

CbC March 23-29

March 23 Su Reading A82 — Genesis 45 — Joseph Revealed Himself **Audio:** [Genesis 45 \(ESV\)](#)

Power of Forgiveness — There is even more evidence of strong emotions in this chapter. Joseph couldn't control his emotions as he outwardly wept (v. 2, 14). The brothers were left speechless in shock upon learning that this great ruler was their brother (v. 3). All that Joseph had said to them earlier was spoken through an interpreter, but now he not only spoke to them in Hebrew but also told them his Hebrew name. Added to their shock was probably the lack of any sign of vengeance from Joseph. His weeping showed forgiving love as did his expressed concern for them by calling them to come near (v. 4) and saying, "*do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here*" (v. 5). Forgiveness was as unexpected to these brothers 4,000 years ago as it is today. Genuine forgiveness is not only unexpected, but it is also arresting. It makes people think, "What is this?!" It is so unnatural that it almost forces people to consider the supernatural. Forgiveness is a subtle but powerful tool of evangelism. That is part of letting "*your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven*" (Matt. 5:16).

March 24 M Reading A83 — Genesis 46 — Israel in Egypt **Audio:** [Genesis 46 \(ESV\)](#)

Guiding by Gender — The long section of genealogies in this chapter (vv. 8-27) raises some questions, especially those relating to women. First, the list of names is organized in groups by the four wives of Jacob, giving those women prominence. On the other hand, the importance of women seems to be degraded with none of the wives of Jacob's sons being mentioned or counted (v. 26). That may only be because they were not directly related to Jacob or his blood relatives. Another curious fact is that verses 7 and 15 speak of Jacob's "*daughters*," although Dinah seems to be the only one. That plural form, "*daughters*," may only be poetic license because in both places it is balanced with "*sons*." There is also only one named granddaughter (v. 17) on the list. The great imbalance of 12 sons and one daughter, 63 grandsons and one granddaughter, and four great-grandsons and no great-granddaughters, seems to suggest God's preference of males over females in Jacob's family. That may, in fact, be true in this case, so that God could more quickly fulfill His promise to Jacob that "*I will make you into a great nation*" (v. 3). God gave Jacob mostly boys who fathered mostly boys so that the family of Jacob would more quickly become the nation of Israel. God has subtle ways of guiding the future.

March 25 Tu Reading A84 — Genesis 47 — Jacob Blesses Pharaoh **Audio:** [Genesis 47 \(ESV\)](#)

Israel Settled — God had provided for the survival of His chosen people by bringing them to Egypt. For the first time in the Bible, after God changed Jacob's name to Israel, His people are here called Israel: "*Thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen. And they gained possessions in it, and were fruitful and multiplied greatly*" (v. 27). So, near the end of Jacob's long life, Israel becomes a people. God also provided for them by giving them good land (v. 6), physically separating them as shepherds from the influence of the Egyptian people and their religions, and providing food for them through Joseph for the remaining five years of famine (v. 12). In great contrast, the Egyptians had to give "*all the money*" (v. 14), "*all their livestock*" (v. 17), and "*all the land*" (v. 20) to Pharaoh for food. I wonder if Israel recognized the extent to which God was providing for them. How often do we recognize and thank God for the many ways in which He provides for us? The next time you pray at the beginning of a meal, think of Israel and thank God for the many ways in which He provides for you. "*Every good gift and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights*" (James 1:17).

March 26 W Reading A85 — Genesis 48 — Israel Blesses Joseph's Sons **Audio:** [Genesis 48 \(ESV\)](#)

Elevated — This intended sick-call of Joseph to his ailing father resulted in significant changes that elevated the status of both Joseph and his two sons. The first promotion was that Jacob raised his long-lost son, Joseph, to the position of “firstborn” by giving him a double portion for his inheritance. We are later told (in 1 Chron. 5:1-2) that because of the sin of Jacob's firstborn son, Reuben, his birthright was transferred to Joseph. So, instead of Joseph becoming one of the tribes of Israel in the Promised Land, Manasseh and Ephraim were made separate tribes, thus the double portion. This was accomplished by Jacob's statement in today's reading that “*Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are*” (v. 5). The second promotion, then, was that Jacob's two grandsons were elevated to the position of sons. The third promotion was the elevation of Ephraim over his older brother, Manasseh. The intentional crossing of Jacob's hands to the heads of these sons came as a surprise to Joseph, who tried to correct his father. No, it was God-ordained. These blessings to Joseph's sons, and to the other sons in the next chapter, included divine predictions about their future. The descendants of the younger son, Ephraim, would become greater than those of Manasseh. God's ways are often revealed as surprises to us today as well. He doesn't think or plan the way we do. That is why His answers to our prayers are often surprising to us, showing His limitless creativity in what He does.

March 27 Th Reading A86 — Genesis 49 — Blessings and Death of Jacob **Audio:** [Genesis 49 \(ESV\)](#)

Now Impacts the Future — The blessings pronounced on Jacob's sons involve events connected with their past (“*blessing each with the blessing suitable to him*”—v. 28) as well as predictions of future events (“*what shall happen to you in days to come*”—v. 1). Most of the predictions would not be fulfilled until over 400 years later in the Promised Land, showing that these were not only Jacob's wishes but God's foreknowledge and direction. For Reuben, Jacob's words were more of a curse than a blessing, removing his honor of being firstborn because of his one sexual act with his father's wife, Bilhah. This provides a good example for those of us who would like to excuse “just one little sin” of pleasure, which may result in life-changing consequences. The result for the anger and violence of Simeon and Levi, when they killed the men of Shechem for the rape of Dinah, was that they would be divided and scattered in Israel (v. 7). In the Promised Land, the Levites were not given an area for each tribe, but 48 widely separated cities in which to live. The tribe of Simeon was given individual cities within the territory of Judah in the south. These two tribes of dispersed people would never again be able to join forces for violence. Again, the actions of these two brothers paid a significant price in the future. On the other hand, the descendants of Judah and Joseph, given the longest portions of Jacob's blessings, would prosper abundantly. Judah was given the blessing of future leadership (“*The scepter shall not depart from Judah*”—v. 10), resulting in the royal line of David and the final King of Kings, Jesus.

March 28 F Reading A87 — Genesis 50 — Jacob and Joseph Embalmed **Audio:** [Genesis 50 \(ESV\)](#)

Please — Jacob and Joseph are the only two people mentioned in Scripture who were embalmed (vv. 2, 26). The oldest Egyptian mummy that has been discovered was that of Pharaoh Ramesses II, who died in 1213 B.C., about 600 years after the death of Joseph. This final chapter of Genesis covers about 50 years between the deaths of Jacob and Joseph, and very little is known about Joseph during that period. What was Joseph's government position and function after the seven-year period of distribution of food during the great famine? Jacob died 12 years after the end of the famine. At that time, Joseph still had some authority in that he “*commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father*” (v. 2). He no longer seemed to be second in command under Pharaoh, however, because when he requested permission to bury Jacob in Canaan, he first

approached *“the household of Pharaoh,”* asking them to *“please speak in the ears of Pharaoh”* for him (v. 4). Joseph was still held in high respect, however, as shown by *“all the elders of the land of Egypt”* (v. 7) accompanying him to Canaan with chariots and horsemen (v. 9) to bury Jacob. The *“please”* in this request to Pharaoh probably showed both his humility and his lower position in the government. The second *“please”* in this chapter came from his brothers after Jacob’s burial. They lied to Joseph about Jacob’s made-up command to *“please forgive the transgression of your brothers”* (v. 17). They also came to Joseph in humility, but they came in fear as well. They still didn’t understand forgiveness even though Joseph had demonstrated it graciously in the past. In response, *“he comforted them and spoke kindly to them”* (v. 21), which is exactly how we should respond to those whom we forgive.

March 29 Sa Reading A88 — Exodus 1-2 — Saving Moses

Audio: [Exodus 1-2 \(ESV\)](#)

ACCOUNTABILITY TIME!

Two Kinds of Strength — Twice in Exodus 1, the growth and strength of the descendants of Israel is mentioned; they *“multiplied and grew exceedingly strong”* (v. 8, cf. 20). The Egyptian Pharaoh feared the strength of the Hebrew men, saying that they *“are too many and too mighty for us”* (1:9), fearing that they would *“join our enemies and fight against us”* (1:10). Because of that perceived threat, Pharaoh launched a deadly campaign to limit the future growth of the Hebrew males. Maybe he should have been more afraid of the women instead of the men. It turned out that God was using women to lead His people toward His future good purpose for all of them. He first used the midwives, who *“feared God”* (vv. 17, 21) and refused to obey Pharaoh’s command to kill all the Hebrew boys at the time of their birth. Next, God used Pharaoh’s daughter to rescue Moses, when *“She took pity on him”* (2:6). God then used Moses’ sister to boldly offer to find a Hebrew woman to nurse the newfound baby (v. 7). Then, God used Moses’ mother to not only nurse him as he grew, but also to get paid for it by Pharaoh’s daughter (v. 9). Finally, God arranged to have the seven daughters of Reuel show up at a well in Midea just as Moses arrived in his flight from the Pharaoh (v. 16), which resulted in a long-term, positive relationship with Reuel (Jethro) and Moses’ marriage to one of his daughters, Zipporah (v. 21). The Hebrew men were strong in a physical way, but the featured women were strong in their sensitivity to God, being led and used by Him. The women’s spiritual strength was greater than the men’s physical strength.

ACCOUNTABILITY TIME! If you are up to date in your reading as of today, please [click here](#) to leave your email address or let me know at accbibleread@gmail.com.

