

Lesson 12: Genesis 42–50, “God Meant it Unto Good”

Joseph Saves His Father’s Family

Joseph demands that his brother return with Benjamin and that they leave Simeon behind in Egypt

Gen 42:8-9,20-24

8 And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.

9 And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

20 But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.

21 ¶ 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.

22 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.

23 And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter.

24 And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

Why do you think Joseph put these demands on his brother?

Maybe to test their loyalty and character

Why do you think Joseph wept when he overheard their reaction to his demands?

They felt guilt and sorry for what they did to Joseph

Jacob’s sons return to their father after their first trip to Egypt and summarize their experience and the demands of Joseph

Gen 42:33-36

33 And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone:

34 And bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffick in the land.

35 ¶ And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man’s bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the

bundles of money, they were afraid.

36 And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.

How did Jacob react when he heard that “the lord of Egypt” was holding Simeon captive until his son’s return with Benjamin?

(Me have ye bereaved of my children... all these things are against me)

He had no idea that his trials would result in great blessings for him and his family

When the brothers returned with Benjamin Joseph invites them to meet with him at his home

Gen 43:26-34

26 ¶ And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth.

27 And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?

28 And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.

29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother’s son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.

30 And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there.

31 And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread.

32 And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians.

33 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.

34 And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin’s mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

How did Joseph react to being with Benjamin again?

(his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth but Benjamin’s mess was five times so much as any of theirs)

Arthur R. Bassett

"It is in Joseph's relationship with his brothers that one sees his most

Christlike features, especially the characteristics of brotherly kindness and charity.... What a shock it must have been, then, when Joseph confronted his brothers again for the first time in twenty-two years. What thoughts must have raced through his mind! Again one senses his great patience in not revealing himself to them until he discovers their feelings.

"History would search far to find another scene so filled with human feelings as that of Joseph listening to his brethren... speak of their punishment for having sold their brother into slavery. Joseph responded with sternness, as God must sometimes do with us, but when one sees him moved to tears on two occasions-to the point that he must leave the room to hide his face from his brethren-one senses the depth of his Christlike love, filled with forgiveness for the truly penitent." ("Joseph, Model of Excellence," Ensign, Sept. 1980)

Joseph seeks to further test his brothers by setting them up as thieves, particularly Benjamin by planting in his sack a silver cup

Gen 44:1-5

1 And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth.
2 And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.
3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses.
4 And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?
5 Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.

Joseph told the brothers that Benjamin must stay behind as his servant. Judah pleads for mercy for the sake of his father

Gen 44:22,32-34

22 And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die.
32 For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever.
33 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.
34 For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

What does Judah offer Joseph if he will let Benjamin return to his father?

(let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord)

This seems to have convinced Joseph of the sincerity of his brothers in their love for their father and Benjamin and their sorrow for how they had treated him

Gen 45:1-8

1 Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

2 And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.

4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

6 For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.

7 And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8 So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

In what way does Joseph recognize the hand of God in the way that his brothers mistreated him?

(God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.
it was not you that sent me hither, but God)

Joseph B. Wirthlin

“Through Joseph, the Lord preserved the children of Israel and provided a place in Egypt for them to flourish and increase.

“This story is well known, but I urge you to read it again, focusing your attention on the integrity of Joseph and on the blessings it brought to him. He became the birthright son in the house of Israel and received an inheritance in the lands of the Americas. The Lord permitted him to prophesy of Moses, who would deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt and of Joseph Smith, the prophet of the restoration of the gospel in the latter days.” (CR, April 1990)

Joseph tells his brothers to bring his father and all their families to Egypt where they can prosper and be protected during the famine

Gen 45:9-15

9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not:

10 And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast:

11 And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.

12 And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you.

13 And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.

14 And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.

15 Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

How does Joseph demonstrate Christ-like forgiveness?

Arthur R. Bassett

"I respect our father Joseph for many things—for his faith, his virtue, his knowledge, his temperance and patience, and for his godliness. But most of all I respect him for his brotherly kindness and love. These are his most godlike attributes; these are his touch-point with the Savior and his touch-point with us, his posterity. These are the attributes we should attempt to emulate as the grandchildren of this model of Christian excellence; one of the greatest men this world has ever produced, a father who taught all of his posterity what it means to truly know Christ." ("Joseph, Model of Excellence," Ensign, Sept. 1980)

Jacob and his household moves from Canaan to Egypt

Gen 46:1-4

1 And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.

2 And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I.

3 And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation:

4 I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

What does the Lord promise Jacob if he will go to Egypt?

(I will there make of thee a great nation
I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again)

Verses 8 thru 26 list all of Jacob's household that travel to Egypt. If you add them up it comes to 66 people

Gen 46:27-30

27 And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten.

28 ¶ And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen.

29 And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.

30 And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.

Verse 27 states that 70 members of Jacob's household who ended up in Egypt. This would probably consist to the 66 souls who moved from Canaan and Joseph's family that was already in Egypt

verse 20 - And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On bare unto him

Jacob ask his son's to promise to bury him in the lands of his fathers and not in Egypt

Gen 47:27-31

27 ¶ And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly.

28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years.

29 And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt:

30 But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace. And he said, I will do as thou hast said.

31 And he said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head.

Why do you think that it was important to Jacob that he be buried in the land of Canaan?

Maybe because of the resurrection – he would be at the same location as his fathers after Christ's resurrection

Jacob Blesses His Posterity

The JST gives us more about Isaac's blessing to Joseph's

JST Gen 48:6-11

6 And thy issue which thou begettest after them shall be thine and shall be called

after the name of their brethren in their inheritance in the tribes; therefore, they were called the tribes of Manasseh and of Ephraim.

7 And Jacob said unto Joseph, When the God of my fathers appeared unto me in Luz in the land of Canaan, he swore unto me that he would give unto me and unto my seed the land for an everlasting possession.

8 Therefore, O my son, he hath blessed me in raising thee up to be a servant unto me, in saving my house from death.

9 In delivering my people, thy brethren, from famine which was sore in the land; wherefore, 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;

10 For thou hast prevailed, and thy father's house hath bowed down unto thee, even as it was shown unto thee before thou wast sold into Egypt by the hands of thy brethren; wherefore, thy brethren shall bow down unto thee, from generation to generation, unto the fruit of thy loins forever;

11 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 when they are altogether bowed down under sin.

What does Jacob give Joseph credit for regarding Jacob and his posterity?

(he hath blessed me in raising thee up to be a servant unto me, in saving my house from death)

What does Isaac promise Joseph because of his service and faithfulness?

(they shall be blessed above thy brethren and above thy father's house
thy brethren shall bow down unto thee, from generation to generation
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 when they are altogether bowed down under sin)

How has this blessing come to pass?

The descendants of Ephraim is responsible for the gathering of Israel in the last days

Isaac blesses Ephraim and Manasseh and gives the birthright to Ephraim

Gen 48:13-14,17-22

13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him.

14 And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn.

17 And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of

Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head.

18 And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head.

19 And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.

20 And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

21 And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

22 Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

John Taylor

"Joseph observing what his father was doing, informed him that he was putting his right hand on the head of the younger boy, but the old man replied, I know it, my son. The Spirit of the Lord prompted him to do as he did—to confer the greater blessing upon Ephraim, the younger brother. It was for this reason that God spake through the mouth of Jeremiah concerning the gathering of Israel: 'I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn' (Jer 31:9). That is according to his purposes. He acknowledged and reconfirmed this birthright upon Ephraim the younger of the two sons of Joseph, when he referred to the dispensation of the fullness of times and the ushering in of its great work—when the Lord should set his hand to gather His people, and be a father to Israel, even to Ephraim His firstborn." (JD, 21:358)

Isaac gives each of his sons a patriarchal blessing

Gen 49:1-2

1 And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.

2 Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.

John Taylor

"We are desirous of blessing our posterity. We read of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, before they left the world, calling their families together, and under the inspiration of the spirit of prophecy and revelation, putting their hands upon their heads and pronouncing certain blessings upon them, which should rest upon their posterity through every subsequent period of time. We have the same Gospel and Priesthood, and the same light and intelligence, and we are after the salvation and exaltation of our families that shall come after us, as they were, and we are seeking for God's blessings to be poured upon their heads as they were." (JD, 15:284)

Jacob's blessing to Joseph

Gen 49:22-26

22 ¶ Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall:

23 The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him:

24 But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

25 Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:

26 The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

LeGrand Richards

"Jacob said that Joseph was a fruitful bough whose branches would run over the wall (and we have always understood that the wall referred to the great waters)—and where was he to go over the wall? Unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills. Is there any theologian in this world who can tell us where those everlasting hills are to which the Lord, through the father of Joseph, promised Joseph that he and his people would go?

"He further said that his blessings would prevail above the blessings of his progenitors and his progenitors were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Can you imagine that God would have in store for that chosen one blessings greater than those of his progenitors, and then not provide that a record should be kept of the fulfillment of those promises unto that great branch of the house of Israel?" (CR, April 1967)

Like his father Jacob, Joseph ask that his remains be buried in the land of his fathers

Gen 50:24-26

24 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

25 And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

26 So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Joseph's Prophesying

In the JST we have the account of Joseph prophesying of Moses, a branch of his posterity "carried into a far country", Joseph Smith, and the Book of Mormon

JST Gen 50:24-33

24 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die and go unto my fathers; and I go down to

my grave with joy. The God of my father Jacob be with you, to deliver you out of affliction in the days of your bondage; for the LORD hath visited me, and 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; and unto thee, whom my father Jacob hath named Israel, a prophet (not the Messiah who is called Shilo); and this prophet shall deliver my people out of Egypt in the days of thy bondage.

25 And it shall come to pass that they shall be scattered again; and a branch shall be broken off and shall be carried into a far country; nevertheless, they shall be remembered in the covenants of the LORD when the Messiah cometh; for he shall be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the Spirit of power, and shall bring them out of darkness into light: out of hidden darkness and out of captivity unto freedom.

26 A seer shall the LORD my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins.

27 Thus saith the LORD God of my fathers unto me, A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins, and he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy loins; and unto him will I give commandment that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy loins, his brethren.

28 And he shall bring them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers; and he shall do whatsoever work I shall command him.

29 And I will make him great in mine eyes, for he shall do my work; and he shall be great like unto him whom I have said I would raise up unto you, to deliver my people, O house of Israel, out of the land of Egypt; for a seer will I raise up to deliver my people out of the land of Egypt; and he shall be called Moses. And by this name he shall know that he is of thy house; for he shall be nursed by the king's daughter and shall be called her son.

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.