

Overview of the Old Testament 8
“RETURNING GOOD FOR EVIL”
-JOSEPH-
Genesis 50:15-21

In Joseph we see a superb example of how to deal with injustice. I believe we can learn valuable lessons from Joseph. Let's start by looking at the negative things he had to deal with —things that would easily make most of us deeply resentful. Then let's look at the lessons we derive from his reaction to these injustices.

1. Joseph's Bitter Experiences

Genesis 37:4; 37:24; 39:1; 39:7-23; 40:23.

→ Which of these experiences impresses you as the most difficult? Why?

Most people would despair and give up on life if they experienced even a little of what Joseph had to put up with. How does Joseph deal with these terrible things? What do years of intense struggle and setbacks do to his faith?

2. Joseph's Response to His Experiences

Genesis 50:15-21. From Joseph's statements we learn two great lessons concerning the proper handling of the injustices we suffer:

A. Trust in God's justice. V. 19 To do justice is God's prerogative.

→ Does this mean that I must put up with all injustices done to me?

→ When is it proper, if at all, to act against wrong?

→ “The only way not to be engaged in self-righteousness is to forgive.” Explain

→ What is forgiveness?

B. Trust in God's providence.

→ What does “divine providence” refer to?

→ How did belief in God's providence help Joseph? Genesis 50:20.

→ How do Jesus' words in Matthew 10:29-31 point to God's providence?

→ Where do chance and luck fit into God's providence?

3. The Reason for Joseph's Reaction

Joseph's reaction is impressive. He forgives and trusts in God's sovereignty. Sometimes we expect such a reaction from an old and experienced believer. But Joseph shows this attitude already as a teenager. What's the secret?

→ How might Joseph's relationship with his father, Jacob, help us with an answer? Genesis 35:3; 37:3.

→ Joseph trusted God, which means he trusted God's Word. How can a true knowledge of God's commandments/instructions help us remain firm in times of trial and temptation? Proverbs 4:13; 13:13; 16:20; 6:220-23.

→ What is the main lesson you have learned through this study?