

God changed Jacob's name to Israel, from the "supplanter" to the "Prince of God"; and Jacob is learning to obey and trust, but there is still a lot of the old Jacob in evidence.

Jacob tells Esau to meet him at Seir, and then heads in the opposite direction.

Instead of heading directly to Bethel where God had first met him, Jacob decides to settle in Shechem.

Jacob was angry with Simeon and Levi after their revenge upon the city of Shechem because they spoiled his reputation and endangered the safety of his family.

Jacob had a real life-changing experience at Peniel, but that did not mean he had "arrived" spiritually and would not sin.

This account once again highlights the key covenantal issue of marrying only within the family of God.

There is no justification for the rape of Dinah, nor is there any justification for the revenge exacted by the sons of Leah on the men of Shechem.

It was particularly reprehensible that they deceived the men of Shechem by misusing circumcision, the sign of the covenant.

The necessity to leave Shechem at last drives Jacob back to Bethel.

Bethel functioned as the spiritual anchor for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The last of Jacob's sons, Benjamin, (which means "son of my right hand") is born at Bethel.



Psalm 75 has a clear message: At the appointed time, God will judge.

Psalm 76 is a Celebration Psalm.

Psalm 76 was most likely written after the army of Sennacherib was struck down by the Lord - "...at His rebuke both the horse and the chariot lie still."

All 4 Psalms center around the fact that it is "the God of Jacob" that we can trust.

The key issue of Jacob's life was trust - whether to follow his own plans and wisdom or simply trust God.

The last 12 chapters of Genesis tell us the story of Joseph.

There are some striking parallels between the life of Joseph and life of Jesus:

Joseph is the most highly honored of all his brothers. (Jesus is the firstborn among many brothers, the New Testament tells us.)

Joseph's faithfulness in communicating divine revelation causes his brothers to hate him and want to kill him. (Jesus - John 1:12)

His father did not understand his dreams, but kept the matter in his mind. (Mary pondered all these things (about Jesus) in her heart.)

Jacob sends his own son to the keepers of the flock and they plot to kill him. (As in the Matthew 21 parable told by Jesus)

Joseph was stripped of his robe. (So was Jesus at the crucifixion)

He was sold for 20 pieces of silver. (Jesus, for 30 pieces)

Joseph's suffering was the means of his people's salvation. (Jesus suffered for the salvation of all mankind.)

Joseph is 17 when he goes from favorite son to slave in Egypt.

The focus shifts from God dealing with an individual man, to God dealing with a nation.

Though Joseph was unaware of it as he entered this life of slavery, God was working out His Divine Plan to preserve the Hebrew nation.

The Joseph story is the story of God's providence.

Jacob's oldest son Reuben is distressed to find that his brothers have sold Joseph into slavery.

Jacob's sons deceived him by killing a young goat and spreading the blood on Joseph's special coat. Jacob had killed 2 young goats to deceive his father.

God sent Jacob's family into Egypt so that they could develop into a nation in safety.

Esau was also made into a nation, but he did not worship God.

The descendants of Esau, the Amalekites and the Edomites, were staunch enemies of Israel.

Judah's daughter-in-law was named Tamar.

Intermarriage between the Hebrews and the Canaanites was already happening; in Egypt, the Hebrews would remain pure because the Egyptians discouraged mingling with the Hebrews.

Tamar was more righteous than Judah, who was trying to shirk his responsibility to her under the Levirate customs of her culture.

In the genealogy of Jesus recorded in Matthew, both Rahab and Tamar are mentioned.

For about 140 years, Egypt was ruled by the Hyksos Dynasty. They were Semites, related to the Hebrews.

Details, titles and customs of the account:

We know from other Egyptian documents that the pharaohs had chief cupbearers and chief bakers.

The Egyptian name Pharaoh gave to Joseph was Zaphemath-Panech, meaning “Head of the Sacred College.”

The signet ring and the robes, and the chariot fit into this time period.

Joseph had to shave before appearing before Pharaoh.

Joseph prospered in Potiphar’s house and then again in prison because God was with him.

Being faithful and experiencing God’s blessing is no guarantee that trouble will not follow.

Joseph could have gotten bitter, but he chose to trust God instead.

For 13 very long years, Joseph was ‘in the dark’ about what God was doing in his life.

Joseph trusted God and waited - he is a model for us.

Joseph understood that all sin was ultimately against God.

Joseph is careful to give God all the glory when interpreting Pharaohs' dream.

God has revealed Himself by dreams a number of times on Genesis:

- To Abimelech, a pagan king
- To Jacob at Bethel
- To Jacob, to tell him to leave Laban and go home
- To Laban, warning him not to harm Jacob
- To young Joseph, before his brothers sold him into slavery
- And now to Pharaoh, to tell him of the coming famine

Hebrews 1 says, "God who in many parts and in many ways spoke in times past to the fathers has in these last days spoken to us by His Son."

The priests of Hathor (the Egyptian cow goddess of love) could not interpret Pharaoh's dream, but the God of Joseph could because He is the one true God.

Everything that had happened in Joseph's life had been divinely ordered with one goal in mind - the preparation of a place in Egypt for Israel to develop as a nation.

Ephesians 2:20 says, "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God has prepared in advance for us to do."

When Joseph's brothers come before Pharaoh's official (Joseph) they do not recognize him - but they bow down to him and Joseph's dream is fulfilled.

God keeps His promises.

Joseph's strategy in dealing with his brothers is meant to test their character.

Keeping Simeon in custody and putting the silver in their sacks was designed to ensure their return to Egypt.

Judah has emerged as the leader of his brothers, instead of Reuben, the oldest.

In Chapter 42, the brothers are now called the sons of Israel, rather than the sons of Jacob.

For 20 long years, the brothers had been carrying the guilt of their actions towards Joseph and now they believe they are being punished.

When we become followers of Jesus, not only is our sin removed, so also is the guilt of sin removed from us.