



SERIES: Beginnings

Chapter 6 – “The Dreamer”

Introductory Questions: Do you agree or disagree with this statement (and why)? We live in a photoshopped world.

Right off the bat, notice the conflict that is being set up in this account (Genesis 37). As the “promises of Land, Nation, and Leader” have passed to Jacob, we begin to see the “nation” piece unfold. Jacob has 12 sons – a great way to start building up a new nation / covenant family. However, there is a THREAT looming. Family division, jealousy, and violence (reminiscent of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4) threaten the young “nation.”



Threat #1 – Family division, jealousy, and violence threaten the young “nation.”

- A. Joseph’s dreams _____
- B. The Brother’s plans _____
- Rueben’s (the oldest brothers) plan
 - Judah’s plan
 - Which brother is the most influential / most natural leader? _____

Threat #2 – Unrighteousness and intermarriage with foreign nations threaten the young nation of Israel’s purity.

- A. Genesis 38 & 39 – A contrast of two brothers (Judah & Joseph).
- Why is Genesis 38 in the Bible (the icky account of Judah’s sexual sin)? Because it provides a dark backdrop to help Joseph’s leadership and purity pop in Genesis 39.
 - Takeaway: *What does God value more highly in a leader? “Leadership Potential” (Charisma) or “Purity” (Character)?*

**Theme of the Next 10 Chapters of Genesis: Joseph’s Position Enables Him to Deliver His Family, Genesis 40-50*

Threat #3 – Global famine endangers the survival of the entire covenant community.

- A. God’s selection of Joseph demonstrated in his providential rise to leadership under the Egyptian Pharaoh
- 41:40-41 – 2nd in command
 - 41:46 – 30 years old at the start
 - 41:57 – “blesses” his own nation and all nations of the earth with bread

- B. Genesis 42-47 – Joseph tests his brothers... actually he makes 'em sweat bullets . . .
 - But WHY? Is he vengeful? Is he looking for Justice? Is he enjoying the charade? Is he “developing character”?
 - The key: What question surely has kept him awake at night for 20 years? And why use little Ben?
- C. **Summary verse of Joseph’s Perspective of his life story:** Genesis 50:20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Summary: Notice how God uses Joseph to reverse the three big threats to the covenant family of Israel:

Threat #1 – Family division, jealousy, and violence threaten the young “nation.”

- Solution: Instead of seeking revenge, Joseph chooses reconciliation and forgiveness (thus restoring family unity).

Threat #2 – Unrighteousness and intermarriage with foreign nations threaten the young nation of Israel’s purity.

- Solution: Joseph settles his family in Goshen. This gives the covenant family a safe place to grow and remain pure from the pagan, polytheistic cultures around them in Canaan.

Threat #3 – Global famine endangers the survival of the entire covenant community.

- Solution: Joseph’s wisdom/position allow him to save his entire family (and the entire region) from starvation.

Bringing it full circle: Why is Joseph the “Photoshopped Patriarch”? Answer: because Joseph gives us a picture (a type) of what to look for in the “Promised Seed” of Genesis 3:15 – He is a pure, faithful, beloved son of his father who endures suffering, rejection from his people, and is sold for silver. He later responds with grace and forgiveness as he rescues his family and the entire world from certain death.

FINAL APPLICATION:

- 1) God’s view of leadership (Character > Charisma)
- 2) God’s providence gives us hope when we are walking through dark days
- 3) Joseph’s life demonstrates the unbelievable power of forgiveness
- 4) God will always be faithful to His promises – we can trust Him completely

Life Group Questions:

- 1) Remember to open your life group with a time to “preach” to each other (a.k.a. proclaim how God has been at work in/through you this past week).
- 2) What aspect of tonight’s lesson was new, challenging, confusing, or convicting to you?
- 3) Genesis 38 & 39 teach us what God values in a leader.
 - Does our culture value character or charisma in the leaders it selects? Why do you think that is?
 - Why does God value character over charisma? Why is character the most important quality of true leadership?
 - Which are you more focused on developing in your life: giftedness and popularity (charisma) or character/purity?
- 4) This evening, we did a 30,000-foot overview of Joseph’s life.
 - What is your biggest takeaway from his life & story?
 - How can his resistance of sexual temptation in Genesis 39 challenge us as we live in a culture saturated by temptation? What can we learn from his example?
- 5) Joseph’s story also teaches us about God’s providence.
 - Do you think that you would have stood strong in your faith like Joseph if you endured betrayal by your siblings, unjust slavery, and unjust imprisonment? Why or why not?
 - How was Joseph able to continue trusting God through even the hardest of trials (hint: review Genesis 50:20)?
 - Is this the perspective you typically have in hard times? Why or why not? How can you develop that perspective?
- 6) Please take a few minutes to share your prayer requests and pray for each person in the group.