

Genesis 42-50 — “God Meant It unto Good”

Come, Follow Me 2026 — March 23–29

Parallel Accounts: JST Genesis 48:5–11; JST Genesis 50:24–36; 2 Nephi 3; Alma 46:24; D&C 27:10; 1 Chronicles 5:1–2

Overview

Genesis 42–50 brings the Joseph cycle — and the entire book of Genesis — to its breathtaking conclusion. What began with betrayal, slavery, and a bloodied coat now ends with tears of reconciliation, a family reunited, and one of the most profound theological statements in all of scripture: “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive” (Genesis 50:20). These chapters narrate Joseph’s testing and reunion with his brothers, Judah’s stunning transformation from self-interested betrayer to self-sacrificial redeemer, Jacob’s migration to Egypt, his patriarchal blessings over the twelve tribes, and the deaths of both Jacob and Joseph — each dying with covenant promises on their lips and the promised land in their hearts.

The Come Follow Me manual for this week centers on Genesis 50:20 as the interpretive key to the entire Joseph narrative and, by extension, to the human experience of suffering and redemption. Joseph’s declaration is not an abstract theological proposition — it is a conclusion forged in the furnace of twenty-two years of separation, slavery, false accusation, and imprisonment. When Joseph says “God meant it unto good,” he speaks not from naivety but from the far side of suffering, having witnessed firsthand how God weaves even the worst of human choices into a tapestry of salvation.

Jared Halverson (Unshaken) frames the theological center of these chapters around forgiveness and faith: “For greater forgiveness, what we need is greater faith.” Joseph’s ability to forgive his brothers flows directly from his faith that “God knows better than I” — a conviction developed through thirteen years of suffering before Pharaoh’s throne and refined through the nine additional years before his brothers appeared. Halverson connects this to D&C 64:11: “Let God judge between me and thee and reward thee according to thy deeds.” Joseph’s forgiveness is not weakness; it is the supreme expression of trust in divine justice.

Emily Belle Freeman and David Butler (Don’t Miss This) identify a two-word theological framework that runs through these chapters like a golden thread: “But God.” Genesis 45:5–7: the brothers sent Joseph to Egypt, *but God* sent him to preserve life. Genesis 50:20: they thought evil, *but God* meant it unto good. Freeman observes that these two words — “but God” — are “the pivot on which every hopeless situation turns.” Whatever the trial, whatever the injustice, “but God” introduces the reversal.

Andrew Skinner (The Scriptures Are Real) brings Christological depth to the narrative, identifying Joseph as what John Calvin called “a lively image of Christ.” The Institute Manual (Religion 301)

provides the fullest enumeration of the Joseph-Christ typology, listing nine specific parallels and concluding: “In their very attempt to destroy Joseph, his brothers actually set up the conditions that would bring about their eventual temporal salvation — that is, Joseph, by virtue of being sold, would become their deliverer. Jesus, by His being given into the hands of the Gentiles, was crucified and completed the atoning sacrifice, becoming the Deliverer for all mankind.”

Mark Holt (Gospel Talktrine, S01E12 — “Fruitful in the Land of My Affliction”) supplies the simplest hermeneutic for spotting these types: *“Anytime you want to be sure that the Old Testament is trying to teach you something about Christ, pay attention to when somebody asks someone else: do this thing that you were going to do to this person — do it to me instead.”* Judah’s plea is exactly that. Holt also carries the story past the reunion into prophecy: in JST Genesis 48, Joseph’s dreams become a prophecy of the **Book of Mormon** — the famine is apostasy, and Joseph’s seed becomes *“a light... to bring salvation”* to Israel *“when they are all together bowed down under sin.”*

Key Concepts

1. The Silver Cup Test — Joseph’s Strategy of Reconciliation

Joseph’s elaborate scheme — speaking roughly, accusing them of being spies, demanding Benjamin’s presence, hiding the silver cup — is not cruelty or revenge. It is a carefully designed test to answer a single question: *Have my brothers changed?* Would they abandon Benjamin the way they abandoned Joseph? Would they protect themselves at the expense of another favored son of Rachel?

The Institute Manual explains: “By demanding that Benjamin be brought back to Egypt, Joseph allowed his brothers to show whether or not they truly were sorry for what they had done to him so many years before. Would they now show the same lack of concern for Benjamin?” The test reaches its climax in Genesis 44:33, when Judah offers himself as a substitute: “Let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.” This is the moment Joseph has been waiting for — proof that his brothers have genuinely changed.

Halverson (Unshaken) highlights the narrative significance: when the brothers first bow before Joseph in Genesis 42, it fulfills the dream from Genesis 37 — “the phraseology in this verse is the same as that used in Genesis 37:7, 9. It had taken over two decades, but the Lord’s revelations were now fulfilled” (Institute Manual). The brothers have no idea they are enacting the very prophecy they tried to destroy.

Holt (Gospel Talktrine) adds two refinements. First, a motive for the test that makes it tender rather than cruel: with Joseph gone, **Benjamin inherited Joseph’s dangerous position** — the remaining son of the favored wife. *“If they treated me this poorly, then perhaps they’ve been treating Benjamin poorly all along... Are they going to let Benjamin die? And if they do, then they don’t deserve my forgiveness.”* The cup-in-the-sack scenario recreates the original sin exactly: *“They all could have walked out of there scot-free if they just left their little brother behind — but they weren’t willing to do it.”* Second, the **two bowings**: in Genesis 42 the brothers

bow *compelled by hunger*; after Jacob's death they bow *willingly*, because “*they recognized that their brother had been their salvation... the very message they were so bitter to hear became something they were happy to do, because they loved their brother.*” The dream's final fulfillment is not submission but grateful love — which is precisely how the knee bows to Christ.

2. Judah's Transformation — From Betrayer to Redeemer

Judah's character arc is one of the most dramatic in all of scripture. In Genesis 37, he proposes selling Joseph for profit. In Genesis 38, he abandons his covenantal obligations to Tamar. But by Genesis 44, he stands before the most powerful man in Egypt and offers his own freedom — his very life — in exchange for Benjamin's safety.

Halverson (Unshaken) traces the reversal: “Here's Judah standing in for his most famous descendant who says likewise, ‘I will be surety for everyone, I will bear their blame.’” Judah's words in Genesis 43:9 — “I will be surety for him... let me bear the blame forever” — are the language of substitutionary atonement, foreshadowing Christ's own willingness to take our place. Freeman (Don't Miss This) observes that Judah becomes a type of Christ *through repentance and character change*: “The fact that Jesus would come through Judah's line — after his demonstrated change — is not coincidental.”

Judah's speech in Genesis 44:18–34 demonstrates profound emotional growth. He now understands a father's devastating grief over losing a son. He empathizes with Jacob's attachment to Benjamin. He acknowledges the consequences of past actions. This was not the Judah who profited from his brother's misery. Halverson notes: “Judah's emotional maturity and empathy are complete — he's become someone capable of bearing a covenant line.”

3. *Shever* and *Sever* — Rations and Hope

Freeman (Don't Miss This) highlights a remarkable Hebrew wordplay. The word for “rations” or “grain” (*shever*, שֶׁבֶר) differs by a single letter from the word for “hope” (*sever*, שִׁבְרָה). Joseph's dual role — provider of physical grain and restorer of spiritual hope — is encoded in the very language. The brothers come to Egypt seeking *shever* (food), but what they ultimately receive is *sever* (hope) — hope for reconciliation, hope for family restoration, hope that God's promises endure even through famine and betrayal.

4. Genesis 50:20 — The Theological Summit of Genesis

“But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.”

This verse is the theological summit not only of the Joseph narrative but of the entire book of Genesis. It answers the question that has haunted the narrative from the Garden of Eden: What does God do with human sin? The answer is not that God ignores it, excuses it, or prevents it — but that He *redeems* it. He takes the broken pieces and builds something beautiful.

Halverson (Unshaken) frames it: “We ended up in the right destination even if the way we got here wasn’t exactly the way God wanted it. God can bring beautiful things out of things we’ve burned down ourselves.” This is not a justification of the brothers’ sin — Joseph acknowledges they “thought evil.” But it is a declaration that evil does not have the last word. God’s purposes are not frustrated by human wickedness; they are accomplished *through* it and *despite* it.

Freeman (Don’t Miss This) elevates the “but God” formulation into a spiritual practice: “I’ve done something terribly wrong — *but God*... I’m never getting out of this — *but God*... I was promised something not coming to pass — *but God*...” She wears a bracelet with the words “but God” as a daily reminder. The phrase becomes shorthand for the entire gospel: whatever the circumstance, God is still at work.

Joseph’s companion question in Genesis 50:19 — “Am I in the place of God?” — carries a double meaning. On the surface, Joseph is saying he won’t usurp God’s role as judge. But Freeman hears a deeper question: “Am I in the *place* God positioned me?” If Joseph hadn’t experienced pit → slavery → prison → palace, he wouldn’t be in position to save his family. The question reframes suffering: not “Why?” but “Am I where God needs me to be?”

5. The Forgiveness Cycle — Receiving and Giving Grace

Halverson (Unshaken) identifies a profound psychological dynamic in the brothers’ response to Joseph’s forgiveness. Even after Joseph explicitly pardons them, the brothers continue to fear and doubt (Genesis 50:15–18). They cannot believe the forgiveness is real. Halverson observes: “One of the most glorious gifts of forgiveness is it allows people to forgive themselves — and that’s usually the hardest one.” Joseph’s brothers struggle with self-forgiveness even after receiving Joseph’s grace, and their self-condemnation almost prevents them from accepting it.

This pattern mirrors our relationship with Christ. Halverson applies it directly: “He forgives us, and because he forgives us we’ve been granted permission to forgive ourselves... Joseph makes it abundantly clear — pouring out blessing after blessing — that we’re forgiven. Don’t tarry here; come join me, race toward me so we can rejoice.”

6. Joseph’s Sons — Names as Theology

Joseph names his two sons with theological precision:

- **Manasseh** (מְנַשֶּׁה) — from *nashah*, “to forget.” “God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father’s house” (Genesis 41:51). This is not amnesia but release — God has removed the sting of the past.
- **Ephraim** (אֶפְרַיִם) — from *parah*, “to be fruitful.” “God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction” (Genesis 41:52). Fruitfulness *in* affliction, not merely *after* it.

Freeman (Don’t Miss This) notes that these names are perpetual theological statements: every time Joseph calls his sons, he is proclaiming that God brings forgetting-of-pain and fruitfulness-in-suffering. The names become living testimony.

Verse-by-Verse Commentary

Genesis 42:1-28: The First Journey — Guilt Surfaces

“And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.” (Genesis 42:21)

Hebrew Deep Dive

- **אַשְׁמִים** (*ashemim*) — “guilty.” The brothers’ spontaneous confession — more than twenty years after the crime — reveals that guilt has been eating at them all along. The Hebrew word carries the sense of bearing guilt-consequence, not merely feeling bad. Their conscience has been a constant prison.
- **אֱמֶת** (*emet*) — “true, faithful.” When Joseph demands “Are you true men?” (42:11, 31), the word *emet* connects to *amen* — reliable, dependable, trustworthy. Halverson (Unshaken) connects this to the creation narrative: “Are you the type that when God says you’ll do it, you are *true men* who follow through?”

Podcast Insights

The Institute Manual explains why the brothers failed to recognize Joseph: “It had been twenty-two years since the sons of Jacob had last seen Joseph — thirteen years of slavery and prison, seven years of plenty, and two years of famine... Joseph was a teenager when they had last seen him. Now he was a mature, middle-aged man.” More than appearance, Halverson (Unshaken) highlights the theological dimension: “He knows them but they don’t know him... God knows us intimately; do we know Him just as well?” The unrecognized savior becomes a type of Christ — present and active in redemption, yet unrecognized by those He saves.

Muhlestein (The Scriptures Are Real) connects the Egyptian cultural detail in Genesis 43:32 — “the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians” — to the Hyksos period. The Institute Manual confirms: “Several Egyptian deities were represented by cattle, especially female cattle. Since the Hebrews were herdsmen who slaughtered and ate cattle, regardless of sex, this practice would have been viewed by the Egyptians as a terrible abomination.”

Halverson also emphasizes a principle of active faith from Genesis 42:1: when Jacob sees famine, he tells his sons, “Why do you look one upon another? Get you down to Egypt and buy for us.” Faith requires agency and effort — “Do you really think God will preserve us if we sit around doing nothing? We must make use of the means that God has provided.”

Doctrinal Connections

- **Alma 36:13–17:** Alma’s experience of guilt mirrors the brothers’ — years of carrying the weight of sin, followed by the overwhelming relief of forgiveness.
- **Ether 12:27:** “If men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness.” The famine forces the brothers to confront their weakness and their guilt — God uses external pressure to surface internal sin.

Come Follow Me Connection

The manual invites reflection on unresolved guilt. The brothers carried their sin for over two decades. What burdens are we carrying that need to be brought to the surface and addressed? Joseph's story assures us that confession and change are possible at any age.

Genesis 43-44: The Second Journey — Judah's Plea

"For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father." (Genesis 44:34)

Hebrew Deep Dive

- **עֲרַב** (*arav*) — "to pledge, be surety." Judah tells Jacob: "I will be surety for him" (43:9). The word means to intermingle one's fate with another's — to bind oneself to another's outcome. This is covenant language, and it foreshadows the Atonement: Christ binding His fate to ours.
- **תַּחַת** (*tachat*) — "instead of, in place of." Judah's offer in 44:33 — "let thy servant abide *instead of* the lad" — uses the language of substitution. This is the Old Testament's clearest human picture of substitutionary atonement before Isaiah 53.

Podcast Insights

Halverson (Unshaken) notes that both Reuben and Judah offer themselves as surety for Benjamin, but with different qualities. Reuben's offer (42:37) — "slay my two sons if I bring him not to thee" — is dramatic but costly to others. Judah's offer (43:9) — "let me bear the blame forever" — is personally costly. It is Judah who foreshadows Christ, bearing the blame himself rather than deflecting it to others.

Freeman (Don't Miss This) traces Judah's arc across three contrasting moments: in Genesis 37, he easily abandons Joseph for profit; in Genesis 38, he abandons Tamar to protect himself; in Genesis 44, he offers to become a slave to protect Benjamin. "Judah becomes a type of Christ through repentance and character change." The transformation is complete — from self-interested to self-sacrificial. And it is through this transformed Judah that the Messiah will come.

The Institute Manual confirms the literary design: "It is significant that Judah, who suggested that Joseph be sold (see Genesis 37:26–27), became the one who was willing to become 'the surety' for Benjamin. There does seem to be evidence of sincere repentance on the brothers' part, and Joseph's stratagem allowed them to demonstrate this repentance."

Halverson adds that the brothers bring symbolic gifts on their return — balm, honey, myrrh, spices, and double payment — which he reads as "fruits of repentance, fruits of goodness, fruits of real change." The gift-bearing mirrors the spiritual preparation required for reconciliation.

Doctrinal Connections

- **Isaiah 53:4–6:** “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows... the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Judah’s substitutionary offer prefigures the Suffering Servant.
- **Mosiah 15:7–9:** Abinadi’s teaching on Christ standing between justice and mercy echoes Judah standing between Joseph and Benjamin.

Genesis 45:1-15: Joseph Reveals Himself — “I Am Joseph”

“And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.” (Genesis 45:3)

Hebrew Deep Dive

- **נִבְּחָלוּ (nivhalu)** — “troubled, terrified, dismayed.” The brothers are not merely surprised — they are *dismayed* in the deepest sense. The word carries overtones of being shattered, undone. They stand before the brother they sold into slavery, now the most powerful man in Egypt. Every lie they have lived for twenty-two years collapses in a single sentence.
- **אֲנִי יוֹסֵף (ani Yosef)** — “I am Joseph.” Two words that shatter and heal simultaneously. This is a revelation scene — the hidden identity unveiled, the unrecognized savior made known. The parallel to Christ’s self-revelations (“I am the bread of life,” “I am the way”) is unmistakable.

Podcast Insights

Halverson (Unshaken) highlights Joseph’s treatment of his brothers after revealing himself: “He treated the guilty the same way he treated the innocent. Oh yes, he loved Benjamin — that full-blooded brother that had never done him wrong — but he gave the same loving embrace to those that had turned their backs on him.” Joseph weeps publicly — “the Egyptians in the house of Pharaoh heard” his tears — validating the depth of his joy and grief simultaneously. There is no restraint, no calculation, no score-settling. Only grace.

Freeman (Don’t Miss This) notes the three gifts Joseph provides: nourishment (“I will nourish you”), shelter (“you will live here”), and glory-sharing (“share in all my glory in Egypt”). Each is given to people wholly undeserving of it. Freeman reflects: “When I’m so undeserving of it, to say ‘come’... I feel like my reaction walking in the presence of the Savior will be the same as the brothers — falling down and being like, ‘It’s too good... for somebody like me.’”

Skinner (The Scriptures Are Real) identifies Joseph’s “Henî” (“Here am I”) response to his father’s earlier commission (Genesis 37:13) as a linguistic parallel to Christ’s obedience in Abraham 3 — both demonstrate complete willingness to undertake redemptive work, even at great personal cost.

The “But God” Theology

Genesis 45:5–8 contains Joseph’s first great theological statement: “Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life... So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God.” Joseph repeats the divine agency three times in four verses. The brothers’ evil was real, but God’s purpose was sovereign. Freeman (Don’t Miss This) distills this into the “But God” framework — two words that pivot every hopeless situation: “I’ve done something terribly wrong — *but God*. I’m never getting out of this — *but God*.”

Doctrinal Connections

- **2 Nephi 2:24:** “But all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things.” Lehi’s theology of divine wisdom mirrors Joseph’s theology of divine providence.
 - **D&C 122:7:** “Know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.” The Lord’s words to Joseph Smith echo Joseph in Egypt’s conclusion.
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Genesis 46–47: Jacob Migrates to Egypt — Seventy Souls

“Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation.” (Genesis 46:3)

Hebrew Deep Dive

- **שִׁבְעִים נֶפֶשׁ** (*shiv'im nefesh*) — “seventy souls.” Jacob brings seventy souls into Egypt (46:27). The number is significant: it recalls the seventy nations in the Table of Nations (Genesis 10) and foreshadows the seventy elders Moses will appoint (Numbers 11:16). Seventy represents the beginning of a nation — still small, but already bearing the shape of the “great nation” God promised Abraham.

Podcast Insights

Halverson (Unshaken) notes the covenant renewal at Beersheba (Genesis 46:1–4): God repeats the Abrahamic promises to Jacob with a crucial addition — “I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again.” This is the same promise made at Jacob’s Ladder (Bethel), now extended geographically. Whether going north to Haran or south to Egypt, God travels with His covenant people.

Halverson also observes the irony in Joseph’s instructions to his brothers (Genesis 46:34): tell Pharaoh you are shepherds, knowing that “every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.” The world looks down on shepherds — “What, you feed the flock? You gather lost sheep? What kind of profit margin is there in that?” — but this is the family business of the house of Israel. “We’re shepherds called to gather lost sheep... there’s nothing better than the family business.”

Halverson draws attention to Jacob’s response when he learns Joseph is alive: “It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive” (45:28). After decades of grief, these three words — *rav*, “it is enough” — signal the

moment Jacob's scarcity mindset shifts to abundance. The hole in his heart, created by Rachel's death near Bethlehem ("the house of bread"), finds healing at Joseph's house of bread in Egypt.

OT Institute Manual Insights

The manual notes that Jacob's days were "few and evil" compared to his fathers (47:9) — the Hebrew word translated "evil" actually means "sorrowful" or "full of toil and trouble." Remembering Jacob's flight from Esau, his years of labor for Laban, his wives' contentions, the death of Rachel, and his years of sorrowing for Joseph helps explain why he would describe his life this way.

Doctrinal Connections

- **Abraham 2:6:** "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee." Egypt's blessing of Israel (providing land in Goshen) becomes part of the Abrahamic covenant's reciprocal blessing.
- **1 Nephi 17:23–25:** Nephi later recounts the Exodus as the great reversal — what began as refuge in Egypt became bondage. Jacob's migration is the prelude to the central drama of the Old Testament.

Genesis 48: Jacob Blesses Ephraim and Manasseh — The Crossed Hands

"And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn." (Genesis 48:14)

Hebrew Deep Dive

- **שִׂכֵּל (sikkēl)** — "wittingly, with understanding." Jacob crosses his hands deliberately — not by accident or failing eyesight. The word implies wisdom and intentionality. Once again, the younger is chosen over the elder (echoing Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau). God's kingdom operates by spiritual qualification, not birth order.

Podcast Insights

The Joseph Smith Translation adds significant covenant language to this blessing (JST Genesis 48:5–11): "And now, of thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt, before I came unto thee into Egypt; behold, they are mine, and the God of my fathers shall bless them; even as Reuben and Simeon they shall be blessed, for they are mine; wherefore they shall be called after my name." Jacob formally adopts Joseph's sons into the tribal structure, giving Joseph a double portion — the birthright inheritance that Reuben forfeited.

The Institute Manual confirms: "Joseph, son of Jacob, because of his faithfulness and integrity to the purposes of the Lord, was rewarded with the birthright in Israel. It was the custom in early times to bestow upon the firstborn son special privileges and blessings... Reuben, the first of Jacob's sons, lost

the birthright through transgression, and it was bestowed upon Joseph" (Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:250–51).

Muhlestein (The Scriptures Are Real) and Rabbi Jared Grover note the theological tension: both Joseph and Judah receive leadership blessings. Joseph gets the birthright (double portion), while Judah gets the royal line (1 Chronicles 5:1–2). Latter-day Saint theology resolves this: Judah's line brings the Messiah; Ephraim's role is the gathering of Israel in the last days (D&C 27:5; 133:30–34).

The JST Genesis 48 Prophecy — Joseph's Dreams and the Book of Mormon (Gospel Talktrine)

Holt reads the JST's expansion of this blessing as the key that unlocks Joseph's original dreams. Jacob prophesies to Joseph: *"Thy father's house hath bowed down unto thee, even as it was shown unto thee... wherefore thy brethren shall bow down unto thee from generation to generation, unto the fruit of thy loins forever; for thou shalt be a light unto my people, to deliver them in the days of their captivity from bondage, and to bring salvation unto them, when they are altogether bowed down under sin"* (JST Genesis 48).

The mapping: **famine = apostasy** (Amos 8:11's "famine of hearing the words of the Lord"); Joseph's separation from his brothers = Lehi's separation from Jerusalem (Lehi, a descendant of Manasseh, learns his lineage from the brass plates — 1 Nephi 5:14); Joseph's storehouses of grain = the Book of Mormon, the stored word that saves the covenant family when the famine comes. Ether 13:6–7 makes the typology explicit. And **the two dreams carry the two fulfillments**: the sheaves (agricultural, temporal) — Joseph literally feeding his family in Egypt; the stars (celestial, spiritual — the same star-glory imagery as Abraham 3) — Joseph's seed delivering all Israel from the bondage of sin in the last days.

Holt closes the arc where Joseph's own life closed it: bread. Joseph, source of Egypt's bread, delivers *"all the glory in the land of Egypt into Pharaoh's hand"* — as Christ, the Bread of Life, delivers all glory to the Father ("the glory be thine forever"). And bread must be bought again and again: *"You can't buy enough bread to last you seven years. You have to keep going back"* — a figure of our continual dependence on the Source of all sustenance.

Freeman (Don't Miss This) connects patriarchal blessings to modern practice, citing Harold B. Lee: patriarchal blessings are "paragraphs from the book of possibilities." Jewish commentary adds: "Every blessing bestowed by man is at the core a prayer... The patriarch sees himself as God's co-worker and as an essential link between generations."

Doctrinal Connections

- **D&C 27:5, 10**: Ephraim's role in the gathering of Israel in the last days.
- **3 Nephi 15:12**: The Americas as the land reserved for "a remnant of the house of Joseph."

Selected Tribal Blessings

Judah (49:8–12): “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” The Institute Manual identifies Shiloh as the Messiah: “It was revealed to Joseph Smith that Shiloh is the Messiah.” Elder Ezra Taft Benson confirmed: “The great blessing to Judah is that it contemplated the coming of Shiloh who would gather his people to him.”

Halverson (Unshaken) finds multiple messianic types embedded in Judah’s blessing: the triumphal entry (“binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass’s colt unto the choice vine”), Gethsemane (“he washed his garments in wine”), and Golgotha (“his clothes in the blood of grapes”). “His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk” — scarlet sin becoming white as snow.

Simeon and Levi (49:5–7): “Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.” Halverson notes the historical fulfillment: Simeon’s territory was eventually absorbed into Judah’s, and Levi was scattered throughout all tribes as priests rather than receiving consolidated land. The scattering of Levi, however, became redemptive — their dispersion served the priesthood function of blessing all Israel.

Joseph (49:22–26): “Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall... The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.” The Institute Manual cites Orson Pratt: “Joseph’s peculiar blessing... was that he should enjoy possessions above Jacob’s progenitors to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills. This would seem to indicate a very distant land from Palestine” (*Journal of Discourses*, 14:9). The “everlasting hills” is interpreted as the Americas — the land to which Lehi’s family came (3 Nephi 15:12).

From Joseph comes “the shepherd, the stone of Israel” (49:24) — messianic titles that apply both to Joseph’s descendants and to Christ. Halverson observes that Joseph’s blessings are “not for Joseph’s personal consumption but meant for everyone else” — the birthright is a commission to bless, not a privilege to hoard.

Genesis 49:18 — Jacob’s Cry of Hope

Freeman (Don’t Miss This) highlights a verse often overlooked amid the tribal blessings: “I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord” (49:18). Despite the immediate deliverance Joseph has provided, Jacob looks beyond to greater deliverances still to come — the Exodus under Moses, the Atonement under Christ, the eschatological gathering of Israel. Joseph’s salvation was real but partial; the full salvation Jacob awaits belongs to the Messiah.

Doctrinal Connections

- **Deuteronomy 33:6–29:** Moses’ later blessings on the tribes should be studied alongside Genesis 49 for comparison.
- **Harold B. Lee:** Patriarchal blessings are “paragraphs from the book of possibilities.”
- **Elder John A. Widtsoe:** “These blessings are possibilities predicated upon faithful devotion to the cause of truth. They must be earned. Otherwise they are but empty words.”

Genesis 50: Deaths, Promises, and Prophetic Hope

“And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” (Genesis 50:24)

Hebrew Deep Dive

- **יִפְקֹד יִפְקֹד** (*paqod yifqod*) — “will surely visit.” The doubled verb form expresses absolute certainty. God *will* come. This promise becomes the watchword of the Exodus — when God “visits” His people through Moses (Exodus 3:16), the same verb is used. Joseph’s deathbed prophecy is the bridge between Genesis and Exodus.

Podcast Insights

Halverson (Unshaken) draws attention to Joseph’s oath about his bones (50:25–26): “God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.” Joseph insists on burial in the promised land — even though he spent 93 of his 110 years in Egypt. His bones become a covenant symbol that will travel with Israel through the entire wilderness journey, finally fulfilled in Joshua 24:32. The physical reminder ensures the next generation remembers: “We’re not meant to be here forever.”

JST Genesis 50:24–36 — The Prophecies of Joseph

The Joseph Smith Translation adds thirteen verses to Genesis 50 that constitute one of the most significant Restoration scriptures. Joseph prophesies of:

- **Moses:** “The Lord God will raise up a righteous branch out of my loins... and this prophet shall deliver my people out of Egypt.”
- **The Messiah (Shiloh):** “A prophet... named Israel, a prophet; (not the Messiah who is called Shilo;) and this prophet shall deliver my people out of Egypt.”
- **Joseph Smith:** “A seer shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins... and his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father.”

The Institute Manual reproduces these verses in full and emphasizes their significance: “These prophecies were evidently on the brass plates that Lehi had but have been lost from our present Bible. Joseph Smith restored the lost scriptures by adding thirteen verses between Genesis 50:24 and 25 of the King James Version.”

The Hyksos Connection and Egypt's Future

The Institute Manual provides a crucial bridge to Exodus: “Many scholars speculate that Joseph came to power in Egypt while the nation was under the domination of the Hyksos people... Since Jacob and his family were also Semitic, it is easy to understand how Joseph would be viewed with favor by the Hyksos and also how, when the Hyksos were finally overthrown and driven out of Egypt, the Israelites would suddenly fall from favor with the native Egyptians.” The “Pharaoh who knew not Joseph” (Exodus 1:8) may thus be the first native Egyptian ruler after the Hyksos expulsion — explaining the dramatic shift from protection to persecution.

Doctrinal Connections

- **2 Nephi 3:4–24:** Lehi’s recounting of Joseph’s prophecies about Moses and Joseph Smith, drawn from the brass plates.
 - **D&C 132:30–31:** The promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob — and through them to Joseph — continue through the Restoration.
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The Structure of Genesis 42–50 — Literary Analysis

The Testing Pattern: Joseph’s three encounters with his brothers (chapters 42, 43–44, 45) form a three-act drama of repentance: guilt surfaces (first visit), character is tested (second visit), and reconciliation occurs (revelation). Each act raises the stakes and deepens the emotional intensity.

The Prodigal Pattern — Inverted: Halverson (Unshaken) notes that Joseph’s story inverts the Prodigal Son parable. In Luke 15, the younger son returns to a forgiving father. In Genesis 42–45, it is the *older* brothers who are the prodigals, returning to a forgiving *younger* brother. The elder-brother resentment that ruins the parable’s ending is resolved in Genesis: Joseph does not withhold grace from those who wronged him.

The Bookend Structure of Genesis: Genesis opens with creation, blessing, and a garden. It closes with Jacob’s blessings over twelve sons — the creation of a nation, the blessing of twelve tribes, and the promise of a future garden (the promised land). The book that began with God creating a world ends with God creating a people.

The Easter Typology: Freeman (Don’t Miss This) frames the entire Joseph narrative as an Easter story: the pit = death/burial; prison = entombment; elevation to Pharaoh’s court = resurrection; saving his family from famine = redemptive work. “The story of deliverance through suffering and apparent defeat is the Christological pattern found throughout the Old Testament.”

Comparing Accounts — Joseph as Type of Christ (Complete)

The Institute Manual provides the most systematic enumeration of the Joseph-Christ typology:

#	Joseph	Christ
1	Favored son of his father (37:3)	“This is my beloved Son” (Matthew 3:17)
2	Rejected by his brothers (37:4)	“He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (John 1:11; Isaiah 53:3)
3	Sold by his brothers to the Gentiles (37:25–27)	Judah/Judas proposed the sale; turned over to the Gentiles (Matthew 20:19)
4	Sold for the price of a slave his age (37:28)	Sold for the price of a slave His age (Matthew 27:3; Leviticus 27:5)
5	The brothers’ attempt to destroy him created conditions for their salvation	Jesus’s crucifixion became the atoning sacrifice for all mankind
6	Began his mission of saving Israel at age 30 (41:46)	Began His ministry of saving the world at age 30 (Luke 3:23)
7	Raised to exalted position; all bowed the knee (41:43)	“Every knee shall bow” (D&C 88:104)
8	Provided bread for Israel at no cost (42:35)	“I am the bread of life” (John 6:35; 2 Nephi 9:50)
9	Forgave without bitterness; saw the Lord’s hand in all (45:4–8; 50:19–21)	The Christlike nature of his character

Skinner (The Scriptures Are Real) adds a seven-point structural typology: estrangement and gathering, prison to exaltation, nations bowing, beloved son sent on mission, separation from Father, reunification, dishonor before exaltation. Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: “A prophet is one who has the testimony of Jesus... many of them lived in special situations or did particular things that singled them out as types and patterns and shadows of that which was to be in the life of him who is our Lord” (*The Promised Messiah*, p. 448).

Insights from Podcasts and Sources

Unshaken — Jared Halverson

- **Faith and Forgiveness:** “For greater forgiveness, what we need is greater faith.” Joseph’s ability to forgive flows from his trust that God’s justice is more reliable than his own.
- **Permission to Forgive Oneself:** Joseph’s grace grants his brothers psychological permission to forgive themselves — “usually the hardest one.”
- **The Unrecognized Savior:** “He knows them but they don’t know him” — a type of Christ’s presence in our lives, often unrecognized.
- **Judah as Foreshadow of Christ:** “I will be surety... let me bear the blame forever” — substitutionary language from the ancestor of the Messiah.
- **Shepherds as Covenant Identity:** “We’re shepherds called to gather lost sheep... there’s nothing better than the family business.”
- **Joseph’s Bones as Covenant Symbol:** A physical reminder traveling with Israel through the wilderness — “We’re not meant to be here forever.”
- **Active Faith:** “Don’t wait for someone to hit rock bottom before you begin lifting them out of it.”
- **Messianic Types in Judah’s Blessing:** Triumphal entry, Gethsemane, and Golgotha embedded in Genesis 49:11–12.

Don’t Miss This — Emily Belle Freeman & David Butler

- **“But God” Framework:** The two-word pivot that turns every hopeless situation.
- **“Am I in the Place of God?”:** Reframing suffering as divine positioning.
- **Shever/Sever Wordplay:** Rations and hope separated by a single Hebrew letter.
- **Judah’s Arc:** From self-interested to self-sacrificial — becoming a type of Christ through repentance.
- **“Empty Your Sack” Metaphor:** Finding Christ as treasure within suffering rather than focusing on material loss.
- **Patriarchal Blessings as “Paragraphs from the Book of Possibilities”:** Harold B. Lee’s description.
- **Easter Typology:** Joseph’s pit/prison/palace arc as death/burial/resurrection pattern.
- **“I Have Waited for Thy Salvation, O Lord” (49:18):** Jacob’s cry pointing beyond immediate deliverance to the Messiah.
- **T.S. Eliot / Elder Holland:** “Costing not less than everything... And all shall be well.”

The Scriptures Are Real — Kerry Muhlestein & Andrew Skinner

- **Joseph as “Lively Image of Christ”:** John Calvin’s recognition of the comprehensive typology.
- **“Heni” — Here Am I:** Joseph’s obedience paralleling Christ’s in Abraham 3.
- **Hyksos Period Context:** Explaining Joseph’s rise and Israel’s eventual fall from favor.
- **Seven-Point Christological Typology:** Structural parallels between Joseph’s story and Christ’s mission.
- **Dual Leadership Blessings:** Joseph (birthright) and Judah (royal line) — tension resolved by LDS theology.
- **Guilt as Conscience (42:21):** The brothers’ spontaneous confession proving guilt never left — repentance remains possible.

Gospel Talktrine — Mark Holt (S01E12: “Fruitful in the Land of My Affliction”)

- **The “do it to me instead” hermeneutic:** the surest sign of a Christ-type in the Old Testament.
- **The silver-cup test as protection for Benjamin:** Joseph testing whether the brothers would abandon the new son of the favored wife as they abandoned him.
- **The two bowings:** compelled by hunger (Genesis 42) vs. willing out of grateful love (after Jacob's death) — the dream's true fulfillment.
- **JST Genesis 48 and the Book of Mormon:** famine = apostasy; sheaves = temporal fulfillment, stars = spiritual fulfillment; Joseph's seed as “a light... to bring salvation” to Israel “bowed down under sin” (cf. Ether 13:6–7).
- **Bread of Life typology:** Joseph delivering all Egypt's glory into Pharaoh's hand as Christ delivers all glory to the Father; bread as the figure of continual dependence on God.
- **Generational reconciliations:** Isaac and Ishmael at Abraham's burial, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers — the patriarchal pattern that broken families can heal.
- **D&C 122 as the Joseph key:** Liberty Jail's “all these things shall give thee experience” as the Restoration's own Genesis 50:20 — *“The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?”*

OT Institute Manual — Religion 301

- **Joseph-Christ Typology:** Nine-point systematic comparison with scriptural references.
 - **Judah's Repentance Test:** Joseph's stratagem designed to reveal whether the brothers had truly changed.
 - **JST Genesis 48:5–11 and 50:24–36:** Restoration scripture adding covenant language and prophecies of Moses and Joseph Smith.
 - **“Everlasting Hills” = Americas:** Orson Pratt's interpretation of Joseph's blessing.
 - **Shiloh = Messiah:** Revealed to Joseph Smith; confirmed by Elder Ezra Taft Benson.
 - **Patriarchal Blessings:** Elder McConkie and Elder Widtsoe on their nature and significance.
 - **Hyksos Theory:** Explaining the transition to “a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph.”
 - **Premortal Life and Tribal Assignment:** Harold B. Lee on foreordination and the lineage of Israel.
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Personal Application & Discussion Questions

1. Ben, Joseph waited twenty-two years between betrayal and reunion. When you look at the longest “wait” in your own life, can you see now what God was doing in the interim? How does Joseph's perspective — “God meant it unto good” — reshape how you view that season?
2. Judah transforms from the man who sold his brother to the man who offers himself as a substitute. What does his arc teach about the possibility of radical personal change? Is there an area of your life where you need to make a similar shift from self-interest to self-sacrifice?
3. Freeman's “But God” framework — two words that pivot any situation. What is the sentence you most need to complete right now? “My situation seems impossible — but God...”

4. Joseph's brothers couldn't accept his forgiveness even after he explicitly gave it. Halverson says self-forgiveness is "usually the hardest one." Where in your life are you struggling to receive forgiveness that has already been offered — by God or by others?
 5. Joseph names his sons "Forgetting" (Manasseh) and "Fruitful" (Ephraim). How has God helped you forget the sting of past pain? Where has He made you fruitful *in* the land of your affliction — not just after it?
 6. Jacob's cry in Genesis 49:18 — "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord" — points beyond immediate deliverance to the Messiah. How do you hold together gratitude for present blessings with longing for the ultimate salvation still to come?
 7. Halverson challenges us: "Don't wait for someone to hit rock bottom before you begin lifting them out of it." Who in your life needs early intervention — a hand before the crisis, not after?
 8. The Institute Manual teaches that Jacob's patriarchal blessings were both prophecy and possibility. How do you relate to your own patriarchal blessing? Do you see it as a fixed prediction or a "paragraph from the book of possibilities"?
 9. Joseph insists his bones be carried to the promised land — even after 93 years in Egypt. What practices help you remember that your current circumstances are not your final home? How do you maintain covenant identity in a foreign land?
 10. Genesis ends with a coffin in Egypt (50:26) — an unfinished story. How does this ending create forward momentum toward Exodus and the rest of the biblical narrative? What "unfinished stories" in your own life point you forward in faith?
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Key Quotes

"But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive."

— Joseph, Genesis 50:20

"For greater forgiveness, what we need is greater faith."

— Jared Halverson, Unshaken

"But God — those are the two words that pivot every hopeless situation."

— Emily Belle Freeman, Don't Miss This

"In their very attempt to destroy Joseph, his brothers actually set up the conditions that would bring about their eventual temporal salvation... Jesus, by His being given into the hands of the Gentiles, was crucified and completed the atoning sacrifice, becoming the Deliverer for all mankind."

— OT Institute Manual, Religion 301

"A prophet is one who has the testimony of Jesus... many of them lived in special situations or did particular things that singled them out as types and patterns and shadows of that which was to be in the life of him who

is our Lord.”

— Elder Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*

“These blessings are possibilities predicated upon faithful devotion to the cause of truth. They must be earned. Otherwise they are but empty words. Indeed, they rise to their highest value when used as ideals, specific possibilities, toward which we may strive throughout life.”

— Elder John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*

“One of the most glorious gifts of forgiveness is it allows people to forgive themselves — and that’s usually the hardest one.”

— Jared Halverson, Unshaken

“He treated the guilty the same way he treated the innocent.”

— Jared Halverson, Unshaken

“I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.”

— Jacob/Israel, Genesis 49:18

“Anytime you want to be sure that the Old Testament is trying to teach you something about Christ, pay attention to when somebody asks someone else: do this thing that you were going to do to this person — do it to me instead.”

— Mark Holt, Gospel Talktrine S01E12

“They all could have walked out of there scot-free if they just left their little brother behind — but they weren’t willing to do it.”

— Mark Holt, Gospel Talktrine S01E12

“The reason they have parallels is because we need tons of examples to teach us how much God loves us... We can’t believe that he loves us as much as he does.”

— Mark Holt, Gospel Talktrine S01E12

Links to Existing Notes in This Vault

- Abraham
- Jacob / Israel
- Joseph Smith
- Forgiveness
- Atonement
- Agency
- Trust
- God Who Sees Me

- Circumstances
 - Paul's Story About Forgiveness
 - Genesis 37–41: The Lord Was with Joseph
 - Genesis 28–33: Surely the Lord Is in This Place
 - Unshaken — Genesis 42–50
 - Don't Miss This — Genesis 42–50
 - The Scriptures Are Real — S5 E21: Genesis 42–50
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Source Links & Further Reading

Podcasts

- Follow Him Podcast — Genesis 42–50 [↗](#)
- Don't Miss This Study — dontmissthisstudy.com [↗](#)

Church Resources

- Come, Follow Me 2026: Genesis 42–50 [↗](#)
- Genesis 42 — KJV Text [↗](#)
- Genesis 50 — KJV Text [↗](#)
- Old Testament Student Manual: Genesis 37–50 [↗](#)
- OT Institute Manual (Religion 301) — Chapter 8: Genesis 37–50

Scholarly

- Scripture Central — Genesis 42–50 Resources [↗](#)
 - BibleHub — Strong's Hebrew 6485: Paqad (to visit) [↗](#)
 - Shiloh — Messianic Interpretation (Wikipedia) [↗](#)
 - FAIR Latter-day Saints — Genesis 42–50 Commentary [↗](#)
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