

Genesis 42-43 Review

Today's Objectives

1. Consider the Faith of Jacob in 42-43

- look at commentary interpretations of Jacob as either strong or weak in his faith.
- Consider "Jacob's 7 Rules of Leadership"

2. Complete a Review of Chapter 43

3. Look at the pattern of the occurrence of El Shaddai in Genesis

4. Bird Walk in the Details Behind a Few of the Different Names for God used in the Old Testament

- El Shaddai
- use of Shaddai in the book of Job
- Elohim
- Elohim as key to Eve's temptation in the Garden
- Adonai
- Jehovah or Yawheh
- Yawheh Elohim as indication of the Trinity

Twenty years have passed since Joseph was sold into slavery.

As you read chapters 42 and 43 this week and last, one of the interesting subplots that I'd asked you to notice is what those twenty years seem to have done to Jacob.

Some commentators see Joseph's reactions as one of faith and assurance, a calm acceptance of life....

Others believe that he's not exactly aged well.

They find him harsh and short-tempered with his sons and perhaps even suspicious about their role

Joseph's disappearance;

stubborn and difficult;

full of self-pity;

and, like Dr. Becker, sees all the problems of life as centering on and around himself.

Which is the correct interpretation?

Who knows what lurked in the heart of Jacob?

Some commentators believe that a hint might be found in the 11th chapter of Hebrews, the "faith chapter."

Jacob is praised for his faith in blessing Joseph's sons as he was dying and some see this as demonstrating that he didn't have any praiseworthy faith until then.

However, Isaac and Joseph also only receive a short mention and it could be just a matter of time or text limits or it could be a clever literary device to connect Isaac and Joseph.

Don't forget, the author of Hebrews was a clever and well-educated man or woman.

Let's look at the quotations from Jacob that have convinced some of the commentators that he was a self-pitying and self-centered old man and yet others that he was a strong leader of the family and a man of unwavering faith.

(Genesis 42:1-2) When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?" And he said, "Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die." (NKJV)

(Genesis 42:36) And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me: Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me." (NKJV)

(Genesis 42:38) But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave." (NKJV)

(Genesis 43:6) And Israel said, "Why did you deal so wrongfully with me as to tell the man whether you had still another brother?" (NKJV)

(Genesis 43:11-16) And their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man—a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. "Take double money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. "Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. "And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!" (NKJV)

From an article named "The Fears of Jacob and the Tears of Joseph" comes an interesting look at the leadership style the author finds Jacob using in Genesis 43.

This is a section of the article entitled "Jacob's Seven Laws of Leadership" and the author is firmly in the weak Jacob camp.

(1) Whatever problems arise today are best dealt with tomorrow. Jacob delayed acting decisively on the issue of sending Benjamin to Egypt until the situation reached crisis proportions. Given enough time anything could happen, Jacob reasoned, and he was willing to wait indefinitely on this slim hope.

(2) No problem can possibly be as bad as it seems. If the first principle betrays a "manana mentality," the second is the effort to minimize the problem to the point that it hardly seems worth giving time to its solution. If the problem is not serious, then it can be put off indefinitely.

(3) Honesty is not the best policy. Jacob still had a lot of the old deceiver in him. He believed that good communication only causes problems. He thought that the less others knew about him, the better off he and his family were. Judah was thus rebuked for telling Joseph any facts about the family. Many Christians today operate on this same principle. They think that keeping others from knowing them well avoids problems, but they, like Jacob, are desperately misled. Sin loves secrecy and darkness, while righteousness loves the light (cf. John 3:19-21).

(4) Always look out for number one. Jacob's leadership was consistently exercised in the light of his own personal interests. It was Judah who urged his father to think of others rather than himself (cf. verse 3). No leader is harder to follow than the one who seeks only his own interests. Conversely, no leader is easier to follow than the one who seeks the best interests of those he leads (cf. Ephesians 5:22ff.).

(5) As much as is possible, see to it that others receive the blame for any problems. Jacob sought to place the responsibility on Judah and his brothers because they told the truth (verse 6).
A good leader is one who is willing to accept the responsibility for his mistakes.

(6) If our efforts to solve a problem fail, add money. Jacob hoped that his presents, along with double payment, would help achieve his desired ends. Christians are often accused of being the last to reach for their wallets. Whether this is true or not, we are all tempted to resort to monetary solutions to our problems. We may pay our children for behaving as they should or offer to pay whatever it takes to solve their problems. Money seldom solves problems, while it causes many.

(7) When all else fails, trust God. It is no accident that Jacob mentions God last. It never seemed to occur to him as it did to Joseph that God was active in all of his troubles. His wish that God would be with his sons is only a last ditch effort when it should have been his first line of defense. “Foxhole religion” is not new, and it did not cease with Jacob.

Anyway, back to the chapter summary:

Notice that Judah begins stepping into the leadership role that both he and later his tribe and his descendants David and Jesus will play.

His rebuke of Jacob and his pledge of responsibility for the safety of Benjamin is heeded by Jacob just as Reuben’s pledge was ignored in the last chapter.

When the brothers get to Egypt they’re brought to Joseph’s house for lunch. They’re afraid that they’re going to be the main course and try to return the money from the last trip. The steward may know a little about what’s going on, after all, the steward of the house is usually the person closest to the master and he’s in the thick of the deception, since he reassures the men that he got their money and uses a distinctive Hebraic sounding “your God and the God of your father” phrase.

The brothers are present to Joseph and bow before him again. He inquires after their father and nearly blows his plan when he gets emotional at the sight of Benjamin and has to leave the room to regain his composure.

The mystery deepens before the brothers as they find themselves seated in order, with the first-born at the head and the youngest at the other end; and they’re further confused when Benjamin gets five times their servings. Nonetheless, they manage to relax a little and eat and drink (maybe too much) and be merry. Maybe everything will turn out all right after all.

Incidentally, there are those who find a literary structure or device in Jacob’s using the name “El Shaddai” when he sends the sons off to Egypt again.

The pattern this author finds is that you have the name el shaddai used in either a divine appearance or a recollection of that divine appearance, then the next time it’s mentioned you have a blessing by a patriarch, and the pattern repeats.

He also sees the verse today where Jacob hopes as opposed to blesses using the name as being the hinge or pivot of the pattern as it swings to a summary in Exodus as shown in this chart:

time for another BIRD WALK

What’s in a Name?

or

If we sidetrack here then we can cover chapters 44 and 45 together next week.

El Shaddai – God Almighty

El – means simply God “mighty, strong, powerful”

Shaddai – probably comes from the Hebrew “shad” that means breast and expresses the idea of a baby who relies completely on the mother for all its nourishment. It is translated as “almighty” in the sense of “all-sufficient,” being able to provide all that we need.

Interestingly (I hope), of the 48 times in the Old Testament that Shaddai or El Shaddai is used, 31 of those times are in the book of Job.

So in the book that tells the story of a man who loses everything and nearly everybody, the name of God that’s most commonly used is the one that means “all-sufficient” or “nourisher” or “provider,” or perhaps most literally, “The God who breast feeds.”

Elohim - God as Creator, Preserver, Transcendent, Mighty and Strong. It is also used to refer to false gods and to angels and fallen angels.

Oddly enough, it is a plural word that is used with singular verbs, that’d be like our saying “The Gods is this or that.”

“Elohim” is also the word used when the serpent told Eve that if they disobeyed and ate the forbidden fruit then they would become as “gods, knowing good from evil.”

Our old Puritan friend Ralph Venning, wrote in “The Sinfulness of Sin” that the way he viewed the account was as follows:

Satan (Yes, I know the account says serpent and not Satan, but we know that the serpent was Satan because Jesus told us so) lies and deceives us not through out and out lies that we might easily see through, but rather through half-truths and out and out lies that we might easily see through, but rather through half-truths and cleverly worded deceptions.

When he told Eve that they’d be as elohim, knowing good from evil, she interpreted that to mean that they’d become as God with increased knowledge and understanding.

What he actually meant was that they’d become as elohim (the fallen angels, Satan himself) and they’d learn that while they already knew good, abiding in obedience in the presence of God, now they’d know evil, disobedience and the broken fellowship with the perfect God and the subsequent broken relationship with Adam and the rest of humanity and even all of creation.

In other words, Satan led her to believe that he was saying that they’d become like God when what he was actually saying was that they’d become like one of him.

Adonai means “Lord” and is translated in your Bibles as such, Lord written in small letters.

It can refer to a human lord or master and when it does the word is singular “Adon” and every time it refers to God it is plural.

Jehovah or Yawheh means all powerful or self-existent or “I am that I am”

It is used a lot in Genesis but is probably an addition of Moses when he compiled the earlier accounts into Genesis because Exodus states that the patriarchs knew Him as El Shaddai and that He did not reveal his name Yawheh to them.

El Shaddai is the name of God that makes covenants because He is all they need and Jehovah or Yawheh is the name he reveals when it’s time to fulfill those covenants be-

cause it reflects the All powerful God who is capable of keeping His word.
Jehovah or Yawheh is translated in your Bibles as LORD (all capital letters).
It is often combined with Elohim, which is translated in your Bibles as “LORD God or
“The LORD your God”

Yahweh is considered too sacred by the Jewish people to pronounce or even to spell.
Strictly speaking we wouldn't know how to actually spell or pronounce it because it
was written without the vowels in Hebrew and since they wouldn't pronounce it they
forgot the vowels that were supposed to be in there, so what we pronounce as Yawheh
or Jehovah is actually spelled YHWH

If you're reading something by our Jewish or Messianic friends, they'll often continue
this practice of avoiding writing the sacred name by using “L-rd” or “G-d.”

They avoid trying to pronounce it by replacing it with “Adonai” or sometimes “Hashem,”
which means “The Name.”

Remember, though, that Elohim is always plural, so it literally reads “LORD Gods,” so
the great shema of Deuteronomy 6:4 will actually read:

“Shama Y'riseal, Y@hovah 'elohiym Y@hovah 'echad”

Our Jewish and Messianic friends would of course recite that as

“Shama Y'riseal, Adonai elohiym Adonai echad”

and translate it as “Hear, O Israel, the L-rd your G-d is one G-d,” but with “Elohiym” it
more literally reads:

“Hear, Israel, LORD your Gods God one.”

For us Trinitarian Christians, we read that as stating the He is one God with a plurality
of persons.