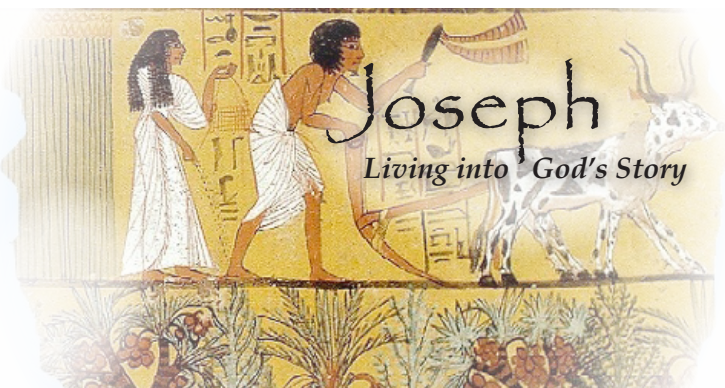


Weekly
Discussion
Guide

April 18,
2010

Genesis 45:16-
46:5:
The View
From Here



Where we start . . .

As you think back over your personal journey with God . . .

How has your *view of God* changed over the years?

How has your *view of what God wants of you* changed over the years?

What we read . . .

Although the end of Genesis appears to focus on Joseph, Jacob (his father) is a key character. This week we want to take note of Jacob's journey, interwoven with the account of Joseph. What do the following excerpts tell you about *what God was revealing to Jacob about Himself* and *what Jacob thought he was supposed to do* in response?

Genesis 28:10-22:

Genesis 31:11-13:

Genesis 35:1-15:

Genesis 46:1-5:

What growth do you see in Jacob's view of God and understanding of his "part" in the relationship?

Why this matters . . .

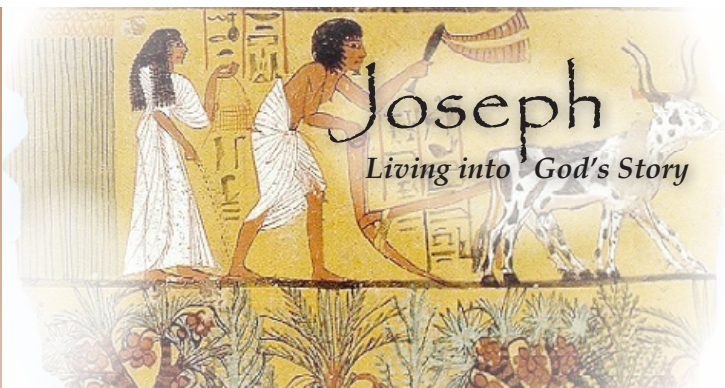
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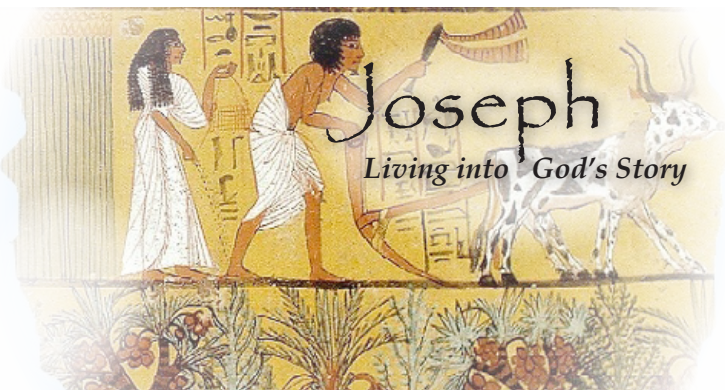
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What are we focusing on?

Although the last portion of the book of Genesis does give a tremendous amount of attention to Joseph, it may be that he really isn't the "main character." Although God has revealed to Joseph certain aspects of what He is doing and although we watch as God works in and through Joseph's life, what God is apparently doing is bringing to fulfillment the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The closing "section" of Genesis opens with the words "These are the generations of Jacob" (37:2; the way the author of Genesis begins his sections) and we don't leave Jacob until his death in the very end of the book. So, a large part of this story of Joseph is really a way into seeing what God is doing in and for Jacob. And, this week, we take a closer look at that.

What we want to look for is the growth or change in Jacob and his relationship with God. Ultimately, the promises made to Abraham are going to be fulfilled through Jacob's (who was renamed by God, Israel) sons . . . not just through Joseph. And, so, God undertakes to shape Jacob into the kind of "patriarch" He wants him to be so that the blessings promised can come through his life and family.

What will we be discussing?

The opening questions help us think through our own growth in understanding--understanding both more and more about God Himself and grasping in clearer and clearer ways what He wants of us. No one enters life with God with a wholly clear grasp of how wonderful and glorious and good He is; no one begins the journey fully comprehending what this relationship is going to be like. So, we all grow; even Jacob!

The way we will trace Jacob's growth is to look at his encounters with God. We will focus on a couple of key moments when Jacob and God have some "conversation." And there we want to ask two questions: 1) What is God revealing about Himself? 2) How does Jacob think he is supposed to respond to God?

The passages (with some notes) are as follows:

Genesis 28:10-22:

God reveals Himself to Jacob as "Yahweh"--His "personal" name, thus stressing the relational dimension of His life with Jacob. God affirms the promises He has made to Jacob's forefathers, thus calling attention to His faithfulness and dependability. Jacob attempts to "strike a bargain" with God!

Genesis 31:11-13

God reveals Himself as "the God of Bethel"--calling attention to His earlier encounter with Jacob, thus underscoring their ongoing relationship. God tells Jacob that He intends for Jacob to go. Jacob does go, but appears to be trying to help God out when he leaves Laban with telling him, etc. (31:17ff).

Genesis 35:1-15

God now reveals Himself as the "Almighty" God. God repeatedly affirms all that *He* will do to fulfill His promises. Jacob apparently just worships (at last!).

Genesis 46:1-5

God identifies Himself as "*THE God*" (as the first phrase in 46:3 is to be understood). God asserts not only that He will care for Jacob in Egypt but that He will, in some compelling sense, travel *with Jacob to Egypt*. And Jacob simply worships and goes!

Jacob goes from seeing God as "some God" that his fathers knew to the God he had come to relate to and, ultimately, as *the* one and only Almighty God. That is a wonderful journey to take!

Jacob goes from thinking that this God he has met is one to be bargained with to one who might need his help to get stuff done to, ultimately, seeing God as fully able to do all that He promised to do without Jacob's help.

The journey Jacob takes, by the grace of God and through his encounters with God, is the journey of faith we all need to take. And the end point? For Jacob and for us, it will be worship!