Genesis 36-50 – Term 1 Daily Devotions 2020

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| **Week 1** |  |  |
| Day 1 | Genesis 36:1-19 | * This year we are continuing the story of Jacob, but through his son Joseph. This means that Genesis 36 closes the chapter on Esau. Why did Esau move to the hill country of Seir? * What was the name of the nation that came from Esau? * How has God kept his promises to Abraham and Isaac through Esau? |
| Day 2 | Genesis 36:20-43 | * Given all the names and descendant in both today’s and yesterday’s readings, we can see that Esau’s family were a significant people. Why does their story end here and not continue like Jacob’s story does? * What does this tell you about people who play significant roles in history but are outside God’s Kingdom? * What is more important to you? Reputation, legacy, significance or the Kingdom of God? How does that make a difference to your life? |
| Day 3 | Genesis 37:1-11 | * What kind of dreams was Joseph having and what were their significance? * We don’t know much about Joseph’s personality at this stage. What do you think it would have been like having a brother who had these kinds of dreams? * Would being the favourite son make a difference? |
| Day 4 | Genesis 37:12-20 | * Joseph was sent to his brothers to make a report on them to their father. Given the small amount we know about him, can you see why Joseph was hated by his brothers? * Joseph’s brothers wanted to kill him. What does this say about them? * Have you been tempted to do something which might cause others pain when you thought you could get away with it? |
| Day 5 | Genesis 37:18-30 | * What did Rueben do to try and stop the brothers killing Joseph? Why do you think he might have gone about it this way? * How did his rescue attempt fail? * Why would the brothers sell Joseph rather than killing him? |
| **Week 2** |  |  |
| Day 1 | Genesis 37:31-36 | * What did the brothers do with Joseph’s coat and why? * How did Jacob take this news? * Is it right to deceive people in this way? Why? Have you been tormented by something you did long ago? |
| Day 2 | Genesis 38:1-11 | * In Gen 37:26ff we see Judah suggesting they sell Joseph instead of killing him. I wonder if Gen 38 is so we can see that Judah did not do this because he was a righteous man. This will be more noticeable by the end of the week. * This passage describes a very different culture to ours. It was really important that people had children, that was why a brother would perform his duty if an older brother died. Why didn’t Tamar have any children? * Consider the shame that Tamar may have felt. A failed wife who could not fall pregnant had to go home to her father’s place. This would be a very different scenario in our culture. |
| Day 3 | Genesis 38:12-19 | * Why would Tamar trick her father-in-law into making her pregnant? * Why did she ask for Judah’s seal, chord and staff? * Remember, this passage is a description of events. Why is it not a good idea to get pregnant by your father-in-law? |
| Day 4 | Genesis 38:20-26 | * How quickly did Judah give up his promise to pay the prostitute? Why did he do this? * While Tamar was living with her father, she was still supposed to be part of Judah’s family. Why did Judah want her killed? * What did Tamar produce to save her own life? How did this transfer family shame from her to Judah? How did this show that Judah had done wrong by not letting her marry Shelah? |
| Day 5 | Genesis 38:27-30 | * How is this birth story similar but different to Jacob’s birth story? (Gen 25:24-26) * Judah had not fulfilled his promise to Tamar, he had used a “temple prostitute”, from a false religion. How does this story show that Judah was a failed human being? * Jesus was from the tribe of Judah. How does this story help you to see that it is by God’s goodness and grace that Jesus came to save us from sin? |
| **Week 3** |  |  |
| Day 1 | Genesis 39:1-6a | * We return to the main story and we get to compare Judah with Joseph. Who bought Joseph? What made this master so significant? * Why did Potiphar benefit so much from having Joseph? Why did he promote Joseph in his household? * Will we always have success at work if we are God’s people? |
| Day 2 | Genesis 39:6b-18 | * Mrs Potiphar was obviously a spoilt woman, getting whatever she wanted. Why would she go after Joseph? * Why didn’t Joseph give himself to Mrs Potiphar? * Mrs Potiphar now had Joseph’s cloak. This should remind you of 2 stories – Joseph’s coat used to prove his death, Judah’s seal and staff used to prove it was his baby. How was Joseph’s cloak used against him? |
| Day 3 | Genesis 39:19-23 | * Why did Joseph have to go to prison? * What happened for Joseph in prison and why? * How should we live in every situation we face and why? |
| Day 4 | Genesis 40:1-15 | * Both Pharaoh’s cupbearer and baker had strange dreams and wanted to know their meaning. Who did Joseph say was interpreter of dreams? Whose work was Joseph really doing? * What was the interpretation of the cupbearer’s dream? * What did Joseph want the cupbearer to do and why? |
| Day 5 | Genesis 40:16-23 | * Why did the baker want his dream interpreted? What was that interpretation? * What happened to these 2 men? * The cupbearer “forgot” Joseph. Have you felt forgotten after showing kindness to others? |
| **Week 4** |  |  |
| Day 1 | Genesis 41:1-13 | * The cupbearer suddenly remembered Joseph. What prompted his memory? * What were the dreams of the Pharaoh? Why were these dreams such an issue? * Who do you turn to when your heart and mind are troubled? |
| Day 2 | Genesis 41:14-27 | * Who does Joseph say is the interpreter of dreams? Why is this so important? * What was the basic interpretation of the dreams? Why was it important for Pharaoh to understand their meaning? * How can we continue to point people to Jesus rather than letting the focus remain on us? |
| Day 3 | Genesis 41:25-36 | * Joseph continues with his interpretation of the dreams. Why were 2 form of the same dream given? * What were Josephs suggestions to Pharaoh? * If Pharaoh did what Joseph suggested and prepared for the famine, whose God do you think would get the credit? |
| Day 4 | Genesis 41:37-44 | * What did Pharaoh recognise in Joseph? Why did he recognise this? * How extreme was Joseph’s authority and power? Why would Pharaoh give this much power and authority to a Hebrew? * Power and authority can change a person. Why is it important that we remain a faithful servant of Jesus when responsibilities come our way? |
| Day 5 | Genesis 41:45-52 | * Why would Pharaoh give Joseph a new name and give him a wife who was the daughter of the priest of On? * Joseph got on with his job and prepared for the famine. He also had 2 sons. What were their names and what do the names tell you about how Joseph coped with all that happened to him? * Imagine the trauma or PTSD which Joseph would have had to deal with. How important is it to remember that God’s people are not immune from trauma and disaster in their lives? |
| **Week 5** |  |  |
| Day 1 | Genesis 41:53-57 | * How do these verses summarise the events of the famine years? * Who was affected by the famine? * One of the promises of God to Abraham was that he (and his children) would be a blessing to the world. How is this seen in these verses? But to the people who came to get food from Egypt, who would get the credit for saving the world? |
| Day 2 | Genesis 42:1-17 | * Why did Joseph’s brothers go to Egypt? Who did not go and why? * How did Joseph react when he saw his brothers? Why do you think he reacted in this way? * How does this show that Joseph had not really gotten over the trauma of being treated so badly by his brothers? |
| Day 3 | Genesis 42:17-24 | * What demands did Joseph make for the brothers to return home. * How Joseph was able to keep his identity a secret? * Up to this point, the focus has been on Joseph’s trauma. What do we see about how the brothers have suffered? How would they ever get over the feelings of guilt? How can we as Christians get over our guilt? |
| Day 4 | Genesis 42:25-38 | * I would have thought that finding your money in the sacks would have been a bonus. Why were they frightened? * Once again, it is Reuben who tries to save a brother (Gen 37:21). What lengths was he willing to go to this time? * How great a tragedy would it have been to lose Benjamin? But this would mean that Simeon would remain in gaol. How would you solve such a great puzzle? |
| Day 5 | Genesis 43:1-14 | * The family had nearly run out of food again and a journey to Egypt was not like going down to the corner store. What clues do we have that a considerable amount of time had passed since they had been to Egypt? Why had they waited so long? * Why was their so much fear about them returning? How were these fears conflicting? * Have you had to risk everything? How difficult must this be? |
| **Week 6** |  |  |
| Day 1 | Genesis 43:15-25 | * When Joseph saw Benjamin what did he want to do for the brothers? How did the brothers react to this? * The brothers tried to tell the steward or manager that there must have been a mix up last time and they had brought the first lot of money as well as another lot. How did the steward react? Who do you think paid the first lot? * What is so surprising about verse 23 given that everything about Joseph would have looked very Egyptian? |
| Day 2 | Genesis 43:24-34 | * The brothers meet Joseph in his house. What did Joseph do to keep up the secret of his identity? * Why did Joseph have to leave the meal? Why was seeing Benjamin so important? * It must have been very confusing for the brothers. What kinds of things astonished them? |
| Day 3 | Genesis 44:1-13 | * Joseph sets up the brothers once again, in a similar way to last time. What extra thing did he do this time? * What was so devastating for the brothers by this inspection? * Imagine you are the brothers, how confusing would this be? How would you begin to cope with this situation? |
| Day 4 | Genesis 44:14-34 | * Joseph talks about being able to find out things by divination and the cup was involved. This may have looked like an Egyptian form of divination. Why would Joseph speak this way? * Why do you think Joseph wanted Benjamin to be his slave? * What was Judah prepared to do? Does this remind you of another “son of Judah”? |
| Day 5 | Genesis 45:1-15 | * Finally, Joseph revealed himself! How loud was his crying? Why so much pent up emotion? * Imagine the shock the brothers felt. Why didn’t they spend lots of time crying too? * Joseph said that God sent him to Egypt. Not everyone can have the luxury of understanding how God has used them through their tragedy. How can you trust in God in difficult times even though you might not know the reasons why you suffered? |
| **Week 7** |  |  |
| Day 1 | Genesis 45:16-28 | * Pharaoh was very understanding. Why did he tell Joseph to bring his family to Egypt? * Jacob was finally told that Joseph was alive. How did he respond? * Forgiveness seems to be implied in this chapter though it is not expressly stated. How important is reconciliation? |
| Day 2 | Genesis 46:1-4 | * God spoke to Jacob. What did he say? * Leaving the Promised Land was risking the promises God made to Abraham (land, children, blessing, fame). How was he going to fulfil 2 of them in Egypt? * What did God say that would have been so precious to Jacob? |
| Day 3 | Genesis 46:5-27 | * This passage is a record of who went to Egypt, but it is not complete. The women weren’t counted, nor the grandchildren, the servants, and any possible livestock. Consider how large a group would have been travelling down to Egypt. * Why would it be so significant that such a large group would be allowed to live in Egypt by the permission of Pharaoh? * How would you respond to such generosity? What/who would you remember if you received such generosity? |
| Day 4 | Genesis 46:28-34 | * Jacob and Joseph are finally reunited. How precious was this reunion to both of them? * Joseph gave his father and brothers strict instructions, what were they? * What does all this tell you about the town of Goshen? |
| Day 5 | Genesis 47:1-12 | * Finally, the meeting with Pharaoh they had been preparing for. What was so important about them living in Goshen? * What is so special about the conversation between Pharaoh and Jacob? * What did Joseph get to do for his family now that they were living in Goshen? |
| **Week 8** |  |  |
| Day 1 | Genesis 47:13-22 | * With the focus of the story on Joseph and his family, we could forget the severity of the famine. This passage outlines just how severe it was. How much did the people have to give to survive the famine? * Imagine how desperate the situation was. How would you cope if you faced this situation? * We are raised in a culture which hates slavery and has Centrelink to provide for our needs. How thankful should we be that we can have such help during our times of need? |
| Day 2 | Genesis 47:23-26 | * Now that the people belonged to Pharaoh, how much did they need to pay him from their work? * Compare this to our tax system. Though they might have been considered slaves, was this too much to pay for their lives? * We pay taxes and still have our freedom. How can we be thankful for these things? |
| Day 3 | Genesis 47:27-31 | * What did Jacob ask Joseph to do for him? * Why would being buried in the Promised Land be so important? * What did this remind Jacob’s family about the Promises? |
| Day 4 | Genesis 48:1-9 | * Jacob was now near death. What was the first thing that Jacob reminded Joseph about? Why was this important? * Jacob declared Joseph’s sons as his own grandchildren. Why could he have not considered them as his own in the past? * Jacob blessed his grandchildren. How can we bless those we love? |
| Day 5 | Genesis 48:10-22 | * What did Jacob do that was so surprising when he blessed his grandsons? * How does this remind you of Isaac’s blessing of Jacob and Esau? * What did Jacob remind Joseph of at the end of chapter 48? |
| **Week 9** |  |  |
| Day 1 | Genesis 49:1-12 | * Jacob then blesses his other sons. What did he say about Reuben? * What did he say about Simeon and Levi? * What did he say about Judah? |
| Day 2 | Genesis 49:13-21 | * What did Jacob say about Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, and Naphtali? * How would you speak to your family if you had the chance to speak to them on your death bed? * How would/did you honour your parents on their death bed? |
| Day 3 | Genesis 49:22-28 | * What did Jacob say about Joseph? * What did he say about Benjamin? * What would your parents say about you? |
| Day 4 | Genesis 49:29-33 | * Jacob died. What were his final instructions? * How has this been like a last will and testament? * Are you prepared for your death? |
| Day 5 | Genesis 50:1-13 | * How did Joseph honour his father’s wishes? How much more did he do for his father than what Jacob asked for? * Why did the Canaanites misunderstand who and what was happening at this funeral ceremony? * Notice that there is no ancestor worship, but still great respect given to Jacob. How can we honour our loved ones in death? |
| **Week 10** |  |  |
| Day 1 | Genesis 50:14-21 | * What were the brothers so afraid of and why? * What does this say about their understanding of Joseph’s reconciliation with them? * Have you had to reassure people of forgiveness and reconciliation? How important is it to be patient in these situations? |
| Day 2 | Genesis 50:22-26 | * Now, we come to the end of Joseph’s life. How long did he live and how many generations did he see? * Joseph was the second youngest, he may have had brothers still alive. But who would have to fulfill his final requests? * What did he remind his family of in his dying wishes? Why was it so important that he remind them? |
| Day 3 | Exodus 13:17-22 | * 400 years later and Moses was leading God’s people out of Egypt. How was God guiding them? * What did Moses take with them when they left? Why did he do this? * How do you honour those who have gone before you? |
| Day 4 | Psalm 80 | * The Psalmist recalls how God had led people in the past. Who were they? * How had God restored his people in the past? * How does verses 17-18 remind you of Jesus? Call out to him for the restoration of your soul. |
| Day 5 | Psalm 105 | * This Psalm recalls the story of God’s people in Egypt. How well does the psalmist recall Joseph’s story? Would you have summarised things differently? * How did God show his power over Egypt and save his people from them? * Why did he do all this? (Psalm 105:42-45) |