

Handout 1: Genesis Lesson 20

In the story of Joseph did you notice the curious reoccurring theme of twos/doubles? In reading though the story of Joseph to the end of Genesis how many doubles or pairing can you find? Here are some, but not all, of the doublets:

Answer: Here are some, but not all, of the doublets:

- There are double dreams: Joseph's two dreams, the ministers each had dreams, Pharaoh's two dreams (37:5-11; 40:5, 9-19; 41:1-7)
- Joseph's brothers came up with two plans to get rid of him (37:20-24, 26)
- The double seduction of Tamar [successful] and Potiphar's wife [unsuccessful] (38:13-30; 39:7-12)
- Two ministers in prison to whom Joseph was assigned (40:2-4)
- Joseph was enslaved in Potiphar's house and in his prison (39:2, 20)
- The double telling of Pharaoh's dreams: by the narrator and by the Pharaoh (41:1-7, 17-24)
- Double sets of cows and grain in Pharaoh's dreams (41:2-3, 5-6)
- Two cycles of seven years (41:28-29)
- Two men named Potiphar/Potiphera (37:36; 41:45)
- There are two sons born to Joseph (41:50)
- The sons of Jacob make two trips to Egypt (42:1-38; 43:1-34)
- There are two accounts of the confrontation with Joseph and the discovery of the money in the saddlebags (42:10-20, 25-28, 30-36)
- Joseph devised two plans to deal with his brothers (42:14-20)
- The eleven brothers bowed down twice to Joseph (43:26, 28)
- The brothers were tested by Joseph's steward and Joseph (44:1-13, 14-34)
- The story of the family's migration was told twice (46:1-27; 46:28-42:12)
- The Pharaoh greeted Joseph's family twice (47:1-5a and 5b-12)
- Jacob blessed Pharaoh twice (47: 7 and 10).
- Jacob gave two sets of blessings: first for Joseph's sons and then for his sons (48:1-22; 49:1-28)
- Joseph was seventeen when he was sent into Egypt and Jacob lived seventeen years in Egypt (37:2; 47:28)
- Two deaths are recounted: Jacob's and Joseph's (49:33-50:13; 50:22-26)

In the significance of numbers in Scripture the number two can signify difference, division, or double portion. For New Covenant Christians the number two came to signify God the Son who came to divide the Old from the New and the sheep from the goats (Mt 10:34-36; 25:31-33). Joseph's sons are a double blessing. Even Jacob's sons are divided into two groups: the 10 sons by Leah and the slave women as opposed to the sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. There is also the division between Joseph and Judah and the question of which one will carry the "promised seed." The symmetry in the repetition of doubles is a sign that God's providence is at work in Joseph's life to fulfill a part of God's plan for man's salvation. For more information on the symbolism of numbers see the document: "The Significance of Numbers in Scripture" in the Documents section.

Handout 2: Genesis Lesson 20

Abraham's family's journey into Egypt in a time of famine in Genesis 12:10-15 prefigured the journey of Joseph's family into Egypt. (*Interlineal Bible, vol. I, pages 27-28 and 113-132*):

Abraham: Genesis 12:10-15	Joseph: Genesis 41:54b-47:27
12:10: <i>And famine was in the land</i>	41:54b: <i>And the famine was in all lands</i>
12:11: <i>And it was when he had drawn near to come into Egypt</i>	46:28: <i>and they came into the land of Goshen (Egypt)</i>
12:11: <i>he said to his wife Sarai</i>	46:31: <i>And Joseph said to his brothers</i>
12:11: <i>I know that</i>	46:31: <i>I will go up and tell Pharaoh</i>
12:12: <i>And it will be when the Egyptians see you, they will</i>	46:33: <i>And it shall be when the Pharaoh calls you and</i>
12:13: <i>say</i>	46:34: <i>says</i>
12:13: <i>that it may be well with me for your sake and I might live</i>	46:34b: <i>that you may live in the land of Goshen</i>
12:13: <i>And the princes of Pharaoh saw her and praised her before Pharaoh</i>	47:1: <i>And Joseph came in and made known to Pharaoh</i>
12:15: <i>And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house</i>	47:2b: <i>And he took five men from among his brothers and set them before Pharaoh</i>
12:16: <i>And he treated Abram well... And he had sheep and oxen and he-asses...</i>	47:6c: <i>make them chief of livestock over what is mine.</i>
13:2: <i>And Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold.</i>	47:27: <i>And they owned in it, and were fruitful and multiplied exceedingly.</i>
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Jacob's blessings and anti-blessings to his sons:

Sons in order of Jacob's blessing	Birth order and mother	Symbol of blessings/anti-blessings	Scripture references
1. Reuben	#1 – Leah	Water = reckless	49:3-4
2. Simeon	#2 – Leah	Weapon = violence	49:5-7
3. Levi	#3 – Leah	Weapon = violence	49: 5-7
4. Judah	#4 – Leah	Lion = royalty	49:8-12
5. Zebulun	#10 – Leah	Ships = commerce	49:13
6. Issachar	#9 – Leah	Donkey = strong & lazy	49:14-15
7. Dan	#5 – Bilhah	Snake = judgment	49: 16-17
8. Gad	#7 – Zilpah	Raider = retaliation	49:19
9. Asher	#8 – Zilpah	Rich food = plenty	49:20
10. Naphtali	#6 – Bilhah	Hind = beauty	49:21
11. Joseph	#11 – Rachel	Fruitful vine = deliverance	49:22-26
12. Benjamin	#12 – Rachel	Wolf = predator sharing prey	49:27
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