



**A quick look forward...**

3. Take a quick look ahead to **Ruth 4:12 and 18**. By the time of Ruth, the names of Tamar, Judah and Perez have become a blessing!

- a) Where does the family line of Perez lead in Ruth 4:18-22?
  
- b) What do you know about the person named last in the list?

Although Judah's lustful liason with his daughter-in-law is contrasted with Joseph's integrity in the next chapter, God is again going to bring a good outcome from a bad situation. Joseph ends up in prison because he refuses to sleep with Potiphar's wife - but better times come. In the last study, we watched Joseph rise to second-in-command of Egypt. He manages the national economy through prosperity and then famine. His brothers – including Judah - have now come to Egypt looking for help.

**Read Genesis 42 and 43 before your group meets.**

4. Joseph has recognised his brothers, but they haven't recognised him.

- a) What do you think is Joseph's motive in his dealings with his brothers?
  
- b) What do the words of the brothers reveal in 42:21-22?
  
- c) What do Jacob's words reveal in 42:36?

5. To test his brothers, Joseph has insisted that they bring his younger brother Benjamin back with them on their next trip to Egypt. Simeon is held prisoner until they return. But Jacob has lost one son already, and refuses to part with Benjamin.

- a) What guarantee does Judah give his dad in 42:8-10?
  
- b) Joseph may seem quite calculating in the way he deals with his brothers. But what do we see behind the scenes in 43:30?

6. Joseph is about to spring his trap. Read the details in 44:1-16.

- a) Benjamin is trapped. But which brother comes to the forefront in the story?
  
- b) From verse 16, what "guilt" do you think has really been uncovered?

7. **Read Judah's speech in Gen 44:17-33.**

- a) How has his attitude changed towards his father?
- b) What offer does he make?
- c) How does Judah's offer to give himself in place of his brother make him "fit to be the father of kings?" Can you think of a future king who does the same thing in a much bigger way?

As chapter 49 will reveal, Judah is indeed going to be father of a line of kings. Meanwhile, though, Joseph is about to break the big news...

8. Joseph's identity is finally unveiled in **45:1-7. Read it.**

- a) How does Joseph react in 45:1-2?
- b) How do the brothers respond to Joseph's revelation of himself?
- c) What has God's intention been in all of this? (See v5 and v7).

9. Joseph sends his brothers home to their dad with the great news that he's alive. Jacob sets out for the safe haven of Egypt in **chapter 46** – and, in a reminder of a previous trip long ago, God speaks to him in a vision during the night.

- a) What does God promise in 46:3-4? Which part of the promise to Abraham in Genesis 12 is highlighted?
- b) What promise is there for the future?

10. Although Joseph takes care of his family in Egypt (as described in Gen 46-47), the hearts of the family are always tied to the promised land, Canaan.

- a) Which part of God's promise is being fulfilled in Gen 47:27? (How many came to Egypt (46:26))?
- b) Where does Jacob want to be buried? (47:29b-30)

11. **Read chapter 48.** Joseph's sons are blessed by Jacob, who "adopts" them as his own sons, giving them inheritance rights.

- a) What earlier "blessing story" comes to mind as you read verses 9 to 21?
- b) What key difference is there between this and the earlier story of Jacob and Esau? (v19-20)
- c) Again, in verse 21, what promise is brought to mind?

The promise – and the prospect – of returning to the "promised land" is constantly repeated. We're just a few chapters from the start of the book of Exodus, which will tell of the great trouble Israel's descendants have in breaking free from Egypt. During those later years of their captivity, promises like these may well have been their only glimmer of hope!

12. **Quickly look over chapter 49 again.** We've looked at Jacob's words of blessing in a previous study. Reuben and Simeon and Levi lose their blessings because of their past foolishness. Judah rises to the top of the list. Read his blessing from verse 8 to 12.

- a) We have already noted that Judah's family line (through his shady liaison with Tamar) ultimately leads to the great King David... and finally (Matthew 1) the rulers staff is passed on to the "one to whom it belongs" – Jesus Christ. Who will this ultimate "King" rule over?
- b) Thinking back over the development we've seen in Judah's character – and the final act that brought about Joseph's "unveiling" – what place should "self sacrifice" play in the character of God's ideal leader?

13. **Read Gen 49:29-50:12.**

- a) Where is Jacob buried?
- b) What does his amazingly lavish "state funeral" say about God's oversight of this family?

14. **Read Gen 50:15-21.**

- a) We looked at the significance of Joseph's words in 50:20 last time. Summarise them in your own words...
- b) Looking back over everything we've seen in Genesis 25-50, how many instances can you think of where God has turned bad circumstances into good results for this family line?

15. God is relentlessly bringing about his promise to bless the world through the descendants of Abraham.  
**Read the closing words of Genesis in Gen 50:22-26.**

- a) What is Joseph's final request?
  
- b) What is Joseph's final confidence?

There are hard times ahead for the Israelites... as the book of Exodus will reveal. But Joseph remains confident in God's promises to give his people a land of their own, and to ultimately bless the world through them. Further, through the line of Judah, God has promised a King who will one day call on people from all nations to live under his rule. Both Judah and Joseph show something of the character of God as he deals with his people. God can bring good results from bad circumstances – even crucifixion. God will provide the saviour his people need, at just the right time. And God's rule over his people will ultimately be by a King who is prepared to give himself for his brothers!

**Think back...**

Take a moment to think back through the material we've covered in Genesis 25-50...

- a) Jacob and Esau – Jacob's grasping for a blessing that God has promised anyway!
- b) Jacob's flight to Laban, and his return as a "broken" man.
- c) Jacob's compromise with the Canaanites, and the potential for disaster it brought.
- d) Joseph's terrible treatment at the hand of his brothers – used for good by God.
- e) Judah's progress – from one who'd sell his brother, to one who'd give himself for his brother, to the father of a line of Kings.

\* What have you been challenged or encouraged by in this series?

\* How are you planning to change through what you've learned from God's word in recent weeks?

\* How does God's faithfulness to his promises to bless the world through Jesus in the past help you to trust Jesus for the future?