

Two Year Bible Trek  
Week 5  
Genesis 42-50

**Key Concepts:** The key concepts continue to be that God is faithful and will bless God's people (we see this in 50:20 where Joseph reminds his brothers that God was in charge of all that transpired), that the land matters (Israel will be buried in it) and that the people of Israel are supposed to keep themselves apart from the Egyptians in order that they not intermarry (the Israelites live apart in the land of Goshen).

**Stories:** In some sense this is a single story about Joseph, God, and the children of Jacob. There are within this single story however several sub-plots dealing with Joseph and his brothers, including Joseph "messing" with them, the migration of the family to Egypt and the death of Israel.

**Brief Summary:** We pick up our story with the growing famine in Canaan. Jacob's family is beginning to go hungry and the only place where they can find food is Egypt. Jacob sends a couple of his sons to Egypt in order to buy food. Little do they know that it is Joseph whom they will meet...and who is in charge of the grain supplies. Joseph recognizes them but they do not recognize him. This is his moment for revenge, but he refuses to take it. Even so, one can sense his anger with them in that he "messes" with them by first demanding that they leave their brother Simon as a hostage until the other brothers could return with their youngest brother, while at the same time putting their money back in their grain sacks. The brothers and their father are appalled that the money is there and become afraid that they are being set up.

Once all of the grain they had purchased was gone (notice that they leave Simon a prisoner), the brothers return with Benjamin, the youngest. Joseph has the brothers dine with him (notice how the Egyptians cannot eat with Hebrews...a sense of separate identity), then once again fills their grain bags with grain, their money, and this time a silver chalice. As the brothers leave, Joseph has them arrested and brought back. At this point Joseph cannot hold back and blurts out that he is their long, lost brother. They do not believe him at first but then are overjoyed at the reunion.

These events then set in motion the movement of Jacob's entire family from Canaan to Egypt. Before they arrive Joseph instructs them that they are to tell Pharaoh that they are shepherds (again which the Egyptians cannot abide) in order that they will be sent into the delta area which is both close to Joseph but also is separate from the Egyptians (remember the story of Abraham making sure Isaac only marries someone from his own family). In that place the children of Israel will be fruitful and multiply (remember Creation story 2).

While all appears to be going well we come across a note of concern. Joseph in his work for Pharaoh helps Pharaoh to control all of the land, animals and ultimately people of Egypt. Thus all power is transferred into Pharaoh's hand; a fact which will haunt God's people in the future. In a sense it will set up a contest between Pharaoh and God. Ultimately Jacob dies and insists that he be buried in the land; which is approved by both Joseph and Pharaoh. The brothers are left a bit uneasy by their father's death, afraid that Joseph will finally get his vengeance. Joseph will not do so because he sees God's hand in all that has happened. The story ends on a happy note with the people doing well in their new location.

1. How do you think you would have dealt with your brothers had you been Joseph?
2. Why do you think that he "messes" with them?
3. Does your opinion of Joseph change when you realize he helped to enslave the nation?
4. What do you think about Joseph's statement in 50:20 about God using evil events for a good outcome?