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**Day 20 - January 20**

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## **Period of the Patriarchs (2100 -1525 BCE)**

### ***Joseph the Egyptian Ruler***

**Readings: *Genesis 43:16-47:28***

#### ***Reflections:***

- The invitation into Egypt is the best it could be – “The best of all Egypt will be yours.” This wonderful salvation becomes the place of their slavery and captivity. Blessing and salvation for one generation can become the enslavement of the next generation. Now God’s purposes were fulfilled through this whole story to give a picture of what God would do for all humanity. God gave the law and at first it looked like the way they as a nation would receive all the blessings of the earth. Yet in time it became the thing that enslaved them and put them in huge bondage. The Law or our own addiction to rules always looks like the place we will be blessed and good things will happen. But in time, all it does is put us into slavery because the rules themselves do not know God. Only being led by God himself through his spirit can bring lasting freedom and life. “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” (2 Corinthians 3:17)
- Israel is obviously overwhelmed and can't believe the news. On the way to Egypt he worships God through offering a sacrifice and then God speaks to him in a dream. God reaffirms again his promise of making a great nation but in the context of Egypt, yet that this nation will return to the Promised Land one day. Also, he is promised to die as he is restored to Joseph. It shows God's grace to Israel in helping him understand the important details of God's plan. This gives him peace and confidence.
- Included is another list of descendents. We can see the family is growing rapidly.
- Joseph weeps again at his reunion with his father. Joseph is portrayed as a very sensitive man and one not afraid to show his emotions.
- Joseph as a shrewd manager uses the storehouses of grain to ultimately take all the land from the people and bring it under control of the Pharaoh. He also uses it to create a taxation system of twenty percent of all produce going to Pharaoh. This shows his skill as a leader but also sets up the very bondage that God will one day have to deliver Israel out of. Again, the human system of leading people through control at first looks great to everyone. It looks like God's long term blessing is on this. Here is a godly leader who is in control and

everything is under their influence. But when the leader changes, all that control turns into slavery. So this is why Jesus takes this very same approach that appears to be affirmed clearly here in Scripture and inverts it by bringing to us servant leadership. "Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave--just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'" (Matthew 20:25-28)