

“Death: A New Beginning” (Genesis 49:29-50:26)

Almost 2,000 years ago, Seneca (5 BC-65 AD), the Roman dramatist, philosopher, and politician, said, “It is a rough road that leads to the heights of greatness.”¹ Seneca was ahead of his time and the timeless truth that he uttered must be remembered today. For those of us who are driven and want to fulfill all that God has for us, we must recognize that God will have us walk a rough road. Yet, it is in this rough road that God will lead us to heights of greatness. While we may not want to suffer and experience trials and tests, these are the tools that God uses to shape us into the people He wants us to be.

We have arrived at the end of Genesis—the book of beginnings. In Gen 49:29ff., we will see that death is not the end... it is a new beginning for believers in God’s promises. In this passage, we will learn that adversities are often blessings in disguise because God uses life’s reverses to move us forward.

Intro: The Death of Jacob (49:29-33). Moses writes, “**Then he charged them and said to them, ‘I am about to be gathered to my people;² bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field from Ephron the Hittite for a burial site. There they buried Abraham and his wife Sarah, there they buried Isaac and his wife Rebekah, and there I buried Leah—the field and the cave that is in it, purchased from the sons of Heth.³ When Jacob finished charging his sons, he drew his feet into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.’**” As he neared death, Jacob made his wishes known. He wanted to be buried in Canaan with his family in the field of Machpelah. This wasn’t the first time Jacob communicated his desires (cf. 47:29-31). He had reflected on his death—he wanted to make sure that everything was in place. We must be sure to do the same thing. Make a will and spell out your wishes very clearly. Give your stuff away while you’re living. Write down your wishes for your burial and funeral arrangements. When it’s time to die, make sure that’s all you have to do.

In these five verses, a repeated phrase serves as bookends: “**gathered to my people**” and “**gathered to his people**” (49:29, 33). This ancient expression describes Jacob’s reunion with those who had preceded him in death and had exercised faith in God. As believers we have the wonderful assurance from 2 Cor 5:8 that to be “absent from the body [is to be] present with the Lord.” You can have the same confidence that Jacob possessed. If you have faith in Jesus Christ, the moment you pass from this life, you will enter into eternity with God. Death is not a period—it’s only a comma.

Joseph was a man of sensitivity (50:1). “**Then Joseph fell on his father’s face, and wept over him and kissed him.**” What a beautiful response by Joseph. The only tears recorded in Joseph’s life were not for himself but for the plight of his brothers and now the loss of his father.⁴ The suffering that Joseph had endured had turned him into a man of love. Suffering can push us in one of two directions: it can create bitterness in us or it can soften us. Joseph was a man of tenderness and loving graciousness to others. He was very affectionate to his father and wept over him when he died.⁵ When somebody we love dies, God expects us to weep. That’s why He gave us the ability to shed tears. Normal tears are a part of the healing process (Ps 30:5), while abnormal grief only keeps the wounds open and prolongs the pain. In my pastoral ministry, I’ve learned that people who suppress their grief are in danger of developing emotional or physical problems that are difficult to heal.⁶ Don’t be afraid to express yourself when you grieve or experience loss.

Reflecting on death, it is important to be sure that you have harmonious relationships. Right relationships in life ease the sting of grief in death. Today, if things are not right between you and your dad, mom, siblings, or children, do all that you can to make sure that there is peace (Rom 12:18).

Joseph was a man of faith (50:2-7a). “Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. Now forty days were required for it, for such is the period required for embalming. And the Egyptians wept for him seventy days [two days short of the mourning for Pharaoh⁷]. When the days of mourning for him were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh,⁸ saying, ‘If now I have found favor in your sight, please speak to Pharaoh, saying, ‘My father made me swear, saying, ‘Behold, I am about to die; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me.’ Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father; then I will return.’ Pharaoh said, ‘Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear.’ So Joseph went up to bury his father.” Joseph was expressing his faith and his father’s faith when he buried Jacob in Canaan. While God’s people lived in Egypt and were even called “Egyptians” by the people of Canaan (50:11), nevertheless, their sights were set on Canaan. Egypt was not their home. The promises of God did not concern Egypt; they were about Canaan. Can you see beyond your temporal life here on earth? Do you have faith to see all that God has for you?

Joseph was a man of honor (50:7b-11). When Joseph went to bury his father, all of Pharaoh’s servants and elders and all of the elders of Egypt accompanied him (50:7b-8). In 50:9-11, Moses writes, “**There also went up with him both chariots and horsemen; and it was a very great company. When they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, they lamented there with a very great and sorrowful lamentation; and he observed seven days mourning for his father. Now when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad,⁹ they said, ‘This is a grievous mourning for the Egyptians.’ Therefore it was named Abel-mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan.**” Joseph had reached high honor in the eyes of the Egyptians. God can do that for His people when He wants to. But it may not last. In the very next chapter of the Bible, a new king rises up in Egypt who does not know about Joseph (Exod 1:8). That’s humbling! We should not get too excited about honors from the world. Fame is fleeting—it does not last. People might one day say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” but a little later be saying, “Crucify Him!” (Matt 21:9; 27:23). Fame and honor is nice, but it is short-lived.¹⁰ Therefore, we must remember that as important as friendships are, we cannot compromise ourselves to attain popularity. Teenagers, I can assure you that your high school friendships will be temporary. So do not compromise yourself to gain friends and do not spend too much time pouring yourself into temporal relationships. In the end, you will be disappointed.

Joseph was a man who persevered in his calling (50:12-14). Moses writes, “**Thus his [Jacob] sons did for him as he had charged them; for his sons carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre, which Abraham had bought along with the field for a burial site from Ephron the Hittite. After he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers, and all who had gone up with him to bury his father.**” God’s promises were all connected to Canaan, but Joseph was not tempted to stay there. He knew his calling concerned Egypt. He took one look at the land of promise, which he had not seen since he was 17, and then went back to the place where God had called him. It is a personal calling that will enable you to continue to persevere in your life and ministry.

Today, you may feel a bit aimless. You may not feel like you have a real sense of calling. Ask God to give you a calling or confirm the calling upon your life. I have a calling from God to preach and teach the Bible. Lori has a calling to home school our children. We will do anything to fulfill these specific callings. If we have to spend money on education, training, or supplies we will spend it. If we have to make sacrifices in our schedule, we will make sacrifices. If we become discouraged and defeated, we will pray for the strength to “buck up” because we have callings upon our lives. What is your calling? Are you prepared to fulfill it?

Joseph was a man who trusted in God's sovereignty (50:15-21). In 50:15-18, Moses writes, **"When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, 'What if Joseph bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong which we did to him!' So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, 'Your father charged before he died, saying, 'Thus you shall say to Joseph, 'Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong.' And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.' And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, 'Behold, we are your servants.'"** In these four verses, Joseph's brothers exhibited some negative and positive responses. Initially, they respond negatively due to guilt, fear, and paranoia. They couldn't comprehend Joseph's forgiveness. They assumed that Joseph was simply biding his time out of respect for his father Jacob. But now that Jacob was gone, they were gripped with the terrifying expectation of punishment for their sins at the hand of Joseph. So they falsely claimed that Jacob had issued a charge for Joseph to forgive his brothers. However, Jacob never did this because he recognized that Joseph had completely forgiven his brothers. Fear often causes us to take matters into our own hands. When this happens, we can say and do things that are carried out with impure motives. In this case, the brothers are trying to "save their skin" when they should be trusting in the Lord.

Positively, the brothers own their sin against Joseph. They did not call their sin a mistake or a lapse in judgment, as is common today. The brothers use words like "wrong" (50:15, 17), "transgression" (50:17), and "sin" (50:17). They then beg for forgiveness, bow down before Joseph, and offer themselves up as slaves (50:17-18). These men are repentant!

Sociologist James Davison Hunter has observed that schoolteachers are being taught to no longer say anything as pointed as, "Stop it, please! You're disturbing the class!" Those are now considered judgmental words. Instead, if a strong-armed youth is rattling classroom windows with his tennis ball, the teacher will say something like: "What are you doing? Why are you doing it? How does it make you feel?" Hunter goes on to say that the word "sin" finds its home mostly on dessert menus. "Peanut Butter Binge" and "Chocolate Decadence" are sinful, but lying is not. Our society has fudged away the meaning of sin. The word "sin" is no longer a meaningful word to most people in our culture. That's why so many guilty people are walking around in our world today. There's no way to get rid of guilt until you first acknowledge having done wrong. Our Christian forefathers understood the word "sin." They feared it, hated it, grieved over it, and fled from it. It's time to rediscover sin, that we might reclaim forgiveness and revel in grace!¹¹ If you have sinned against someone else, for God's sake and for your own, call it what it is! Don't marginalize it or make excuses for yourself. God honors a man or woman with a humble and contrite spirit (Isa 57:15; 66:2b; Matt 5:3-4; Luke 18:13-14). In many cases, those whom you have sinned against also find genuine confession irresistible.

In 50:19-21, Moses records Joseph's powerful response: **"But Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.' So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them."**¹²

Joseph's response to the wickedness of his brothers is nothing short of divine. But it is also the proper response of every Christian man or woman who is confronted with unjust suffering or persecution (Luke 6:27-28; Col 3:13). Let's break down Joseph's three-pronged response.

- 1) **God is the ultimate judge of all things.** "Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place?" Joseph asks. All wrongs are to be righted by Him, not by men. One thinks at once of the well-known text in Rom 12:19, "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord'" (cf. 1 Thess 5:15; 1 Pet 4:19).

- 2) ***God is the ultimate governor of the universe, the one who holds the strings of divine providence.*** One is reminded by Joseph's words here of the words that he spoke in 45:5, a classic statement of the principle of providence, "And now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because YOU SOLD ME here; for GOD SENT ME before you to preserve life." "You sold me" represents the human side of things, while "God sent me" represents the divine side (cf. John 18:11; Ps 76:10; Acts 2:22-24; 4:28; 13:27; Rom 8:28, 32, 38-39; Phil 1:12). Even evil events have their ultimate cause in the purposes of the sovereign of the universe, although He is not the author of evil, in the sense that evil proceeds from His being. That He causes evil for purposes of greater good for His people and His world is patent from the cross, determined by Him before the foundation of the world. And who can dispute the fact that the wickedness of men in the crucifixion of the Son of God is the greatest wickedness the world has ever seen or known? The texts that prove that God may use evil for greater good include Acts 2:22-24, 4:28, and the present passage. Divine providence involves both preservation of the universe and its parts, as well as its operation or government (cf. 28:15; Heb 1:3). In other words, God's attention is concentrated everywhere. His providence is also said to be general, in that it has to do with all objects, all things, together with the creatures of the universe (cf. Ps 103:19). And it is also said to be special, having to do with all men (cf. Ps 66:7; Dan 2:21; 4:25; Prov 16:9). All of this is necessary, if God is to accomplish His purposes, for often His purposes depend upon the minutest of events and details.¹³

God's purposes for Joseph and his family were good (cf. Gen 1-2). Consequently, he behaved with tender compassion toward his brothers. He proved to be his brothers' keeper (cf. 4:9). Genesis opened with a couple, Adam and Eve, trying to become like God; it closes with a man, Joseph, denying that he is in God's place.¹⁴ With this reply, Joseph summarized God's activity throughout Gen. God the Creator is sovereign. His purposes to bless mankind through the chosen line of Abraham—the line of promise—are accomplished in spite of the actions of His people.¹⁵ What a great use of bookends by Moses. God wants us to understand that He is God and we are not! He wants us to trust Him. He is sovereign and He has a plan for our lives. He can use life's reverses to move us forward.

Undoubtedly, there were nights when Joseph cried out, "Why Lord?" "What have I done to deserve this?" And the same may also be true of you. You might be asking: Why did my spouse die? Why do I have cancer? Why did I have to bury my child? Why, why, why? We all have questions like that, but where you go next in your thinking is critical. You can either allow your doubts to cripple your relationship with God and cause you to spiral in fear and self-pity, or you can believe God by putting your confidence in His promise that "in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28).

As we consider the remarkable life of Joseph, we are faced with one of life's universal questions: "Why do bad things happen to good people?" The premise of the question is flawed, because "there aren't any good people." The problem in understanding suffering has to do with our beginning point of reference: (1) If we begin with the premise that man and his happiness is the ultimate goal, then life will present us with a never-ending string of challenges and disappointments. (2) But if we begin with the premise that God and His happiness is the ultimate goal in life, then life begins to make sense and takes on an eternal perspective that the Bible teaches.¹⁶

The doctrine of providence is not very popular today. When difficult circumstances come our way many contemporary folks are quick to jump to God's defense. They proclaim, "God had nothing to do with it!" or worse, they will say, "God couldn't do anything about it."

But there are two problems with these statements. First, there is no comfort in them at all. What is comforting about knowing that God is powerless to control the things that happen in your life? And second, in this attempt to safeguard God's reputation they make God less than God. God's promises, His plans, and His purpose are now subject to the arbitrary whims of man. If He is God, of course, He could have done something about it. God is never powerless! So the question becomes: What is God doing in bringing about or in not stopping certain events. Joseph contends that God's actions or inaction (in some cases) is due to His providence.¹⁷

- 3) ***Evil is to be repaid with forgiveness and affection.*** Joseph acknowledged the evil motives of his brothers: "You meant evil against me" (50:20a). He does not minimize their sin! However, Joseph promises these same brothers, "So therefore, do not be afraid; I (emphasis in the original text) will provide for you and your little ones," Moses adding, "So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them" (50:21). The personal aid that Joseph promises and the manner in which he promises it anticipate the Christian teaching of the New Testament (cf. Luke 6:27 -38).¹⁸ From a human perspective, Joseph had the "right" and the ability to punish his brothers. Yet, he not only refused to do so, he went far beyond what could be expected and returned grace and kindness for their wickedness (Rom 12:19).

Now, I know what you may be thinking. How can I forgive like this? Let's get practical for a moment. Did you know that animals can hold grudges and struggle with anger too? Consider the camel. Camels are capable of building up a pressure cooker of resentment toward human beings. And when the lid suddenly blows off, watch out. In Asia, when a camel driver senses trouble, he gives his coat to the animal. The camel rips the coat to shreds—jumping on it, biting it, tearing it to pieces. Soon enough the camel feels vindicated and they can continue in harmony again.

Is there someone's coat you wouldn't mind trampling across? No matter how we like to shrug off the seriousness of revenge, the truth is that it is like poison to our soul. The Bible is very clear about the consequences of bitterness.¹⁹ You may be surprised to discover that King David, a man after God's own heart, had resentment. At the end of his life, he was still concerned with wrongs that were done to him years earlier. Don't let hurt and anger become your entire life!²⁰ Find a constructive way to let it go. I use a heavy bag and boxing gloves. When I feel angry, bitter, or resentful, I take my frustrations out with fists of fury. Find a profitable activity (besides eating) that diffuses anger. Maybe you need to take up tennis or golf. These two sports will allow you to blow off some steam. As you do so, reflect on the grace God has given to you that you can give to others. Remind yourself that vengeance is not yours—it belongs to God. Pray that you will handle resentment in a way that your relationships do not suffer.

Joseph was a man that experienced God's blessing (50:22-26). It is only fitting that the book of Gen ends on a note of blessing since "bless" and "blessings" are the key words of the book. In the final five verses, Moses writes, "**Now Joseph stayed in Egypt, he and his father's household, and Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. Joseph saw the third generation of Ephraim's sons; also the sons of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were born on Joseph's knees. Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.'** Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, 'God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here.' So Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years; and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt." More than 50 years elapsed between 50:21 and 22. During this period, God abundantly blessed Joseph with three blessings.

- 1) **God gave Joseph long life** (50:22). He lived 110 years. An expert in Egyptian history has collected at least 27 references to the age of 110 years. It was considered an ideal age.²¹ Joseph's first 17 years were spent as a young man in Canaan, the next 13 years as a slave in Egypt, and the last 80 years as a ruler of all Egypt.
- 2) **God gave Joseph the privilege of seeing his great-great grandchildren** (50:22-23). For more than 20 years Joseph had missed his family for the sake of what God was doing through him, but now what he had lost is made up to him. He lived to see God's blessing on his children's children (cf. 48:11). It was a part of God's reward (Ps 128:6). As Prov 17:6 says, "Grandchildren are the crown of the aged" (*ESV*). The above two blessings are not guarantees to those who are faithful. As the old Billy Joel song goes, "Sometimes the good die young." But these are general principles that are frequently true.
- 3) **God gave Joseph remarkable faith** (50:24-26). Joseph told his brothers four important things: First, God would come to Israel's aid. Twice Joseph repeats the phrase, "**God will surely take care of you**" (50:24-25). These are the words that you and I need to leave with our loved ones. Don't promise them financial wealth or security. Assure them of God's care. He is all they need! Second, God would take them up out of Egypt. Although God's people would spend 400 years in Egyptian bondage, Joseph sees a brighter day.²² Third, God would bring them to the Promised Land. Fourth, God would fulfill his oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Heb 11:22).

In light of his great faith, Joseph made his wishes known to be buried in the Promised Land (50:25). It was an expression of faith and confidence that God's covenant promises would come to pass. He died and was placed in a coffin in Egypt (50:26). Unlike his father, Jacob, Joseph's body wasn't buried immediately. Instead, his coffin lay aboveground for over 400 years until the people of Israel took it back to Canaan as they left Egypt under Moses' leadership. So there it sat in Egypt for 400 years as a silent witness of Joseph's confidence that Israel was going back to the Promised Land, just as God had said (Exod 13:19). This expression of Joseph's faith in God's promises to his forefathers provides a fitting climax for the book of Gen and the formative period of Israel's history.

Genesis begins with creation and ends with a coffin. It begins in a garden and ends in a grave. It begins with the living God and ends with a dead man. Why? It is the Holy Spirit's final commentary at the end of this foundational book of Gen displaying the condition of man and outcome of sin. The message of the Bible is this: You and I are sinful and God seeks to restore sinners. Since He cannot overlook sin, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ (the Messiah), to pay the penalty for man's sin.

Similarities between Joseph and Jesus²³

- Both men were loved by their father (Gen 37:3; Matt 3:17).
- Both men were shepherds of their father's sheep (Gen 37:2; John 10:11-16).
- Both men were sent by their father to their brothers, but Joseph's brothers hated him and sought to kill him and Jesus' blood brothers rejected him and his spiritual brothers sought to kill him (Gen 37:13ff; John 7:3; Luke 20:47).
- Both men had a personal robe that was taken from them (Gen 37:23-24; John 19:24).
- Both men spent time in Egypt (Gen 37:25-28; Matt 2:14-15).
- Both men were sold for the price of a slave (Gen 37:28; Matt 26:15).
- Both men were bound in chains (Ps 105:18; Gen 39:20; Matt 27:2).
- Both men were tempted (Gen 39:7-10; Matt 4:1-11).
- Both men were falsely accused (Gen 39:16-17; Matt 26:59).
- Both men were placed with two other prisoners, one of whom was saved and the other lost (Gen 40:2-22; Luke 23:32-43).
- Both men began their ministries at the age of thirty (Gen 41:46; Luke 3:23).
- Both men were exalted by God after a season of suffering (Gen 41:41-43; Phil 2:9-11).
- Both men forgave those who harmed them (Gen 45:1-15; Luke 23:34).
- Both men were sent by God to save many (Gen 45:7; Matt 1:21; Mark 10:45).
- Both men understood that God turned evil into good (Gen 50:20; Rom 8:28).

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Notes

¹ David Jeremiah, *Grace for the Day*: Turning Point Daily Devotional, 4/14/06.

² In ancient times, the use of the clause “gathered to his people” was a euphemistic way of speaking of the death of an individual. At times (e.g., in the present passage), however, the clause seems to convey more than the mere death of an individual; it appears to suggest a meeting of departed souls in the afterlife. In other words, the individual who dies is not considered to have ceased in his or her existence but to have moved on to another dimension, to the place where his deceased ancestors also live. Within Scripture, the idiomatic expression occurs only in the Pentateuch and only on ten occasions to predict or describe the passing of Abraham (25:8); Ishmael (25:17); Isaac (35:29); Jacob (49:29, 33); Aaron (Num 20:24, 26); Moses (Num 27:13; 31:2; Deut 32:50). Barry C. Davis, *Genesis* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Biblical Seminary unpublished class Notes, 2003).

³ Some translate the Hebrew term “Heth” as “Hittites” here (see also Gen 23:3), but this gives the impression that these people were the classical Hittites of Anatolia. However, there is no known connection between these sons of Heth, apparently a Canaanite group (see Gen 10:15), and the Hittites of Asia Minor. See H. A. Hoffner, Jr., “Hittites,” *Peoples of the Old Testament World*, 152-153. See NET Study Notes.

⁴ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning & Blessing* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 565.

⁵ Michael Eaton, *Preaching Through the Bible: Genesis 24-50* (Kent, England: Sovereign World, 1999), 121.

⁶ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Authentic: Genesis 25-50* (Colorado Springs: Chariot Victor, 1997), 159.

⁷ Allen P. Ross, *Creation & Blessing* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988 [2002 ed.]), 715. Waltke suggests, “This grand funeral procession and this exaltation of Jacob as a king by the Egyptians foreshadows Israel’s exodus from the world and gives a foretaste of the time when the nations hail a son of Jacob as King.” Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 618.

⁸ Though Joseph was on the best of terms with Pharaoh, he thought better of going directly to him. Perhaps this was because of his recent contact with his father’s dead body. Or, even more likely, he was in an unshaven, disheveled state from mourning. So Joseph submitted his tactfully worded request through courtiers. Hughes, *Genesis*, 566.

⁹ The location of “the threshing floor of Atad” is not certain. The expression “the other side of the Jordan” could refer to the eastern or western bank, depending on one’s perspective. However, it is commonly used in the OT for Transjordan. This would suggest that the entourage came up the Jordan Valley and crossed into the land at Jericho, just as the Israelites would in the time of Joshua. See NET Study Notes.

¹⁰ See also Eaton, *Genesis 24-50*, 121.

¹¹ David Jeremiah, *Grace for the Day*: Turning Point Daily Devotional, 5/4/06.

¹² Sailhauer writes, “The last description of Joseph’s dealings with his brothers is the statement that ‘he comforted them [*wayenahem oth am*]; NIV, “reassured”] and spoke kindly to them [*wayedabber al-libbam*]’ (v. 21). It is again difficult not to see in this picture of Joseph and his brothers a foreshadowing of the future community of the sons of Israel in exile awaiting their return to the Promised Land. To that same community the call went out by the prophet Isaiah to ‘comfort [*nahamu*], comfort [*nahamu*] my people, says your God. Speak tenderly [*dabberu al-leb*] to Jerusalem...she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins’ (Isa 40:1-2). John H. Sailhauer, *Genesis*: EBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), Electronic ed.

¹³ Unfortunately, many of us who have the text do not have the truth! For us to benefit from this truth, we have to realize that how we define “good” is often different from how God defines “good.” To us “good” is whatever makes us happy, satisfied or brings us enjoyment. We see good as the absence of any pain or suffering. But God defines “good” as that which leads us to Christ-likeness, brings us to trust Him more or advances His Kingdom. As I have said before, if Joseph’s brothers never sell him to the Midianites, then Joseph never goes to Egypt. If Joseph never goes to Egypt, he never is sold to Potiphar. If he is never sold to Potiphar, Potiphar’s wife never falsely accuses him of rape. If Potiphar’s wife never falsely accuses him of rape, then he is never put in prison. If he is never put in prison, he never meets the baker and butler of Pharaoh. If he never meets the baker and butler of Pharaoh, he never interprets their dreams. If he never interprets their dreams, he never gets to interpret Pharaoh’s dream. If he never gets to interpret Pharaoh’s dream, he never is made prime minister. If he is never made prime minister, he never wisely administrates for the severe famine coming upon the region. If he never wisely administrates for the severe famine coming upon the region, then his family back in Canaan perishes from the famine. If his family back in Canaan perishes from the famine, then the Messiah can’t come forth from a dead family. If the Messiah can’t come forth, then Jesus never came. If Jesus never came, then you are dead in your sins and without hope in this world!

¹⁴ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Genesis* (<http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/genesis.pdf>, 2005), 276.

¹⁵ Paul Wright, ed., *Genesis: Shepherd's Notes* (Nashville: Broadman, 1997), 86.

¹⁶ Bob Hallman, "God Intended It For Good" (Genesis 49:29-50:26):

<http://kauai.calvarychapel.com/teachings/genesis.html>

¹⁷ Bruce Goettsche, "The Invisible Hand of Providence" (Genesis 50:15-21):

<http://www.unionchurch.com/archive/040900.html>.

¹⁸ See also S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., "The Last Words of Joseph" (Genesis 50:1-26) *Believers Bible Bulletin* Lesson 66 June 29, 1980: <http://www.believers-chapel.org/bulletins/genesis/genesis.html>.

¹⁹ See Eph 4:31; Heb 12:15; and Jas 3:14.

²⁰ David Jeremiah, *Grace for the Day: Turning Point Daily Devotional*, 5/6/06.

²¹ Johnson, "The Last Words of Joseph," <http://www.believers-chapel.org/bulletins/genesis/genesis.html>. Victor P.

Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 18-50: NICOT* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 709.

²² Some of God's promises take a long time to fulfill: Noah spent 100 years building the Ark before rain even existed. Abraham waited 25 years for his son of promise, Isaac. Joseph waited 14 years before his brothers bowed down to him. And the world waited almost 4,000 years for the Messiah to come (Heb 11:13). And yet, we know that each of these promises was fulfilled! And now we wait for the promised return of Jesus Christ. We've been waiting 2,000 years so far, but He will come. We have His Word on it!

²³ Ron Ritchie, "How God Turns Evil Into Good: Joseph: Man Of Faith...Image Of Christ" (Genesis 50:1-26):

<http://www.pbc.org/dp/ritchie/4423.html>.