

St Annes Ryde  
ANGLICAN CHURCH



CGS 21  
Term 2 2010

**Theology 101 (ctd)**  
**& Beyond the technicolour coat**  
**Joseph Genesis 37-50**



**Bible based, application focussed**  
**discussion material**

prepared by Greg Burke and linked to sermons  
preached at St Anne's Ryde Anglican Church

**Discussion 1 Theology 101 Covenant: God's promise  
Sermon 25/4 Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1-6**

1. Read Genesis 9:1-17. What are the main features of the "Covenant with Noah"?
2. How does Genesis 9:16 indicate that there is a previous "covenant" that God has made? From our previous study of Genesis 1 and 2, what do you think are the features of a "covenant" implied by these chapters?
3. "Covenant" means promise. What are the features of a promise made by God that differ from promises we make
4. Read Genesis 12:1-3 List the features of the covenant (promises) made with Abram. How do these promises indicate that God's dealings with Abram have the benefit of all people in mind?
5. How would you defend the Old Testament against the charge that God is playing favourites. He has his special chosen people and doesn't care about the rest of humanity? (Think of examples of God's gracious dealings with non-Jewish people)
6. What evidence do you see in Jesus' ministry of God's concern for all people, not just the people of Israel? (See e.g. Matthew 28:16-20, Acts 1:1-6, John 4:1-42, Mark 7: 24-30, Luke 4:14-30, Luke 7:1-10)
7. Read Genesis 15:1-6  
How does Abram respond to God's covenant promise regarding children" What grounds does Abram have on which to base his response?  
In what ways is this a good model for our own response (see Romans 4:1-25, Galatians 3:1-9)
8. How would you reply to a friend who says "You are lucky – you can just believe. I can't take that leap in the dark. I need evidence"

**Discussion 2 Theology 101 Incarnation: God with us  
Sermon 9/5 John 1:1-18**

1. Review the genealogies at the beginning of Matthew (1:1-17) and Luke (3:23-37) What are the differences concerning:
  1. "How far back" they each go
  2. The inclusion of women's names in Matthew's genealogy.What do you think could be the significance of these differences?

2. How do Matthew (1:16\_ ad Luke (3:23) indicate that Jesus' birth breaks the cycle of "inherited nature" – i.e. that in Jesus God is 'breaking I to human history'?"
3. Read John's carefully constructed account of the incarnation (John 1:1-18). Verse 14 has been called the 'most offensive verse in the Bible'. Why do you think this verse could be seen as offensive?
4. To what extent do all of Jesus' actions and claims rely on John 1:14?
5. From your knowledge of religions like Hinduism and Islam what is so radically different about the claim that Jesus is God in the flesh?
6. How would you respond to a 'Jehovah's Witness' at your door who claims that Jesus was the 'first created being' and not God?
7. How helpful/unhelpful is teaching such as this:  
'Jesus was tired – this shows that he is truly man. Jesus did miracles – this shows that he is truly God' in helping us to understand the incarnation?

### **Discussion 3 Theology 101 Atonement: Jesus dies in our place Sermon 16/5 Romans 3:21-26 & 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2**

1. "If Jesus was not truly human he could not die for human sin.  
If Jesus was merely human he could not die for human sin."  
How helpful are these statements in understanding Jesus' unique qualifications as a substitute who atones for our sin? See Galatians 4:4-5
2. From your knowledge of the Old Testament sacrificial system how does this system point to Jesus as its fulfillment? Specifically discuss the role of the priest and the animal offered on the Day of Atonement (see Leviticus 16 and Hebrews 10:1-18).
3. How would you respond to a Roman Catholic friend who says "We need a priest to offer Jesus as a sacrifice in regular church services if we are to stay right with God"?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2. How does this passage highlight God's initiative in salvation rather than ours?
5. How would you respond to critics who say that the Atonement shows that God the father is cruel and vindictive as he forces his son to die on the cross?

**Discussion 4                    Joseph 1: Dreamer**  
**Sermon 23/5                    Genesis 37:1-11**

1. Read the passage. List the features that point to future trouble for Joseph.
2. Joseph and his family accept the validity of dreams as future predictors. How do they interpret the dreams?
3. How do these dreams point to the sovereignty of God?
4. What difficulties do you think people have in accepting that God controls our lives and our future?
5. How does the story of Joseph illustrate that real human initiative and decisions are possible in a world where God is sovereign?
6. How would you respond if someone said they had a particular dream and they believed it was “from God”? How would you test this claim?

**Discussion 5                    Joseph 2: Sold out**  
**Sermon 30/5                    Genesis 37:12-36**

1. Read the passage and list the evidence of human sinfulness and compassion. How does God demonstrated his care for Joseph?
2. Why does Reuben act as he does?
3. How does Joseph’s situation in Egypt illustrate his helplessness? How does it speak of hope given our knowledge of God’s sovereignty?
4. Read Acts 4. How does the sovereignty of God inform the early Christians’ prayers and their response to persecution?

**Discussion 6**  
**Sermon 6/6**

**Joseph 3: Framed**  
**Genesis 39**

1. Read vv 1-6. From Joseph's perspective how does God deal with him? What could he logically expect from the future?
2. Read vv7-10. What two reasons does Joseph give for his refusal to sleep with Potiphar's wife? Either one would be sufficient. What does his dual reasoning say about our obligation in relationships?
3. Read vv 11-20. From Joseph's perspective, how does God deal with him now? How would you have reacted?
4. How would you respond to a friend who is seriously ill and says "I have been a faithful Christian all my adult life – and this is how God rewards me!" What does their statement say about their understanding of relationship with God?
5. Read vv21-23. What reason is give for Joseph's new situation? How does Joseph demonstrate abilities in prison that are similar to his conduct as Potiphar's slave?

**Discussion 7**  
**Sermon 13/6**

**Joseph 4: Prisoner**  
**Genesis 40**

1. Dreams again! As Joseph moves down from Potiphar's steward to prisoner he is getting closer to Pharaoh's household. How does the narrative show that this is totally outside of Joseph's control?
2. The dreams of the cup bearer and baker are remarkably similar. How does this illustrate the truth of Joseph's statement in verse 8?
3. Joseph hopes to have gained an ally in a high place (vv 14-15). How does the chapter show that this will not help him, apart from God's grace?
4. How does this chapter illustrate God's control over the details and the big issues of life?
5. Discuss the validity of the following statements as a summary of Christian living: "As long as I am faithful to God he will give me good things – nothing will harm me."

**Discussion 8**  
**Sermon 20/6**

**Joseph 5: Interpreter**  
**Genesis 41:1-40**

1. The ‘magicians and wise men of Egypt’ (41) appear again in a future contest – again a contest between the false ‘gods’ of Egypt and the true God of the Israelites in Exodus 7:8-13 and the following chapters. Contrast the Pharaoh’s reaction in Exodus 7:13, 22, 8:15 etc. with the Pharaoh’s reaction here in our passage. What do you think accounts for the difference?
2. How does Joseph’s response to Pharaoh’s dreams illustrate **both** divine insight and human wisdom (God given!)? Checkout Pharaoh’s assessment in 41:39.
3. What is the significance of the ‘double dream’? (see 41:32). How does this and the interpretation of the dream indicate God’s sovereignty over national fortune and climate conditions?
4. Pharaoh recognises the divine presence with Joseph (41:38). Do you think the reading in the verse ‘the spirit of God’ or the footnote ‘the spirit of the gods’ is more likely? Why?
5. If God showed you your future how would this change how you live now? To what extent **has** God shown us our future?

**Discussion 9**  
**Sermon 27/6**

**Joseph 6: Administrator**  
**Genesis 41:41-57**

1. Read the passage. How do you account for the almost absolute power Joseph is given?
2. How does Joseph use his power?
3. Who benefits from Joseph’s God-given insights and wisdom?
4. Can you think of ways in which society in general benefits from the insights, wisdom and actions of Christian people and agencies?
5. What hints does the account give us that Joseph still longs for his family and his land?

**Discussion 10            Joseph 7: Saviour**  
**Sermon 4/7                Genesis 42-45**

1. Read chapter 42. Why does the presence of silver in the sacks of wheat cause so much concern (v 2, 7-28, v 35)
2. Read Chapter 43 . How does Judah's statement in vv 8-10 contrast with his and his brother's previous treatment of Joseph and their account of his 'death' to their father (Genesis 37:31-35)
3. How does Genesis 43:26-28 refer back to Joseph's final dreams?
4. How does 43:32 hint at trouble to come in Egyptian/Hebrew relations.
5. Read Chapter 44 How does Judah's offer (v33-34) indicate genuine change in his (and his brother's) attitude?
6. Read Chapter 45. why do you think Joseph's brothers had not recognised him until this moment?
7. How does Joseph see God's guiding hand in all that has happened to him? (esp. v 5-8)
8. Why do you think Joseph gives extravagant gifts to Benjamin?
9. What is the link between 'preserving remnant for you (45:7) and the Covenant made to Abram (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6)

**Discussion 11            Joseph 8: Forgiveness**  
**Sermon 11/7              Genesis 49:29 – 50:26**

1. Read the passage. Contrast Pharaoh's response to Joseph's request (Genesis 50:4-6) to the later Pharaoh's response to Moses' requests in Exodus 7ff
2. What is the significance of Jacob's burial plot (Genesis 50:12-14) and the way it is described?
3. What indicates the genuine nature of Joseph's brothers' repentance?
4. What is the relationship between repentance and forgiveness in the way God deals with us?

5. Is it possible to actually forgive someone who does not repent? Discuss.
6. What barriers are there that make it hard for us to forgive someone who has sinned against us?
7. Why do you think Jesus links our forgiveness to our willingness to forgive others? (Matthew 6:12 and 6:14-15)
8. Joseph is placed in a coffin but not buried in Egypt (50:26) How does this indicate that the narrative is to be continued?