Seminole
BAPTIST CHURCH

KINGDOM PATRIARCHS

PART 2

Forty Daily Devotions
from Genesis 26-50
(Based on the NKJV)

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Introduction

Genesis is a book about "beginnings." It tells us about the beginning of the heavens and the earth and all that is contained therein. This is also a book about our "beginnings" in the sense that it is the record of man's ancestry all the way back to Adam and Eve. These early ancestors of the Christian faith are referred to as "patriarchs" in the New Testament. Hebrews 7:4 specifically speaks of Abraham as being one of those patriarchs. Patriarch means "father" or "head." The people that we will meet in Genesis are people that became the fathers, or heads, of all the nations of the earth. Enjoy your time in Genesis as you learn more about your spiritual ancestors and get to know your family better!

Daily Reading Schedule

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
1	Genesis 26:1-19	06/10/26
2	Genesis 26:20-35	06/11/26
3	Genesis 27:1-23	06/12/26
4	Genesis 27:24-46	06/13/26
5	Genesis 28:1-22	06/14/26
6	Genesis 29:1-30	06/15/26
7	Genesis 29:31-30:24	06/16/26
8	Genesis 30:25-43	06/17/26
9	Genesis 31:1-24	06/18/26
10	Genesis 31:25-55	06/19/26
11	Genesis 32:1-32	06/20/26
12	Genesis 33:1-20	06/21/26
13	Genesis 34:1-31	06/22/26
14	Genesis 35:1-29	06/23/26
15	Genesis 36:1-43	06/24/26
16	Genesis 37:1-18	06/25/26
17	Genesis 37:19-36	06/26/26
18	Genesis 38:1-30	06/27/26
19	Genesis 39:1-23	06/28/26
20	Genesis 40:1-23	06/29/26

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
21	Genesis 41:1-21	06/30/26
22	Genesis 41:22-36	07/01/26
23	Genesis 41:37-57	07/02/26
24	Genesis 42:1-20	07/03/26
25	Genesis 42:21-38	07/04/26
26	Genesis 43:1-17	07/05/26
27	Genesis 43:18-34	07/06/26
28	Genesis 44:1-17	07/07/26
29	Genesis 44:18-34	07/08/26
30	Genesis 45:1-14	07/09/26
31	Genesis 45:15-28	07/10/26
32	Genesis 46:1-17	07/11/26
33	Genesis 46:18-34	07/12/26
34	Genesis 47:1-17	07/13/26
35	Genesis 47:18-31	07/14/26
36	Genesis 48:1-22	07/15/26
37	Genesis 49:1-18	07/16/26
38	Genesis 49:19-33	07/17/26
39	Genesis 50:1-14	07/18/26
40	Genesis 50:15-26	07/19/26

Day 1: Genesis 26:1-19

"And the men of the place asked about his wife. And he said, 'She is my sister'; for he was afraid to say, 'She is my wife,' because he thought, 'lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah, because she is beautiful to behold.'" (Genesis 26:7)

Like Father, Like Son

Two especially important things stand out in today's Scripture reading: those being that God's *promises* to Abraham continued through God's relationship with Isaac and that God's *problems* with Abraham also continued with Isaac. Compare verses three and four of today's reading with Genesis 12:2-3 and you will see that to be true. The last part of verse three of today's Scripture clearly indicates that God planned to fulfill His promises to Abraham through His blessing of Isaac and his descendants. However, the failures of Abraham are sometimes seen in Isaac as well. When faced with famine, Isaac looked to the Philistines much like his father looked to Egypt in the past (v. 1). The Bible clearly states that God had to command Isaac not to go down to Egypt for food (v. 2). But, unfortunately, the similarities between Abraham and Isaac do not end there. A careful look at our focus verse reveals that Isaac committed the same cowardly sin as his father when he lied about his wife's identity to protect his own life! Just like it was with Abraham, the so-called "worldly" people had to step in to make sure things were made right. How sad it is that the world sometimes exhibits more respect for God than His own people.

Prayer Emphasis: Remember, Romans 15:4 tells us, "Whatever things were written before were written for our learning" (instruction). **Learn** some valuable life lessons from the people that we are reading about as we study the lives of God's Kingdom Patriarchs.

Day 2: Genesis 26:20-35

"And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, 'I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham's sake.' So he built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD…" (Genesis 26:24 & 25a)

Like Father, Like Son, Continues

The similarities between Abraham and Isaac continue as we read that God "appeared" to Isaac just as He had earlier appeared to his father (compare 26:24 to 12:7). And, because of that special appearance, Isaac responded exactly as his father had when God appeared to him. Verse 25 tells us that Isaac, like his father, built an altar and called upon the name of the LORD. But, just as surely as we can see these similarities now, those who knew both Abraham and Isaac saw their similarities then. Verses 26 through 28 disclose that Abimelech approached Isaac and stated that he had "certainly seen that the LORD" was with Isaac and, therefore, concluded that he needed to make a treaty with him. If you recall, this is almost identical to what this same man said to Abraham (21:22-23) when he came seeking a treaty with him. It is encouraging to know that even if we fail God in many ways, others can still see God's blessings upon our lives and be influenced by them.

Prayer Emphasis: Praise God that He can use frail, broken people like Abraham, Isaac, and the rest of us to reveal His blessings to others. Take some time today to **thank** God for blessing us on an *in spite of* and not *a because of* basis! **Contact** a fellow believer to let them know how they have been a blessing to you and **thank** them for their commitment to Christ.

Day 3: Genesis 27:1-23

"'Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you.'" (Genesis 27:8)

An Elaborate Scheme

There is often confusion between the birthright and the blessing, but they were two separate things in Bible times. Earlier (chapter 25) we read how Jacob traded Esau out of his birthright. In today's chapter, we read how Jacob later tricked Esau out of his father's blessing. The saddest thing about this great deception is that Rebekah, Isaac's wife (and the mother of both boys), is the one who instigated this deceitful act. Our focus verse records her encouraging Jacob to carefully follow her instructions regarding this deception. The word that is translated "obey" in our focus verse comes from a Hebrew word that means "to give undivided attention" to what is being said. The main idea of this word is to make sure that you perceive and obey what is being spoken to you at that moment. This word is generally used when there is no, or truly little, margin for error concerning the events that are about to take place. Such was the case with the elaborate scheme that Rebekah and Jacob are about to put in place to ensure Jacob receives Isaac's blessing rather than the intended Esau. While Esau is out trying to obey the request of his dying father, his own mother and brother are taking multiple steps to make goat meat pass for venison and Jacob pass for Esau. Perhaps Isaac's own love for venison (see 25:28) played a part in his being so easily fooled.

Prayer Emphasis: Avoid selfishness and greed whenever possible. **Do** something unselfish for someone today. **Be** a blessing to someone and see how much you are blessed by doing so.

Day 4: Genesis 27:24-46

"And Esau said, 'Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing!…'" (Genesis 27:36)

A Fitting Name

As I mentioned yesterday, the birthright and the blessing were two different things. Our focus verse clearly states that. It also reveals Esau's great sorrow over how his own brother had deceived him again. Esau declared that his twin brother had been "rightly" named because "Jacob" meant to "supplant" or "to supersede by force or cunning." Verse 19 (from yesterday's reading) and verse 24 (from today's reading) both indicate that Jacob had no qualms whatsoever about lying to his father in order to get what he wanted. Although Jacob and Rebekah might have felt they had gotten away with their deception, the chapters ahead will reveal that Jacob spent a lifetime reaping from the hands of others what he sowed at the expense of his own brother. He lived much of his life in fear of his own brother and was forced to flee from his home, leaving behind his mother and the flocks of his father that he desired so strongly. Eventually we will see Jacob deceived by his own sons when they lied to him about the death of their brother, Joseph. Rebekah had some reaping of her own to do. In verse 43, she once again commands Jacob to "obey (her) voice," but this time it was to send her son away to live with her brother, Laban, who repeatedly deceived Jacob. It is sad to note that Rebekah did not live to see her son Jacob again.

Prayer Emphasis: Realize that the Bible clearly teaches that we always reap what we sow, more than we sow, and often our reaping comes much later than the time of the actual sowing. **Practice** the "Golden Rule" by treating others the way that you would want to be treated. **Take** every precaution to be honest and fair in your dealings with others.

Day 5: Genesis 28:1-22

"'Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.'" (Genesis 28:15)

Two Wonderful Promises

No matter how undeserving we may be, God is always faithful to His promises. We certainly would not think Jacob deserved to receive the kind of blessings that God is promising him in today's verses. But God, because of His grace, desired to make them. God made two wonderful promises to Jacob in our focus verse. The first promise involved God's *presence* and the second His *protection*. First, God said to Jacob, "I am with you." Notice that God's presence was described in the present tense. Later, in this same verse, He promised Jacob that He would not leave him until He had fulfilled His every promise to him. God also promised Jacob that He would "keep" him. In return, Jacob made a promise of his own. He promised God that he would give a tenth of all that God provided back to Him (v. 22). Abraham (then Abram) was the first person in the Bible that was said to give "tithes" unto the LORD (14:20). Jacob now becomes the second. These two places are the only two places that the "tithe" or "tenth" is mentioned in Genesis. The word that is translated "tenth" here is translated "tithe" in other places in the Scripture.

Prayer Emphasis: Ask God to help you trust Him enough to become faithful in the matter of tithes and offerings. Many people who once thought they could not afford to tithe would now tell you they could not afford *not* to tithe. **Pray** much about it and begin to give to God on a regular basis.

Day 6: Genesis 29:1-30

"And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother." (Genesis 29:10)

Jacob Meets His "Match"

The title of today's devotional thought carries a double meaning. In our verses we read of Jacob meeting his life "match" when he met his beautiful Rachel. It is interesting to note that Jacob met Rachel at a well while she was there as her father's flocks were watering. If you recall, this meeting is remarkably similar to how Abraham's servant first met Rebekah when he was searching for a bride for Isaac, Jacob's own father. The memories of that story might be what first led Jacob to stop at the well that he just "happened" upon in his journey. But Jacob met his match in another way on that very same day. Upon learning that his sister Rebekah's son was at the well, Laban "ran" to meet him (v. 13). It would be through his own "Uncle Laban" that Jacob would learn some hard lessons, reap some harvest from his own seeds of deception, and receive a strong dose of his own medicine. The story is simple. Jacob loved Rachel and served Laban for seven years for the right to marry her. But on the wedding night, Laban slyly substituted his older daughter, Leah, and then tricked Jacob into serving an additional seven years for Rachel. What was Laban's excuse for doing such a terrible thing? Read verse 26 again! He did it because of birthrights! It was not right to wed the younger before the older! We can only imagine how Jacob received those words!

Prayer Emphasis: Read Galatians 6:7 and **memorize** it. **Remember**, God's laws of sowing and reaping still apply today. **Determine** to sow good things into the lives of others by being fair and upright in all your dealings, associations, and relationships.

Day 7: Genesis 29:31 - 30:24

"When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel was barren." (Genesis 29:31)

Three Striking Similarities

It is interesting to note that the wives of the first three patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) were all three "beautiful" women (see 12:11, 24:15-16, and 29:17). But we also notice a second similarity among these women. All three of these beautiful women were also "barren" (see 16:1, 25:21, and 29:31). How interesting it is that these three men who received the promise of having ancestors that would outnumber the stars, all had to be constantly reminded to look to God for the answer to that promise. The third similarity between Jacob's wives and the wives of his father and grandfather was found in the fact that they were all "busy" trying to fulfill God's promises in their own ways. Rachel watched as her sister Leah gave Jacob six sons and a daughter. In between the fourth and fifth sons by Leah, Rachel, after the manner of Sarah, persuaded Jacob to be with her servant, Bilhah, by whom Dan and Naphtali were born. But Leah also had a willing maid, Zilpah, by whom Gad and Asher were born. Finally, Rachel conceived in her own womb and bore Joseph, who will become one of the greatest types, or images, of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

Prayer Emphasis: Allow God time to work His will in your life. **Determine** to trust in His *promises* and not in your own *plans*. **Wait** on the Lord and see if He does not "renew" your strength and help you "mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31).

Day 8: Genesis 30:25-43

"And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, 'Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my country.'" (Genesis 30:25)

Some Shrewd Negotiations

The day finally came when Jacob could think of nothing but going home! He approached his uncle- turned-father-in-law, Laban, and asked for permission to do so. That is when the bargaining began! Laban, knowing that God had blessed him because of Jacob's presence in his family, and wanting him to remain with him, said to him "name…your wages" (v. 28), or what it would take to keep him there. But Jacob, determined to go home, proposed a settlement that seemed more than fair to Laban. Jacob would separate and retain all the "speckled and spotted" sheep and goats and the brown colored lambs (v. 32). These multi-colored animals were rare and usually fewer than the solid-colored ones. Laban, thinking that this offer was seemingly to his advantage, quickly closed the deal. But, true to his own nature, and perhaps because he did not trust Jacob any more than Jacob trusted him, Laban took all of the animals that might most likely produce the kind that would fall to Jacob, gave them to his sons, and had them take them so far away from the rest of the flocks that it would take a "speckled and spotted" Papa goat three days to come and mate with one of Laban's own. Thus, two men who sounded so spiritual in their dealings acted selfishly to make them come out to their best advantage.

Prayer Emphasis: Express your faith to others by what you do and not just by the spiritual sounding things that you say. **Exhibit** true Christian character today as you deal with others. **Examine** the motivations of your heart and ask God to make them pleasing in His sight.

Day 9: Genesis 31:1-24

"Then the LORD said to Jacob, 'Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you.'" (Genesis 31:3)

On the Road Again

Jacob hit the road for two reasons: 1) The animosity between him and Laban's family was growing stronger every day, and 2) God told him it was time to go home (v. 3)! Jacob held a family meeting and his wives agreed to do whatever God commanded Jacob to do (v. 16). So, the journey began. But it was more exciting than Jacob might have imagined. Little did he know that sweet, little Rachel had stolen the "household idols" from her father's house (v. 19). In pagan societies, the first born inherited such idols as a symbol of their birthright. Perhaps this was Rachel's way of getting back at her father for not allowing her to marry first. But whatever message Rachel intended to send, the one that Laban received caused him to become truly angry. Three days after Jacob had set out for Canaan, Laban heard of it and set out to pursue him. Travelling lighter and faster, he caught up with Jacob's family and flocks in seven days. Just before he overtook Jacob, God spoke to Laban and warned him not to harm Jacob. Jacob may have been a planner and schemer, but God had a plan for this man, and He was not going to allow Laban, or anyone else, to stop it.

Prayer Emphasis: Listen for God's voice daily and **allow** Him to speak to you through His Word. **Discuss** what God is saying to you with your family and **seek** to **serve** God as a unit. **Express** love and appreciation to your family today.

Day 10: Genesis 31:25-55

"'Now therefore, come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me.'" (Genesis 31:44)

The Covenant

After several accusations from Laban and as many answers from Jacob, the two men decided to come to an agreement and make a covenant. Notice that it was after Jacob finally opened up to Laban and told him how he felt about his 20 years of service and the unjust ways in which he had been treated, that Laban suggested they make a covenant of peace between them. It really makes you wonder what difference such honest communication between these two men might have made if they had only communicated honestly many years earlier. Like most covenants, this one had certain stipulations. The first was the safety of Laban's daughters and their children (v. 50), and the second concerned the separation of their two estates (v. 52). The "pillar" mentioned in verse 51 represents a land marker that legally separated what was Laban's from that which belonged to Jacob. After a couple of names for this place of peace negotiations were bantered back and forth, the Hebrew name Mizpah was agreed upon (v. 49). This word literally means "beacon" or "watchtower" and was to serve as a reminder to both men that God would be constantly watching to see if they would honor the agreement they made on that day.

Prayer Emphasis: Practice clear Christian communication in all your relationships. When strong, seemingly unpleasant words are necessary, speak from a soft heart and with a soft tone and watch how God can get involved in helping you resolve conflict in a positive way. **Read** Proverbs 15:1 and look for an opportunity to practice what it says today or at your next opportunity to do so.

Day 11: Genesis 32:1-32

"So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him." (Genesis 32:1)

"The Angels of God"

The phrase, "the angels of God," demands some time and attention. This phrase is found in only two places in the Old Testament. Both places are in Genesis and both times the phrase is found it is associated with Jacob and his travels. Back in 28:12, Jacob, upon his first leaving his homeland, saw "the angels of God" ascending and descending a "ladder." Now, as he finally returns to his homeland, he is met by "the angels of God" once again. Just as the angels represented God's safety and protection as Jacob *ran away* from home, they now represented that same sense of God's safety and protection as he *returned* home. But even with this divine assurance of safety, the ever-scheming Jacob busied himself with his own precautionary plans. After sending presents to Esau, and a long prayer session with God, Jacob settled in for the night to await a response from his once angry brother. But, as if having the very angels of God appear to him once again was not enough, Jacob then had an encounter with the Lord Himself, and wrestled with Him all night long! It was in that battle of wills that Jacob received a new name – Israel! Although this wrestling match was spiritual in nature, it also made a lasting physical impression on Jacob's life. This man, who had once fled from home at his mother's command (27:43), now returned with a limp in his step that would serve as a constant reminder that he should never again trust in his own strength or schemes.

Prayer Emphasis: Pay careful attention to what God is saying and doing in your life. **Refuse** to see anything that He says or does as insignificant or unimportant. **Allow** Him to speak to you through your prayer time and be faithful to meet with Him daily.

Day 12: Genesis 33:1-20

"Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants." (Genesis 33:1)

Facing Esau!

Even after receiving strong assurances from God, Jacob still exhibited weakness and fear as he approached his meeting with Esau. However, while God used time and experience to bring about some positive changes in Jacob, including giving him a new name, God had been equally busy in the life of Esau! We must remember that the last time we read about Esau was in 27:41 where we learned that he "hated" Jacob and vowed to kill him. Now, the two men meet again. But, there is something different about both men. God's power has changed Jacob from a man marked by *greed* to one marked by *generosity*. At the same time, the amazing power of God had been working to change Esau from a man seeking *revenge* to one that now sought *reconciliation*. Read verses 8-11 again and watch as these two men who fought over a birthright and possessions now argue back and forth over who could be more generous to the other. It is only by the power and blessings of God that Esau could summarize their meeting with the words found in verse 12: "Let us take our journey." From this point on in Genesis, the focus will shift from Jacob (Israel) to more detailed information about his children.

Prayer Emphasis: Read Psalm 133:1 and try to **commit** it's meaning to memory. **Seek** unity with your fellow believers and take definite steps to keep or restore it. **Cast** some long-standing grudge into the deepest part of God's sea of forgiveness today!

Day 13: Genesis 34:1-31

"But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, and spoke deceitfully, because he had defiled Dinah, their sister." (Genesis 34:13)

A Very Sad Day for Jacob

Dinah, Jacob's daughter, went out to visit with some of her new neighbors. While doing so, she was raped by one of the local men. It seems that this man genuinely loved Dinah and begged to marry her, but he had wronged her and her family. It was an incredibly sad day for Jacob when he heard that his daughter had been defiled (v. 5). Verse seven tells us that Jacob's sons were "very angry" when they heard about what happened to their sister. The word that is translated "angry" here is the word used to describe the anger Cain felt just before he killed Abel. A second reason for this being a sad day for Jacob is found in our focus verse. Jacob's sons are said to have dealt "deceitfully" with the young man and his father. They tricked all the men in that city to submit to circumcision under the guise that they would then allow intermarriage between their peoples. Three days after this mass circumcision, while the men were very sore, Jacob's sons went in and slaughtered them. The word that is translated "deceitfully" in verse 13 is found in only one other place in Genesis. That was back in 27:35 when it described the way Jacob acted when he tricked his father into giving him Esau's blessing. There is no sadder form of reaping than to see our past sins presently manifested in the lives of our children.

Prayer Emphasis: Make every effort to model a righteous life before your children in word and deed. **Pray** for those who have been victimized by sexual violence. **Pray** especially today for all the women and children in our church.

Day 14: Genesis 35:1-29

"Then God said to Jacob, 'Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother.'" (Genesis 35:1)

Back to Bethel

There are two main themes found in today's chapter. The first theme is that of *completion*. After more than 20 years, Jacob and his family are finally back home in the land of promise. He has learned many lessons and seen the fulfillment of God's promise in his lifetime. But there is a second theme, which is *correction*. Jacob had to go to his family and followers and demand that they "put away" (KJV) or "get rid of" (NIV) the strange gods that were among them (v. 2). Many believe that these were the same idols that Rachel had stolen from her father's home. Notice that all the things that needed to be put away were to be taken care of before they returned to Bethel. After Jacob returned to Bethel, God confirmed the promise that He made to Jacob there over two decades earlier (see 32:28). After his return to the Promised Land, Jacob's family was completed by the birth of his 12th son, Benjamin. Unfortunately, Rachel died during the birth of this child. The chapter closes with the death of Isaac and notes that Esau and Jacob were there together when they buried him.

Prayer Emphasis: Pray especially for your family today. **Seek** to heal any division that might exist between you and any family member. **Employ** your words and your work to ensure that your family members know they are loved and appreciated.

Day 15: Genesis 36:1-43

"Now this is the genealogy of Esau, who is Edom." (Genesis 36:1)

Esau's Family Tree

The Bible contains many genealogies. They do not always make for interesting reading, but we have to remind ourselves that every part of God's Word is profitable to us. As we read this chapter, I want to suggest just a few ways that we might benefit from doing so. First, *in these verses we learn something about the faithfulness of God*. He made promises to Esau, and it is important that the fulfillment of those promises be recorded for us. Second, *the people of Jacob's day needed to know that Edom would be founded by the descendants of Esau*. The Israelites would someday cross the Jordan River to conquer and possess Canaan and destroy the Canaanites. There were, however, some people who they were not to harm in any way. Among those whom God protected were a people called the Edomites, the descendants of Esau. To prevent this command from being violated, it was essential for the Israelites of Moses' day to know who the Edomites were via this carefully documented record of the generations of Esau. Finally, *this chapter helps us remember that every person is important to God*. Someone else's family tree may not be of special interest to you, but to the people and families it represents, it is precious. Each of these names represents the life of a man or woman — individuals made in the image of God who had hopes, dreams, and aspirations just like you and me. God made a point to continually remind His people that the descendants of Esau were their brothers (Deuteronomy. 2:4; 23:7).

Prayer Emphasis: Ask God to show you something about Him on every page and in every paragraph that you read from the Bible. **Look** for something that you can take with you and meditate on all day long. **Remind** someone that you encounter today that they are important to God.

Day 16: Genesis 37:1-18

"Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors." (Genesis 37:3)

Meet Joseph

Although we have already read his name five times before today, the remaining chapters of Genesis will focus on the life and times of Joseph. Joseph was special to his father, Jacob, for at least two reasons. First, we are told he was "the son of his (Jacob's) old age" or "he had been born to him in his old age" (NIV). Second, Joseph was the first of Jacob's two sons who had been born of Rachel – the true love of Jacob's life. Joseph's life was marked by preferential treatment from his father and the "tunic of many colors" that is mentioned in our focus verse is just one indication of the special relationship that this young man had with his father. Some translations refer to this tunic as an "ornamented robe." Joseph's special relationship with his father was obvious to his brothers and they "hated" him for it. They "could not speak peaceably," or as some translations read, "speak a kind word" to him (v. 4). Ultimately, they began to conspire among themselves "to kill him" (v. 18). They refused to allow their brother's special relationship with their father to be a source of *inspiration*, and thus, it soon became a source of *irritation*.

Prayer Emphasis: Look again at verse four and **note** that one of the ways anger is vented is through the way we speak to people. Be sure to **mark** the "will not be able to attend" box when you are invited to conspire against others. **Refuse** to be a part of any plot that thwarts the work of God's Kingdom.

Day 17: Genesis 37:19-36

"'Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, "Some wild beast has devoured him." We shall see what will become of his dreams!'" (Genesis 37:20)

A Very Bad Place

Let me remind you about something from yesterday's reading. Joseph's father sent him to Shechem in search of his brothers who were there tending his flocks. There, Joseph's brothers conspired to kill him and committed themselves to a plan of action to do so. The name Shechem, no doubt, conjured up sad and angry memories for the sons of Jacob. It was Shechem who defiled their young sister, Dinah (34:2) and angered the sons of Israel to the point of war (34:25). In that story, Shechem was the name of a person. In this story, Shechem is the name of a place, and it did not prove to be a particularly good place for God's people to be. It was in this place that Joseph's brothers set out to kill him. Two of Joseph's brothers play prominent roles in this story. First, Reuben heard of the plan to kill Joseph and did everything in his power to thwart that plan. Afterwards, he returned to the pit into which Joseph had been cast hoping to find his younger brother alive and rescue him. Judah is important to the story because he is the one who recommended that Joseph be sold and not killed. Notice that these brothers received payment in "silver" coins (v. 28). Does that remind you of the story of our Lord's betrayal?

Prayer Emphasis: Refuse to settle *for* or to settle *in* Shechem! **Remove** all hatred and animosity for others (especially your Christian family) from your heart by confessing it to God and seeking His cleansing from its curse.

Day 18: Genesis 38:1-30

"It came to pass at that time that Judah departed from his brothers, and visited a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah." (Genesis 38:1)

Meet Judah & Tamar

Although we have read the name "Judah" three times since we started Genesis, it was just another name in a genealogy until we got to Genesis 37:28. There we read that it was Judah who suggested that Joseph's brothers ultimately sell him into slavery for "20 shekels of silver." Now, we are told that after doing so, Judah "departed from his brothers." Judah is the same name that was born by the disciple who betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver and then departed from the apostles on the night of Jesus' arrest. We know that the New Testament Judas went out and hung himself after he betrayed Christ. Our Old Testament Judas did not use a rope, but today's reading reveals that he "hung himself" in an entirely different way. The story pretty much speaks for itself, but the main idea is that this man made a promise to Tamar, the widow of one of his sons, which he knew he had no intention of keeping. When Tamar realized Judah lied to her, she set a trap for him that resulted in her becoming pregnant. When he first heard that his daughter-in-law was pregnant, he was ready to have her die in a way that was even more severe than the Law required. But when she proved to him that the child she carried was his, he acknowledged his guilt and declared Tamar to be more righteous than him.

Prayer Emphasis: Remind yourself that the pleasures of sin are only for a season – and a short one at that! **Refuse** to allow the draw of this world to lead you to make decisions that can harm you or those you love. **Stand** strong against sin's enticements and realize that the only direction that it can take you is down.

Day 19: Genesis 39:1-23

"Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there." (Genesis 39:1)

Joseph in Egypt

Joseph, like Abraham, is going to spend some time in Egypt. But, unlike Abraham, who went there freely in search of food, Joseph was *bought* and *brought* to Egypt at the hand of others. However, God's hand was with Joseph, and God was working to fulfill His personal plan for Joseph's life. Joseph's time in service to Potiphar is important to the story of the Bible, because it allows us to see more about Christ in the Old Testament. Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob (37:3), becomes a servant in Egypt. When we remember that Egypt is a type of the world in the Bible, then we begin to see a much bigger story than that of one man unfolding before us. Even though Joseph was taken to Egypt against his will, he did not allow his unfortunate situation or his circumstances to daunt his spirit. Despite his problems, we are told that Joseph "was a successful man" (v. 2). Two things should be considered about Joseph's success. First, we must consider the *place* of his success. He was in Egypt, a place where he had no desire to be. However, that place didn't change Joseph, but rather, Joseph was a man who helped change that place. Second, when we discuss Joseph's success, we must consider a *Person*! Verse two begins with these words: "The LORD was with Joseph." As we walk through this sometimes-trying world, we should always remember our Lord's promise that He is with us "always" (Matthew 28:20).

Prayer Emphasis: Read Deuteronomy 31:6-8 and see where God twice promised His divine presence to His people. **Note** the important command attached to the second promise: "Do not fear nor be dismayed."

Day 20: Genesis 40:1-23

"'Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his butler.'" (Genesis 40:13)

Seeing Jesus in Joseph

Just as Jesus suffered with two other men (see Luke 23:32), Joseph was joined in prison by the "butler" and the chief "baker" of the king of Egypt (v. 1). Through their association with Joseph, one was fully "restored" (v. 13). But look carefully at verse 13 again and circle the number of days that are mentioned there! Joseph boldly proclaimed to this sinner that "within three days" he would be fully restored to a place of service. Isn't that an interesting number of days? While it is true that Jesus told one of the criminals dying with Him that he would be with Him in Paradise that day, we know that man's full restoration came as a result of the resurrection three days later! We are in chapters that are too rich to mine in short devotions or one paragraph, but at least one more point must be made from today's Scriptures. Verse 14 states that Joseph asked the pardoned butler to "remember" him after he was restored and to "make mention" of him to Pharaoh. Jesus asked his disciples to do the same. That is why we remember Him when we observe the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19). As sad as it is that the butler "did not remember" Joseph (v. 23), it is an even sadder fact that many Christians go days without bowing their hearts before God and thanking Him for their salvation and even longer than that without mentioning Him to others.

Prayer Emphasis: Thank God for your salvation experience. **Remember** that moment when Christ first set you free from the prison of sin and shame and mention it to someone you speak with today.

Day 21: Genesis 41:1-21

"Then the chief butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying: 'I remember my faults this day.'" (Genesis 41:9)

Joseph "Remembered"

As a whole, chapter 41 deals with Joseph's eventual release from prison and his rise to power. However, since we are reading this chapter over a three-day period, we can focus on one of the things that led to that exaltation each day. Two years after the dreams mentioned in chapter 40, Pharaoh had two dreams of his own. When "all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men" could not together interpret Pharaoh's dream (v. 8), the forgetful "butler" that had been restored as a result of his relationship with Joseph in prison, remembered the dreams Joseph interpreted for the baker and him (vs. 9-12). At the same time this man remembered what Joseph had done for him, he also remembered what he failed to do for Joseph. So, some two years after his promise to do so, he finally mentions Joseph to Pharaoh! Two important points must be made from these verses. First, since Egypt is a type of the world in Scripture, then we must conclude that the wisdom of this world was "made foolish" (see 1 Corinthians 1:20) in that it was not enough to answer the spiritual questions with which Pharaoh and his people were now confronted. There was no satisfaction or peace to be found in worldly wisdom then, and there is still none to be found in it today. Second, it is when those who have been blessed by their relationship with Jesus speak up and mention Him, that He can be exalted in the eyes of the world! The baker, however late, mentioned Joseph and soon Joseph was magnified in the eyes of Pharaoh and all the people of Egypt.

Prayer Emphasis: Mention the name of Jesus in conversation again today – and then strive to do so every day. Like the pardoned man in our focus verse, **acknowledge** it as a "fault" when you fail to speak up.

Day 22: Genesis 41:22-36

"'This is the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do.'" (Genesis 41:28)

A Faithful Witness

Joseph explained to Pharaoh that, through his dreams, God was showing him that there was going to be seven years of blessing and prosperity in Egypt followed by seven years of famine. To avoid being destroyed by that famine, Pharaoh and his people were being warned to take immediate action. To help Pharaoh see this, Joseph had to tell him the whole truth, including both the good and bad parts about the dreams. It is such a blessing to be able to speak with people about Heaven. I mention it to people that I meet even though I do not know whether they are Christians or not. One thing is sure. Heaven is a real place whether people believe in Jesus or not, and they need to know that the followers of Jesus are firm believers in both the *Person* and the *Place* that awaits us after this life is over. But it is not enough that we speak only of Heaven. Just as it was with Joseph, we must be faithful witnesses who warn people about the dangers of not obeying God's instructions to respond to His call. When people die without Christ, they go to Hell. Although Heaven is mentioned many more times than Hell in the Bible, Hell is just as real. We do well to share about Heaven, but we do need to be faithful to warn people of the wrath that is to come upon those who refuse to obey God's command to be saved.

Prayer Emphasis: Pray for an unsaved friend or associate today. **Plan** to be a faithful witness to them by being straightforward about what the Bible has to say about those who reject Jesus as Savior.

Day 23: Genesis 41:37-57

"Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: 'For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house.' And the name of the second he called Ephraim: 'For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.'" (Genesis 41:51-52)

"Manasseh" and "Ephraim"

In the first part of today's verses, we see where Pharaoh elevated Joseph to a position of great power, putting him "over" his "house" thereby allowing his "people" to be "ruled according" to Joseph's "word" (v. 40). When Pharaoh had Joseph ride in the "second chariot" he was saying to his people that Joseph was second in command and, after him, was ruler "over all the land of Egypt" (v. 43). But Pharaoh gave Joseph more than just a special *position* in life, he also gave Joseph a special *person* for his life in the form of a wife (v. 45). Verse 46 reveals that Joseph was "thirty years old" when he stood before the king and was commissioned to go "throughout all the land of Egypt." During these seven years of preparing for the coming famine, Joseph was given two sons. Joseph named the first son Manasseh, which means "forgetfulness" and the second he named Ephraim, which means "fruitfulness." Joseph decided to forget the evil things that had been done to him in the past and to focus on being fruitful in the present.

Prayer Emphasis: Strive to forget the wrongs that have been done to you in the past and **remember** to serve God in every situation in the present. **Make** every effort to turn your forgetfulness into fruitfulness. **Read** verse 55 again and note that the people were only blessed with bread when they were obedient to the commands of Joseph!

Day 24: Genesis 42:1-20

"Now Joseph was governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with their faces to the earth." (Genesis 42:6)

"Down, Down, Down"

I have mentioned before that the Bible states that Abraham went "down" to Egypt (12:10). We later read where God appeared to Isaac and told him not to go "down" to Egypt (26:2). After Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, he was taken "down" to Egypt (39:1). In today's verses we see Jacob commanding his sons to go "down" to Egypt to buy food (v. 2), so they went "down" to Egypt as commanded (v. 3) and wound up bowing "down" at the feet of the brother they thought they would never see again (v. 6). They probably assumed that Joseph was dead. It is interesting to note the word that describes the way Joseph's brothers "bowed down" to him is the same word that was used to describe the way their sheaves bowed down to him in the dream that he shared with them almost 20 years earlier (37:7). The first law of sowing and reaping is that you always reap what you sow (Galatians 6:7). The second law is that you always reap more than you sow (Hosea 8:7). The third law of sowing and reaping is that you always reap later than you sow (Ecclesiastes 11:1). From the moment these men made their decision to thwart God's plan and replace it with their own, they had nowhere to go but "down."

Prayer Emphasis: Choose to look "up" to God and Heaven rather than to go "down" to the level of seeing this world as your source or supply. **Remember** the three laws of sowing and reaping and **humble yourself** before God before He has to humble you before others.

Day 25: Genesis 42:21-38

"Then they said to one another, 'We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us.'" (Genesis 42:21)

It's Harvest Time!

The word that is translated "distress" in our focus verse is found only three times in Genesis, and two of those times are here in 42:21. But, before we discuss the "distress" that we see Joseph's brothers facing today, let's take a quick look back at the only other verse in Genesis that contains this word. In 35:3, Jacob recalled the day he had to finally face his brother Esau and described it as "the day of (his) distress." After that, we do not see the word again until we get to our story today. The word that is used to describe the "anguish" of Joseph's "soul" as he "pleaded" with his unhearing brothers is the same word that is used to describe the "distress" that his brothers now felt as they were forced to bow before him! It is clear that they knew it was "harvest time" because they fully acknowledged that they were reaping what they sowed when they said, "Therefore this distress has come upon us." How interesting it is to see that the only time this word is found in Genesis is in situations where brothers are meeting after one has been treated wrongfully by his fellow brother(s). Since God chose to use the same word to describe the "distress" they had sown into Joseph's life to also describe the "distress" that they now faced, we have no choice but to say that there is no escaping God's laws of sowing and reaping.

Prayer Emphasis: Sow only the kind of things that you desire to reap. **Remember** God's laws of sowing and reaping and **respect** them by sowing good things into the lives of others on a regular basis.

Day 26: Genesis 43:1-17

"And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, 'Go back, buy us a little food.'" (Genesis 43:2)

More of the Same!

In yesterday's reading, we saw that Joseph instructed his people to fill his brothers' sacks with food and to put their money in the sacks as well. When the brothers discovered their money, they believed it was God's way of dealing with them for what they had done (42:28). Joseph told his half-brothers that there would be no more grain unless they returned to him and brought his only full brother, Benjamin, with them. So, when the grain was gone, Jacob was willing to send them back to Egypt, and allowed Benjamin to go with them along with double the amount of money needed so that the money that Joseph secretly put back into their grain sacks could be returned to him. There is some great irony in the words of verse 15 as we see that these men took their "present and Benjamin…double money…and arose and went down to Egypt". Remember the second law of sowing and reaping? The one about you always reap more than you sow? We see this second law in full operation in the lives of these men as they head to Egypt this "second time" (v. 10). Just for kicks, go through today's verses and circle the number of times you read the word "down." In chapter 42, when their first trip to Egypt was described, you read it three times while in today's chapter you will find it five times! As I have repeatedly stated, you always reap more than you sow!

Prayer Emphasis: Ask God for the wisdom to learn from experience and the strength to admit wrong as soon as it is committed. **Realize** that there is no way to hide sin and no way for a sinner to hide from God.

Day 27: Genesis 43:18-34

"Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, 'Is this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?' And he said, 'God be gracious to you, my son.'" (Genesis 43:29)

Benjamin

Although he may not be as well-known as some of the others, Benjamin is one of our Kingdom Patriarchs. He was the youngest son born to Jacob, and after the loss of Joseph, now he became the only living child of Jacob and his beloved Rachel. Our focus verse states that Joseph viewed this brother in a different light than the others, considering him to be "his mother's son." We read about Benjamin's birth in chapter 35. Unfortunately, we read about Rachel's death in that same chapter. As she was dying, Rachel named her baby, Benoni ("Son of my sorrow"), but Jacob changed the boy's name to Benjamin ("Son of my right hand"). This certainly helps us understand why Jacob refused to allow Benjamin to travel to Egypt with his brothers and why he was hesitant to do so after Joseph's demand that his guests bring their youngest brother with them. It is obvious that all of Benjamin's brothers knew how much their father loved him. Even Judah, who suggested selling Joseph into slavery, was willing to pledge his own life to protect his younger brother, Benjamin.

Prayer Emphasis: Thank God for your family today. **Express** your love, admiration, and appreciation to them in a special way. **Employ** both verbal and visible in your expressions of love to those closest to you.

Day 28: Genesis 44:1-17

"Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city." (Genesis 44:13)

Graduate School!

After all we have read, you might think that the sons of Jacob may have finally done enough reaping for their terrible sin of betrayal against Joseph and also lying to their father. But our focus verse provides yet another opportunity for the laws of sowing and reaping to be illustrated in their lives. After Joseph had his own silver cup placed into Benjamin's bag, he allowed his brothers to leave and then sent his steward after them to accuse his brothers of stealing the cup. The steward discovered the missing cup by starting with the bag of the oldest brother and searching each bag until he came to the bag of Benjamin, the youngest. We can only imagine how tense these moments were for these men. Even though, to the man, they were sure they had not stolen the cup, they had to be thinking about the unexplained event regarding their money being found in their bags after their first trip. We can only imagine their agony when the cup was finally found! Our focus verse states that the men "tore their clothes." This was done by grabbing each side of the neck opening and tearing the garment down toward the heart. It was symbolic of a breaking heart. If you recall, this is exactly what these men caused their father to do when they reported Joseph's loss to him (37:34). I would say these guys were being awarded their "Graduate Degree" from the School of Sowing and Reaping on this particular day!

Prayer Emphasis: Remember the third law of sowing and reaping is that we always reap later than we sow. **Refuse** to allow known sin to create a separation between you and God. **Seek** forgiveness and restoration at the earliest opportunity after discovering that you have sinned against God or others.

Day 29: Genesis 44:18-34

"'Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers.'" (Genesis 44:33)

Judah

Judah is one of the most important names in the Old Testament. He was the fourth son of Jacob and was born to him by Leah. It was Judah who advised his brothers to sell Joseph into slavery (37:26-27). This is the same man that slept with (and impregnated) his former daughter-in-law, Tamar, thinking that she was a prostitute (38:16-18). However, we see a much better man in this same Judah in today's reading. After Joseph proclaimed that Benjamin would have to remain in Egypt with him as his slave, Judah stepped up. Verse 18 states that "Judah came near" to Joseph and asked to have a private word with him. That is when Judah spoke up and explained why Benjamin was so precious to his elderly father. But, most importantly, Judah stands out in the sense that he volunteers himself as a "slave" to Joseph if only he will allow Benjamin to return home with his brothers. There was a significant difference between a "hired servant" and a "slave" in Old Testament times. The first received wages for his work and was treated like an employee, while the latter was rewarded only by the fact that he was allowed to live. Most "slaves" were prisoners of war. A hired servant could be redeemed by his family at any time or could be legally freed after six years of service. A slave could not be redeemed and would forever remain a slave. Thus, Judah was willing to trade his own life for that of his brother.

Prayer Emphasis: Remember there is always hope that someone will make a change for the good and commit their lives to God and His purposes. **Pray** specifically for someone today who needs to grow more Christ-like in their daily walk. **Believe** that God can do a great work in their lives.

Day 30: Genesis 45:1-14

"And Joseph said to his brothers, 'Please come near to me.' So they came near. Then he said: 'I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.'" (Genesis 45:4)

A Startling Revelation

Most translations of the Bible begin chapter 45 with the word "then". It was "then", after Judah offered to give his own life in exchange for that of his youngest brother, that Joseph could no longer contain himself and commanded everyone but his brothers to leave the room (v. 1). He began to weep so loudly that everyone in the house could hear him. He asked his brothers to "come near" so that they might have a good look at him when he revealed his true relationship to them. We must remember that Joseph was only a teenager (37:2) when his brothers last saw him and now, he is a young man in his mid-thirties. As an Egyptian ruler, he would be clean shaven on his face and head, and he would be made up and dressed in an unfamiliar manner. When he made his startling revelation to them, he wanted them to be able to see him for who he really was. At the same time, he wanted them to see God for who He really was, too! He wanted them to understand that he believed God sent him to Egypt ahead of them so their family could be preserved. Verse eight clearly indicates that he believed God was in control even through some of the darkest days of his life!

Prayer Emphasis: Believe that God is in control of your life and circumstances. **Trust** Him even when you cannot fully understand all that He is allowing to happen in your life.

Day 31: Genesis 45:15-28

"Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him." (Genesis 45:15)

Sweet Fellowship

The way our focus verse reads indicates that the tears continued to such an extreme that Joseph and his brothers were unable to speak. Note that it is only "after" they finished with this time of weeping that Joseph was able to "talk" with his brothers. We can only imagine what that conversation must have been like as 12 brothers sat together and tried to recapture over 20 years of life! The word that is translated "talked" in our focus verse is a very general word in the Hebrew language that is used to describe almost every manner of speaking. However, the first time this word is used in the Bible, it is used to describe the way God "spoke" with Noah (8:15) and Abram (12:4). All the previous hatred, envy, and jealousy were now gone and only the love of brothers was known among them. Joseph was a man who was not afraid to weep before others. He wept when he made himself known to his brothers (45:2) and now again when his brothers were reconciled to him (45:15). We will later see him weep as he finally sees his father (46:29) and more tears are shed when his father dies (50:1). We see him weeping once more (50:15-17) when his brothers question his love and intentions toward them after Jacob's death.

Prayer Emphasis: Show compassion and **express** your love for others openly. **Refuse** to allow anyone to lead you to believe that weeping is inappropriate for even the strongest people.

Day 32: Genesis 46:1-17

"So He said, 'I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes.'" (Genesis 46:3-4)

A Promise of His Presence

Even though God changed Jacob's name to Israel in Genesis 32:28, we will see the names Jacob and Israel used interchangeably thereafter. Surely, we can understand Jacob's hesitation to move his family to Egypt. He was obviously aware that God warned his grandfather, Abraham, that his descendants would someday serve in affliction there (15:13) and God had also once commanded his father, Isaac, not to go to Egypt (26:2). In verse four, God said, "I will go down with you to Egypt." So, any fears that Israel might have had were to be subdued by God's divine *presence*. In verse three, God said, "I will make of you a great nation there." He later promised to one day bring Israel's family back out of Egypt. Therefore, Israel's fears were also subdued by God's divine *promises*. It had to be difficult to comprehend that the "there" in which God would make Israel a great nation was not the Promised Land but Egypt! We will later read that only 70 people entered Egypt with Israel (Genesis 46:27; Exodus 1:5-7) and then even later see that hundreds of thousands of people finally left Egypt with Moses. The promises God made to Israel are much the same as the ones that Christ made to the church before He ascended to Heaven to be with His Father. After commanding His followers to go unto the ends of the earth, He promised He would always be with them.

Prayer Emphasis: Notice that God made all the necessary provisions prior to commanding Israel to go to Egypt. **Believe** that God makes every provision for our success as we go out to serve Him.

Day 33: Genesis 46:18-34

"So Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; and he presented himself to him, and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while." (Genesis 46:29)

A Grand Reunion

Our focus verse describes what must have been some of the happiest moments in the lives of Jacob and Joseph. They had not seen each other or conversed since Joseph was a 17-year-old boy (37:2) when Jacob sent him out to find his brothers (37:13). Their tearful reunion was obviously very emotional and, since no conversation between them upon their initial meeting is recorded, it must have been some time before they were composed enough to speak. Jacob (Israel) spoke first, saying to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive" (v. 30). These words remind us of the words of the New Testament's Simeon whose story is found in Luke 2:25-32. Simeon was a just and devout man who longed to see the coming of the Messiah. It was revealed to him that he would not die before he had seen the Christ. When Joseph and Mary first brought Jesus into the temple for dedication, Simeon took the baby into his arms and blessed him. Then, he stated that he could now die in peace because he had seen the One who was to be the Savior of the world! Jacob must have felt much the same when he first saw Joseph.

Prayer Emphasis: Express love to your family and friends while the opportunity is at hand. **Realize** that we, or our loved ones, could be gone before we ever see them or speak with them again. **Leave** nothing unsaid that might lead to regret later.

Day 34: Genesis 47:1-17

"Then Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, 'Your father and your brothers have come to you. The land of Egypt is before you. Have your father and brothers dwell in the best of the land; let them dwell in the land of Goshen. And if you know any competent men among them, then make them chief herdsmen over my livestock.'" (Genesis 47:5-6)

The Great Underestimation

As we finished with yesterday's reading, we read where Joseph advised his brothers to say that they were, just like their ancestors, cattlemen. His reason was because the Egyptians hated shepherds. But, as some of his brethren stood before Pharaoh, they stated that they were shepherds just as their fathers before them had been (v. 3). They continued speaking and mentioned their "flocks" again (v. 4). Verses five and six record what must have been Pharaoh's next conversation with Joseph, and he never once mentioned the fact that his family came from a long line of shepherds. Instead, he offered them the best of his land for their flocks. But he did offer to put some of them in the cattle business! However, God had a plan to do the same thing, and before long, people were trading their cattle and horses to Joseph's family for bread. I find it interesting to read that Joseph, who had shown so much faith in God for such a lengthy period of time, felt it necessary to try to handle Pharaoh by having his brothers not be totally honest about their profession. Obviously, God was able to make that "sheep thing" a complete non-issue with Pharaoh and the people of Egypt.

Prayer Emphasis: Trust God to prepare the hearts of people before you ever meet them or speak to them about Him. **Believe** that He can soften the hardest hearts and cause them to be open to receiving the truth. **Refuse** to fear being honest and forthright in all your dealings with people.

Day 35: Genesis 47:18-31

"When the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, 'Now if I have found favor in your sight…Please do not bury me in Egypt, but let me lie with my fathers; you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place…'" (Genesis 47:29-30)

Jacob's Last Wish

Some "seventeen years" after he came to Egypt a 147-year-old Jacob realized that the time of his death was near (v. 28). He called Joseph to him and asked if one final request could be granted to him. He asked that he not be buried in Egypt, and that his body would eventually be carried out of Egypt so he could be buried with his family in the cave that Abraham purchased for a burial plot (23:19-20). After receiving Joseph's promise to have him buried in the Promised Land, Jacob "bowed" before the LORD (v. 31). How blessed it is to see that even a death bed can become an altar unto the LORD and that God's people can worship Him at all times and in any situation. The New Testament writers understood the meaning of what was said here and mentioned the fact that Jacob, "When he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff" (Hebrews 11:21). Of all the moments from Jacob's life that could have been included in the great faith chapter of the Bible, this moment of him worshiping God and blessing others was chosen over even the account of his wrestling match with God!

Prayer Emphasis: Speak to your family about important matters and make sure that they know your wishes about your own end-of-life experience. **Prepare** your heart to face death with dignity.

Day 36: Genesis 48:1-22

"'And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.'" (Genesis 48:5)

Ephraim and Manasseh

Joseph came to visit his dying father and brought his sons with him. Upon hearing that Joseph and his grandsons were there to see him, Jacob "strengthened himself and sat up on (his) bed" to meet with them (v. 2). Our focus verse tells us that Jacob planned to transfer the birthrights of Reuben and Simeon (his two firstborn sons) to Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Sensing what was about to happen and knowing that his father's eyesight was failing (v. 10), Joseph carefully guided his two sons toward his father, making sure that the firstborn, Manasseh, was near his father's right hand (v. 13). The blessing of the firstborn was traditionally done with the right hand, and Joseph was trying to make sure that the "right" son received the blessing. But Jacob, "the trickster," had one more trick up his sleeve. He crossed his hands over the two boys and placed his right hand on the second son, Ephraim, even though he knew that Manasseh was the firstborn (v. 14). Like we often do today, Joseph had assumed that God would work in a certain way – the usual way – and that the firstborn would receive the blessing. But Jacob had learned many things in his long walk with God, one of them being that God often works in unexpected and unconventional ways. So, he blessed the younger over the older and continued a four-generation history of God doing so. Check it out. Isaac was blessed over Ishmael. Jacob was blessed over Esau. Joseph was blessed over Reuben and now Ephraim was blessed over Manasseh.

Prayer Emphasis: Remember God's thoughts and ways are higher than our thoughts and ways. **Allow** God to work in His own way in your life. **Refuse** to confine God to any limitation in your heart and mind.

Day 37: Genesis 49:1-18

"'The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people.'" (Genesis 49:10)

Jacob's Final Words

The second to last chapter in Genesis includes the final words that Jacob spoke to his sons before his death. The fact that these words are so direct and straightforward is evidence that there is no more of the trickster left in this man. Time will not allow discussion of what was said to every son, but it is worth our time to read all these final words and learn as much from them as we can. However, his final words to Judah demand some time and attention. Jacob stated that the scepter would not depart from Judah. The scepter was a special staff carried by a ruler as a symbol of his authority. Jacob was saying that Judah would remain in a role of authority "until Shiloh comes." Jacob is prophesying that the Messiah would come through the line of Judah, and that is what the New Testament genealogies confirm. In Matthew's genealogy, Judah is the son that is mentioned after Jacob (Matthew 1:2). It is the same in Luke's record (Luke 3:33-34). However, we do not have to wait until Jesus comes again to determine who holds the "scepter" in our lives. We can willfully choose to put the final authority for our lives into the hands of the One to whom it rightfully belongs now.

Prayer Emphasis: Surrender your all to Jesus Christ and **allow** Him to be your true Lord and Master. **Dedicate** your life to doing His will. **Share** a testimony of His Lordship with someone today and help them to know why He is worthy of being Lord in their lives, too.

Day 38: Genesis 49:19-33

"And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people." (Genesis 49:33)

Jacob Dies

There are so many things that might have been appropriate to say if one had been asked to speak at Jacob's memorial service. Some of those things would have been more flattering than others. Perhaps some of the things that could have been said would have been quite embarrassing! He began his life "struggling" with Esau while still in his mother's womb (25:22), and he had many more struggles thereafter – including a wrestling match with God (32:25)! Beyond his struggles, he also had his share of infirmities. He walked with a limp (32:31), eventually lost his eyesight (48:10), and was so weak before he died that he could barely sit up in his bed (48:2). It could truly be said that this man had his share of disappointments, which are far too many to record in one devotional! But, if I had been invited to speak at this man's memorial service, I would have said that he had an unquenchable hunger and thirst to know God and to have God's blessings on his family. He learned to rely on God more as his days passed and, in the end, he died as a man of genuine faith. After his life was done, this man of many tricks proved to be the real deal for God! Perhaps the most distinguishing thing about him was the change that his walk with God brought into his life. We must always remember that Jacob ("the trickster") received a new name from God. God decided to call him Israel ("God prevails").

Prayer Emphasis: Allow God to bring change into your own life and **submit** to His will in every situation and circumstance. **Refuse** to allow your failures to keep you from growing in faith.

Day 39: Genesis 50:1-14

"So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt." (Genesis 50:7)

Jacob's Funeral Procession

After his father's death, and the appropriate time of mourning, Joseph kept his father's wishes by taking his body back to the Promised Land for burial. Even though he, like Abraham and Isaac before him, had not ever fully inherited the land, they would all become one with the land by being buried there. The Cave of Machpelah is called "The Tomb of the Patriarchs" and is considered to be the second holiest place to the Jewish people. Only the Temple Mount is held in higher esteem than this final resting place for Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their wives. Our focus verse tells us that, Pharaoh, his personal servants, and all the leaders of Egypt accompanied Joseph to his father's burial grounds. Verse nine describes this vast entourage as "a very great gathering." In fact, so many Egyptians went to Jacob's funeral that the Canaanites called the place where they stopped to have the service Abel Mizraim, which means "the mourning of the Egyptians."

Prayer Emphasis: We never know the impact that our lives are having on others. **Believe** that God is using you as His witness and **live** like the ambassador He has called you to be. **Remember** that any word or act could prove to be our last.

Day 40: Genesis 50:15-26

"Thus you shall say to Joseph: 'I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you.' 'Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father.' And Joseph wept when they spoke to him." (Genesis 50:17)

Joseph – A Type of Christ

I have mentioned several ways that Joseph was a type of Christ in these devotionals, but I have not come even close to discussing them all. It would do any believer good to research the life of Joseph and discover the many ways that he prefigured Christ and His earthly ministry. Here, in this concluding chapter of Genesis, we see one more way in which Joseph becomes an image of what Jesus would be when He came from Heaven to save us from our sins. After Jacob's burial, Joseph's brothers falsely assumed that he would finally act against them in revenge for the things they had done to him in his youth. They sent "messengers to Joseph" stating that Jacob had left some final instructions that included forgiveness for his brothers' sins against him (v. 16). Our focus verse says that when Joseph received that message, he "wept." This marks the sixth time we are told that Joseph "wept" (42:24, 43:30, 45:2, 45:14, 50:1, and now 50:17). Since six is a number closely associated with man in the Scriptures and weeping is closely associated with sorrow, we can then conclude that the last image of Jesus that is prefigured in Joseph is the fact that He would be, according the prophet Isaiah, "a Man of sorrows" (Isaiah 53:3).

Prayer Emphasis: Thank God for the witness and testimony that His Kingdom Patriarchs left to us. **Seek** to continue that witness by fully committing your own life to God's work. **Make** every effort to pass this great ministry "baton" to the next generation. **Pray** for one of the younger people in our church today and let them know that you have done so. If we can serve you in any way, please contact us at **gary@seminolebc.com** or (850)-562-8069.