

## The 10<sup>th</sup> and Final תּלְדוֹת ...

THE GENERATIONS OF JACOB

GEN 37-50

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## The Big Picture

- \* Nine (9) times before we have encountered this phrase — אֵלֶּה תּלְדוֹת — “these are the generations”
  - ♦ Gen 2:4 (heavens and earth); Gen 5:1 (Adam); Gen 6:9 (Noah); Gen 10:1 (Shem, Ham, Japheth); Gen 11:10 (Shem); Gen 11:27 (Terah); Gen 25:12 (Ishmael); Gen 25:19 (Isaac); Gen 36:1 (Esau); and ...
- \* Now we come to Jacob in Gen 37:2 ...
- \* Which is the last installment of the “generations” and the culmination of God’s working through the Patriarchs

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# The Big Picture

- \* There are three interesting “big picture” ideas I want to note as we embark upon Jacob’s generations
- \* They represent different “camera angles” through which we can view the proceedings of chapters 37-50
- \* The first camera angle is [promise](#)
  - ◆ Gen 37-50 fulfill God’s promises to Abraham and complete the preparation of Israel to be the “nation of God’s promise”
  - ◆ Turn back to Gen 15:5-21 [\[READ\]](#)

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# The Big Picture

- \* First note that Jacob’s “patriarchy” is told primarily through the “life of Joseph” ... BUT, it is Jacob’s story none-the-less!
- \* Chapters 37-50 record how God worked through Joseph to initiate and fulfill Gen 15:5ff
  - ◆ When we start this final section, “Israel” is one family of 70 people (Gen 46:27)
  - ◆ God selected one of the “70” to be the primary catalyst for getting the nation to Egypt — [Who/What?](#)

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# The Big Picture

- ◆ But there was a second, yet subtly important person and catalyst ... **Who and What?**
  - Judah and his marriage a Canaanite woman
- ◆ **Why was this recorded and important?**
  - It showed the risk to the nation's ethnic purity ...
  - Prompting God to get the future nation out of Canaan and "quarantine" them in Goshen
- \* From chapter 39 onward, we see God's providential hand in the life of Joseph to bring about the fulfillment of his promises to Abraham

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# The Big Picture

- \* The second camera angle is **structural ...**
- \* Gen 37 commences one long narrative ... comprised of multiple acts and scenes with Joseph at the center
  - ◆ Gen 37, **in particular**, initiates the chain of events that God uses to bring Israel into bondage in Egypt
  - ◆ It presents the third act of the patriarchal history recorded in Genesis — **OK, so what?**
- \* Well ... let me pull you back to the wide-angle view of the book of Genesis
  - ◆ In Gen I-II we traversed "Pre-Patriarchal History" ...

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# The Big Picture

- ◆ We had creation in Gen 1-2 — and the fall in Gen 3-5
- ◆ Followed by the flood in Gen 6-9 — and the dispersion in 10-11
- \* In Gen 12, we embarked upon the “Patriarchal History” of what will become Israel
  - ◆ First Abram/Abraham in Gen 12-24
  - ◆ Then Isaac in Gen 25-26, and last
  - ◆ Jacob ... thru Joseph ... in Gen 37-50

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# The Big Picture

- \* Again you say — [So what?](#)
- \* Here's the “so what” ...
  - ◆ Overlaying the patriarchal structure, we have a theological “redemptive” structure
  - ◆ In Gen 12-36 we have the [revelation](#) of God's redemptive plan in his promises
  - ◆ And now in chapters 37-50 we begin to see the [outworking](#) of God's redemptive plan

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# The Big Picture

- \* The third camera angle is biographical — and maybe the most fascinating of the three!
- \* Joseph's life is a vivid illustration of a key aspect in God's redemptive plan ... **What is it?**
  - ◆ *Suffering for righteousness' sake that finally triumphs*
- \* The biographical "camera angle" is the many parallels we see between Joseph and Jesus!
- \* I would not go so far as to say that Joseph is a "type" of Christ — though many commentators do ...

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# The Big Picture

- \* Rather I would point to the ways that Joseph prefigures key aspects of Christ's incarnation
- \* **Can you think of some?**
  - ◆ Envy and hatred "in the family" — paralleling the religious leaders envy and hatred of Christ
  - ◆ Being sold for 20 shekels of silver — paralleling Judas' betrayal of Christ for 30 pieces of silver
  - ◆ The rejected becomes the redeemer

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# The Big Picture

- ◆ Last, God's redirecting man's evil for His good — resulting in the salvation of many ... both generally and particularly
  - Joseph "generally" fed millions, while "particularly" provided for his family, while ...
  - Christ "generally" died for sin, while "particularly" for the elect
- \* Now, "a little more candy" ...
- \* This prefiguring can be traced back to Abraham and Isaac as well

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# The Big Picture

- \* "Zoom out" again and note that the parallels began with Abraham — **What does he picture?**
  - ◆ God's love in giving up his only begotten son
- \* Followed by Isaac — **picturing what?**
  - ◆ God's willing sacrificial lamb
- \* And fully encapsulated in Joseph, picturing ...
  - ◆ The favored son — sent by his father to seek his "brethren"
  - ◆ The innocent son — betrayed by his "brethren"
  - ◆ The rejected son — who becomes the rescuer of his "brethren"

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## The Big picture

- \* The pattern of Joseph's life also prefigures the treatment of God's messengers in general ...
  - ◆ The OT prophets, the Messiah, and
- \* Pretty cool, but let me conclude saying ...
  - ◆ Interesting thoughts & "thoughtful illustrations," but I would not press them beyond that — why?
  - ◆ Because nowhere in the NT are these events "stamped," that is, called out, as typical

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## The Big Picture

- \* Before we leave biographical — let's spend a few minutes on Joseph's character
- \* What things about he and his life come to mind?
  - ◆ Adaptable — A man for all seasons ... future heir, slave, prisoner, prime-minister
  - ◆ Stable — Adversity did not harden him, nor did prosperity ruin him
  - ◆ Resilient — He never complained nor compromised

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# Opening Thoughts

- ◆ Faithful — seems to have trusted in God
- ◆ The granddaddy — [FORGIVING!!!!](#)
- \* There are many implications we can draw from Joseph's life ... but two strike me in particular
  - ◆ ONE GODLY MAN can make a "world-wide" impact when he submits to God's providence
  - ◆ The importance of shunning bitterness — *Any others?*
- \* Let me recap the overall outline from last week

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# The Big Picture

TEXT	TITLE
GEN 37	FROM "PREFERRED" TO "PUT-OUT"
GEN 38	THE RISK OF ENTANGLEMENTS (PARENTHETICAL)
GEN 39-41	FROM POTIPHAR TO PRISON TO PRIME-MINISTER
GEN 42-45	THE BROTHERS PRESERVED
GEN 46	THE FAMILY REUNION

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## Structure of the Chapter

- \* Gen 37:1-2a serve as the transition from Isaac to [Jacob's patriarchy](#) told through the life of [Joseph](#)
  - ◆ Gen 37-47 is one long narrative — comprised of multiple [acts](#) and [scenes](#) ... “classic narrative genre”
  - ◆ Along the way, new acts will be signaled by a changing of the characters, events, and locations — yet always with Joseph at the center (excepting chapter 38)
  - ◆ Each [act](#) will have several [scenes](#) that develop the plot line

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## Structure .. Continued

- \* Gen 37 comprises the first act of the narrative — consisting of [five scenes](#) that chart Joseph's progression from “[preferred to put-out](#)”
  - ◆ [Scene 1](#) introduces the [overall context](#) for the Joseph narrative in vv. 2b-4 — the “meta-context” for Gen 37-47
  - ◆ [Scene 2](#) presents the plot line — Jacob's prophetic dreams in vv. 5-11
  - ◆ [Scene 3](#) sets the stage for revenge in vv. 12-17

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## Structure .. Continued

- ◆ [Scene 4](#) presents the brothers conspiracy to destroy Joseph & render his dreams mute in vv. 18-28
- ◆ [Scene 5](#) concludes Act I with the family's distinctive "birthmark" — deception — in vv. 29-36

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## Transition and Context

- \* Gen 37 picks up the storyline from Gen 35:29 ... which helps us see that all of Gen 36 is a "parenthetical pause"
- \* Verses 1-4 really set the context for all of Gen 37-47 and is notable (to me a least) for its brevity
- \* It's as if Moses is "breathless" to start the story and gives us only the barest of details for the following account to make sense

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## Transition and Context

### \* What are the key things we told in vv. 1-4?

- ◆ Jacob had finally “settled” in the land - v. 1
- ◆ Joseph was 17 ... and working as a shepherd
- ◆ Why the qualifier “while he was still a youth?”
  - I think to suggest he was an “apprentice shepherd” which might explain the Bilhah/Zilpah association
- ◆ He seemed to be aligned with the “lesser” siblings
- ◆ Joseph “reported” on his brothers

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## Transition and Context

- ◆ Jacob “preferred” Joseph ... *Why?*
  - He was the son of his old age — but I think more ...
  - Because he was the son of his beloved wife Rachel
- 🗨️ *I think there is an implication here — Often times a later in life child can be unintentionally preferred*
- ◆ Jacob displayed his preference via a “royal robe”
  - “Varicolored” is more accurately translated “a long robe”
- ◆ Jacob’s favoritism was not hidden — resulting in “hatred” and “isolation”

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## Transition and Context

\* What questions are left in your mind after reading vv. 1-4?

- ◆ Did Jacob not learn anything about the effects of favoritism?
- ◆ Does he recognize the untenable situation his favoritism has placed Joseph in?
- ◆ Why the does Moses add “along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah” after “with his brothers?”
- ◆ What compelled Joseph to initiate the bad report and who was it directed toward?

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## Transition and Context

\* So, at the outset, we see the pattern of sibling rivalry that marks the book of Genesis is “alive and well”

- ◆ Started with Cain and Abel ... continued with Jacob and Esau ... and culminates with Joseph and the “ten”

\* And that the emotions of such are quite strong ... Murder (C & A); estrangement (J&E); back to murder (J&The 10)

📖 Some implications ...

- ◆ Jacob's partiality dooms his family to the same strife he experienced ... cautioning us not to repeat the sinful patterns of our parents

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## Transition and Context

- 👉 Favoritism really does the recipient no favors, because ...
  - 👉 It draws the envy and jealousy of others
  - 👉 It isolates and endangers the recipient
  - 👉 It can place someone in a position they are too immature to handle
  - 👉 It may ultimately separate you from the object of your favoritism
- \* With the context set — we move to **scene 2** where we get the narrative's **"plot line"**

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## Scene 2: The Dreamer

- \* We will stop here this week — Your HOMEWORK is ...
- ◆ Read the chapter from v. 5-36 and ...
  - ◆ Think about the two dream metaphors and what they symbolize beyond Jacob's "superiority"
  - ◆ Think about why Reuben intervenes to prevent the murder of Joseph
  - ◆ Think about why Judah takes the lead in the scheme to sell Joseph into slavery
  - ◆ Think about the irony of goats blood used to deceive Jacob

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