

***IN THE BEGINNING GOD*****Looking Ahead Genesis 49:1—50:26**

*“But Joseph said to them, ‘Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish...the saving of many lives.’”* Genesis 50:19, 20

**Day 1: Read Genesis 49:1–28.**

1. In this passage, Jacob blesses his sons and prophesies about the tribes of Israel that will come from them. As firstborn, Reuben would ordinarily have been entitled to leadership of the extended family and a double portion of the inheritance. What presumptuous action of his caused him to lose this position of favor? (v. 4; Gen. 35:22)
2. Simeon and Levi come next in the birth order, but they too lose out on the privileges of the firstborn.
  - a. Why? (Gen. 34:25ff)
  - b. What does Jacob say will be the result for their descendants? (v. 7b)
  - c. How does God turn this prophecy around in a merciful and surprising way? (Ex. 32:25–29; Num. 18:21–24; Deut. 18:1, 2)
  - d. Can you think of a time when a discipline you received for sin resulted in a blessing after you repented and sought the Lord?

**Day 2: Read Genesis 49:1–28.**

3. The blessings of Judah and Joseph stand out for their length and lavishness. These brothers—the fourth son and the favorite son, the firstborn of the beloved Rachel—each receive part of the privileges of the firstborn.
  - a. Which son’s tribe will assume the leadership role? (vv. 8–12)
  - b. Which son will receive the double portion through his sons? (Gen. 48:1, 5; 1 Chr. 5:1)
4. The prophecy of a ruler from Judah (v. 10) is initially fulfilled in whom? (2 Sam. 2:4a) In what descendant of Judah does it find complete and permanent fulfillment? (Mt. 1:1–3, 6, 16; Mt. 21:4–11; Acts 2: 29–36)
5. At this point, the Canaanites, Egyptians, and other peoples are excluded from the covenant promises. But the prophecy concerning Judah’s royal descendant reveals that “the obedience of the nations is his” (v. 10). How does the work of King Jesus throw wide the doors of blessing? (Mt. 28:18–20; Acts 9:11, 15; Rom. 1:16, 17; Rev. 5:9, 10)

**Day 3: Read Genesis 49:29—50:21.**

6. Earlier Jacob made Joseph swear to bury him back in Canaan (47:29–31). Now he repeats his request in painstaking detail. Why do you think it is so important to him to be buried in Canaan? (Gen. 17:8; 28:13–15; 46:2–4)
7. Now that their father has died, what do Joseph’s brothers fear? What do they do? How does Joseph respond?
8. How is Joseph’s question, “Am I in the place of God?” (v. 19b) evidence of the character he has shown in both happy and hard circumstances? (Pr. 9:10; 15:33)
9. Throughout Joseph’s adult life, his words and actions consistently demonstrate an awareness that life is lived before the face of God. (See for example, 39:9; 40:8b; 41:16, 50–52; 45:5–9.) Pray that God would enable you to have more of this perspective in your life.

**Day 4: Read Genesis 50:22–26.**

10. For what act of faith does the writer of Hebrews praise Joseph? (Heb. 11:22)
11. How would the accounts of Jacob’s and Joseph’s burial instructions have encouraged the Israelites in the desert, who were the original audience of Genesis?
12. How was Joseph’s request fulfilled? (Ex. 13:19; Jos. 24:32)

**Day 5: Read Genesis 50:15–26.**

13. Some commentators see 50:20 as a key verse for the whole book of Genesis: “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” There have been many occasions in Genesis when human sin seemed to threaten God’s plan to preserve a seed and create a people. God has always used those circumstances to further his plan. Is there one instance that has really stood out for you?
14. How does Genesis 50:20 fit the events at the heart of God’s plan of redemption? (Acts 2:22–24, 36–39)
15. Our reading of Genesis has provided us with many examples of painful situations, grief, violence, discord, deceit, fear.... Is there any situation in the lives of individuals or nations that God cannot redeem for good? Is there any situation in your life where you have trouble believing that?
16. Genesis is the book of beginnings. Read some of the end of the story and be encouraged: Revelation 1:12–18; 5:5–13; 20:10, 14; 21:1–8; 22:1–5.