

GROUNDS OF FAITH CAFÉ: “Genesis” (Subtitled: Is there a snake in your Garden too?) Further subtitled: Lessons from the Garden! Lesson 33. (Gen chapter 47:1-48:22). For lesson copies, go to <http://www.montgomerychurch.org/resources8.html>

Introduction/Review: The story of God raising up and caring for His people, Israel, in order to give them land and make them a mighty people per His Promise (12:1-3) comes to fruition in great part through the life of Joseph. Joseph has transformed from a teenage spoiled brat who tattled on his brothers and who had dreams depicting him as superior to both his elder siblings (37:5-11) to a powerful, wise interpreter of dreams in the land of Egypt and a benefactor to his family and all.

Read 47:1-12: In Gen 12:1-3, God made specific promises to Abraham of descendants and land. As we learned in 46:27, Abraham’s grandson, Jacob, brought his family numbering 70, not including the wives of his sons (46:26), to live in Egypt – confirming God’s promise that Abraham’s descendants would multiply and flourish. .

- Now re-read God’s promise to Jacob in 46:2-4 as Jacob prepares to leave the “promised land” to relocate his family to Egypt. Where does God say He will make Jacob a great nation? According to 47:6, what part of Egypt is given by Pharaoh to Joseph’s family? What lesson do you learn from these texts about God’s promises and His faithfulness in keeping His promises to His people? Discuss.
- In chapter 12, God also admonished Abraham to bless as he had been blessed. According to 47:1-12, who turns out to be blessed as Pharaoh receives Jacob? What, if anything, do you make of this? Discuss.

Read 47:13-26: This part of the text moves toward a bit of an ironic twist. Recall the picture above of the impact of the famine upon the descendants of Jacob who have been given land in Egypt and are flourishing. Now picture the impact upon the natives of Egypt as seen in 46:13-26.

- Joseph is about to make deals with Egyptians to provide food supplies that involve their monies, livestock and finally their land. What happens according to the text?
- Re-read 47:25-26. What does the text say is the result of all Joseph’s transactions? Now, consider the irony: the former Hebrew slave of the Egyptians has successfully enslaved them. What lesson, if any, do you learn from this? Discuss.

Read 47:27-31: Again we see a contrast to what has happened to the native residents of Egypt:

- What picture is drawn of God’s people, Israel, in Egypt, and what does Israel/Jacob request of Joseph?
- Israel/Jacob’s reaction to all of this (47:31) is typical. What does Israel do and what lesson do you find applicable for your own life circumstances? Discuss.

Read 48:1-22: This chapter details the blessing of Joseph’s sons, Manasseh and Ephraim – a blessing that takes a turn, although not totally unexpected, considering previous stories.

- Re-read 48:1-6: What does Jacob request of Joseph and what do you think it means?
- In 48:1-6, Jacob reiterates aspects of the journey he has been taking with God. In light of what we read earlier in this lesson, what comforts or discomforts you about Jacob’s speech? Discuss.
- Re-read 48:7-13: Joseph positions his children in a certain way to receive Jacob’s blessing (the benefits that go with birth order or the birthright). What does Joseph do?
- Re-read 48:14-22: Jacob gives his blessings to Joseph’s children but not according to custom.
 - Who receives the greater blessing and what, if anything, do you make of this? Discuss.
 - In 48:15-16, Jacob’s blessing reveals even more about his relationship with God. What do you learn from this that may be pertinent to your own life? Discuss.