

BAND of BROTHERS

SPRING SERIES 2023 – WEEK 10

### Genesis 44:1-46:27: Surprise!

*And he said again, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into slavery in Egypt. But don't be upset, and don't be angry with yourselves for selling me to this place. It was God who sent me here ahead of you to preserve your lives.*

– Genesis 45:4-5 NLT

- **Things have turned out surprisingly well**
  - The brothers had feared the worst
  - Yet nothing happened as they expected
    - They were acquitted of stealing
    - They were reunited with Simeon
    - And the governor treated them to a feast
  - But there was one **final surprise**
  - Preceded by one **final test**

- **The Governor's Cup**
  - They had been the beneficiaries of...
    - ...God's **mercy** and **grace**
    - ...through **Joseph**

**Justice** – is getting what you rightly deserve

**Mercy** – is not getting what you deserve

**Grace** – is getting what you don't deserve

- Mercy and grace are two sides of the same coin
  - One must accompany the other
  - Mercy without grace simply leaves a void (no punishment but no forgiveness either)
  - Grace without mercy loses its value

*Then he commanded the steward of his house, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack, and **put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest**, with his money for the grain." And he did as Joseph told him.*

*As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away with their donkeys. They had gone only a short distance from the city. Now Joseph said to his steward, "Up, follow after the men, and when you overtake them, say to them, '**Why have you repaid evil for good?** Is it not from this that my lord drinks, and by this that he practices divination? You have done evil in doing this.'"* – Genesis 44:1-5 ESV

- Did Joseph practice divination?
  - It seems unlikely
  - He was simply carrying out his masquerade
  - It was one thing to steal the governor's cup
  - But they had stolen the governor's power to foresee the future
- The steward accused them of "doing evil"
  - Returning evil for evil is **vengeance**
    - What they had done to the Shechemites
  - Returning evil for good is **foolishness**
    - What Joseph was accusing them of
- A not-so-subtle prompt to act wisely
  - Joseph knew his brothers well
  - It was imperative that they return
  - But he knew they might not do so

*It is safer to meet a bear robbed of her cubs  
than to confront a fool caught in foolishness.*

*If you repay good with evil,  
evil will never leave your house.* – Proverbs 17:12-13 NLT

- Joseph wanted them to do the right thing
  - So, he set up another test
  - How would they treat **this** favored son?
    - Joseph had offered him a special blessing
    - He had received 5 times as much food
    - Now he would be accused of theft
- **The fate of the favored one**

*And he searched, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest. **And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.** Then they tore their clothes, and every man loaded his donkey, and they returned to the city.* – Genesis 44:12-13 ESV

  - What will they do?
  - Their actions will reveal their character
  - They had agreed to the death of the guilty one

*"Whichever of your servants is found with it shall die..."* – vs 9

- Joseph changes the terms

*But he said, “Far be it from me that I should do so! **Only the man in whose hand the cup was found shall be my servant.** But as for you, go up in peace to your father.” – Genesis 44:17 ESV*

- The guilty one will be imprisoned but not die
- The rest will be allowed to return home
- But these terms were unacceptable to Judah

- **A less-than-stellar son steps up**

- Judah was far from perfect
  - It was his idea to sell Joseph to slavers
  - He had married a Canaanite woman
  - He had deceived his twice-widowed daughter-in-law
  - Then he had unknowingly impregnated her
- He was a **flawed** man
- But he would prove to be a **faithful** man

*Judah said to his father, “Send the boy with me, and we will be on our way. Otherwise we will all die of starvation—and not only we, but you and our little ones. I personally guarantee his safety. You may hold me responsible if I don’t bring him back to you. Then let me bear the blame forever.” – Genesis 43:8-9 NLT*

- Judah kept his word
  - He boldly confronted the governor
  - He explained the situation
  - He revealed the promise he had made to Jacob

*“For **your servant became a pledge** of safety for the boy to my father, saying, ‘If I do not bring him back to you, then **I shall bear the blame** before my father all my life.’” – Genesis 44:32 ESV*

- **A selfless sibling substitute**

- Judah did the right thing
  - He pledged his life for Benjamin’s
  - He offered to stand in his place
  - He was willing to pay another’s debt
- And Judah’s sacrifice would be honored
  - Jacob would later bless Judah

*The scepter will not depart from Judah,  
nor the ruler’s staff from his descendants,  
until the coming of the one to whom it belongs,  
the one whom all nations will honor. – Genesis 49:10 ESV*

- Jesus would be the fulfillment of this promise
  - He is a descendant of Judah
  - He is the **Lion of Judah**
- Jacob pronounced this blessing on Judah:

*Judah, my son, is a young lion  
that has finished eating its prey.  
Like a lion he crouches and lies down;  
like a lioness—who dares to rouse him? – Genesis 49:9 NLT*

- And Jesus will ultimately fulfill it

*...one of the twenty-four elders said to me, “Stop weeping! Look, **the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the heir to David’s throne, has won the victory.** He is worthy to open the scroll and its seven seals.” – Revelation 25:5 NLT*

- **The big reveal**

*Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him. He cried, “Make everyone go out from me.” So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. –Genesis 45:1 ESV*

- Joseph is deeply moved by Judah’s actions
- So, he decides to disclose his true identity

*“**I am your brother, Joseph**, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.” – Genesis 45:4-5 ESV*

- Joseph is an agent of God
  - His chosen instrument...
    - ...to sustain life
    - ...to preserve a remnant of Israelites
    - ...to be a father to Pharaoh
    - ...to have responsibility for all the land
    - ...and to carry out God’s will (as lord of all)

- **The consummate happy ending**

*So they went up out of Egypt and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob. And they told him, “Joseph is still alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt.” And his heart became numb, for he did not believe them. But when they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. – Genesis 45:25-27 ESV*

- Jacob and his small family make the move
- Assisted by Pharaoh’s “moving vans”
- And buoyed by a message from God

*"I am God, the God of your father,...Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there **I will make your family into a great nation.** I will go with you down to Egypt, and I will bring you back again. You will die in Egypt, but Joseph will be with you to close your eyes."* – Genesis 46:3-4 NLT

*All the persons belonging to Jacob who came into Egypt, who were his own descendants, not including Jacob's sons' wives, were sixty-six persons in all. And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two. **All the persons of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were seventy.*** – Genesis 46:26-27 ESV

*"And God sent me before you **to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors.** So it was not you who sent me here, but God."* – Genesis 45:7-8 ESV

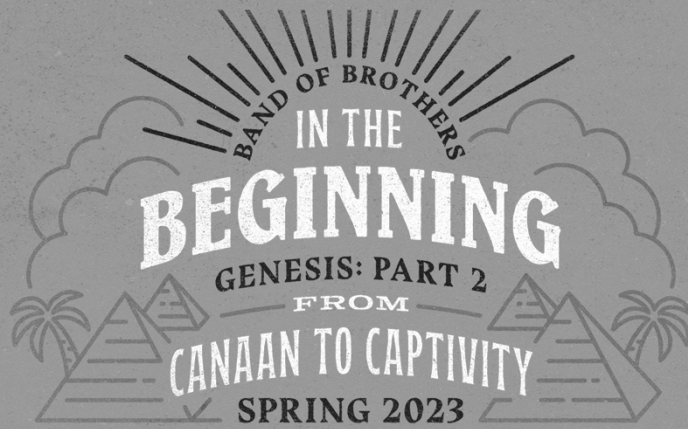
- **Discussion questions**

Everything in this story happened for a God-ordained reason. Do you believe that to be true of your story?

Moses followed God's promise to make the Israelites into a great nation with the fact that they were only 70 in number. What was he trying to tell his audience?

How should this lesson change your outlook on life?





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SPRING SERIES 2023 – WEEK 11 HOMEWORK

### **WEEK 11 – Genesis 46:27-48:22: Fruitfulness in the Land**

In this lesson, the elderly Jacob will make the long trip to Egypt but will be blessed with the joy of seeing his long-lost son. Their reunion will provide the fitting climax to this tale of treachery, deceit, disappointment, and divine control over every single phase of the story. At no point was God caught off guard, surprised, or forced to come up with a Plan B to handle the unexpected events that marked the life of Jacob or his son. In fact, God will reveal that this outcome was His plan on along. As Joseph so aptly puts it, what his brothers meant for evil, God had intended for good. Each moment of Joseph's life was held in the hand of the omnipotent, omniscient God of the universe. And Jacob's arrival in the land would be marked by blessing, fruitfulness and abundance.

- Read Genesis 46:27-48:22. What are the primary lessons that jump out at you in this lesson?
- Now read pages 191-205 of Ken's Devotionalary™ on Genesis Part II.
- In Genesis 46:28-34 we have Moses' description of Joseph's reunion with Jacob. What signals does Moses use to reveal that this was a heartfelt and joyful experience for both men?

In what ways does Joseph use his power and influence to help his family acclimate to their new surroundings?

- Look at verses 1-12 in chapter 47. What evidence does Moses give in this passage that proves the continued demonstration of God's sovereign will being done?

- Look closely at Genesis 47:13-26. Why do you think Moses included this information? How does it provide further evidence that God is not yet finished with Joseph??

Why was it necessary for Joseph to continue to administer the plan that God had given him over seven years earlier?

How does Joseph exhibit wisdom and cunning stewardship of Egypt's resources? And why is this so vital to the story?

- What do you see in Genesis 47:27-31 that would foreshadow a fulfillment of the promise that God made to Jacob in Beersheba (See Genesis 46:1-4)?
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Why do you think Jacob was so adamant that his bones be returned to Canaan after his death? What does this request indicate that Jacob believed? Read Genesis 15:12-16 for possible insight into the answer.

- Chapter 48 covers the blessing that Jacob gave to the two sons of Joseph. What does Jacob reveal to Joseph in verses 1-4, and why is this important?

What is significant about the promise Jacob makes to Joseph in verses 5-6? Why would this be meaningful to Joseph? (Keep in mind, his two sons are half-Egyptian)

Look closely at verses 8-22 again. What is going on and where have we seen this same kind of thing happen before?

What have we learned about the ways of God?

What do you think Jacob meant by what he said to Joseph in verses 21-22?