sign of divine inspiration
- Blessing and warning to Rueben 49:3-4 – firstborn is historically the first group removed from Canaan
- Blessing and warning to Simeon and Levi 49:5-7
 - Again condemns their actions regarding Dinah
 - Note that although they are not blessed as much now, the Levites earn the right to be priests!
- Blessing to Joseph 49:22-26
 - Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring; his branches run over the wall.
 - Note the symbolism of hills and mountains – the sacred mountain is the temple
- The last word of Genesis looks forward to Exodus: Egypt...

Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise:
thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies;
thy father's children shall bow down before thee.
Judah is a lion's whelp:
from the prey, my son, thou art gone up:
he stooped down, he couched as a lion,
and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?
The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
until **Shiloh** come;
and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.
Binding his foal unto the vine,
and his ass's colt unto the choice vine;
he washed his garments in wine,
and his **clothes in the blood of grapes:**
His eyes shall be red with wine,
and his teeth white with milk. (Genesis 49:8–12)

The Tribes of Israel



Judah's Blessing Genesis 49:8-12

1. Descendants persecuted
("lion's whelp")
 2. Descendants have authority (until Christ)
("sceptre not depart")
 3. Messiah come from lineage
("Shiloh come")
 4. Descendants will gather
("unto him...gathering")
- "...the Messiah, who is called Shiloh." (JST Gen. 50:24)

Joseph's Blessing Genesis 49:22-26

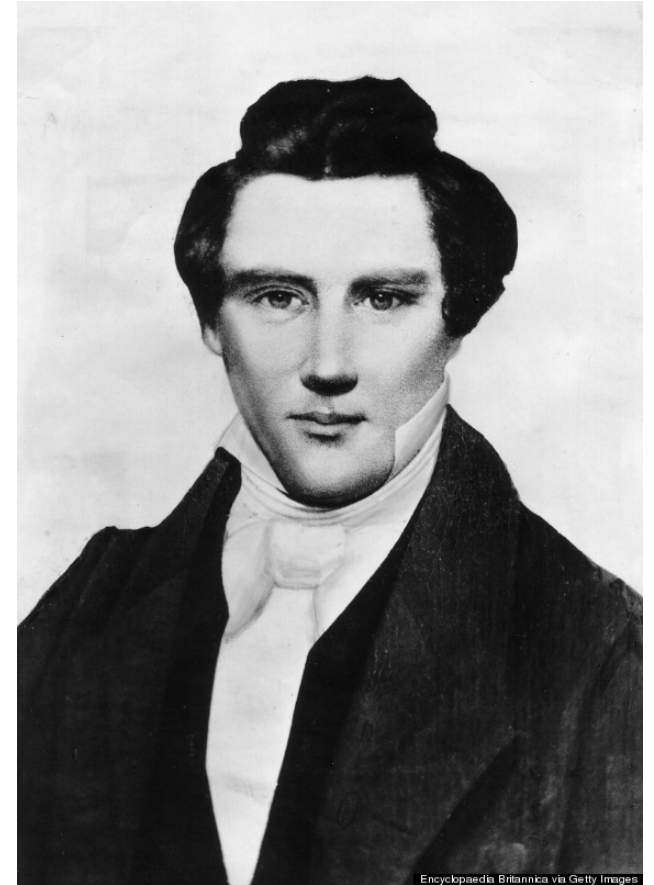
1. Numerous posterity
("fruitful bough")
 2. Descendants scattered
("run over the wall")
 3. Descendants persecuted
("archers grieved him, shot at him, hated him")
 4. Descendants blessed & prospered
("above blessings unto utmost bound")
- Joseph said: "I have obtained a promise of the Lord, that out of the fruit of my loins, the Lord God will raise up a righteous branch out of my loins." (JST Gen. 50:24)

JST Genesis 50:30 And again, a seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins, and unto him will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins; and not to the bringing forth of my word only, saith the Lord, but to the convincing them of my word, which shall have already gone forth among them in the last days;

31 Wherefore the fruit of thy loins shall write, and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together unto the confounding of false doctrines, and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to a knowledge of their fathers in the latter days; and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord.

32 And out of weakness shall he be made strong, in that day when my work shall go forth among all my people, which shall restore them, who are of the house of Israel, in the last days.

33 And that seer will I bless, and they that seek to destroy him shall be confounded; for this promise I give unto you; for I will remember you from generation to generation; and his name shall be called Joseph, and it shall be after the name of his father; and he shall be like unto you; for the thing which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand shall bring my people unto salvation.





Twelve Tribes of Israel

Manasseh	Asher
Naphtali	Zebulun
Issachar	Gad
Ephraim	Dan
Benjamin	Reuben
Simeon	Judah

Not included: Levi
(no land inheritance)