



Genesis 42-50: God's rescue

by Bernard Gabbott

Memory verse:

“God sent me ahead of you
to establish you as a remnant within the land
and to keep you alive by a great deliverance.
Therefore it was not you who sent me here, but God...”

Genesis 45:7-8

Introduction

This our sixth year in Genesis. We have moved from the Garden, and God's good creation, of his mob gathered with/under him, dwelling with him and obeying his word, to the wretched horror of sin. We have heard the promise of God to restore his creation, through the family of Abraham. We have watched this family grow and develop, and we have watched God's commitment (expressed in his covenant) move through the generations. And we have seen the loving kindness and commitment and faithfulness of God, his grace and justice, his mercy and judgement. Reflecting the promise of God (Gen.15:18-21), the dreams of Jospheh (Gen.37), and commitment of God to save the world through Abraham's family, we are now in Egypt, where Jospheh operates in a rare place of power, famine has gripped the land, and the family of Abraham are struggling. By the time we finish this section (spoiler alert), God will have reunited Jacob's family, brought them safely to Egypt, fulfilled his promises, and set the stage for the next chapter of his own gracious work: saving his people from slavery!

Joseph's Brothers go to Egypt to buy Grain



Study 1: Genesis 42-43

Comprehend

1. Read Genesis 42-43
2. There is a world-wide famine (41:57). What does Jacob do... and what does he not do? (42:1-5)
3. Joseph is in charge (42:6). He meets his brothers—describe the interaction? (42:6-14)

What does Joseph remember? (42:9)

What does Joseph do? (42:15-17)

What is the final result? (42:18-26)

What do the brothers start to consider? (42:21)

The brothers return home. On the way, what do they discover? And what happens in the interaction with Jacob? (42:27-38)

4. What has happened 'in the land'? (43:1-2)

How long has this been going on, and what is the decision? (43:10; cf. 43:2)
5. What is the dilemma, and what is the solution? (43:3-14)
6. The return of Jacob's sons leads to what? (43:15-31)
7. As they sit for the meal, what surprises the brothers? (43:32-34)

How does the meal turn out? (43:34)

Consider

1. We are familiar—VERY familiar—with this account. But, place yourselves in the sandals of the first readers.

What might they make of:

- the famine?
 - the trip to Egypt?
 - the interaction between Joseph and his brothers?
 - the way in which Joseph and his brothers regard these events?
 - the return to Jacob, and his fondness for Joseph and Benjamin?
2. What development do we see in Joseph's brothers, especially Judah? (cf. Genesis 38)
 3. How might the various events (for example, 43:23) reassure and confront the brothers?
 4. What do you make of Joseph's reaction/emotions?
 5. What does this episode teach us about reading Genesis?

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1. What do these events reveal about the promises, plans and actions of God?
2. What do these events reveal about the nature of Joseph, his brothers, and Jacob?
3. What do these events reveal about how we might learn to regard events?
4. An important question to ask, as we read God's Word, is, 'What is missing from the storyline of the Bible if this episode is taken out?' What would you answer to that question here?
5. What do you make of the change/development in Judah?

Study 2: Genesis 44-45

Consider

1. Read Genesis 44-45.
2. Joseph has one last 'test' - what is it? (44:1-2)
 What happens? (44:3-17)
 How do the brothers 'think through' this? (44:16)
 What does Judah do? (44:18-34)
 What is the heart of Judah's intervention and mediation?
3. What does Joseph do, and how? (45:1-3)
 How does Joseph explain, reassure, instruct and reunite with his brothers? (45:4-15)
4. How is this received in the wider Egyptian context? (45:16-20)
5. How is the news broken to Jacob? And what is his response? (45:21-28)

Comprehend

1. What do you make of Joseph's 'tests'? Why do you think they take place?
2. What do we learn about the impact of Joseph's 'death' on his family?
3. What do we learn about Judah, and his dealing with this situation? How is this encouraging, and confronting?
4. What do we learn about how the brothers understand the situation they are in?

5. As Joseph reveals his identity, what strikes you?
4. How might you link this moment, and the one that follows (45:16-20) with the promise of God in Genesis 12:1-2 and 15:13-21?

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1. What is missing in God's unfolding actions if these two chapters are not in the Bible?
2. How does Joseph's understanding of the events of his life help us understand life?
3. How else do you see 45:7-8 worked out in the rest of God's word? Why?
4. How does this episode help us understand the impact God's people have on the world in which they live?

Study 3: Genesis 46-47

Comprehend

1. Read Genesis 46-47.
2. In 46:1-7, what does Jacob/Israel do?
In 46:1-7, what does God do?
3. What are we given in 46:8-27?
Why? And what important information is contained here?
4. In 46:28-30, what meeting takes place? What is so good about this?
In 46:31-34, what does Joseph organize?
5. How does all this planning pan out in 47:1-12?
6. in 47:13-26, what happens?
What does this reveal about Joseph?
7. How does this chapter finish? What is assured?

Consider

1. What was God's promise to Jacob in Genesis 28:15?
How do we see that happening here?
2. What do we see happening in Joseph?
3. What do we also learn about the emerging situation in Egypt?

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1. What do we learn about God in this account?

2. What do we learn about God's people in this account?

Study 4: Genesis 48

Comprehend

1. Read Genesis 48.
2. What is the state of affairs for Jacob/Israel? (vs.1)
3. Joseph visits him with his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. What does Jacob state? (vs.3-7)
4. What happens, and what does Jacob say? (vs.8-12)
5. Jacob blesses the boys of Joseph—what does he say? (vs.13-20)

What does he do?

What does this remind you of?

6. Jacob is about to die—what does he give Joseph? (vs.21-22)

Consider

1. What is joyful about this episode?
2. What is strange about this episode?
3. How does Jacob understand his life, and his relationship with God?
4. What driving theme is evident here?

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1. Why do you think this episode is here—what purpose does it serve?
2. What is revealed here about God?
3. What is revealed here about God's people?

Study 5: Genesis 49-50

Comprehend

1. Read Genesis 49-50.
2. What does Jacob do? (49:1)
3. Go through the list and note down what is spoken to each of the brothers by Jacob...

Does anything stand out? Why?

How does this blessing close? (49:28)

4. How does Jacob's life end, and with what instructions? Is there anything that stands out here? (49:29-33)
5. How does Joseph obey his father? (50:1-14)

What do the details tell us about the impact of Jacob's family on those around them?

6. In the aftermath of Jacob's death, what is revealed? (50:15-21)

7. Joseph's death is framed by an expectation, and a hope—what are they? (50:22-26)

In this sense, how is this a fitting ending to Genesis?

Consider

1. What is the picture we are given of Jacob, at the end of his life? What does this show?
2. What is the picture we are given of Joseph, at the end of his life? What does this show?
3. What picture are we given of God, his people, and his promises, at the end of Genesis? What does this show?

Contact

1. What are some things you have learned as we have worked our way through Genesis?
2. What are some thing you have been confronted by as we have worked our way through Genesis?