

Psalm 18, Genesis 33-38 (#11)

Psalm 18 — This Psalm is about God. Written by the newly elected king David, he recalls all that God has done for him. These deeds include protection from the insanity of Saul and numerous military victories. God performed miraculous deeds for a little shepherd from the hill country of Judah. *Take a moment and list what you are grateful for.*

Genesis 33— To the relief of Jacob, his meeting after twenty years with his brother Esau is a cordial one. Jacob introduces his family and gives gifts of livestock to Esau. Esau returns to Seir and Jacob goes to Shechem, and erects an altar to worship the God of Israel. *What might be some reasons that Esau was not angry with his brother Jacob anymore?*

Genesis 34— The Bible does not hide the sordid details of the lives of the sons of Jacob. After the rape of Jacob's daughter Dinah, his sons (especially Simeon and Levi) avenge Dinah, deceiving and killing Shechem and Hamor's family. *Who was more honorable, Shechem or Jacob's sons (Simeon and Levi)? Why?*

Genesis 35— God calls Jacob back to Bethel where he had met God for the first time on his way to Haran. Jacob had all those with him purify themselves, put away all foreign gods, and bury them near Shechem. After obeying God by going to Bethel, God again appears to Jacob and repeats the covenant blessings He gave to Abraham. Rachel dies while giving birth to Benjamin. Jacob comes to his father Isaac after twenty years and soon after that Isaac dies. *How did God bless Jacob and what promises did He give Jacob for his obedience to return to Bethel (v. 5-15)?*

Genesis 36— This chapter gives a detailed genealogy of Esau. The descendents of Esau would become bitter enemies of Israel in the future. *What can be said about the life and person of Esau? See Romans 9:13, Hebrews 12:16-17. Extra Question: What history did Israel have with Amalek, the grandson of Esau (v. 11)? See Exodus 17:8-16, Numbers 14:39-45, Deuteronomy 25:17-19, I Samuel 15, and Esther 3:1.*

Genesis 37— Joseph is the favorite son of Israel, therefore all the other sons are angry and jealous. Joseph tells his dreams of his family bowing down to him which makes them all the angrier, and so they plot to kill him. Instead of killing Joseph, they sell him to the Ishmaelites. They, in turn, sell him into slavery. Upon hearing of the loss of his son, Jacob will not be comforted. The Midianites sell Joseph to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh. *Think back to the beginning of the life of Jacob in Haran up to the time Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers (chapters 25 to 37). Give the contributing factors why Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery.*

Genesis 38— This chapter gives the unsavory account of Judah, his sons, and Tamar. Judah fathers the two sons of his daughter-in-law, Tamar. Judah tries to apply a double standard by making Tamar a prostitute, when all along he did not fulfill the obligation of giving his third son to raise up sons for Er, Judah's firstborn. *Contemplating this whole scandal ridden story, what is the most amazing result we see in the life of Judah with the birth of Perez (Matthew 1:3)?*

Psalm 19, Genesis 39-44 (#12)

Psalm 19 — God's majesty is shouted in the heavens and written in scripture. This demands an allegiance to the one who redeems our soul. *In what ways did David want to be pleasing to God? See verse 14.*

Genesis 39— Joseph becomes a slave of Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, and excels in all he does so that he takes charge of everything in his household. Potiphar's wife tries to seduce Joseph, but he refuses and is wrongly imprisoned. In prison Joseph excels again and becomes the prison administrator. *1. Why was Joseph so successful both in Potiphar's house and in prison? 2. What lessons do we learn from the way Joseph resisted temptation?*

Genesis 40— Pharaoh's cupbearer and chief baker who offended him are assigned to Joseph's care by the captain of the guard. The cupbearer and the chief baker both have dreams which Joseph interprets. The dreams are fulfilled exactly as predicted. *What lessons was God teaching Joseph in Chapters 39 and 40?*

Genesis 41— Two years after the return of the cupbearer to his position, Pharaoh has a dream that no one can interpret. The cupbearer remembers that Joseph is able to interpret dreams, and so Joseph is quickly brought up from the dungeon to interpret the dream. Giving credit to God, Joseph hears and accurately interprets the dream. He is then chosen by Pharaoh to be the chief administrator of food during the next fourteen years of abundance and famine. *As you look back on Joseph's life from chapter 37 to 41, what factors prepared Joseph for going from a prisoner to be Prime Minister in one day?*

Genesis 42— Now the plot thickens, and Jacob sends 10 sons to Egypt to buy grain due to of the famine in Canaan. As his brothers bow down to him, Joseph recognizes them and remembers the dreams he had back in Canaan as a teenager. Joseph sends back 9 brothers with grain and keeps Simeon in prison until they return with Benjamin. Jacob is filled with self-pity at the thought of letting Benjamin go down to Egypt and

possibly losing him too. He decides not to let Benjamin go to Egypt. 1. *Why was it necessary for Joseph to test his brothers instead of immediately revealing his identity to them? What motivates him to do this: revenge, bring them to repentance, or what? Extra Question: What flaws do we see in Jacob's character (v. 35-38)? How should have Jacob reacted to this event as well as the things that have occurred in the previous 20 years?*

Genesis 43— The famine is so severe that Israel relents and allows his sons to go back to Egypt with Benjamin to get more grain. Once his sons arrive in Egypt, Joseph invites them to his own house to eat. Fearful of Joseph's wrath, they carefully mentioned about bringing back to him the money left in their sacks. Simeon is released from jail, and Joseph is overcome with emotion after seeing his brother Benjamin. The eleven brothers are seated in order by age, and Benjamin is served 5 times more food than his brothers. *Why do you think Joseph chooses not to reveal himself to his brothers, even at the poignant moment of greeting Benjamin? What more does Joseph want? Source #1*

Genesis 44— Still disguising his true identity from his brothers, Joseph sends them off back to Canaan at dawn. Joseph gives instructions to his steward to put his silver cup in Benjamin's bag in order to accuse him and give his final test to his brothers. Later, when the silver cup is found in Benjamin's sack, they are forced to return to face Joseph once again. Although Judah says they should all be his slaves, Joseph says that only the one guilty of stealing the cup would be his slave. Judah intercedes for Benjamin and pleads that he be allowed to take Benjamin's place for fear that if Benjamin does not return, Jacob may die of grief. 1. *Why do you think Joseph choose to put the silver cup in Benjamin's sack? 2. Jesus is called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. In what way did Judah exemplify Jesus in this chapter (v. 18-34)? How do we know his pleading impressed Joseph?*

Psalms 20-21, Genesis 45-50 (#13)

Psalm 20— David calls upon God’s protection and favor. There are two assumptions here. First that God’s help is sufficient to resolve any problem we face. Second is that God will act on our behalf. *List some of the reasons David gives to assure us that God will respond to his prayer*

Psalm 21— It is commonplace for people to forget God when they achieve their dreams, as if these things were accomplished by our own abilities. Not so with David, for he knows the depths of despair and sorrow, and savors the sweet triumph accomplished by God. *List some of the blessings of God in this chapter.*

Genesis 45— Joseph reveals himself to his brothers as they are dumbfounded and dismayed. Joseph shares with them God’s purposes for his being sold by his brothers and urges them to bring his father and all their families to live with him in Egypt. Pharaoh invites all of Jacob’s family to Egypt and offers them the best land and the transportation to facilitate the move. Upon hearing that Joseph is still alive, Jacob is numb and does not believe their words until he hears Joseph’s words repeated to him and sees the wagons he had sent to transport them.

As Jacob hears the truth that his son Joseph is still living, what do you think went through Jacob’s mind about the previous 22 years of grief and mourning? How does his story of wasted years of lamenting touch our lives?

Genesis 46— When Israel took his journey toward Egypt, he stopped at Beersheba and offered sacrifices to God. God appeared in a vision to Jacob and assured him that his journey to Egypt had His approval, giving him the promise that he would return to Canaan. All of Jacob’s family and all their belongings are taken to Egypt in Pharaoh’s wagons (v. 1-7). A record of all the names of Jacob’s family who travelled to Egypt is given (v. 8-27). Jacob and Joseph finally reunite, and Joseph makes a plan so that Jacob’s family can stay in Goshen (v. 28-34).

What promises and assurances does God give to Jacob in his vision (v.2-4)?

Genesis 47— Joseph takes Jacob and some of his brothers to see Pharaoh. Jacob blesses Pharaoh, sharing with him details of his life. After receiving approval from Pharaoh, Joseph settles all of his family in the land of Goshen which is in the district of Rameses (v. 1-12). Through wise administration, Joseph saves the people of Egypt from death and starvation, and the people give their lives and land in return (v.13-26). In the land of Goshen, the children of Israel have property, are fruitful, and multiply rapidly. Joseph promises to bury Jacob in Canaan after his death (v. 27-31). *In this chapter, what are the ways Jacob showed himself as “Israel”, the matured spiritual patriarch of his family?*

Genesis 48— When Jacob was close to death, he calls for Joseph and his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, to come to receive a final blessing. Jacob elevates Manasseh and Ephraim to the status of full sons and declares the younger Ephraim to receive the blessing of the firstborn rather than Manasseh. *From Abraham through Joseph’s sons, what pattern do we see in the blessing of the firstborn son with the son who actually received the blessing? What lesson does this teach us about who God chooses? Extra Question: In verses 21-22, what is the significance of the words, “I have given to you rather than your brothers one mountain slope”? See Genesis 33:18-20, Joshua 24:32, and Numbers 13:8.*

Genesis 49— As he nears death, Jacob blesses his sons by reflecting on their past actions in order to determine how their future descendents would prosper. Through these two chapters (48-49), Joseph and Judah received the greater blessings, with Judah being promised that kings would come from his lineage culminating with the promised Messiah (v. 10). At his death, Jacob gives the final instructions to be buried in Canaan with Abraham, Isaac, and their wives. *What commendations and prophecies are given to Judah? Why?*

Genesis 50— Jacob dies and his family and the Egyptians mourn for seventy days. Joseph receives permission from Pharaoh to bury Jacob's body in Canaan with his fathers. A long funeral procession with Jacob's family and prominent Egyptian officials makes its way to the burying place in Canaan. After Jacob's death, Joseph's brothers are fearful of revenge, but he reassures them of his forgiveness and reminds them of God's ultimate purposes of saving and building a nation. Before his death at 110 years of age, Joseph makes the leaders in Israel promise to carry his bones with them when they return to the Promised Land in the future. *Why was it important (1) to Jacob to be buried in Canaan (46:1-4, 47:29-31), and, (2) to Joseph to have his bones buried in Canaan (Hebrews 11:22)?* *Extra Question: As you read verses 19-21 and Romans 8:28, we think of God's sovereignty and involvement in all the circumstances of our lives. What other Biblical stories do we see God's sovereign work in the lives of God's people? In your life?*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups . c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible c. 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Illustrated Bible Handbook. c. 2008 by George W. Knight, Barbour Publishing Inc. Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc. Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, Mi & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009, David C. Cook.