A Parallel Structure between the Jacob Narrative (Gen 25:19-37:1) and the Joseph Narrative (Gen 37:2-50:26): The Purpose of God’s Election of the Patriarch

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Theology of the University of St. Michael’s College and the Biblical Department of the Toronto School of Theology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Theology awarded by the University of St. Michael’s College

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Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the possibility of a parallel structure between the Jacob (Gen 25:19-37:1) and the Joseph narratives (Gen 37:2-50:26). This study proposes a new understanding of the Joseph narrative as well as the nature of the redactional materials in their relation both to the original Joseph story and the Jacob narrative. Using a holistic, synchronic approach to the narratives, this dissertation investigates how the redactional materials (Genesis 38; 46-50) are deliberately and carefully redacted and added to the original Joseph story so as to complete the parallel between the Jacob and the Joseph narratives. Chapter One examines the different approaches to the Joseph narrative, such as the documentary, traditio-historical, redactional, and synchronic approaches. Chapter Two demonstrates how the redactional materials (Genesis 38; 46-50) are carefully and deliberately redacted to be an integral part of the Joseph story in the development of the story line. This chapter also surveys how the redactional materials parallel with the Jacob narrative in terms of literary and thematic/theological features. Chapter Three examines the unique thematic and theological parallels between the Jacob narrative and the original Joseph story (Genesis 37; 39-45). Chapter Four analyzes the eight matching pairs of units between the Jacob and the Joseph narratives as a whole based on the findings of the
thematic/theological parallel features between the two narratives. Chapter Five investigates the theological dimension of a parallel structure between the Jacob and the Joseph narratives in relation to the meaning of God’s election. It concludes that the Joseph narrative is carefully redacted so as to create a parallel structure with the Jacob narrative and to convey clearly and persuasively a theological or ideological message: God’s grace and faithfulness despite the unworthiness of the chosen enable them to live out their destiny as the chosen.
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Abbreviations

AB  Anchor Bible

ABD  Anchor Bible Dictionary. Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992

AB  Anchor Bible

ABR  Australian Biblical Review

AE  American Ethnologist

AGAJU  Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums

AUSS  Andrews University Seminary Studies

BETL  Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium

BCOT  Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament

BG  Bible Guides

BIS  Biblical Interpretation Series

BJS  Brown Judaic Studies

BLS  Biblical Literature Series

BO  Berit Olam

BRev  Bible Review

BSac  Bibliotheca Sacra

CBC  Cambridge Bible Commentary

CBQ  Catholic Biblical Quarterly

CBQMS  Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series

CBR  Currents in Biblical Research

Chm  Churchman

CSBS  Canadian Society of Biblical Studies

CTR  Criswell Theological Review

EC  Epworth Commentaries
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<td>JBL</td>
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<td>MLBS</td>
<td>Mercer Library of Biblical Studies</td>
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<td>Siphrut</td>
<td>Siphrut, Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures</td>
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<td>SJLA</td>
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Introduction

The Abrahamic promise regarding the progeny, the land, and the blessing has long been considered to be the indispensable theme of the patriarchal narratives in Genesis 12-36, binding the narratives together.¹ When it comes to the last section of the book of Genesis (Genesis 37:2-50:26), however, the Abrahamic promise theme has usually been discerned only in the so-called redactional materials (Genesis 38; 46-50).² Therefore, the original Joseph story (Genesis 37; 39-45)³ has long been interpreted as thematically and theologically distinct from the preceding patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12-36). This tendency can be seen, for example, in scholars’ discussions of the original Joseph story as a novella,⁴ a literary product quite different from the Sagen traditions of the patriarchs.⁵

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² It is especially the case for the passages in Gen 46:1-4; 47:28-50:26.

³ I use the expression, “the original Joseph story,” to refer to the sections of Gen 37-50 that deal mainly with Joseph as the main character. There are various opinions on the boundary of the original Joseph story, from the minimal position which regards the original Joseph story as Gen 37; 39-45 to the maximal position which sees the original Joseph story as Gen 37; 39-48 or as Gen 37; 39-47; 50. For the minimal position see John S. Kselman, “Genesis,” in Harper’s Bible Commentary (J. L. Mays et al., eds.; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 85-128 and for the maximal position see R. E. Longacre, Joseph: A Story of Divine Providence, A Text Theoretical and Textlinguistic Analysis of Genesis 37 and 39-48 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1989) and Gerhard von Rad, Genesis: A Commentary (OTL; trans. J. H. Marks; Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1972). Since Genesis 38; 46-50 have been the disputable sections, in this dissertation I will use the expression, the original Joseph story, to refer to Genesis 37; 39-45 and the redactional materials to refer to Genesis 38; 46-50. For a detailed discussion of the various scholarly views of the boundaries of the original Joseph story, see Lindsay Wilson, Joseph, Wise and Otherwise: The Intersection of Wisdom and Covenant in Genesis 37-50 (PBM; Waynesboro: Paternoster Press, 2004), 44; Friedemann W. Golka, “Genesis 37-50: Joseph Story or Israel-Joseph Story?” in CBR 2:2 (2004): 161.

Focusing on the distinct origin of the original Joseph story, many scholars have emphasized its literary and thematic/theological distinctiveness. With these approaches, the original Joseph story has become divorced thematically and theologically from its canonical context, and thus having “no roots in the classical theological traditions of the Pentateuch.” However, in this dissertation, I will argue (for one thing) that the original Joseph story in itself is thematically/theologically connected to the Abrahamic promise theme and its theological concept.

Most scholars have agreed that the original Joseph story is an independent work, separate or distinct from the previous patriarchal narratives. This, for example, can be seen in scholars’ discussions of the original Joseph story as a unified work, a literary product quite different from the Sagen traditions of the patriarchal narratives, which consist of individual cycles. The distinct literary nature of the original Joseph story has been universally noted by scholars. At first glance, the original Joseph story is distinct from the patriarchal narratives thematically and theologically. In the original Joseph story, for example, God does not talk about the promises to biblical figures, while in the patriarchal stories God communicates the full Abrahamic promise elements directly. This is one of the distinctive features which support many interpreters’ view that the original Joseph story is an independent work, distinct from the patriarchal narratives.

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7 Scholars have noted the absence of any reference to the promise or covenant theme in the original Joseph story. See Redford, A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph, 247.
8 See Westermann, Genesis 37-50, 18.
However, scholars focus so much on the distinctions between the original Joseph story and the patriarchal narratives that they fail to identify fully the theological continuities between the two. I will argue that the original Joseph story parallels with the Jacob narrative in terms of the unique promise elements and the main thematic/theological contents.

Most scholars, who have regarded Genesis 38 and 46-50 as the redactional materials, have further argued that they have been inserted into the original Joseph story with no thematic/theological continuities with it\(^{10}\) and that they were combined only to join the original Joseph story together with the previous narratives.\(^ {11}\) Although I agree with these views that Genesis 38; 46-50 were added to the original Joseph story, based on their different ways of presenting the Abrahamic promise theme,\(^ {12}\) I disagree with the conclusion that the redactional materials are haphazard insertions into the original Joseph story without thematic/theological continuities. I will argue that the redactional materials are thematically/theologically interwoven with the original Joseph story and that they are deliberately and carefully redacted and added to the original Joseph story.

For the discussion of the purpose of the redactional materials, this study will discuss some scholars' observations of the parallel features of the redactional materials with the Jacob narrative as a foundation and point of departure. Based on the

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\(^{10}\) For example, Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 461-62, asserts that Gen 48:2-50:14 does not belong to the Joseph story, but is put into the present position as a conclusion of the Jacob narrative by the redactor. Similarly, Westermann, *Genesis 37-50*, 479-90, argues that Genesis 46-50 is mainly an original Jacob tradition because it has no immediate connection to the Joseph story of Gen 37- 45. Thus, John Van Seters, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 313-14, points out that the distinct materials have been disregarded as haphazard.


\(^{12}\) Although both the original Joseph story and the redactional materials contain the Abrahamic promise theme, they present it in very different ways. In the redactional materials, for example, God communicates the complete list of the Abrahamic promises such as land, progeny, nations, and blessing directly to biblical figures. The presence of the promise elements in the original Joseph story will be discussed in Chapter Two.
observations, this study will lead to a new understanding of the nature of the redactional materials in their relation both to the original Joseph story and the Jacob narrative. The findings of thematic/theological continuities of the redactional materials with both the original Joseph story and the Jacob narrative are important because it explains the rationale for the materials. In other words, this study seeks to give satisfactory answers to the question, why the redactional materials, which are obviously related to both the Jacob narrative and the original Joseph story, are put at the end of the original Joseph story. In this dissertation, I will argue that in order to convey the theological or ideological message clearly and persuasively, the Jacob and the Joseph narratives are carefully redacted and the redactional materials are added to the original Joseph story so as to complete the parallel between the Jacob and the Joseph narratives.

Chapter One will examine the different approaches to the Joseph narrative, such as the documentary, form-critical, traditio-historical, redactional, and synchronic approaches, such as biblical structuralism. A brief survey of each discipline is presented, and how each approach handles the Joseph narrative. This chapter will include a criticism of the working presupposition of the traditional source-critical, traditio-historical, and synchronic approaches with which the redactor or redactional materials are overlooked, thus failing to discuss the significant thematic/theological intentions underlying the redactional material in their connections to the original Joseph story. This aims to argue for the necessity of a new reading for the original Joseph story with its connection to both the redactional materials and the Jacob narrative.

Chapter Two will focus on the redactional materials (Genesis 38; 46-50). This chapter will first argue that the redactional materials are carefully and deliberately
redacted to be an integral part of the Joseph narrative in the development of the story line. As a result, the necessity of treating the redactional materials as an integral part of the Joseph narrative to be read as one continuous story is strongly emphasized. To do so, this chapter will examine the studies on the integral literary and thematic/theological interconnectedness of the redactional materials to the original Joseph story and among themselves. Then, this chapter will discuss the function and purpose of the redactional materials. As a result, it will be argued that the redactional materials are meant to be read in their connection both to the original Joseph and to the Jacob narrative. It will further argue that in order to convey a theological or ideological message clearly and persuasively, the redactional materials are carefully crafted and added to the original Joseph story so as to complete a parallel between the Jacob and the Joseph narratives.

Chapter Three will critique some scholars’ attempts to read the Joseph story as connected to wisdom literature. By evaluating these scholars’ readings, this chapter will prepare for the argument for unique thematic and theological parallels between the original Joseph story and the Jacob narrative to lay the groundwork for my proposal of a parallel structure between the two narratives as a whole.

Chapter Four will analyze the thematic/theological parallel features between the Jacob narrative and the Joseph narrative as a whole based on the findings of the parallel features between the Jacob narrative and the original Joseph narrative.

Chapter Five will investigate the theological dimension of a parallel structure between the Jacob narrative and the Joseph narrative. This chapter will discuss how a parallel structure of the Jacob and the Joseph narratives explains the corrective meaning of the purpose of God’s election. This chapter will include the discussion how Jacob and
Joseph change in their attitudes to their non-elect brothers and finally live out their destiny/mission as God’s elect after the realization of the corrective meaning of being God’s chosen.
Chapter One
Various Readings of the Joseph Narrative (Gen 37:2-50:26)
With Emphasis on the Redactional Materials
(Genesis 38; 46-50)

Since the nineteenth century rise of historical criticism, which includes the documentary hypothesis, form criticism and traditio-historical criticism, the Joseph narrative (Genesis 37-50) has been divided by different sources or traditions. As holistic approaches have exploded since the 1960s, especially since James Muilenburg’s article, “Form Criticism and Beyond,” many scholars have dealt with the Joseph narrative holistically. The following sections review and evaluate the source-critical, traditio-historical, and holistic approaches, particularly some interpreters' proposals of a chiastic structure, to the Joseph narrative and their ways of dealing with the so-called redactional materials (Genesis 38 and Genesis 46-50). By pointing out the failures of these methods in explaining the purpose of the redactional materials within their working propositions, I will argue that the redactional materials are to be explained in relation to both the original Joseph story and the Jacob narrative.

1. The Source-Critical Approaches

With traditional source-critical analysis, Genesis 37-50 is assumed to comprise originally separate sources (J, E, and P). As V. Hamilton points out, "From the latter part of the 19th century and into the 20th century, the book of Genesis is considered to be a compilation of three of the four sources, J, E, and P, since the source D is considered to

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be confined to the book of Deuteronomy.”15 Wellhausen’s source division of J, E, and P in the book of Genesis has dominated Old Testament scholarship until the late 1970s. When it came to the Joseph narrative in Genesis 37-50, Wellhausen affirmed the validity of this approach as follows:

In diesem eng zusammenhängenden Abschnitte (Kap. 37. Kap. 39-50) . . . [d]ie Hauptquelle ist auch für diesen letzten Abschnitt der Genesis JE. Es ist zu vermuten, dass dies Werk hier wie sonst aus J und E zusammengesetzt sei; unsere früheren Ergebnisse drängen auf diese Annahme und würden erschüttert warden, ware sie nicht erweisbar. Ich halte das Beginnen, diese fließende Erzählung von Joseph nach Quelle zerstückeln zu wollen, nicht für verfehlt, sondern für so notwendig, wie überhaupt die Dekomposition der Genesis.16

As this statement indicates, Wellhausen’s argument for the Joseph narrative as consisting of J and E is based on his presupposition that the Joseph narrative comes from the same sources as the rest of Genesis, rather than as the result of source analysis. Indeed, Wellhausen’s claim that the Joseph narrative is an “eng zusammenhängenden Abschnitte” seems to be in tension with the theory of multiple documents that he advocates.

Thus, despite the recognition of a unified nature of the Joseph narrative, Wellhausen does not attempt to justify the source-critical approach to the Joseph narrative. Likewise, many scholars recognize the unified quality of the Joseph narrative but still apply the source-critical approach, and thus fail to justify the application of the source-critical analysis to the Joseph narrative. As G. Wenham points out, “although Wellhausen’s views of the sources have been transformed and modified by successive scholars, even to this day such source division remains influential to the study of the book

of Genesis in that the existence of diverse sources in Genesis is always taken for
gran
ted.”17 This can be shown in G. von Rad’s view of the Joseph narrative.

Von Rad regards the Joseph narrative as derived from two main documents, J and
E. On the other hand, however, von Rad argues that the Joseph narrative is “a novel
through and through” and thus, different from the “local, cultic sage-materials” of the
patriarchal narratives, which have been “brought together by the Yahwist or an even
earlier writer.”18 In this way, von Rad’s view of the origin or tradition of the Joseph
narrative vacillates between the unified nature of the Joseph narrative and its
compositional character. This failure to justify a strong tension between a view of the
unified quality of the Joseph narrative and an adherence to a source-critical approach to
the story is criticized by Whybray:

Von Rad does not deal with problems of source criticism, and the reader is
likely to receive the impression that he is here speaking of a single writer of
genius who, in an age of exceptional cultural achievement created an entirely
original novel. . . . [This] ought to drive us back to re-examine the whole
question of the documentary hypothesis.19

In this way, Whybray criticizes von Rad’s view of the Joseph narrative for its failure to
justify the contradiction between the view of the Joseph narrative as a novel and its
connection to the pentateuchal sources J and E.20

Similarly, Gunkel calls the source-critical analysis into question by
acknowledging the unified qualities of the Joseph narrative:

18 Gerhard von Rad, “The Joseph Narrative and Ancient Wisdom,” in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and
20 Von Rad, *Genesis*, 347, regards the Joseph story as “an organically constructed narrative.” But on the
48:3-6; 49:1a, 28b-33; 50:12-13 as the Priestly sections. Thus, von Rad restricts the unified section to Gen
37: 39-47; and 50.
Considering the Joseph narrative as one coherent story, Gunkel calls it “die novella” which “entsteht aus dem Märchen eine weitläufigere Erzählungsform.” At the same time, however, Gunkel still adheres to the view of the Joseph narrative as a composite work as he regards it as originating from several Joseph narratives. According to Gunkel, the original Joseph tales are a pure family story without any historical relation: “Diese ursprüngliche Joseph-Erzählung aber haben wir uns zu denken als eine reine Familiengeschichte, ohne jede historische Beziehung, auch ohne den Namen Joseph.”

In this way, despite the realization that the Joseph narrative is a unified literary work, scholars often fail to justify the source division of the Joseph narrative. Therefore, this demonstrates that this approach is inadequate alone for dealing with the Joseph narrative because it cannot explain the unified character of the Joseph narrative. As R. M. A. Davidson notes, “[t]he more we stress the literary skill and the basic unity of the entire story [i.e. the Joseph narrative], the less likely the two-source theory becomes.” Thus, as C. Westermann puts it, “[i]t became impossible therefore to avoid the question whether the Joseph narrative as a short story, a creation out of ‘a single mold,’ was still compatible with source division.”

Despite the contributions of source criticism, and its continuing relevance to the book of Genesis, its method of dissecting into small and separate sections according to

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22 Gunkel, 59.
23 Gunkel, 66-67.
24 Gunkel, 68.
26 Westermann, Genesis 37-50, 19.
sources is not adequate by itself to the task of interpreting the Joseph narrative because of its conceptual unity.

The inadequacy of the source-critical approach to the Joseph narrative is well articulated by Noble in his analysis of Genesis 38:

According to the virtually unanimous critical consensus there is ‘no connection at all’ between these passages [Genesis 38 and the Joseph narrative]; and if this is correct, they are a good illustration of a Quotation-theoretic method of composition [the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis] . . . . However, it seems to me that this explanation is quite wrong . . . [because] they [Genesis 38 and the Joseph story] are intimately interrelated at a deep, structural level.27

In this statement, Noble points out that the text itself rejects the traditional source-critical analysis, which regards Genesis 38 as being inserted into this composition with virtually no meaningful editorial reshaping, because Genesis 38 is intrinsically interrelated to the Joseph narrative.

Some scholars’ realization of the original Joseph story as a unified literary work28 has given rise to the view by subsequent interpreters that the Joseph narrative should be

28 In fact, scholars have come to realization of the original Joseph story as a novella, a literary product quite different from the Sagen traditions of the patriarchs: Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 344, states, “the Joseph story is . . . often referred to as a short story or, in German, Novelle;” Skinner, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis, 41, calls it “novelistic narrative;” Davidson, Genesis, 212, calls it a “short novel;” Redford, A Study of the Biblical Narrative of Joseph, 66, calls it a “Märchen-Novelle;” Gary A. Rendsburg, The Reduction of Genesis (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1986), 79, calls it “it is, by all accounts, the most unified story in Genesis, perhaps in the entire Pentateuch, and indeed in the whole Hebrew Bible;” Nahum M. Sarna, Understanding Genesis: The Heritage of Biblical Israel (New York: Schocken Books, 1970), 211, describes it as “unparalleled continuity of narrative;” and Westermann, Genesis 37-50, 18. Westermann points out that Gunkel first suggests that the Joseph story is in the nature of a short story or novella. As Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 344, puts it, “the heading, ‘This is the family history of Jacob’ (37:2), and the end of the book (50:26) define the limits of this section most securely. By universal consent, the Joseph story is the most closely integrated part of the patriarchal narrative, and it is often referred to as a short story or, in German, Novelle.”
viewed as a literary work coming from a different tradition from the preceding patriarchal traditions.\textsuperscript{29}

2. The Traditio-Historical Approaches

The traditio-historical approach, which is built on results of source-critical and form-critical studies, tries to “uncover the creative process which issued in the biblical literature—to the extent that this process was collective and gradual.”\textsuperscript{30} As D. A. Knight puts it, the traditio-historical approach attempts to answer the question, “How did a specific text come into existence, and what was the import of any of its earlier forms and elements—to the extent that these can be plausibly identified?”\textsuperscript{31} As J. H. Hayes and C. R. Holladay point out, “All of these reconstructive efforts are made with a view to explicating and illuminating the final form of the written text which confronts the readers on the pages of the Bible itself.”\textsuperscript{32}

As one of the initiators of the traditio-historical approach, M. Noth argues that the critical period for his research is the pre-literary stage which gave the Pentateuch its essential shape, despite his acknowledgement that the task of his history of Pentateuchal traditions is the investigation of its whole growth and formation from beginning to end.\textsuperscript{33} Thus, Noth deals with the process of oral tradition which lies behind the documentary sources of the Pentateuch. He identifies its main themes and isolates five originally

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{30} Douglas A. Knight, “Tradition History,” \textit{ABD} 6: 637.
  \item \textsuperscript{31} Knight, 636.
  \item \textsuperscript{32} John H. Hayes & Carl R. Holladay, \textit{Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner’s Handbook} (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987), 91-92. Knight, “Tradition History,” 636, also says, “The exegete synthesizes all of these findings into a description of the growth of the tradition from its origin to its final form.”
  \item \textsuperscript{33} Noth, \textit{A History of Pentateuchal Traditions}, 1.
\end{itemize}
separate blocks of tradition which have their own tradition histories: (1) exodus out of Egypt, (2) entrance into the land of Canaan, (3) promise to the patriarchs, (4) guidance in the wilderness, and (5) the revelation at Sinai.\textsuperscript{34} As Knight points out, Noth “expanded on von Rad’s work by shifting the emphasis to the pre-Yahwistic stage of tradition growth.”\textsuperscript{35} Noth argues for an earlier source G, upon which both J and E were based independently in the pre-monarchic period. When it comes to the Joseph narrative, Noth argues for indications of a later tradition than those of the other patriarchal and exodus accounts, which are mentioned in the historical creed (Josh. 24:4) without reference to the Joseph narrative, because of its function as a connecting story between the patriarchal tradition and the exodus tradition.\textsuperscript{36}

According to Noth, the origin of the Joseph narrative is found in Josh 24:4, “Jacob and his sons went to Egypt”\textsuperscript{37} and “the originally central Palestinian story of Jacob with his twelve sons was enriched with the Joseph short-story (\textit{Novelle}), which was intended as a transition to the next theme, ‘guidance out of Egypt.’”\textsuperscript{38} With the argument for the connecting function between the patriarchal and exodus traditions, Noth further asserts that the Joseph narrative “does not actually belong to any one of the fundamental themes [of the Pentateuch], . . . it does not belong to the ‘patriarchal’ theme . . . Nor is it related . . . to the theme of ‘guidance out of Egypt’ which, as has been shown, is

\textsuperscript{34} Noth, \textit{A History of Pentateuchal Traditions}, 46-62. According to Noth, the combination of these traditions occurred in the time of judges and the worship of the twelve tribe confederacy, the so-called Amphictyony, before any written version was made. Therefore, Noth, \textit{A History of Pentateuchal Traditions}, 208-13, says that “the emergence of the total Pentateuch . . . is a purely literary work.”

\textsuperscript{35} Knight, “Tradition History,” 635.

\textsuperscript{36} Noth, \textit{A History of Pentateuchal Traditions}, 208. Noth [ibid] also says, “the Joseph story shows itself to be a traditio-historically late construction by its discursive narrative style and by its combination of numerous individual narratives.”

\textsuperscript{37} Noth, \textit{A History of Pentateuchal Traditions}, 208.

\textsuperscript{38} Noth, \textit{A History of Pentateuchal Traditions}, 211.
connected to it very loosely at the conclusion.” Thus, he considers passages such as Gen 46:1b-5a; 50:15-26 as the redactional materials added later. As a result, the important thematic/theological message and the function of the Joseph narrative within its context have consistently been underestimated.

Von Rad, who is another important figure related to the development and application of the traditio-historical approach, understood the Hexateuch in its final form as a “history of redemption” by the work of a theologian, Yahwist. With the creeds of Israel’s faith such as Deut 26:5-9; 6:20-24; and Josh 24:2-13, von Rad answered the question of why the diverse kinds of traditions are put together in a historical sequence, not in a random collection. According to von Rad, these creeds express the fundamentals of the sacred history and shape the structure of the hexateuchal traditions as we now have them. As good evidence of his thesis, von Rad presents Deut 26:5-9, as having been inserted by the Yahwist into the framework established by the old credo and the Primeval History in Gen 1-11. According to von Rad, this led to the creation of the present forms of the Hexateuch: (1) salvation history, (2) the creation account and the life of the patriarchs, and (3) the revelation at Sinai. Von Rad contends that all these traditions

39 Noth, A History of Pentateuchal Traditions, 209.
40 Noth, A History of Pentateuchal Traditions, 210-13. Noth [ibid.] considers these passages as E, thus not belonging to the original Joseph story, which is independent in origin.
42 Von Rad, Genesis, 21-24. This old credo recounts: the forefather who descended into Egypt with his family and stayed there as a sojourner; the Egyptians treated them harshly that they cried out to the Lord and God rescued them, led them through the wilderness and brought them into the Promised Land. In this credo, however, the Sinai tradition of covenant making (Exod 19-Num 10) is absent, but von Rad concluded that it too derived from old tradition, having originated in a covenant renewal feast at Shechem.
existed before J wrote the first version of the Hexateuch in the time of Solomon. Von Rad argues that Genesis mainly comprises three distinct sources: J, E, and P.\(^\text{43}\)

Although von Rad regards the Joseph narrative as derived from two main documents, J and E, the Joseph narrative, in his view, not only does not convey any hexateuchal themes, but also shows a distinct literary character from the preceding patriarchal narratives or traditions:

The story of Joseph, in the narrower sense, comprises chs. 37; 39 to 47; and 50. The text of these chapters, apart from unimportant sections from the Priestly source, is an artistic composition from the representations of the sources J and E. . . . The redactor combined them with each other in such a way that he inserted extensive sections of the Elohist parallel version into the Yahwistic story of Joseph and thus created an even richer narrative.\(^\text{44}\)

Von Rad argues that the original Joseph story (Genesis 37; 39-47; 50) is purely a \textit{Novelle} in which the tribal historical elements are not found and that the Story is wisdom literature.\(^\text{45}\) Thus, von Rad emphasizes the distinctiveness of the Joseph narrative in terms of its content and function. For example, for the absence of the tribal historical aspects in the Joseph narrative, von Rad argues, in Gen 37:8 “The narrator does not intend in the dreams to prepare for the much later history of Israel but rather for Joseph’s exaltation in Egypt.”\(^\text{46}\) However, this seems unconvincing because the tribal historical aspect is indeed apparently reflected in Gen 37:5-8, as Westermann, along with other commentators, cogently argues:

\begin{quote}
It is the basic question of man (a brother) ruling over his equals (brothers), a question which agitated Israel in the period of the rise of the monarchy . . . The question of kingship is only hinted at, but runs on through the narrative.\(^\text{47}\)
\end{quote}

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\(^{43}\) Von Rad, \textit{Genesis}, 39.  
\(^{46}\) Von Rad, \textit{Genesis}, 352.  
Furthermore, von Rad’s justification for the absence of the tribal historical aspect in the original Joseph story as shown in Genesis 37 on the grounds that Genesis 37 is different from “Gen 48, [which is] an independent passage . . . in the directness of its reference to tribal history,” is also not fully convincing. This argument fails to account for the connection of the tribal history in Gen 48 with the original Joseph story where the births of Manasseh and Ephraim are recounted (Gen 41:50-52). Von Rad’s failure to account for the existence of the tribal historical aspect is further shown in his comments on Gen 47:13-27. According to von Rad, Gen 47:13-27 is part of the original Joseph story, and 47:27 clearly points to the tribal historical aspect as it refers to Jacob’s family as יִשְׂרָאֵל. However, von Rad ignores this tribal historical aspect in Gen 47:27 while arguing that Gen 47:13-26 “shows us Joseph’s wisdom which is capable of mastering every new complication,” thus focusing on “prais[ing] Joseph as . . . savior.”

Although von Rad argues for the unity of the Joseph narrative, within the tradition-historical approach, the unity is only limited to Genesis 37 and 39-47:27. For example, von Rad comments on Genesis 38 and 47:28-48:22:

Every attentive reader can see that the story of Judah and Tamar has no connection at all with the strictly organized Joseph story at whose beginning it is now inserted . . . and therefore the Yahwist, who found the story in tradition, faced the question where to insert his piece into the succession of traditions.

Von Rad continues:

With the narratives about Jacob’s legacy, death, and burial we come to the end of the Joseph story, which the final redactor, however, as is here evident,
wished to be understood as a Jacob story. . . . This is the only place in the Joseph story where the expositor has to consider tribal facts, . . . when we heard of Manasseh and Ephraim, of Ephraim’s preferential position . . . [because we were] reminded of the tribes represented by the two boys. 51

In this way, to von Rad, these chapters certainly do not belong to the original Joseph story. However, in his thesis, von Rad fails to account for the position of the redactional materials in the Joseph story: why would these originally independent traditions be put into the original Joseph story, “a novel through and through,” 52 destroying the unity of the story? Furthermore, von Rad’s argument that the Yahwist, whom he sees as a theologian, inserted the story of Judah and Tamar, which is a theologically important chapter recounting the birth of the future Davidic line, only to create suspense in the Joseph narrative 53 is not fully convincing. In this way, for von Rad, the Joseph narrative is dissected even more than with the source-critical approach, in that he extracts the so-called non-original materials, Genesis 38; 46:8-27; 48 and 49, from their literary contexts. Furthermore, with the focus on explaining the distinctiveness of the Joseph story within wisdom literature, 54 the Joseph story has become thematically/theologically divorced from its context in the book of Genesis. As G. W. Coats states, with this approach, the Joseph story has become a narrative which “has no roots in the classical theological traditions of the Pentateuch.” 55

Such an exclusion of the so-called redactional materials derives from von Rad’s understanding of redactors or redactional materials. Von Rad argues that the Yahwist is a theologian, who put the distinct traditions such as the Sinai tradition and the exodus-

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53 Von Rad, Genesis, 357.
54 The scholarly discussions of the connection between the Joseph story and wisdom literature will be examined in Chapter Three, Section 1. “Modern Search for the Wisdom Elements in the Joseph Story.”
55 Coats, From Canaan to Egypt, 4.
occupation tradition in its final form, the Hexateuch, as a “history of redemption” on the basis of an “historical credo.” Von Rad asserts, “one of Gunkel’s most significant shortcomings is his almost complete failure to take into account the coordinating power of the writer’s overall theological purpose, and the gathering of the separate materials around a very small nucleus of basic concepts.”

However, to von Rad, this theological purpose of a writer who put the diverse sources or traditions together does not apply to the redactor(s) as he excludes the theological purpose behind the redactional materials (Genesis 38; 46:8-27; 48 and 49). This is inconsistent with his own understanding of the Yahwist because his Yahwist is indeed a redactor in the sense that his Yahwist gathers different traditions and arranges them for his/her theological purpose. But von Rad excludes a theology of redactor(s) at any stage of its literary history. Views similar to those of Noth and von Rad are found in the studies of Coats and Westermann with some modifications.

Coats argues that Genesis 39-41 formed the kernel of an initially independent “political legend,” which could be connected with wisdom circles found at the Solomonic court, in that it shows “an obvious didactic function . . . demonstrat[ing] to future administrators the proper procedure for using power.” According to Coats, the Joseph story is a novella contained in Genesis 37 and 39-47:27a. It has a main motif of familial strife, as do the Abraham saga and the Jacob saga. Thus, Coats regards Genesis 39-41 “in the present position as digression in the movement of narrative about Joseph and his brothers, . . . [and] reveals its character as a story within a story, a story with its own

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58 Coats, “Joseph, Son of Jacob,” 977.
independent structure, genre, and intention.”

Coats further argues that Genesis 38 and 47:28-50:26 are “structural parasites,” which disrupt the structural unity of the Joseph narrative and “function to incorporate the Joseph Story into the larger narration.”

Concerning the content and function of the Joseph narrative, Coats poses important questions such as, “Is it, in effect, completely isolated from its context, secondarily placed into its present position as a stop-gap measure? Or . . . [does] it show structural or theological relationships with the rest of the Pentateuch?”

Then he concludes that the Joseph narrative “functions basically and substantially as a bridge.” However, there are some difficulties in Coats’ reading of the Joseph narrative.

Coats delimits the Joseph story as Genesis 37; 39-47:27a based on the inclusio between Gen 37:1 and Gen 47:27a: “Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan” (37:1) and “thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt” (47:27a). However, this proposition for a framework of the Joseph story (37:1 and 47:27a) cannot stand because “Israel” in Gen 47:27 is not intended to refer to the individual Jacob but to the people of Israel as a group. Moreover, Coats’ choice of Gen 37:1 as a starting point for a framework of the Joseph story is moot. As many scholars have pointed out, Gen 37:1 is intended to match Gen 36:8, concluding the Jacob narrative, rather than starting the Joseph narrative, as these verses form an inclusion by comparing

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60 Coats, “Redactional Unity in Genesis 37-50,” 15; Coats, From Canaan to Egypt, 7-8; Coats, From Canaan to Egypt, 49, 69, also regards Gen 46:1b-4 as secondary. Coats [ibid.] treats the remaining materials such as “tradition about Jacob’s death in Egypt (47:28-50:14),” “denouement recapitulation (50:15-21),” and “appendix (50:22-26)” as well as “Judah and Tamar story (38:1-30)” as heterogeneous elements disrupting the structural unity of the Joseph story.
61 Coats, From Canaan to Egypt, 2.
62 Coats, From Canaan to Egypt, 2-3, 79. Coats also explains that he is following Noth’s initial suggestion of the Joseph story’s bridging function between the patriarchs and the exodus. See also Coats, “Joseph, Son of Jacob,” 979, 981.
63 Coats, From Canaan to Egypt, 9-11; Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 449, also argues, “So Israel settled in the land of Egypt’ [47:27] concludes the account of the move to Egypt begun in 46:1.”
the settlement of Jacob and Esau: while Esau settles in the hill country of Seir (36:8), Jacob settles in Canaan where his father had lived as an alien (37:1). This is further supported by the indication of a new section in Gen 37:2 where *toledot* appears; thus 37:1 is to be regarded as the end of the previous section rather than the beginning of the new section. As R. E. Longacre notes, Gen 37:2 “has a striking juxtaposition of proper names. . . [since] ‘Jacob’ and ‘Joseph’ are juxtaposed across sentence boundary.”

Right after the formula, “These are the *toledot* Jacob,” Joseph is introduced: “Joseph was seventeen years old and was shepherding the flock with his brothers.” The sentence beginning with ‘Joseph’ introduces a paragraph that uses several grammatical devices to present Joseph as the central participant in the following narrative. Both the new *toledot* formula and the sudden shift of the main character are evidence of the beginning of a new story, the Joseph narrative.

Coats’ understanding of Gen 37 and 39-47:27a as mainly functioning as a bridge, having no thematic/theological contribution to the original Joseph story, is not fully convincing for other reasons. For example, Coats argues that Gen 47:13-27 is included for an aetiological purpose and thus, has no theological significance. However, his view of Gen 47:13-27 is disputable, as many scholars have discussed its thematic/theological significance. Some interpreters have argued that Gen 47:13-27 is intended to indicate Joseph’s wisdom. On the other hand, some scholars have read this passage as having

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68 Davidson, *Genesis*, 287, says, “It could be that to the writer this is but another illustration of Joseph’s wisdom and political skill.” W. Lee Humphreys, *Joseph and His Family: A Literary Study* (SPOT;
the function of contrasting God’s special treatment of Jacob’s family, the promised line, with that of the Egyptians who are enslaved during the famine. All these scholars’ discussions indicate that Gen 47:13-27 conveys a thematic/theological message within its context. But by considering this passage as being merely included for aetiological purposes, Coats fails to appreciate its important thematic and theological message within its context. As D. B. Redford points out, “the Joseph Narrative [including the redactional materials] is far too polished a piece of literature to have been created solely or even primarily for the pedestrian purpose of bridging a gap.” Furthermore, Coats’ understanding of Genesis 38; 47:28-50:26 as “structural parasites,” which disrupt the structural unity of the Joseph story, having no thematic/theological contribution to the original Joseph story, is not fully convincing because they are interconnected to their

Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1988), 136, also says that “Genesis 40 and 41 (along with 47:13-26 and 50:26) tell of the remarkable rise and successes of Joseph as an Egyptian courtier.” See also von Rad, Genesis, 410.

David W. Cotter, Genesis (BO; eds. J. T. Walsh and C. Franke; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 322, says, “47:13-26 . . . a more lengthy description- which also serves as a contrast with the privileged position of Joseph’s family- of the measures Joseph takes with the rest of the Egyptian populace.” Naomi Steinberg, “Vayigash 44:18-47:27” in The Torah: A Women’s Commentary (eds. T. C. Eskienazi & A. L. Weiss; New York: WRJ, 2008), 273, also says that 47:13-26 “serves as a contrasting situation to that of Jacob’s family, which is explicitly said to be given food by Joseph (v.12).” Thus, Clare Amos, The Book of Genesis (EC; Peterborough: Epworth., 2004), 263, says, “Most modern readers feel a sense of disaster as they come across these verses . . . [because] Joseph’s cleverness . . . that finally results in virtually all of Egypt belonging to Pharaoh.” Other theological concerns of this passage will be discussed in Chapter Three, 3.1 “Links between Gen 47:13-27; 48; 49 and Gen 34; 35 within Motif of Preservation and Blessing.”

Coats, From Canaan to Egypt, 54, argues that the Joseph story “functions basically and substantially as a bridge.” Coats explains that he is following Noth’s initial suggestion of the Joseph story’s bridging function between the patriarchs and the exodus (3). For the scholars in this group, see also, Eric I. Lowenthal, The Joseph Narrative in Genesis: An Interpretation (New York: Ktav Pub. House, 1973), 1; Arnold, Genesis, 317; Davidson, Genesis, 214; Werner H. Schmidt, Old Testament introduction (trans. Matthew J. O’Connell and David J. Reimer; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 73; Zvi Adar, The Book of Genesis: An Introduction to the Biblical World (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1990), 137.

Redford, A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph, 27; Westermann, Genesis 37-50, 18, also says that such explanation is no longer viewed valid. In fact, Bruce T. Dahlberg in his article, “On Recognizing the Unity of Genesis,” TD 24 (1977): 364, sees the Joseph narrative as a balance in that “Joseph appears . . . as an antitype to . . . main representatives of humanity who figure in [Genesis] 1 through 11.” In this way, as Clines, The Theme of the Pentateuch, 84, articulates, the Joseph narrative “does not function . . . primarily as a bridge between the patriarchal narratives and the exodus material, but as an inclusion for the book of Genesis.”
surrounding chapters. A similar view is found in Westermann’s reading of the Joseph narrative.

Westermann argues, “[c]hapters 37-50 form coherence inasmuch as ch. 37 deals with Joseph as a boy and ch. 50 reports his death.” He contends that the Joseph story in a narrow sense is found only in Genesis 37, 39-45, and parts of 46-50. According to Westermann, this Joseph story forms a tightly-knit and homogeneous narrative which grew independently from Genesis 38 and most of 46-50 which were skillfully woven into the Joseph story later. In his judgment, Genesis 38; 46-50 has no immediate relation to the preceding chapters of the original Joseph story. According to Westermann, this is particularly evident in 46:1-7 because it shows features very different from those of the preceding chapters of the Joseph story, but very close to those of Genesis 12-36. In fact, this passage shows distinct theological features from those of the original Joseph story in that God gives promises directly to a human agent, unlike in the preceding chapters of the original Joseph story where God is only mentioned by the narrator as being with Joseph in Potiphar’s house and in prison (39:2, 3, 5, 21, 23). This is the first time since Gen 35:11-12 that God has spoken directly to anyone. There is also a genealogical list in Gen 46:8-27. The language of the itinerary and the genealogy and this directly communicated promise are strange to the Joseph story and not suited to it in style. For

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72 This will be discussed mainly in Chapter 2 although it will be briefly discussed in the following section in this chapter.
73 Westermann, Genesis 37-50, 22.
74 Westermann, Genesis 37-50, 23. Noth, A History of Pentateuchal Traditions, 211-12, also argues, “The theophany vouchsafed to Jacob in Beer-sheba while he was on his way to Egypt (Gen 46:a/b-5a [E]) comes explicitly from ‘the God of his father Isaac.’ Therefore it too belongs to a secondary narrative connecting the ‘patriarchal’ figures, one that did not want to let Jacob pass by the sites of Isaac and Abraham silently.”
75 Amos, The Book of Genesis, 261.
76 Westermann, Genesis 37-50, 23.
this reason, Gen 46:1 has been considered to have no immediate connection with the preceding Joseph story.

Despite a different main character and style in Gen 46:1, this passage is tightly interwoven with both the preceding and following chapters. The theophany in Gen 46:1 cannot be read outside the original Joseph story because this passage is described as the theological confirmation of Pharaoh’s invitation to Jacob’s family to Egypt as already mentioned in the original Joseph story in Gen 45:19. Likewise, the genealogical list in Gen 46:8-27 is connected to the preceding account of the moving of Jacob's family in Gen 45:19-28 because it is a list of Jacob’s family who moved to Egypt as the beginning (46:8), and the end of the section (46:26), articulate. Furthermore, by including Joseph’s two sons in the genealogy (46:27), who were born in Egypt in Gen 41:50-51,

and the reader is invited to read this genealogical list in connection with the original Joseph story.

Concerning the nature of the last chapters of the Joseph narrative, Wenham has a view similar to Westermann. Wenham correctly asserts that Gen 48:2-50:14 contains both strands of the Jacob narrative and the Joseph narrative. With this coalescing of traditions, however, Wenham argues, “the whole of 25:19-50:26 tells the narrative of the forefather of the nation and the origin of the twelve tribes.”77 To Wenham, who restricts the Joseph story to Gen 37:2-47:31, Gen 48:2-50:14 concludes the Jacob narrative, which

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77 Wenham, “Pondering the Pentateuch,” 345.
begins in Gen 25:19. Although Wenham’s observation of the connection between the Jacob narrative and the Joseph narrative in these chapters is correct, his view has a weakness because it tends to weaken the unique and rich thematic/theological message with their connection to the Joseph story. Furthermore, the story of Joseph in Gen 37; 39-45 is too long and rich in content to be considered only as the story of one of Jacob’s sons.

Like Coats, Westermann sees the Joseph story as combining a family story and a political story, which were originally independent traditions. This is clearly demonstrated in his statement:

The story is structured by means of its two locales: the home of Jacob and the Egyptian court. The story leads from the threatened break between the sons of Jacob (chapter 37) to the healing of the family bonds (chapter 45), which is made possible by Joseph’s elevation to authority in the Egyptian court. There are really two separate story lines: chapters 39-41, describing Joseph’ ascent to power, and chapters 42-45, which recount the brothers’ journeys and eventually leads to the unification of the two story lines.

However, this separation of the political story from the story of Joseph and his family seems to be untenable because the amalgamation of the family story and the political

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79 In fact, much of Gen 48:2-50:14 concerns both Joseph and his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh who were born to Joseph while Joseph was in Egypt.
80 Claus Westermann, *Joseph: Studies of the Joseph Stories in Genesis* (trans. Omar Kaste; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), x-xi. Coats, “Joseph, Son of Jacob,” 977. Longacre, *Joseph*, 22-23, also observes that the Joseph story in Gen 37-50 consists of at least two different strands or story lines. He says that even though Joseph appears as a central figure in many parts of Gen 37-50, there are sections where he is not mentioned at all or if mentioned, he is not the main figure. Thus, Longacre argues that this inconsistency of the story line in Gen 37-50 is solved by recognizing that the toledot of Jacob (37:2) has essentially two interwoven strands: the Joseph story and the story of Jacob and his family. Likewise, Humphreys, *Joseph and His Family*, 147, argues that the story of “wise courtier,” Gen 40:41, 47:13-26, and 50:26, was a separate story, a story of a wise foreign slave to become a high rank in Egypt, from the rest of the Joseph story. Humphreys, *Joseph and His Family*, 182, further argues that concerning the other chapters (Genesis 38; 46:1-4, 48, 49, and 50:24-25), Humphreys argues that they were gradually combined into the story at a relatively late stage of the development of the Joseph story as a whole, serving to link “the Joseph novella” to its larger context.
aspect occurs consistently in the Joseph story. This amalgamation of the family matter and the political motif in the Joseph story is well summarized by F. Crüsemann:

Wie מָלֵךְ und מֶשֶׁת sachgemäß umschrieben werden muß. Der gesamte Josephsgeschichte aus sich entlassende Konflikt wird vom Erzähler also von Anfang an mit einer ausgesprochen politischen Terminologie beschrieben und geht schon damit weit über einen normalen Familienzwist hinaus, wie er sonst in der Genesis häufig ist.  

Crüsemann continues to say:

Von dieser Schürzung des Problems aus muß dann auch seine Lösung, also die gesamte Josephsgeschichte, mit Notwendigkeit eine politische Seite haben.

As Crüsemann points out, the combination of the motif of family strife with a political aspect pervades throughout the Joseph story. This amalgamation can be seen in the brotherly reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers in Genesis 42-45, which not only presupposes the story of Joseph’s rise to a high rank politically in Genesis 39-41, but which also itself contains the political aspect in that Joseph is depicted as a politically high ranking man in Genesis 42-45. In other words, the motifs of family and of the political in Genesis 37 and 42-45 are interspersed throughout these chapters and cannot be separated as two traditions, thus disproving the argument that the presence of the two motifs is evidence of different origins. Indeed, Crüsemann’s insightful recognition of the amalgamation of the family story between Joseph and his family and the political matter within the Joseph story is consistently demonstrated in the redactional materials.

Scholars have noted only the political aspect in Genesis 38. For example, von Rad contends that Genesis 38 is mainly concerned with reporting tribal conditions: “The

82 Crüsemann, Der Widerstand Gegen das Königum, 147.
83 Crüsemann, Der Widerstand Gegen das Königum, 146-49.
narrative about the birth of her [Tamar’s] sons is furnished with aetiological motives that perhaps reflect a recollection of a rivalry between the two Judean lines Perez and Zerah.¹⁸⁴ Likewise, Sarna states that Genesis 38 is filled with certain historic associations that have to do with the fact that Perez became pre-prominent among the Judahite tribes and became the ancestor of Davidic dynasty.¹⁸⁵ However, this political aspect of Genesis 38 is interwoven with a family matter as it reports Judah’s family story: Judah’s violation of his pledge, Tamar’s plot to restore the pledge, and the birth of two sons, Perez and Zerah. In this way, in Genesis 38, both a political aspect and a family motif are interwoven with each other in the story.

A similar amalgamation between a family matter and a political aspect can be found in Genesis 49. This chapter reports, not only the family matters concerning Jacob’s sons, Reuben’s incest and the actions of Simeon and Levi, but also the political aspects of the future twelve tribes of the nation Israel. In this way, the political elements of the nation Israel¹⁸⁶ in the redactional materials is intermingled with a family story. Thus, some scholars’ argument that the Joseph narrative is a combination of the two originally independent stories based on different main story lines, a family story and a political legend, is not fully convincing because the amalgamation of the two story lines consistently appears in the Joseph narrative as a whole. This pattern of the amalgamation of a family story of Joseph and his family and a political matter, both in the original Joseph story and the redactional materials, further indicates a careful coherency and integration between them.

¹⁸⁴ Von Rad, Genesis, 361-62.
¹⁸⁵ Nahum M. Sarna, Genesis (JPSTC; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 263-64.
¹⁸⁶ Longacre, Joseph, 54; Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 345.
Following the traditio-historical method in the study of the Pentateuch developed by his teacher Rendtorff, Erhard Blum presents an analysis of the Joseph narrative. Blum explains the origin and the development of the Joseph narrative in their relation to those of the Jacob narrative.\footnote{Blum, \textit{Die Komposition}, 229-57.} According to Blum, the Jacob tradition, which consists of several independent legends (Jacob-Esau, Gen 25:29-34; 27; Bethel, Gen 28:11-13; and Jacob-Laban, 31:45-54),\footnote{Blum, \textit{Die Komposition}, 202.} becomes the Jacob-Esau-Laban story (25:19-34; 27-33) of the northern kingdom’s political consolidation under Jeroboam I. In Blum’s contention, this northern Jacob tradition was then interwoven at a later stage with the “judäische Textgruppe,” justifying Judah as the leader among his brothers (Gen 34; 35:21-22a; 38; 49:1-27).\footnote{Blum, \textit{Die Komposition}, 209-29.}

According to Blum, the Joseph story is an independent and non-composite literary work into which various passages from different traditions (Genesis 38; 41:50-52; 46:1-5a, 8-27; 48; 49:(28) 29ff; 50:12-13, 22-26) have been inserted in order to connect the Joseph story with the patriarchal traditions.\footnote{Blum, \textit{Die Komposition}, 229.} Based on the identical wording in Gen 37:32ff and 38:25ff, Blum concludes that the redactor of the “judäische Textgruppe” knew about the Joseph story:

\begin{quote}
Im Hinblick auf das überlieferungsgeschichtliche Verhältnis von Gen 38 und Josephgeschichte deutet demnach alles darauf hin, daß letztere dem >Ergänzer<\textit{Kompositor< der in 3.2 beschriebenen judäischen Textgruppe, der auch Gen 38 zuzurechnen ist, literarisch vorgegeben war.}\footnote{Blum, \textit{Die Komposition}, 244-57.}
\end{quote}

\footnote{Blum, \textit{Die Komposition}, 245.}
In this way, Blum argues that the Joseph narrative was an expansion of the Jacob tradition.

However, some difficulties with Blum’s traditio-historical approach to the Joseph narrative remain. First, Blum’s reading of Gen 49:1-27 as a Judah-focussed passage leaves much of the chapter unexplained, especially the blessing of Joseph in Gen 49:8-12, which is an important part of the chapter, as many scholars have pointed out. For example, Brueggemann asserts that Genesis 49 is intended as political propaganda in order “to advance some tribal claims at the expense of others,” thereby uniting the twelve tribes. As Sarna points out, “it is apparent that the dominant tribes are the Judah and Joseph tribes, as shown in the length of the accounts of the Judah and Joseph tribes in Genesis 49; five verses are assigned to each tribe, together totalling ten of the twenty-five verses of the sayings.” By regarding Gen 49:1-27 as a Judah-focussed passage, however, Blum fails to explain Gen 49:8-12, which reflects the account of Joseph. In this respect, Genesis 49 cannot be separated from the literary context of the Joseph story.

Secondly, the validity of his views on the development of the Joseph narrative in its relation to the Jacob tradition depend solely on the reliability of his thesis on the

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93 In fact, scholars have pointed out that Gen 49 describes the preeminence of both Joseph and Judah. For instance, Jan P. Fokkelman, “Genesis 37 and 38 at the Interface of Structural Analysis and Hermeneutics,” in Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible (L.J. de Regt et al., eds.; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 181, says, “Gen 49 underlines the prominent positions of Joseph and Judah amongst the brothers. Each brother gets one strophe (one to three full poetic lines) from the father who distributes blessings, except Judah and Joseph. They both get an entire stanza: vv. 8-12 (three strophes) is the eight-verse stanza for Judah, vv. 22-26 is the nine-line stanza for Joseph (again three strophes).” Likewise, Longacre, Joseph, 51, says, “cha 49 contains Jacob’s blessings on the twelve tribes: vv 3-27, . . . of which five refer to Judah and five to Joseph, that is, 40 percent of the total. . . . Among the descendants of Jacob, Joseph and Judah are to be preeminent both as individuals and as tribes – with some ambiguity as to the precise preeminence of each.” (Italics are the author’s).
95 Sarna, Genesis, 331.
redaction of the Jacob tradition. For example, Blum’s view of the story of Gen 41:50-52 and 48 as complementing that of Genesis 27, thus bringing a conclusion to an early stage of the northern Jacob tradition, rather than belonging to the original Joseph story, is questionable.

In sum, with source-critical scholarship, which takes the existence of diverse sources for granted, the unity of the Joseph narrative (Genesis 37-50) has been ignored. With the traditio-historical approach, scholars are able to discuss, not only the existence of the redactional materials, but also the unified literary nature of the original Joseph story, as developing from a separate origin. However, even scholars using the traditio-historical approach, who argue for the unity of most of the Joseph narrative, have considered most of the so-called redactional materials as either having no thematic/theological continuities with the original Joseph story or as having been intended at most to integrate the original Joseph story into the larger narrative. This is well summarized by Wenham:

Among these writers [with integrative readings of the Joseph narrative] there is a broad agreement that chapters 37 and 39-45 constitute a story from a single source, but there is less unanimity about chapter 38 (the Judah and Tamar episode) and chapters 46-50 with its P-like list (46:8-27), the account of Joseph’s famine relief (47:13-26), Jacob’s blessing (chap. 49), the various interlinkages with the Jacob cycle (chaps. 25-36), and the renewed fraternal reconciliation (50:15-21).

In this way, traditio-historical scholarship, because of its presupposition regarding the redactor(s) or redactional materials, also fails to account for the rationale for the independent traditions, the so-called redactional materials, in their context, giving no due

97 Wenham, “Pondering the Pentateuch,” 120.
analysis as to whether they are an integral constituent part of the Joseph narrative.\textsuperscript{98} As Wenham puts it, “[a]lthough it is easy to affirm diversity from a variety of sources on the basis of genre and content, it is also apparent that at some time some editor or author thought these materials were interconnected.”\textsuperscript{99}

Therefore, the source-critical approach and the traditio-historical approach, which are dissecting in orientation and ignore the interpretive intention behind the redactional materials, are inadequate to the task of interpreting the Joseph narrative as a whole, since it has been redacted as a coherent unit.

With the recent literary movement devoted to chiasm, scholars have expressed their conviction of an overall chiastic structure of the Joseph narrative. In what follows, the chiastic readings of the Joseph narrative as a literary and theological unit are reviewed and evaluated, with a focus on the treatment of the redactional materials.

3. **Synchronic Approaches**

With the renewed interest in the integrity of biblical narratives in their present canonical form, a number of scholars have found a chiastic structure underlying each of the four sections, the primeval history, the Abraham story, the Jacob narrative and the Joseph narrative. Some scholars’ readings of the Joseph narrative and the redactional materials are as follows. G. A. Rendsburg constructs a chiastic structure of Gen 37:1-50:26 as follows:

\textsuperscript{98} With the traditio-historical scholarship, the Joseph story was discussed in its connection with the wisdom literatures. This further separates the Joseph story, not only from its canonical context, but also from the so-called redactional materials. The scholarly discussions of the connection between the Joseph story and the wisdom literature will be discussed in Chapter Three, Section 1. “Modern Search for the Wisdom Elements in the Joseph Story.”

\textsuperscript{99} Wenham, “Pondering the Pentateuch,” 120. Adar, *The Book of Genesis*, 9, also asserts that even though the book of Genesis is composed of different sources, it is evident that these disparate sources have been blended into an integral whole; thus, the diachronic approach of the scholars who fractionalize the book of Genesis is diametrically opposed to that of the author/redactor of Genesis.
This chiastic construction forces the redactional materials to be matched with other sections; as a result, their thematic/theological contents have been selectively affirmed. This means other important thematic/theological elements are ignored. For instance, matching A’ (49:29-50:26) as a story of Joseph and his brothers with A (37:1-36), important motifs such as Jacob’s death and the anticipation of the land of promise at Joseph’s deathbed are overlooked. Likewise, matching B (38:1-30) and B’ (49:1-28) in terms of the lack of Joseph’s presence fails to note their important thematic/theological contents. Although it is correct that Joseph is either absent or only nominally present in these sections,^101 thematically and theologically, B deals with the story of Judah and Tamar and B’ records Jacob’s blessings on his sons.

The matching between C (39:1-23) and C’ (47:28-48:22) seems also to be selectively forced and thus, to fail to discuss the other thematic/theological contents. As the reversal of the rule of primogeniture is selectively emphasized in C’ (48:17-19), the theme of Jacob’s blessing on Ephraim and Manasseh on his deathbed in C’ (47:28-48:22).

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101 Rendsburg, “Redactional Structuring,” 119-221, argues that although with the redactional work these two chapters, Genesis 38 and 49, become corresponding sections through theme-words such as *siloh* (38:5, 11, 14; 49:10), they are sill interludes as most commentators regard. In this way, Rendsburg fails to account for the purpose and content of Genesis 38 and 49 in its context, in spite of the fact that these two chapters are now fitted into the Joseph narrative.
is ignored. Furthermore, Rendsburg’s reading of C (39:1-23) as reversal to be a matching unit with C’ (47:28-48:22) not only seems to be farfetched, but also fails to note the important thematic/theological element of the divine presence with Joseph and the subsequent success despite the false accusation against Joseph. Likewise, in D (40:1-41:57) many themes such as the dreams of the two prisoners and of Pharaoh, Joseph’s rise to power, the actualization of the dreams and the underlying divine help for Joseph’s rise, are ignored, while in D’ (47:13-27) themes such as Joseph’s agricultural policy and its outcome, Israel’s being fruitful and numerous (v. 27) are ignored. In this way, Rendsburg’s chiastic structure of the Joseph narrative fails to discuss the important thematic/theological elements of the redactional materials by selectively choosing aspects that fit his scheme. This subsequently leads to a failure to give the proper rationale for their existence in their present positions in the Joseph narrative.

Garrett also seeks to deal with the Joseph narrative (Gen 37:3-50:21) as a whole by discerning a chiastic structure. In his chiastic structure, Garrett considers Gen 38:1-26 as the matching section to Gen 49:8-12 in that the first gives the information of Judah’s primogeniture which is background to the latter. Thus, he says that “[t]he importance of Gen 38 for the Joseph narrative . . . is that it contributes materially to the story of how Judah achieves the status of first-born.” However, this interpretation of Genesis 38 does not seem to be convincing because it is based on the disputable view that Genesis 38 describes a character transformation in Judah. Furthermore, Garrett’s division both of chapter 38 into verses 1-26 and 27-30 and of chapter 49 into verses 8-12 and the rest seems to be arbitrary.

103 Garrett, Rethinking Genesis, 176.
With an attempt to structure the Joseph narrative (Gen 37:2-50:26) in many different ways, D. A. Dorsey presents three different structures: a parallel structure (37:2-50:26); a complex chiastic structure (37:2-50:26); and a twofold chiastic structure (37:2-42:38; 43:1-50:26). The following is Dorsey’s chiastic structure:

a introduction: beginning of Joseph story (37:2-11)
b grievous mourning in Hebron (37:12-36)
c reversal of elder and younger sons of Judah as “firstborn” (38:1-30)
d Joseph’s enslavement to Egyptian (39:1-23)
e disfavor at pharaoh’s court (40:1-23)
f Joseph’s revelation of pharaoh’s dreams (41:1-57)
g Center: brothers come to Egypt for food (42:1-38)
g’ Center: brothers come to Egypt for food (43:1-44:3)
f’ Joseph’s revelation of his identity to brothers (44:4-45:15)
e’ favor at pharaoh’s court (45:16-47:12)
d’ Joseph’s enslavement of Egyptians (47:13-26)
c’ reversal of elder and younger sons of Joseph (47:27-49:32)
b’ grievous mourning near Hebron (49:33-50:14)
a’ conclusion: end of Joseph story (50:15-26)

Here, even putting aside that most of the matching pair of units do not seem to go together well, it can be easily observed that the thematic and theological contents of the redactional materials are over-generalized. For instance, in a (37:2-11) and a’ (50:15-26), the important themes in both sections are over-generalized as the beginning and end of the Joseph narrative, thus failing to identify important themes. Likewise, unit b (37:12-36) is summarized as the story of the mourning ritual at the expense of overlooking the story of the brotherly conflict between Joseph and his brothers, which plays a crucial role in the development of the Joseph narrative.\(^\text{105}\) Such thematic over-generalization between the matching set of units continues to show in c (38:1-30) and c’ (47:27-49:32) as the reversal of primogeniture, in that other important thematic elements are not identified. In


\(^{105}\) This will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two, 3.1 “Brotherly Strife As an Intrinsic Theme and Its Occurrence in Relation to the Motif of Parental Favouritism and Divine Election of the Younger Son over the Older.”
this way, with Dorsey’s chiastic proposal of the Joseph narrative common themes of the redactional materials are identified at the expense of other important themes.

Furthermore, Genesis 38 does not seem to record a story of the reversal of primogeniture because Gen 38:27-30 reports how the expected first child has come out as the second child, rather than the reversal of primogeniture in the other stories, Jacob over his older brother Esau (Gen 25:23), Ephraim over his older brother Manasseh (Gen 48:17-19), and Judah over his older brothers (Gen 49), where the younger sons are chosen as the promise heirs. Genesis 38 deals with reporting Judah’s violation of his pledge, Tamar’s plot to restore the pledge, and birth of Perez and Zerah. Genesis 48-49 mainly concerns Jacob’s blessings on his (adopted) sons. Likewise, e (40:1-23) mainly concerns Joseph’s interpretations of the two prisoners’ dreams and e’ (45:16-47:12) deals with Jacob’s arrival in Egypt, the genealogy of the Israelites, the settlement of Jacob’s family in Goshen and the audience of Joseph’s brothers and Jacob with Pharaoh. Although favour at Pharaoh’s court is implied in e’, Dorsey overlooks the rest of the important contents of this section, and his summary of section e as the story of disfavor at pharaoh’s court seems arbitrary.

As shown above, in their construction of chiastic structure of the Joseph narrative, these interpreters’ readings of the redactional materials fail to include or discuss many of the inherent important thematic/theological contents of the redactional materials despite their integrative readings of the Joseph narrative as a whole.106 As Noble points out, “synchronic study . . . explains (virtually) all the text’s features intrinsically, and thus

106 Similarly, Garrett, Rethinking Genesis, 169-82, Garrett also seeks to deal with the Joseph story (Gen 37:3-50:21) as a whole with the chiastic structure. In his chiastic structure, Garrett considers Genesis 38:1-26 as the matching section to Genesis 49:8-12 in that the first gives the background information of Judah’s primogeniture to the latter. Thus, he says that “[t]he importance of Genesis 38 for the Joseph narrative . . . is that it contributes materially to the story of how Judah achieves the status of first-born (176).”
leaves (virtually) nothing to be explained extrinsically (e.g., the repetitiveness stems from a conflation of sources)”¹⁰⁷ because it takes the coherence of the text for granted. The literary methods take the unity of the text for granted, thus often failing to assess the intentions of the redactors when they insert certain materials into the existing texts for thematic/theological purposes. As Barton puts it, “newer movements in the 1980s such as canonical criticism and structuralism, which shared its interest in the ‘final form’ of biblical texts . . . [are] less concerned to derive this from the deliberate intention of one or more redactors.”¹⁰⁸ In this respect, although this approach makes important gains, it seems to be inadequate for the discussion of the deliberate purposes of the redactional materials within their present context because it tends to choose selectively often minor thematic/theological themes at the expense of other important thematic elements.

4. Redaction-critical Approaches

As the notion of redactors derives from the recognition that the Pentateuch is compiled from several disparate sources, redaction criticism is a by-product of the analyses of literary criticisms such as source-critical, form and traditio-historical criticisms. As J. Barton puts it, “the discovery of ‘redactors’ in the OT belongs to classical source criticism.”¹⁰⁹ But source criticism, form criticism, and traditio-historical criticism regard the work of the redactors as unimportant, as to them “redactors were not seen as creative editors.”¹¹⁰ This view of the redactors or redactional materials comes from “the preoccupation with historical originality and purity . . . [which] caused the early source

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¹⁰⁷ Noble, The Canonical Approach, 162.
¹⁰⁹ Barton, “Redaction Criticism,” 644.
critics to view the work of redactors as a species of textual corruption.”111 In like manner, form criticism considers the transformation from oral traditions to written texts as redaction, and “according to the early form critics, this transformation was in no way creative, but merely preservative.”112 This transformation, that is, redaction, was regarded as a tragedy by early form critics because written texts were generally considered to have distorted original and creative oral materials.113 Therefore, redactional materials, as discovered by source criticism, form criticism, and traditio-historical criticism, are not considered to be important, but rather a product of “scissors and paste.”114

After the Second World War, some Old Testament scholars began to approach the redactional materials in different ways.115 With this approach, the term “redaction” began to be understood in very different ways from the previous literary criticisms. Eventually, some scholars came to realize that the amalgamation of written documents, that is redaction, concerns much more than "mere ‘scissors and paste’ work, but flowed out of a profound interpretative mindset.”116 Redaction criticism is still closely correlated to the source, form-critical, and traditio-historical criticisms because “it makes sense to practice

112 Stone, “Redaction Criticism,” 80.
113 Ibid.
114 Barton, “Redaction Criticism,” 644.
115 Barton, “Redaction Criticism,” 644-45. John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay, Biblical Exegesis, 106, also explain that the term redaction criticism was “coined by a New Testament scholar in the 1950s, . . . and is later applied to Old Testament studies.”
116 Stone, “Redaction Criticism,” 81. Barton, “Redaction Criticism,” 644-55, also says, “the sense of a renewed respect for the text in its finished shape . . . [which] was often combined with a theological commitment to the Bible in its canonical form.” Similarly, Jr. Dan O. Via, Editor’s Foreword,” to What is Redaction Criticism? (GBS; Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1969), vi-vii, also says that the aim of redaction-critical analysis is “to identify the theological motives that were at work in composing a finished text, and to elucidate the theological point of view expressed in and through the composition.”
redaction criticism only when it is certain that a book is composite in character.”117 However, redaction criticism can account for the theological motives expressed in and through the redactional materials as it sees the theological interpretative mindset underlying the materials, without losing the composite character of the text. In this respect, redactional approach is a corrective to the previous types of criticism, with which the redactional materials are regarded as being non-related or at best loosely connected to such original materials as the original Joseph story, thus accounting for integral parts of the Joseph narrative.

Although views of the scope of the original Joseph story vary from scholar to scholar, there is a wide consensus that the original Joseph story consists of at least Genesis 37; 39-45.118 For this reason, in this dissertation, I will use the expression, “the original Joseph story,” to refer to Genesis 37; 39-45 and “the redactional materials” to refer to Genesis 38; 46-50. In light of this consensus and in view of the fact that my purpose is not to identify redactional levels but rather to argue that the redactional materials are thematically integral to both the original Joseph and Jacob narratives, I will assume that Genesis 38 and 46-50 are secondary to Genesis 37 and 39-45. What follows then is an unabashedly robust (and thus best-case-scenario) consideration of the redactional materials, based on the indisputable consensus regarding the core. Although it is not my purpose to reopen the question of the redaction of the Joseph narrative (apart from arguing for its integrative and coherent nature), neither can the phenomenon be

117 Barton, “Redaction Criticism,” 645.
118 Cf. Blum, Die Komposition, 246, argues for Gen 41:50-52 as the non-original Joseph story, “So hat Donner gezeigt, daß die Notizen über die Geburt der josephsöhne in 41.50-52 erstens das Ka 48 vorbereiten, das seinerseits, wie noch zu zeigen sein wird, außerhalb der Josephgeschichte im engeren Sinne steht, zweitens deutlich in den nahtlosen Erzählzusammenhang 41, 49.53f eingeschoben sind.”
simply accepted without any justification. In what follows then, I will briefly rehearse the case for distinguishing the core of the Joseph story from its additions.

4.1 The Composite but Unified Character of the Joseph Narrative

It has been argued by others that the redactional materials (Genesis 38; 46-50) come from different sources or traditions and have been added to the original Joseph story, because they are distinct in style from the original Joseph story. Although both the original Joseph story and the redactional materials contain the Abrahamic promise theme,\(^\text{119}\) they present it in very different ways. In the redactional materials, for example, "God communicates the complete list of Abrahamic promises such as land, progeny, nations, and blessing directly to a human agent."\(^\text{120}\) However, in the original Joseph story, the promise elements are only partially presented, and God never directly communicates them to a human agent. In addition, as many scholars have also pointed out, Joseph appears to be the main character throughout the original Joseph story, thus taking a leading role in the development of the story line, whereas Joseph either does not appear or only supposedly present in the redactional materials.\(^\text{121}\) These differences suggest that the redactional materials come from different sources or traditions, and have been added by one or more redactors.

There are other indications that the Joseph narrative as a whole is a composite literary work. Barton puts forward at least five principles to detect redactional traces.\(^\text{122}\) One of them is the existence of link passages which cannot be assigned to any of the

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\(^{119}\) The presence of the promise elements in the original Joseph story will be discussed in Chapter Three.

\(^{120}\) See Fritsgh, “God Was With Him,” 21; Noth, A History of Pentateuchal Traditions, 208-13; Speiser, Genesis, 292; Arnold, Genesis, 316; von Rad, Genesis, 433, 439; Davidson, Genesis, 314; Wilson, Joseph, Wise and Otherwise, 237-72.

\(^{121}\) Westermann, Genesis 37-50, 22, says, “All P passages deal with Jacob, even through Joseph is mentioned often in them. P thereby confirms that chs. 46-50, without the texts that belong to the conclusion of the Joseph story, are part of the Jacob narrative”; Rendsburg, The Redaction of Genesis, 80, refers to Gen 38:1-30 and 49:1-28 as texts where Joseph is absent and nominally present respectively.

\(^{122}\) Barton, “Redaction Criticism,” 645-47.
main sources (J, E, D and P) of a particular passage, but must be assumed to have come into being as part of the process of editing. Materials like this can only be ascribed to the redactor, and represent an attempt to make the text read smoothly, integrating the original separate sources into a coherent narrative. Barton presents Genesis 26, a story about Isaac and Rebekah at the court of the Philistine king Abimelech, as an example. As Barton points out, “This story is clearly a version of the same incident related twice about Abraham and Sarah (Gen 12:10-20 and Gen 20).” 123 Whoever combined the sources that make up the book of Genesis appears to have realized that the reader might be disturbed if such similar incidents were retold without explanation. Thus, he begins the story as follows: “Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham (26:1).” This verse would not be necessary if the story formed an independent unit. But the verse is needed because it has been inserted, thus making the narrative flow more efficiently. 124

Similar redactional linking passages are detected in the Joseph story: “at that time” in Gen 38:1, וַיְיהִי בָעֵת הַהִוא, and “after these things” in Gen 48:1, וַיְיהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה. These show that these chapters may originally have been independent traditions. However, at the same time, these traditions are integral constituent parts of Genesis 37-50, as many scholars have discussed. 125 For example, as F. W. Golka points out, “already the Talmudic sages noted the parallel provided by the word hakkaer-na (b. Sota 10b and Gen Rabba 84 and 85).” 126 In the same way, the occurrence of the phrase “after these things”

123 Barton, “Redaction Criticism,” 646.
124 Barton, “Redaction Criticism,” 646.
125 The interconnections between the redactional materials and the original Joseph story will be further discussed in detail in Chapter Two, Section 1. “Integral Interconnectedness of the Redactional Materials (Genesis 38:46-50) with the Original Joseph Story and Among Themselves.”
in Gen 48:1 indicates the connectedness between what precedes and what follows this phrase. These linking passages indicate that these chapters not only come from different sources or traditions, but also are meant to be read as integral parts of the narratives in the surrounding chapters.127

Barton also argues for the existence of meaningful redactional insertions, which can have a profound effect on the meaning of the text. As an example he cites Hosea 14:10, “Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them; for the ways of the Lord are right, and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them,” in that it may be argued that this saying has an important retrospective effect on the whole book to which it forms the conclusion.128 This kind of thematic/theological interpretive comments are present in the redactional materials of the Joseph narrative. In Gen 46:1-7, as Westermann points out, “the highly personal promise to Jacob that Joseph will close his eyes when he dies (46:4b) . . . is meant to link the far-reaching promise to the patriarchs with the Joseph story (cf. 45:28; 46:30; also 15:13-16).”129 In addition, the reference to Pharaoh’s wagons, בעגלות אשר־שלח פרעה לשאת אתו, in Gen 46:5, is clearly meant to connect this passage directly to the preceding account of Pharaoh’s wagons in Gen 45:19. This indicates that the journey of Jacob’s family to Egypt in Gen 46 is intended to be read as a continuous story of the departure set out by Joseph and Pharaoh in Gen 45:9-28.

127 Similar linking passages are detected through the rest of the redactional materials and they will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two.
128 Barton, “Redaction Criticism,” 646. Similarly, Barton deals with insertions which are explicitly interpretative as redactional traces: both Judges 2:6-26 and 2 Kings 17:7-41 give summaries of a section of the story that is being told, with comments on its significance from a theological point of view.
129 Westermann, Genesis 37-50, 305.
Furthermore, Gen 46:1-7 is intended to function not only to connect the chapter to the previous original Joseph story, but also to make sure the account of Jacob’s family moving to Egypt set out in the original Joseph story (Gen 45:9-28) is theologically interpreted. Joseph explains in Gen 45:5-8 that God is involved in the events so as to save Jacob’s family. Because of this belief, Joseph instructs his brothers to move to Egypt, bringing his whole family in Gen 45:9-28. Now the divine assurance that validates the departure of Jacob’s family for Egypt in Gen 46:3-4 supports Joseph’s explanation in Gen 45:9-28. In this respect, Gen 46:1-7 cannot be disregarded as unimportant in its present context of the Joseph narrative because it not only connects the following stories to the original Joseph story, but also has the theological interpretive purpose behind the account, although it is redactional. In fact, this nature of the redactional materials, which are not only connected to the original Joseph story, but also clearly theologically-oriented and interpretive in nature, is demonstrated throughout the rest of the redactional materials. We will discuss this further in Chapter Two.

In sum, with redaction criticism, which concerns the thematic/theological interpretive reason behind the redactional materials, we can appropriately understand the nature of the redactional materials in the Joseph narrative. Furthermore, with this approach, the strands of both the Jacob and the Joseph narratives in Genesis 46-50 can be appropriately explained.

4.2 Both Jacob and Joseph Stories Reflected in Gen 46:1-50:26

Many scholars have observed elements of the Jacob narrative strand in the redactional materials (Genesis 38; 46-50), especially Genesis 46-50. Note for example what C. Amos states about the redactional materials to the Joseph story:
Yet this section of Genesis [i.e. the original Joseph story] also has a character distinct from any other in the book. It is a more cohesive and sustained narrative, punctured (ruined) only by a few episodes (e.g., Judah and Tamar, 38:1-30; the vision of Jacob and the list of his descendants, 46:1-27; the Blessing of Jacob, 49:1-27) that feel as though they have stepped out of chapters 12-36. 130

Amos continues:

In these chapters [Gen 46:1-50:26] Jacob and Joseph seem to jostle for control of the narrative. Unlike chapters 42-45 where events are largely orchestrated by Joseph, here Jacob (or perhaps rather ‘Israel’) seeks the opportunity to offer a different perspective which may at times conflict with Joseph’s priorities. Some of these chapters (e.g., 46.1-27; 47.27-48.22) remind us of earlier sections of Genesis. Their style, and particularly their view of God’s way of working with human beings, contrast with perceptions in other parts of chapters 37-50. 131

In fact, the amalgamation of strands of both the Jacob and the Joseph narratives is shown throughout Genesis 46-50. For instance, Genesis 48 recounts Jacob’s adoption of Joseph’s two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, thus indicating both Jacob and Joseph playing a crucial role. 132 The similar amalgamation of strands of both the Jacob and the Joseph narratives can be seen in the blessing of Jacob to the twelve tribes of Israel in Gen 49. This chapter is connected with the Jacob narrative in that it refers to the misdeeds of Simeon and Levi (34:25-31) and of Reuben (35:21-22). On the other hand, the Joseph narrative strand cannot be ignored as the blessing given to Joseph (49:22-26) is an important part of the chapter. 133

However, these strands of both the Jacob narrative and the Joseph narrative in Genesis 46-50 have not been satisfactorily explained. For instance, with the tradition-historical approach, some scholars have argued that these chapters are the conclusion of

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131 Amos, The Book of Genesis, 260.
132 Sarna, Genesis, 325, points out that Manasseh and Ephraim are elevated to full membership in the Israelite tribal league.
133 As discussed above, this chapter cannot be separated from the Joseph story because the question of the main issue, “who will rule over” (37:8), in the Joseph story is finally answered in Gen 49:8-12.
the Jacob narrative, thus coming from the Jacob tradition. For instance, commenting on Gen 47:28-50:14, Coats argues, it belongs to the “tradition about Jacob’s death in Egypt,”134 not to the Joseph story. To him, the existence of the Jacob tradition in these chapters is merely to connect the Joseph story to the Jacob narrative. This can be seen in Coats’ argument, “the position of the death report for Jacob in Genesis 49 suggests that the Joseph tradition has been bound into the structure of the Jacob saga.”135 In a similar way, Westermann argues that Genesis 38 and parts of 46-50 are “the conclusion of a Jacob narrative inasmuch as they all concern Jacob”136 and that “the Joseph story in the stricter sense [Genesis 37; parts of 46-40] is an insertion into the Jacob story, that it rose independently out of it, and that it was artistically interwoven with it in chs. 37 and 46-47.”137 The views, which regard Genesis 46-50 as belonging to the Jacob tradition, explain away the existence of the Joseph narrative strands in the chapters through the claim that they are intended merely and loosely to bind the Joseph story to the Jacob narrative. This explanation that Genesis 46-50 are to loosely bind the Joseph story to the Jacob story is debatable. In my view, the redactional materials are not only related to the

134 See Coats, From Canaan to Egypt, 7-8; Coats, “Redactional Unity in Genesis 37-50,” 15. Coats [ibid.] regards the remaining materials as denouement recapitulation (50:15-21),” and “appendix (50:22-26)” as well as “Judah and Tamar story (38:1-30)” as heterogeneous elements disrupting the structural unity of the Joseph story.

135 Coats, “Joseph, Son of Jacob,” 977.

136 Westermann, Genesis 37-50, 22. When it comes to Genesis 38 and 49, Westermann argues for their late insertions into the Jacob narrative. According to him, these insertions occurred before the connection of the Jacob narrative with the Joseph story. Some scholars also argue for the change of the main characters from Joseph to Jacob and his twelve sons who are the main characters while Joseph is merely one of them as evidence of these materials as belonging to the Jacob tradition. See Longacre, Joseph, 23, 54; Horst Seebass, “The Joseph Story, Genesis 48 and the Canonical Process,” JSOT 35 (1986): 29; Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 468.

137 Westermann, Genesis 37-50, 23. On the other hand, however, Westermann argues that the Joseph story is an expansion of the Jacob narrative by the author, contradicting himself. Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 461-62, also argues that Gen 48:2-50:14 does not belong to the Joseph story, but is put into the present position as a conclusion of the Jacob narrative by the redactor. According to Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 345, this passage indicates that Gen 25:19-50:26 is one large story, the biography of Jacob and it is composed of two parts, “the family history of Isaac” (Gen 25:19-35:29) and “the family history of Jacob” (Gen 37:2-50:26).
Jacob narrative, but also to the original Joseph story, and furthermore their connections to
the original Joseph story are not loose, but integral.

According to Barton, redaction criticism attempts to explain the way in which the
redactors arranged materials of biblical books into the order in which we now find them.
For example, the book of Judges manifests an intentional handling of its basic source
materials “where one can scarcely doubt that a redactor is responsible for most of the
effect the book now makes on the reader.” 138 The schematic arrangement is shown in that
the stories about various tribal heroes are illustrated in the same pattern: “the Israelites sin,
are subjugated by their enemies, cry to God, and are saved by the intervention of a
‘judge,’ after which they enjoy a period of ‘rest.’” 139 One can scarcely doubt that a
redactor is responsible for most of the effect the book now makes on the reader. In a
similar way, with redaction criticism, we can account for the rationale for the redactional
materials, which are interwoven with both the Jacob narrative and the original Joseph
story. 140 In other words, with the help of redaction criticism, which emphasizes the
theological side of the different sources or traditions, we are able to ask why the
redactional materials were modified and connected both to the Jacob narrative and the
original Joseph story.

In sum, redaction criticism is a useful tool in analyzing the thematic/theological
motivations behind the shape of the Joseph narrative, which is a composite work but at
the same time a unified story, by examining why and how the final redactor put the
redactional materials in their present positions. Despite the fact that redaction criticism is
a useful tool for the Joseph narrative, the purpose of this dissertation is not to undertake a

138 Barton, “Redaction Criticism,” 647.
139 Barton, “Redaction Criticism,” 647.
140 Via, “Editor’s Foreword,” vi-vii.
serious redactional history of the Joseph narrative. Rather, the major interest of this
dissertation is to argue from the contents of the final form that these so-called redactional
materials (Genesis 38; 46-50) are not so much loose appendages pertaining only to the
Jacob narrative, but well integrated thematically to both the Jacob and the Joseph
narratives. Now we must turn to a careful examination of the nature of the redactional
materials with their interconnections both to the Jacob and the original Joseph narratives.
Chapter Two:
Integral Redactional Unity of the Joseph Narrative as a Whole (Gen 37:2-50:26) and the Function and Purpose of the Redactional Materials (Genesis 38; 46-50)

As discussed above, most scholars have agreed that most of the material apart from Genesis 37; 39-45 contains editorial or redactional insertions to the original Joseph story. Most scholars have further argued that the redactional materials have been inserted into the original Joseph story with little or no thematic or theological connections, having been "intended at most only to function to integrate the original Joseph story into the larger narrative." In other words, the redactional materials have usually been regarded as having been inserted haphazardly into the original Joseph story. However, what follows argues that the redactional materials have been deliberately selected with an exegetically meaningful and significant purpose, although they may have come from different sources or traditions. We must therefore examine the notion of the integral literary and thematic/theological interconnectedness of the redactional material to the original Joseph story and within itself.

1. Integral Interconnectedness of the Redactional Materials (Genesis 38; 46-50) with the Original Joseph Story and Among Themselves

There are diverse ways in which the Joseph story is connected with the redactional materials. Firstly, there are occasions when the text of the redactional materials refers to the people, places and events in the rest of the Joseph narrative. Secondly, there are a

\[141\] For example, Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 461-62, asserts that Genesis 48:2-50:14 does not belong to the Joseph story, but is put into the present position as a conclusion of the Jacob narrative by the redactor. Similarly, Westermann, *Genesis 37-50*, 479-90, argues that Genesis 46-50 is mainly an original Jacob tradition because it has no immediate connection to the Joseph story of Genesis 37-45 ff. Thus, Van Seters, *Prologue to History*, 313-14, points out that the distinct materials have been disregarded as haphazard.

\[142\] Coats, “Redactional Unity in Genesis 37-50,” 15.
number of themes, motifs, literary devices, and characters shared between the redactional materials and the Joseph story, including the theme (as a literary pattern) of promises and fulfillment.\textsuperscript{143}

1.1 The Interconnectedness of Genesis 38 to the Original Joseph Story and to Other Redactional Materials

Most biblical critics have insisted that Genesis 38, the story of Judah and Tamar, is a completely independent unit based on recognition of the continuation between Gen 37:36 and 39:1, where the latter reiterates the first with regards to Joseph’s descent to Egypt and Potiphar’s purchase of him:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
Gen 37:36 & The Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, one of the Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard. \\
Gen 39:1 & Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there.
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Even though in these verses there exists a certain difference concerning the agents, the Midianites and the Ishmaelites, Gen 39:1 certainly repeats Gen 37:36. This reinforces many interpreters' views of Genesis 38 as an intrusive chapter.\textsuperscript{144} Furthermore, Joseph is completely absent from this chapter. However, more recently, as R. J. Clifford puts it, “a consensus is building that the chapter is not a foreign body, as many had thought; rather,
it contributes to the story of the sons of Jacob.”\textsuperscript{145} In what follows, studies on the links of Genesis 38 to the Joseph narrative will be discussed.

1.1.1 Genesis 38 in Its Links to the Immediate Context

Many scholars have noted that Genesis 38 has connections with Genesis 37 and further with Genesis 39 with the motifs of garment and recognition, thus finding its links to the immediate context. After selling Joseph according to Judah’s proposition (Gen 37:26-27), the brothers take Joseph’s robe, dip it in the blood of a goat in Gen 37:31 (שעיר עזים ויטבלו אתכתנת הבמות) and bring it to their father Jacob. They say to Jacob, “Please, recognize (הַכֶּר־נָא) whether it is your son’s robe or not. And he recognized (וַיַכִיר) it (Gen 37:32-33).” This deception parallels Tamar’s scheme in Genesis 38. Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute to entice Judah, and demands the pledge of his seal, cord, and staff which are to be redeemed by a young goat (38:17 גְדִי־עִזִים). A few months later, when Tamar becomes pregnant, she sends a message with the pledge to Judah, “Please, recognize (הַכֶּר־נָא), to whom these seal, cord and staff belong (38:25)” and Judah recognizes (וַיַכֵר) them (38:26). As R. Alter points out, we thus have “the exact recurrence at the climax of Tamar’s story of the formula of recognition, haker-na and vayaker, used before with Jacob and his sons.”\textsuperscript{146} These parallels between Genesis 38 and its surrounding chapters are well summarized by J. R. Huddlestun:

In all three chapters [i.e. Genesis 37, 38, and 39], garments play a pivotal role in plot development as markers of status and authority by which identities are revealed or concealed. . . . [This] reading of Genesis 37-39 suggests that, as far as the garment motif is concerned, the Judah/Tamar episode − whatever its literary history, be it secondary embellishment, seamlessly stitched interlude, or awkward intrusion—merits consideration as a significant component alongside chs. 37, 39 and 41, and one that

\textsuperscript{146} Robert Alter, The Art of Biblical Narrative (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 10. Alter further points out, “The same verb, moreover, will play a crucial thematic role in the denouement of the Joseph story when he confronts his brothers in Egypt, he recognizing them, they failing to recognize them.”
demonstratively shapes in various ways the reader’s perception of garment-related events in these chapters and beyond. In this statement, Huddlestun demonstrates that with the motif of garment and recognition Genesis 38 is tightly linked to its immediate context of Genesis 37 and 39.

In a similar vein, J. P. Fokkelman contends that “comparison between 37:31-34 and the central event plus denouement in ch. 38 are by now obvious: deception by means of clothing, recognition, the death aspect (real to Jacob, a threat to Tamar, imposed as a verdict by Judah).” Even Blum, who regards Genesis 38 as an having been inserted later into the Joseph narrative, recognizes the links between Genesis 38 and Genesis 37, based on the identical wording in Gen 38:25-26 and Gen 37:32-33: “vielmehr ist sie am ehesten damit zu erklären, daß der text in 37, 32f, der sich vom inhalt her dazu anbot, in anlehnung an 38,25f neu gestaltet wurde.” These interpreters’ discussions of the links of Genesis 38 with its immediate context confirm the integrity of the chapter within the Joseph narrative in its present position. This matter is articulated well by Alter: “This precise recurrence of the verb in identical forms at the ends of Genesis 37 and 38

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148 Wilfred Warning, “Terminological Patterns and Genesis 38,” *AUSS* 38:2 (2000): 303-04, points out that “the garment motifs seemingly plays a significant role” in Genesis 38 and its immediate context with the recognition of the recurring Hebrew word בּגּד (Genesis 37:29; Genesis 38:14, 19; Genesis 39:12, 13, 15, 16, 18; Genesis 41:42); Sarna, *Genesis*, 263-64, points out the connections of Genesis 38 to the Joseph story by observing the recurring key words creating verbal links between Genesis 38 and its preceding and following chapters (Genesis 37, 39, 43, and 44); Umberto Cassuto, “The Story of Judah and Tamar” in *Biblical and Oriental Studies* (trans. I. Abrahams; Magnes Press: Jerusalem, 1973), 30-31, also points out the parallel between Genesis 37:32-33 and 38:25-26; Golka, “Genesis 37-50,” 155, argues that “Genesis 38 is modeled on the selling of Joseph in ch. 37.”
149 Fokkelman, “Genesis 37 and 38,” 178; Wilson, *Joseph, Wise and Otherwise*, 87-91, says that Genesis 38 is the story of the deceiver being deceived: as the brothers deceive their father Jacob about Joseph death (37:32-35), so Judah deceives Tamar withholding Shelah from her (38:11) and is deceived by Tamar.
150 Blum, *Die Komposition*, 245. Likewise, even Michael D. Coogan, who regards the story of Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38) as a digression from the Joseph story, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 76, admits that the story “contain[s] themes found both in the main narrative and the Joseph story, including deception by clothing, and especially the birth of twins, in which the younger supersedes the older, as in the case of Jacob and Esau (Gen 25. 19-26).”
respectively is manifestly the result not of some automatic mechanism of interpolating traditional materials but of careful splicing of sources by a brilliant literary artist."  

1.1.2 **Genesis 38 as a Microcosm of the Original Joseph Story**

Some scholars have attempted to understand Genesis 38 in its relation to the wider context as a microcosm of the Joseph narrative as a whole. Wilson, for example, argues that Genesis 38 is "a microcosm of the Joseph story in that Genesis 38 mirrors the whole Joseph story in various ways: thematic parallels, 'life emerging from death,' 'God vindicates the wronged righteous person,' and 'the deceiver, deceived'" as well as structural parallels. In a similar way but taking a different direction, P. F. Lockwood asserts that Genesis 38 is a microcosm of the Joseph narrative in that Judah’s character transformation parallels the brothers’ changed attitude to Joseph in their reunion. Thus,

151 Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 10. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 10-11, comments on the note in the Midrash on this matter, “It is instructive that the two verbal cues indicating the connection between the story of the selling of Joseph and the story of Tamar and Judah were duly noted more than 1500 years ago in the Midrash: ‘The Holy One Praised be He said to Judah, ‘You deceived your father with a kid. By your life, Tamar will deceive you with a kid’ . . . The Holy One Praised be He said to Judah, ‘You said to your father, haker-na. By your life, Tamar will say to you, haker-na (Bereshit Rabba 84:11, 12). This instance may suggest that in many cases a literary student of the Bible has more to learn from the traditional commentaries than from modern scholarship”

152 Wilson, *Joseph, Wise and Otherwise*, 87-91. Wilson further points out that the structure of chapter 38 is analogous to that of the Joseph story as a whole: the larger family picture (37 to 38:1-11); the main human character’s initiatives (39-47 to 38:12-26); and a summary of the subsequent descendents’ genealogy (46:8-27 and 48-50 to 38:27-30). The issue of life emerging from death in chapter 38 is analogous to that of the Joseph story as a whole: the death of Judah’s wife and his sons, Er and Onan (38) and Joseph’s death (37:32-35) and the crisis of famine (42:2); new lives through Tamar’s plot (38:27-30) and lives preserved through Joseph (45:5,7); and the symbol of continuing life with a list of descendents (38:27-30 and 48-49). God vindicates the righteous victim: as God helped Tamar to succeed in her scheme, so He helped Joseph (45:5-8; 50:20). Similarly, Aaron Wildavsky, “Survival Must not be Gained Through Sin: The Moral of the Joseph Stories Prefigured Through Judah and Tamar,” *JSOT* 62 (1994): 37-48, asserts that the characterization of Judah in Genesis 38 is a microcosm of the Joseph story in that both attempt to survive through sin and thus, are described as negative examples. He continues, Judah is a model figure of Joseph in that Judah’s moral sin described in Genesis 38 is analogous to Joseph’s sin of assimilation.

he says that Genesis 38 is “the Joseph story in a nutshell” in that “[a]s Joseph is to his brothers, so Tamar is to Judah.”

In this way, many scholars have demonstrated the interconnectedness of Genesis 38 with the Joseph narrative in that it is a microcosm of the Joseph narrative as a whole, thus strongly suggesting its integrity in its present position.

1.1.3 Genesis 38 in Its Links to Gen 44:18-34 and Genesis 49 as a Judah-focused Story

There are two sections where Judah is depicted as a main character in the Joseph narrative as a whole. They are Genesis 38 and Gen 44:18-34. However, Judah is depicted in drastically different ways in these passages. In Genesis 38 Judah is described as a selfish man who is willing to sacrifice the right of his daughter-in-law for the life of his own sons. But in Gen 44:18-34 Judah has been transformed into a person who is willing...

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154 Lockwood, “Tamar’s Place,” 42. Similarly, Donald A. Seybold, “Paradox and Symmetry in the Joseph Narrative,” in Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives, Vol. II (ed. K. R.R. Gros Louis and J. S. Ackerman; Nashville: Abingdon, 1974), 59-61, regards Genesis 38 as presenting “a paradox which mirrors those of the larger narrative . . . . [This] serves to recast and reinforce some major aspects of the Joseph narrative.” This paradox is demonstrated in that, as Tamar’s unnatural way of preserving the family in Genesis 38 becomes natural, as proven in Judah’s confession (38:26), so the unnatural family relationships in Joseph’s dreams become natural because through Joseph the whole family survived the famine. Extending the context of Genesis 38 to the Jacob narrative as well as the Joseph story, Paul R. Noble, “Esau, Tamar, and Joseph: Criteria for Identifying Inner-biblical Allusions,” VT 52 (2002): 219-52, asserts that the relational dynamic of Judah and Tamar contributes to the understanding of the stories of Jacob and Esau and of Joseph and his brothers. Noble, “Esau, Tamar, and Joseph,” 233, argues that the common plot between Genesis 38 and the stories of Jacob and Esau and of Joseph and his brothers is “one of the principal characters (Esau, Tamar, and Joseph, respectively) . . . wronged by another of the principals (Jacob, Judah, and Joseph’s brothers),” and a subsequent separation and a reconciliation.

to sacrifice his own life for his old father Jacob.\textsuperscript{156} As many scholars have argued, Judah’s experience in Genesis 38, when read in its context, can be read as transforming his character, enabling him to be a selfless and caring person in Gen 44:18-34. This demonstrates that Genesis 38 has deliberate literary links to Gen 44:18-34,\textsuperscript{157} as Wenham summarizes:

Yet what a different Judah we meet in 44:18-34. Here he appeals for Benjamin’s release with great warmth and tenderness, describing with great love his father’s suffering since Joseph’s disappearance and foreseeing his sorrowful death if Benjamin is not allowed to return to Canaan. He concludes by offering to stay as a slave in place of Benjamin. Clearly, Judah is a changed man, and this story shows the beginning of the transformation when he admits “She is in the right, not I” (38:26). Without this account of Tamar putting her father-in-law to shame, we should be hard pressed to explain the change in his character. And in its biographical sketches, character change is what Genesis is all about: Abram becomes Abraham; Jacob becomes Israel. Particularly in Jacob’s family we see examples of character change: Reuben, violator of his father’s concubine, later shows great concern for both Joseph and his father, while the upstart cocky Joseph becomes the wise statesman who forgives his brothers. Thus this chapter has a most important role in clarifying the course of the subsequent narrative; without it we should find its development inexplicable.\textsuperscript{158}

In this statement, Wenham shows that the transformation of Judah’s character in Gen 44:18-34 cannot be explained without Genesis 38. Similarly, Clifford argues that Judah’s experience in Genesis 38 enables him to lead Joseph to realization in Gen 45:4-8\textsuperscript{159} that he should accept his responsibility for his family.\textsuperscript{160} Thus, these interpreters’ discussions demonstrate that Genesis 38 is closely connected, not only with what precedes it (Genesis

\textsuperscript{156} See Longacre, \textit{Joseph}, 55.
\textsuperscript{157} Longacre, \textit{Joseph}, 53, says that Gen 44:18-34 depicts this changed Judah as the one having arrived at a moral earnestness and sacrificial responsibility that qualifies him for preeminence in Gen 49:22-26.
\textsuperscript{158} Wenham, \textit{Genesis 16-50}, 364.
\textsuperscript{159} Clifford, “Genesis 38,” 519-32.
\textsuperscript{160} The argument that Judah has affected Joseph’s decision to reveal himself in Genesis 45 will be discussed in Chapter Four, Section 5.3 “The Rejected/ Non-chosen as the Medium for Reconciliation.”
37) and follows it (Genesis 39), but also with its wider context (Gen 44:18-34).\textsuperscript{161} The purposeful links between Genesis 38 and Gen 44:18-34 are further supported by the word, “pledge” (38:18, 20; 44:32; cf. 43:9, וּנֶּעֶרְבִּים and עָרַב), exclusively occurring in these passages. In Genesis 38, Judah gives a pledge, עָרַב, to Tamar (38:18, 20) and in Gen 44:32, Judah explains that he pledges, עָרַב, Benjamin’s safety. The word “pledge” (38:18, 20; 44:32; cf. 43:9, וּנֶּעֶרְבִּים) occurs only in these three sections in the book of Genesis and they all appear in connection with Judah.

Having established the links of Genesis 38 to Gen 44:18-34, some scholars have further argued for linking of Genesis 38 and Gen 44:18-34 to Gen 49:22-26, in that the first two foreshadow the preeminence of Judah in the latter.\textsuperscript{162} According to Steinmetz, "the continuation of the blessing in a context of family violence continues until in Genesis 38 Tamar teaches Judah a lesson about how to pass on the future without the possibility of threat and violence."\textsuperscript{163} From this lesson, Judah teaches his father Jacob and his brothers by offering himself for the sake of Benjamin (43:9; 44:16). Thus, “Jacob recognizes, as he blesses all his sons at the end of his life (chs. 48, 49), that through the house of Judah a nation will be built—a nation of which every member has a part in a common destiny.”\textsuperscript{164} In this way, Steinmetz argues for the connection of Genesis 38 to Gen 44:18-34 and to Gen 49:22-26.\textsuperscript{165}

\textsuperscript{161} Amos, \textit{The Book of Genesis}, 237, also argues that Genesis 38 “offers an interlude that helps us to understand the development of the character of Judah between chapters 37 (when he is the ‘bad guy’!) and 44:18-34 when his offer of self-sacrifice facilities the reconciliation of Joseph and the other brothers.”

\textsuperscript{162} See Devora Steinmetz, \textit{From Father to Son: Kinship, Conflict, and Continuity in Genesis} (LCBI; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 44. For instance, Steinmetz, \textit{From Father to Son}, 46-67, sees succession as a significant theme in Genesis 12-50, notes that the patriarchal succession and blessing will continue through Abraham’s descendants such as Isaac and Jacob, but not without violence.

\textsuperscript{163} Steinmetz, \textit{From Father to Son}, 44.

\textsuperscript{164} Steinmetz, \textit{From Father to Son}, 49.

\textsuperscript{165} Some scholars explained the links of Genesis 49 to the preceding sections in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives in that Genesis 49 refers back to people and events of the two stories (Genesis 34; 35:22; 38; 48).
Similarly but taking a different direction, D. M. Carr argues for the link of Genesis 38 to Gen 49:1b-28:

Together, Genesis 38 and 49:1b-28 redirect the surrounding Joseph story; whereas the context develops a narrative world where Joseph’s present dominance is divinely destined, these insertions at the beginning (Gen 38) and end (Gen 49:1b-28) of the Joseph story implicitly relativize this picture by predicting Judah’s future dominance over his brothers, including Joseph. The claims of the surrounding narrative for Joseph are left in place, but they are overcome by being relegated to a narrative past: Joseph was dominant, but in the future Judah will be the one who ends up on top (Gen 49:8, 10).

In this statement, Carr goes so far as to assert that the whole of chapter 49 focuses on Judah’s future prominence, especially the first three accounts in Gen 49:3-7, which justify his prominence by recounting the three oldest brothers’ misdeeds. As to the following eight blessings, Carr attempts to justify his position by appealing to the features of Gen 49:3-12 which are distinct from the rest of the eight blessings: the first follow the birth order in Gen 29:31-35 while the latter diverge from it in Gen 29:31-30:24. Also, the first concerns the matters of the guilt or innocence of the brothers referring to the preceding episodes while the latter do not. Although this reading of Genesis 49 tends to leave much of the chapter unexplained, especially the blessing of Joseph in Gen 49:8-12, Carr’s discussion of the links between Genesis 38 and 49 is worth noting. All these

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See Edwin M. Good, “The ‘Blessing’ on Judah, Genesis 49:8-12,” *JBL* 82:4 (1963): 427-32; Calum M. Carmichael, “Some Sayings in Genesis 49,” *JBL* 88 (1969): 435-44. Similarly, Fokkelman, “Genesis 37 and 38,” 181, points out the connection among these chapters, “In ch. 38 [Judah] goes through a growth process that prepares and equips him for the difficult task ahead . . . This hard-won maturity lends authority to Judah’s speeches to his father in ch. 43 and to Joseph in ch. 44. The poetry of Genesis 49 underlines the prominent positions of Joseph and Judah among the brothers. . . . The many plays on sounds and words, the use of key words . . . link Genesis 38 to its immediate and wider contexts firmly keep[ing] this chapter in its place.”


168 In fact, scholars have pointed out that Genesis 49 describes the preeminence of both Joseph and Judah. For instance, Fokkelman, “Genesis 37 and 38,” 181, says, “Gen 49 underlines the prominent positions of Joseph and Judah amongst the brothers. Each brother gets one strophe (one to three full poetic lines) from the father who distributes blessings, except Judah and Joseph. They both get an entire stanza: vv. 8-12
comparisons of Genesis 38 to Gen 44:18-34 and to Gen 49:22-26 demonstrate elaborate and deliberate ingenuity, revealing the integrity within a coherent story line.

In sum, all these integral thematic links of the story of Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38 with the rest of the Joseph narrative demonstrate careful and deliberate coherency and integration.

1.2 The Interconnectedness of Gen 46:1-47:12 to the Original Joseph Story and to Other Redactional Materials

The interconnections of Gen 46:8-47:12 to the original Joseph story and the other redactional materials are made by the references both to common people and events in that it is described either as a fulfillment of the command in the original Joseph story or as promise to be fulfilled in the redactional materials.

1.2.1 Links of Gen 46:1-5 to Gen 47:27; Gen 48:21; Genesis 49; and Gen 50:1-14

As even Westermann, who regards Gen 46:1-7 as the conclusion of the Jacob narrative, and as having no thematic connection with the original Joseph story, admits, the promises in the passage are meant to link it with the original Joseph story.169

One of the promises in Gen 46:1-5 concerns Joseph’s burial of Jacob in Gen 46:4b, וַיִּשְׁתֶּה יִשָּׂעֲרֵךְ וּלְיַעֲבֹדךְ, and its fulfillment is cited explicitly in Gen 47:29-31; 49:29-33; and 50:1-14, which recount Joseph’s presence at Jacob’s deathbed and his burial by Joseph. The fulfillment of another promise element of bringing Jacob back to the land in

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169 Westermann, Genesis: Text and Interpretation, 304-05. Commenting on Genesis 47:5b-12, Bruce Vawter, Genesis: A New Reading (Garden City: Doubleday, 1997), 447, argues, “Having brought Israel to Egypt, the Redactor–or his sources, indeed–loses interest in pursuing the subject further. Instead, there has been appended an apparently totally unrelated section from J.”
46:4a is also implied in his burial place, Machpelah, in 50:1-14.\(^{170}\) Similarly, Amos points out, “Perhaps this [i.e. 46:4] refers in part to the return of Jacob’s body, after his death, to Canaan,”\(^{171}\) thus pointing to the links of Gen 46:4b to Gen 50:1-14. In any case, Jacob’s insistence on his arrangement for his own burial from Egypt to Canaan (47:29-31; 49:29-33; 50:1-14) indicates their interconnectedness with Gen 46:4 in that they foreshadow the fulfillment of the promise of coming back to the Promised Land. Another promise element in Gen 46:3 is to become a great nation. As Ross points out, the passage in Gen 47:27, which demonstrates Israelites becoming prosperous and multiplying greatly, points to the “beginning to grow into a great nation.”\(^{172}\) This promise of a great nation is reiterated in Gen 48:21 and implied to be fulfilled in Genesis 49 in that the nation Israel is mentioned in Gen 49:28.\(^{173}\) In this respect, within the promises and their fulfillment, Gen 46:1-5 is interwoven with the chapters that follow.

In sum, the passage in Genesis 46:1-5 is tightly interwoven both with the original Joseph story and with some of the redactional materials. Genesis 46:1-5 offers great insight into the development of the storyline of the original Joseph story by way of continuing the theme of the immigration of Jacob’s family set out in the story of Genesis 45. The passage in Gen 46:1-5 also functions as a trailer or preview for the following chapters because the fulfillment of the promises in Gen 46:1-5 are recounted or

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170 See Ron Pirson, The Lord of the Dreams: A Semantic and Literary Analysis of Genesis 37-50 (JSOTSUp 355; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 119. Prison points out that the fulfillment of this promise is implied in 50:1-14 although it may refer to the future event of the exodus of Jacob’s descendants.

171 Amos, The Book of Genesis, 261.

172 Allen Ross, Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of the Book of Genesis (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 687. Likewise, N. Steinberg, “Vayigash 44:18-47:27,” 274, says, “By referring to the thriving of ‘Israel’ rather than the individual Jacob, the text emphasizes that what was once a family of brothers (and sisters) and their father (and their mothers) has grown into a nation. (Compare at 46:1.)”

173 The promise element of nationhood in Genesis 49 will be further discussed in this chapter, Section 2.2.2 “Links between Genesis 49:1-50:1-14 (cf. 47:28-31); and Genesis 34; 35 within Abrahamic Promise of Nation, King, Land and Other Thematic Parallels.”
foreshadowed in the following chapters. This indicates that these chapters have been deliberately and carefully redacted, although this passage may have come from a different source from the original Joseph story and the following chapters.

1.2.2 Links of Gen 46:8-27 to Genesis 38; Gen 41:50-52; Gen 46:3; Gen 47:27; Gen 48:21 and Genesis 49

The genealogical list of Jacob’s descendants in Gen 46:8-27 lists the people who moved to Egypt. The reference to the specific incident of the death of Er and Onan in the genealogy in 46:12 also points to its connection to Genesis 38, where the incident is recounted. Among the list, there is also a reference to the birth of Manasseh and Ephraim in 46:20. This indicates the connection of this passage with the original Joseph story which reports the same event in 41:50-52, showing that these texts are related to each other. As Sarna points out, “the genealogy of Judah is repeated in 46:12 in a way that requires knowledge of 38:3-10, 29-30 in order for it to be understood.”\(^\text{174}\)

In addition to these links between Gen 46:8-27 and Genesis 38; 41:50-52, Gen 46:8-27 indicates its connections to its surrounding chapters. One of the promises given to Jacob in Gen 46:3-4 is making Jacob into a great nation. As discussed in the previous section, it is articulated to be fulfilled in Gen 47:27. This promise of making a great nation is also described to be prefatorily fulfilled in the genealogical list of Jacob’s descendants in Gen 46:8-27 by listing the survival number of Jacob’s family. In this respect, J. Kselman is right to point out that the genealogical list “links the Joseph narrative with its theme of Israel blessed, prolific, and prosperous in Egypt (47:27).”\(^\text{175}\)

As Alter points out, “the genealogical list indicates an inventor of his offspring, a large family already exhibiting

\(^{174}\) Sarna, Genesis, 264.
\(^{175}\) Kselman, “Genesis,” 115.
in embryo the configuration of the future tribes of Israel.”¹⁷⁶ In this respect, the genealogical list in Gen 46:7-28 is interconnected to its surrounding chapters (Gen 46:1-5; Gen 47:27; Gen 48:21; and Genesis 49) within the motif of the promise of nationhood.

1.2.3 Links of Gen 46:31-47:12 to Gen 45:10-11, 18-20; Gen 48:4 and to Gen 50:4-14

After this genealogy, Gen 46:31-47:12 recounts how, under Joseph’s instruction, Jacob’s family settles in the best part of the land of Egypt with the permission of Pharaoh. By referring to Pharaoh’s command to bring Joseph’s family to Egypt in Gen 45:17-20, Gen 47:11 affirms that this settlement in the best land in Egypt is the fulfillment of Pharaoh’s promise to give the best of the land of Egypt to Jacob’s family in Gen 45:20:

 đuổiכם אל־תחס על־כליכם כי־טוב כל־ארץ מצרים לכם הוא׃  
(Gen 45:20)

וישב יוסף את־אביו ואת־אחיו ויתן להם אחזה בארץ מצרים במיטב הארץ בארץ רעמססelah:  
(Gen 47:11)

The settlement of Jacob’s family in Goshen and their survival because of Joseph in Gen 47:11-12 are also the fulfillment of Joseph’s promise to his brothers in Gen 45:10-11.¹⁷⁷ In this way, the account of the settlement of Jacob’s family in Egypt in Gen 46:31-47:12 is interconnected with the original Joseph story (Gen 45:10-11, 18-20). This section is also connected with Gen 50:15-21.

The settlement account in Gen 46:31-47:12 shows how Joseph treats his family favorably compared with the Egyptians, who have to sell everything they have and even themselves into slavery (Gen 47:13-26).¹⁷⁸ Joseph’s special treatment of the Israelites in

¹⁷⁶ Alter, Genesis, 275. Clines, The Theme of the Pentateuch, 49, also points out that the genealogical list “means that the family has become established, and, barring drastic misfortunes” pointing to the multiplication of his descendants. Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 442, also points out, “Thus the nation of Israel represents the family of man in microcosm.”

¹⁷⁷ Kselman, “Genesis,” 115, says, “The concluding verses, 47:11-12, relate Joseph’s keeping of the promise to care for his family that he made in 45:1-11.”

¹⁷⁸ This will be further discussed in Chapter Four, section 5.1 “God’s (Promise of) Being with and Its Outcome: Successful Settlement and Gaining of the Property.”
relation to food is further articulated in Gen 50:15-21, thus indicating unity of thought of this section with Gen 50:15-21. In response to his brothers’ plea for “becoming Joseph’s slaves (50:18),” Joseph firmly rejects his brothers’ offer to become his slaves and replies to them that without any condition, he will surely keep providing for his brothers and their children (50:19-21). While Joseph accepts the Egyptians’ willing plea to become slaves (לָעַד, 47:19, 25), he sternly rejects his brothers’ willing plea for the same thing (לָעַד, 50:18). Instead, Joseph reassures his brothers that he will unconditionally continue to provide them with food.179

The interconnectedness of Gen 46:31-47:12 to Gen 50:4-14 is further demonstrated in terms of the roles of Pharaoh and of Joseph. In both passages, Pharaoh plays an important part in that he is the one who enables the events by giving permission for a place to live in Gen 47:1-12 and for a burial place in Gen 50:4-14. In both units, Joseph approaches Pharaoh to receive his permission for petitions. Both units are related to the place of settlement: Gen 47:1 concerns the land of the settlement of Jacob’s family in the best part of the land of Egypt and Gen 50:4-14 deals with the land of Jacob’s burial. In this way, both Gen 46:31 and Gen 50:4-14 deal with the land. Although Jacob’s family settled in the best part of the land of Egypt, the fact that the land of Egypt is not the land of their perpetual settlement is implied by Jacob’s insistence on his burial in the land of

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179 Recognizing the difference between the status of the Israelites and the Egyptians, Thomas L. Author Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue: A Literary, Historical, and Theological Commentary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 403, asserts that “even though all must serve Joseph’s Pharaoh, one group stays free – Israel.” Comparing Joseph’s different treatments of the Egyptians (Genesis 47:13-26) and the Israelites (Genesis 50:15-21), Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, 276, argues that “in this way the narrative uses the extreme example of Joseph’s oppression of the Egyptians as a foil against which Joseph’s benevolent provision for his brothers looks good.” However, this argument seems unconvincing because of the Egyptians’ gratified statement, “You have saved our lives . . . May we find favor in the sight of my lord, we will be slaves of Pharaoh (47:25)” as Paul Borgman, “A Story Not Heard, A God Not Known?” *Per 15* (2000): 24, points out. Although Carr’s argument for Joseph’s treatment of the Egyptians as “oppression” does not seem to be convincing his observation of the different treatments between the Egyptians and the Israelites is worth noting.
Canaan. Similarly, Sarna points out the links between Gen 47:1 and Gen 48:4 in that the Hebrew אֲחֻזָה בְׂאֶּרֶּץ (47:11) is contrasted with אֲחֻזַת עֹולָם (48:4), “thereby emphasizing that the only true and inalienable ‘possession’ of territory is the Land of Israel. Only God can give an ‘everlasting possession.’ Pharaoh’s gift is transitory.”

Although Pharaoh gives the best land in Egypt to Jacob’s family, it is only temporary while God will give them a land of an everlasting possession.

In my view, these interconnections of Gen 46:8-47:12 to Genesis 38; Gen 41:50-52; Gen 45:18-20; and Gen 50:4-14 (cf. Gen 48:4) indicate unity of thought.

1.3 The Interconnectedness of Gen 47:13-27 to the Original Joseph Story and to Other Redactional Materials

Many scholars have considered Gen 47:13-27 as a non-related passage to its context. For example, Von Rad argues that the account of Joseph’s administrative measures in Gen 47:13ff “would at its present position disturb the structure” of the preceding accounts, which deal with “Joseph’s relationship to his brothers, to Jacob and the question of their stay in Egypt, etc.”

Thus, he is perplexed over its origin. Similarly, Westermann argues that Gen 47:13-27 is a secondary addition having no function in the Joseph narrative. However, this section is tightly linked to the development of the plot in the Joseph story in terms of the motif of the preservation of lives. In fact, as many scholars have pointed out, within this motif of the preservation of lives this passage is interwoven both with the original Joseph story and with the following chapters of the redactional materials.

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180 Sarna, Genesis, 325.
181 See von Rad, Genesis, 403.
182 Von Rad, Genesis, 403.
183 Westermann, Genesis: Text and Interpretation, 311.
1.3.1  **Gen 47:13-27 and Gen 41:53-57; Gen 45:5-13; Gen 50:15-21 within the Motif of Preservation and Nationhood**

The main motif of Gen 47:13-27 is the preservation of lives of the Egyptians and Jacob’s family. This is supported by the text itself as these 15 verses in 47:13-27 mainly deal with food and grain for sowing, as the words in relation to food and famine appear 11 times: לֶחֶם (bread, food, grain) occurs 7 times (vv. 13, 15, 16, 17 [bis], 19, 22); רָעָב (famine) 3 times (vv. 13 [bis], 20); and שֶׁבֶּר (grain) once (v. 14). In fact, the structure of this passage further shows such almost exclusive concern as it begins with the devastating impact of the famine on the land of Egypt and Canaan (47:13) and ends with the gratitude of the Egyptians (47:25) and the thriving state of the Israelites (47:27). In this way, the whole passage revolves around the impact of the famine and the effort to overcome it: Joseph’s trading with the Egyptians (47:13-17); the proposal of the Egyptians to deal with the desperate situation of the famine (47:18-24); their proposal to and appreciation of Joseph (47:25); summarization of the events (47:26); and multiplication of Jacob’s descendants (47:27). Thus, even von Rad, who argues that the interest of 47:13-26 “is fixed rather exclusively on Joseph and his activity,” regards the meaning of 47:13-26 as lying in “the gigantic task of preserving the people throughout the period of distress.” Likewise, M. G. Kline says that Joseph’s administration in Gen 46:28-47:27 is “viewed by the Egyptians themselves as a favour, indeed, as their salvation (cf. v. 25) in the desperate famine emergency (vv. 13, 20).”

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184 The fact that Joseph’s administrative scheme of enslaving the Egyptians, which is considered to be tyrannical by some scholars, is proposed by the Egyptians themselves opposes the characterization reading of this passage either positive reading or negative reading of characterization of Joseph.
185 Von Rad, *Genesis*, 409.
In this sense, Gunkel’s view of Gen 41:55-57 as the explanation of Gen 47:13-26 seems to be right. Similarly but taking a different direction, W. L. Humphreys also points out the links of Gen 47:13-26 to Gen 40-41:

This unit [47:13-26] seems to offer a fuller development of a basic theme informing chapters 40-41: effective action by the courtier is detailed, and the nature of his success and devotion to his king is developed. In 41:33-36 Joseph’s counsel on measures to be taken to meet the crisis is outlined, and in 41:53-57 it is stated broadly that these were carried out by him. . . . The expression lparoh lahomes in verse 26 is awkward, and perhaps lhms is to be read with the LXX and Genesis 4134 as a piel infinitive. . . . Thus 47:13-26 is linked with 40-41 both verbally and thematically.

Thus, in his earlier article, Humphreys even says that “Gen 47:13-26 and 50:26 might have been part of this tale [i.e. Gen 40-41]” because both comprise a courtier tale of “A foreign youth . . . [rising] to become the highest official in the land” of Egypt.

Even Westermann, who regards this passage as a secondary appendage having no function in the Joseph story, admits that in 47:13-14 “the author links his narrative with the Joseph story, especially 41:53-57.” Insightfully, Westermann notes that the “reference to both Canaan and Egypt (only in 47:13-15a) is intended as a bridge from the Joseph story (41:57).” In fact, another exposition of Gen 47:13-27 is even more clearly recounted in Genesis 45:5-13, in which Joseph explains God’s saving plan for Jacob’s family. In this sense, Wenham is right to connect 47:13-27 with 45:5-13, saying, “Now the truth of his words [i.e. Gen 45:5-13] is demonstrated [in that] . . . the

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188 This is pointed by von Rad, Genesis, 403.
189 Humphreys, Joseph and His Family, 146. Von Rad, Genesis, 404, also points out that Gen 47:13ff parallels with the account in Genesis 41:56 because both report people’s purchase of grain and Joseph’s earning money for selling the grain to them.
190 Von Rad, Genesis, 491.
191 Westermann, Genesis: Text and Interpretation, 311.
192 Westermann, Genesis: Text and Interpretation, 311. Ross, Creation & Blessing, 686-87, also points out that Genesis 47:13-27 recounts how “Joseph’s wise rule over the land of Egypt not only ensured the peace and prosperity of his family but also saved the people of Egypt from starvation and prospered Pharaoh abundantly.”
Egyptians themselves say, ‘You have saved our lives (47:25).’” As Ross points out, “It is interesting to note that the people of Egypt proclaimed Joseph as their savior - which is what God had prepared him to do (v. 25; see 45:7).” All these interpreters' discussions about the interconnectedness of Gen 47:13-27 to Gen 41:55-57 and Gen 45:5-28 indicate that this passage is tightly interwoven with the original Joseph story by way of continuing themes and motifs in terms of the preservation of lives.

The word “provide (לְלַעֲבֹ, Pilpel form of לְלָבֹ),” which is used in 47:12 and 50:21, further shows the contrast between the privileged treatment of Jacob’s family and of the other people. This matter is summarized well by Carr:

Joseph’s reply to his brothers at this point is a crucial indicator of the type of authority being advocated here. He reassures them and explicitly distinguishes himself from God (Gen 50:19). By reassuring them, he implicitly rejects their offer to be his slaves, thus distinguishing his authority over his brothers from that he exerted over the land of Egypt. The Egyptians came to Joseph in order to “live and not die,” and he bought their livestock and land and enslaved them (Gen 47:13-26). Joseph’s family came for the same reason (Gen 42:2; 43:8), but Joseph simply “provides for them” (45:11; 47:12; 50:21) because that is why God placed him in his position of authority (45:5-8; 50:20). . . . he provides a privileged place for them.196

In this statement, Carr points out that these set of units (Gen 47:13-27 and Gen 50:15-21) are intended to highlight the special treatment of the Israelites, although both the Egyptians and the Israelites are saved, thus indicating the deliberate links between them.

All these interpreters' discussions of Gen 47:1-27 in relation to Gen 41:53-57; 45:5-13; and 50:15-21 indicate that these materials are not random insertions into the Joseph story, but rather a careful and deliberate redactional activity of the Joseph narrative.

194 Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 438.
195 Ross, Creation & Blessing, 687.
196 Carr, Reading the Fractures of Genesis, 276.
1.3.2 Gen 47:13-27 Compared with Gen 47:10-12, Genesis 48, & Genesis 49 within the Motif of Blessing

Concerning the links of Gen 47:13-26 to Gen 47:10-12; Genesis 48; and Genesis 49, it is worth noting some scholars' view of Gen 47:13-27 as the fulfillment of the promise of the mediatorialship of blessing. Humphreys, for example, says that Gen 47:13-26 functions to show Israel “as a source of blessing for the nations (cf. 12:1-3)” in that Joseph, as a representative of Israel, saves people's lives, both foreign and Israelites, from the famine. Likewise, Wolff, who regards a blessing to the nations as the significant aspect of the promise in the patriarchal narratives, points out how Joseph became a mediator for the blessing for the Egyptians and others (39:5, 41:49, 57; 47:13-26). This reading of Gen 47:13-26 as a fulfillment of the mediatorialship of blessing is in line with Gen 47:27, which articulates the fulfillment of the blessing of fruitfulness, ויאחזו בה ויפרו וירבו מאד (47:27b). Although this blessing of fruitfulness is mentioned several times in Genesis (cf. 1:28; 9:1, 7; 26:24), Gen 47:27 for the first time describes the fulfillment of the promise, while in other places it is still a promise in prospect (cf. a command made to Jacob in Gen 28:3 [cf. 28:14] and Gen 35:11). In this sense, Joseph is not only a sustainer of the promised line, but also a mediator of the blessing to both his own people and other nations because he further both enables Jacob’s family to be fruitful and

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197 W. Lee Humphreys, “The Joseph Story,” IDBSup: 492. Humphreys also mentions Jacob’s blessing of Pharaoh (Genesis 47:7, 10) for this argument. Peter F. Ellis, The Yahwist: The Bible’s First Theologian: with the Jerusalem Bible Text of the Yahwist Saga (Notre Dame: Fides Publishers, 1968), 48, also regards 47:13-26 as a passage bearing the motif of the blessing to the nations, thus entitling it as “Blessing on the nations.”

198 Humphreys, Joseph and His Family, 181. Victor P. Hamilton, The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50 (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 620, also says, “ch. 47 attributes much of the Pharaoh’s holdings not to his magnanimity but to the blessing of Jacob (vv. 1-12) and to Joseph’s wise management in times of potential chaos (vv. 13-26).”

199 Hans W. Wolff, “The Kerygma of the Yahwist,” Interpretation 20 (1966): 151. Wolff, The Validity of the Old Testament Traditions, 59, expresses that the Joseph story is “a capsule drama showing how . . . blessing came even upon the powerful empire of Egypt.” Similarly, Wilson, Joseph, Wise and Otherwise, 230, even goes far to regard the Joseph story as a whole as conveying this motif: “the Joseph story begins to flesh out the least developed aspect of the Abrahamic promises — that of blessing to the nations [in that] Joseph acts to keep many people alive, and causes his masters to prosper.”
multiply after delivering them from the famine and preserves the lives of the Egyptians. In this way, the validity of the theological orientation of Gen 47:13-27 in terms of the motif of blessing is interwoven with the surrounding sections, which deal with Jacob’s blessings on Pharaoh (Gen 47:7-10) and his sons (Genesis 48 and 49).

Many scholars have maintained that Joseph’s successful agrarian policy in Gen 47:13-26 is inserted to elaborate the fulfillment of Jacob’s blessing upon Pharaoh in Gen 47:7-10. Commenting on Gen 47:7-10, B. A. McKenzie, for example, asserts that “it was intended to fulfill a theological role by demonstrating . . . Gen 47:13-26 as a blessing upon Pharaoh.”

Similarly, B. K. Waltke points out that Jacob’s blessings in Gen 47:7-10 “are strikingly fulfilled in 47:13-26.” These scholars maintain that Joseph’s successful agrarian policy, which saves the lives of the Egyptians and brings riches to Pharaoh, is placed in its present position to depict the immediate effect of the blessing of Jacob which is linked further to the promise to Abraham and his descendants, “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (cf. Gen 12:2; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14).” In fact, within this motif of blessing, Gen 47:7-27 is connected to the following chapters. Genesis 48 and 49 recount Jacob’s blessings on Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen 48) and on his twelve sons (Genesis 49). When it comes to Genesis 49, however, some scholars

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200 Kline, “Genesis,” 112, also entitles 47:13-27 as “Israel, Blessed and Blessing.”
202 Bruce K. Waltke, Genesis: A Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 587. Likewise, Ross, Creation and Blessing, 686, comments on Jacob’s blessing on Pharaoh, “Since he was the recipient of the promised blessings, his words here were more than a wish; he spoke for God in granting the blessing to Pharaoh, one that began shortly through the wise administration of Joseph.”
203 Westermann, Genesis 37-50, 171; Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 446-47. Brueggemann, Genesis, 354, also regards Genesis 47:7-10 as Jacob’s blessing of Pharaoh in its relation to the Abrahamic promise of the mediatorialship of blessing, although he does not connect this passage specifically to Joseph’s successful agrarian policy to the Egyptians in Genesis 47:13-26: “At the beginning (v. 7) and at the end (v. 10), it is Jacob who blesses Pharaoh. Israel blesses Egypt. This could be no more than a conventional, pro forma greeting. Or it could be deference to an old man. But in this context, neither is likely. The reference is surely to the powerful gift entrusted to this family which the empire needs and does not have (cf. 39:5).”
have argued that exclusive emphasis on ‘the blessing of Jacob’ for the chapter is a distortion because there are also rebukes, such as in the case of Reuben (49:3-4) and Simeon and Levi (49:5-7).  

This view of Genesis 49, however, directly contradicts the editorial view of this chapter as blessing, ברכה with its noun form, ברכה (49:28), which is used to describe Jacob’s words to his sons. The fact that this chapter as a whole concerns the establishment of twelve tribes and anticipates their occupation of the Promised Land supports the view of Genesis 49 as a blessing to Jacob’s sons. Although Reuben, Simeon and Levi are rebuked for what they have done, they are still included as recipients of the Abrahamic promise or blessings as founders of the nation of Israel. This matter is elaborated well by Waltke as follows:

Paradoxically, what the narrator calls “blessings” (see 49:28) is often antiblessings, such as in the case of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi. However, in terms of the nation’s destiny these antiblessings are a blessing. By demoting Reuben for his turbulence and uncontrolled sex drive, Jacob saves Israel from reckless leadership. Likewise, by cursing the cruelty of Simeon and Levi, he restricts their cruel rashness from dominating.

In this statement, Waltke demonstrates how even the rebukes are a blessing to the twelve tribes as one nation. In this respect, within the motif of blessing, Gen 47:13-27 and its surrounding chapters (Gen 47:7-10; 48; 49), are interwoven with each other. The interconnectedness of these passages indicates a deliberate and careful redaction.

The passage in Gen 47:13-27 is further interwoven with the following chapters, Genesis 48-49, in that both foreshadow the fulfillment of the promise to Jacob’s family of becoming a nation. The passage, Gen 47:13-27, reinforces the focus on the promise of

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204 See Brueggemann, Genesis, 365, who argues that “while this poem is placed as a blessing, it is not introduced as a blessing (v.1) and is not. . . . It might better be termed a ‘testimony’.”
206 Waltke, Genesis, 603.
descendants, which is directly connected to the promise of nationhood. The promise of descendants or nationhood begins with the explicit mention of the promise in 46:3, followed by the genealogy of 46:8-27. After the account of the settlement and survival of Jacob’s family (Gen 47:11-12), the promise of nationhood recurs in Gen 47:27 in that Jacob’s family is designated as the nation of Israel. As Amos points out, for the first time in Genesis we have the name ‘Israel’ referring to the nation, rather than to an individual: “Israel has now become a nation, at least in essence.” In this way, in Gen 47:27, God’s promise of making Jacob into a great nation has begun to be fulfilled, and the same promise is foreshadowed in Genesis 48-49, which deals with the blessings upon the future nation of Israel.

1.4 The Interconnectedness of Gen 47:28-50:14 to the Original Joseph Story and to Other Redactional Materials

These sections of Gen 47:28-50:14 have usually been presupposed to be separate and independent, not only from each other, but also from their literary context. However, the analysis of these sections demonstrates their integral links both to their surrounding chapters and within the redactional materials themselves.

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207 Amos, The Book of Genesis, 264. Wilson, Joseph, Wise and Otherwise, 230, also points out that it is the first time to be recounted that the promise of multiplication is reported as being fulfilled in the book of Genesis (cf. Genesis 8:17; 9:1; 17:6; 28:3; 35:11). Steinberg, “Vayigash 44:18-47:27,” 274, also points out that by referring to the thriving of “Israel” rather than the individual Jacob, the text emphasizes that what was once a family of brothers (and sisters) and their father (and their mothers) has grown into a nation. See also Wilson, Joseph, 228.

208 The promise element of nationhood in Genesis 48-49 will be discussed in this chapter, section 2.2 “The Abrahamic Promise Theme in Genesis 48-49 and Other Thematic Parallels between the Two.”

209 Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 491, points out, “To modern readers, the last three chapters of Genesis seem to be rather an anticlimax after the high drama of the discovery of Joseph’s identity in cha 45 and his reunion with his father in chaps. 46-47. The account of the deaths of Jacob and Joseph strikes us as over-detailed, if not morbidly melodramatic.” Raymond de Hoop, Genesis 49 in Its Literary and Historical Context (OtSt 39; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), 317, also criticizes the scholarship in that “Genesis 49 cannot be separated in advance from its literary context when performing a diachronic analysis.” De Hoop, Genesis 49, continues to say that “such a separation (if present) has to be the result of the analysis instead of its presupposition.”
1.4.1 Gen 47:28-50:14 as One Plot: The Deathbed Episode

Many scholars have read Gen 47:28-49:33, the so-called “deathbed episode,” as one unit, and thus separated it from Gen 50:1-14. De Hoop, for example, presents the chiastic structure of the composition of Gen 47:29-49:31, thus suggesting this section as one unit as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
A & : 47:29-31: \text{instruction for the funeral} \\
B & : 48:1-22: \text{adoption and blessing} \\
B’ & : 49:1-28: \text{blessing} \\
A’ & : 49:29-33: \text{instructions for the funeral} \\
\end{align*}
\]

However, this chiastic structure fails to note the narrative details which suggest a difference between A and A’. The recognition of the difference is important because it invites the inclusion of Gen 50:1-14 in the so-called “deathbed episode” (47:29-49:33). Jacob’s instruction for his burial in 47:29-31 is given to Joseph (47:29) alone while the one in 49:29-33 is given to all his sons (49:29, 33), and Jacob’s instruction for the burial given to his sons in 49:29-33 is preliminary to the episode of the burial of Jacob in 50:1-14 by all his sons (50:12-14). Thus, Gen 50:1-14 should not be separated from its preceding accounts.

The inclusion of the actual burial by his sons (50:1-14) in the so-called “deathbed episode” in 47:28-49:33 is further supported by parallels with the other patriarchs’ deaths and burials such as those of Abraham and Isaac as follows:

Abraham (25:7-10)

Abraham lived a hundred and seventy-five years. Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people. His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, the field Abraham had bought from the Hittites. There Abraham was buried with his wife Sarah.

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210 See de Hoop, Genesis 49, 317-65.
211 De Hoop, Genesis 49, 318.
Isaac (35:28-29)
Isaac lived a hundred and eighty years. Then he breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people, old and full of years. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Jacob (47:28; 49:29-33; 50:12-13)
Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years, and the years of his life were a hundred and forty-seven (47:28); Then he gave them these instructions: “I am about to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite, the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre in Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite. There Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried, there Isaac and his wife Rebekah were buried, and there I buried Leah. The field and the cave in it were bought from the Hittites” When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people (49:29-33); So Jacob’s sons did as he had commanded them: 13 They carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre, which Abraham had bought along with the field as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite (50:12-13).

There is a pattern in the death and burial accounts of the other patriarchs such as Abraham and Isaac: the lifespan of the patriarch, the actual death, and the burial of the patriarch by all his sons. What is noteworthy is that the patriarch’s sons such as Isaac and Ishmael, and Esau and Jacob gather together for their father’s burials even though they have been separated. This feature also occurs in the burial of the last patriarch, Jacob: Jacob’s wish to be buried in Canaan in Gen 49:29-33 is articulated in the presence of all his sons; the actual burial of Jacob is carried out by all his sons in Gen 50:1-14. As Carr comments, “Jacob’s commission of all twelve of his sons to bury him at the cave of Machpelah in Gen 49:29-33 . . . appears to have originally stood right before the report of their burying their father in Gen 50:12-13.”213 This indicates that Gen 47:28-50:14 is intended to be treated as one plot. 214 Furthermore, as this section begins with accounts

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213 Carr, Reading the Fractures of Genesis, 95. Carr uses the italic to indicate his quotation of Westermann. Similarly, Blum, Die Komposition, 254-55, points out the connection between Genesis 49:29-33 and Genesis 50:12-13.

214 George W. Coats, Genesis with an Introduction to Narrative Literature (FOTL 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 300-02, also considers Genesis 47:28-50:14 as one unit integrating earlier materials such
about the impending death and burial instruction of Jacob, it is natural to include the accounts of his actual death and the burial.

Jacob’s death and burial account in Gen 47:28-31, 49:29-33 and Gen 50:1-14 are intentionally separated in order for the blessings (Genesis 48 and 49) to be inserted between them, thus offering a frame for the blessings of Jacob to his sons.215 As Waltke points out, “This frame suggests the narrator intends Jacob’s blessings on Joseph and on his own twelve sons set at his deathbed to be read together as Israel’s transference of future blessings to the twelve tribes of Israel, based on the character and history of their founding fathers. . . . [Thus,] they should be understood as one unit.”216

In sum, though many scholars contend that there is no intended connection between Genesis 48; 49 and the surrounding materials of 47:28-31; 49:29-33 and 50:1-14 which come from different sources,217 it is noteworthy that the present structure of Gen 47:28-50:14 shown above displays the well-planned redaction of this section as one plot.218 This deathbed episode is also connected to the original Joseph story. As Ross points out, “The death of Jacob was anticipated throughout the Joseph stories (37:35; 42:38; as 48:3-7, 15-16, 20; 49:1-28. He says that the coherence of this unit is shown in the elements of the framework of farewell speeches in Genesis 47:29-31; 48:11, 21-22; 49:29-32. Coats, Genesis with an Introduction, 303, points out that the unity of Genesis 47:28-50:14 is further demonstrated in “the speeches in 48:3-7, 15-16, 20; 49:1-28 [which] are also typed as FAREWELL SPEECHES in the final form of the narrative, drawing on the deathbed setting for their principal character.”

215 I argue that the blessing of Jacob to Manasseh and Ephraim in Genesis 48 is to be considered as part of Jacob’s blessing to his twelve sons in Genesis 49 because it is followed by their elevation to the status of Jacob’s sons.
216 Waltke, Genesis, 593. Although to Waltke the frame is Gen 47:29-31 and 49:29-33, not Gen 47:29-31 and 49:29-50:14, this point is still relevant for the subject matter for our discussion.
217 Brueggemann, Genesis, 365, states that it was simply conventional to insert a blessing in the story at the death of a great leader; Noth, A History of Pentateuchal Traditions, 209, note 564, also holds the same view. Here Noth says, “The Blessing Jacob in Genesis 49 does not belong to the Joseph story and in all probability does not belong originally to the old Pentateuchal narrative at all. Moreover, the tribal-historical tradition of Genesis 48, which originally belongs to the setting of Palestine, has nothing to do with the Joseph sold into Egypt but initially arose as an accretion to the Jacob tradition.”
218 Coats, From Canaan to Egypt, 7-8, is correct to regard Gen 47:28-50:14, “Jacob’s death in Egypt (47:28-50:14),” as a coherent narrative unit, although his view of Genesis 38 and 47:28-50:26 as “structural parasites,” which disrupt the structural unity of the Joseph story, is mistaken.
43:27-28; 44:22, 29-31; 45:9, 13, 28; 46:30),” thus indicating their links. In addition to this loose connection, however, this section is also tightly interwoven, both with the original Joseph story and other redactional materials.

### 1.4.2 Links of Genesis 48 to Gen 41:50-52 (cf. Gen 37:32-35; Gen 45:25-28)

Seebass notes that despite the possibility of a distinct source of Genesis 48 from the original Joseph story, the redactional link of the chapter with the original Joseph story is obvious:

One still has to consider whether classical source-criticism is applicable to 47.28-48.22, because this passage is possibly an alien element within the IJS [Israel-Joseph story] . . . 48.11 definitely belongs to the IJS [Israel-Joseph Story] (the joy of Israel in meeting Joseph again) . . . Chapter 48 is thus so deeply rooted in the IJS.²²⁰

Likewise, Carr, who considers Genesis 48 as a compositional addition, argues for the continuity of the chapter with the original Joseph story as follows:

Genesis 48 could not exist outside its context in the Joseph narrative, focusing as it does on Joseph’s sons born in Egypt (cf. Gen 41:50-52) and referring as it does to Jacob’s previous expectation not to see Joseph again (Gen 48:11; cf. 37:32-35; 42:36; 45:25-28; 46:30).²²¹

These scholars demonstrate that Genesis 48 is interwoven with the other parts of the Joseph narrative, as the chapter refers to the incidents in the story. This is supported by the recurring phrase in 39:7 and 40:1 (וַיְהִי אַחַר הַדְבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה), which functions to connect the following account with the preceding account. Thus, it is apparent that the phrase “after these things” plays a role of connector between the distinct materials in the story.²²²

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²¹⁹ Ross, Creating & Blessing, 690.
²²¹ Carr, Reading the Fractures of Genesis, 253. See also Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 461.
It is also worth noting Davidson’s observation of the same pattern in Gen 48:2-6 and Gen 47:27-31 in terms of the use of name: “Notice also the curious and apparently unmotivated constant change between the names Israel and Jacob, e.g., Israel in 47:27, Jacob in 47:28, Israel in 47:29 . . . , Jacob and Israel in 47:31, Jacob and Israel . . . in 48:2.” These cross-linkages indicate the deliberate redaction of this chapter to connect it to its present context.

1.4.3 Links between Gen 49:8-12 and Gen 37:5-10

Some scholars have pointed out the crucial role of the dreams in the story line of the Joseph narrative. For example, Redford says, “Remove the dreams from chapter 37, and the Joseph Story as a coherent whole is reduced to nothing.” In fact, the dreams function to introduce the development of the Joseph narrative. As the dreams deal with the theme of the struggle for leadership or power, the dreams do indeed seem to come true in that Joseph becomes a powerful man and his brothers bow down before him (Gen 42:6; 50:18). But this leadership is different from what Joseph's brothers assume in their interpretation (Gen 37:8). In fact, Joseph’s power and leadership concerns specifically the preservation of the lives of his family and others. This idea of leadership is proven, as Joseph himself explains, rejecting the mastery of his brothers in Gen 45:5-8 and 50:19-21. As to the question found in Gen 37:5-8 concerning who will lead the family, the answer is finally given in Jacob’s deathbed blessing, as the leadership is given to Judah in Gen 49:8-12. This is well summarized by M. G. Brett:

223 Davidson, Genesis, 292.
224 Redford, A Study of the Biblical Narrative of Joseph, 69. See also Coats, From Canaan to Egypt, 12; von Rad, Genesis, 352; Wilson, Joseph, Wise and Otherwise, 63, says that “the dreams are pivotal for the story as a whole.” Likewise, Brueggemann, Genesis, 290, 296, points out, “the dream of chapter 37 governs all that follows.”
225 Blum, Die Komposition, 240; Westermann, Genesis 37-50, 34-35, comments on Genesis 37 that the Joseph story as a whole concerns the questions of power and authority between family and state.
226 See de Hoop, Genesis 49, 323-24, 365.
Leadership is then passed on to Judah in 49:8-12, a blessing that reiterates a motif from the wider context of the Joseph story: ‘Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father’s sons will bow down to you’ (v. 8). A key feature of Joseph’s dream is taken up here . . . If this poetry is to be taken as political allegory, then it perhaps reflects the political reality that only King David succeeded in unifying all the tribes into a single state.  

This seems to demonstrate that Genesis 49 is interwoven with the original Joseph story.  

1.5 The Interconnectedness of Gen 50:15-21 to the Original Joseph Story (Gen 37:2-36) and to Other Redactional Materials (Gen 49:29-33)  
The passage in Gen 50:15-21 concerns Joseph’s conversation with his brothers after the death of their father, Jacob. This passage can be seen as the second reconciliation because their reconciliation has already been recounted in Genesis 45. Some scholars consider this passage as an addition that has no function in the development of the Joseph narrative; to them it is a redundant account. Redford, for example, regards the passage as the “Judah” expansion, whereas he sees the first reconciliation scene in Genesis 45 as the original Joseph story.  

Likewise, Westermann assigns Gen 50:15-21 to a redactor who inserted it to integrate the Joseph narrative with the Jacob narrative. Therefore, he sees “no necessary function” for this passage in the Joseph narrative. However, the story in Gen 50:15-21 is a natural development of the story line in its context, thus not merely a redundant report of reconciliation between the brothers.  

The passage, Gen 50:15-21, presupposes the previous account of Jacob’s death (49:29-33). This demonstrates that this passage is a development of the preceding account. Besides its links with the other redactional materials, this passage is linked to the original Joseph story by recapitulating the brothers’ recalling of their past harm to Joseph (50:15; cf. 37:12-36). A distinct element in Gen 50:15-21 from Gen 45:5-11 further

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disputes the views of this passage as a random insertion into the Joseph narrative or as functioning only to integrate the Joseph narrative to the Jacob narrative. In Gen 45:5ff Joseph comforts his brothers by saying, אֶל־תעצבו ואל־יחר בעיניכם (45:5). But in Gen 50:19 Joseph uses a different word to comfort his brothers, אל־תיראו, "Do not fear." This is a natural response after their father Jacob dies and thus, disputes the view of Gen 50:15-21 as a redundant story. This matter is well articulated by Wenham:

here the great theme of this story, the tension between Joseph and his brothers, is finally resolved. Joseph’s deeds and words (from chap. 45) had shown he wanted to be reconciled to his brothers, but they had never asked for forgiveness, so their feelings of guilt had continued to haunt them. Now with their father dead and the great funeral over, they are gripped by fear that all Joseph had done was motivated by affection for Jacob, not out of real love for them.  

Wenham argues with von Rad and Schweizer that the fear which the brothers feel at this time is “quite realistic psychologically,” criticizing Westermann, “Westermann’s claim that this scene has ‘no necessary function in the course of the narrative’ (3:204) depends on a superficial reading of earlier episodes and a failure to appreciate the psychological dynamics of the situation.” Unlike the first reconciliation scene, this second reconciliation demonstrates a strong emphasis upon the brothers’ asking for forgiveness. This is well demonstrated in words such as ‘trespass’, פשע, ‘to forgive’, נשא, ‘evil’, רעה, ‘sin’, חטא and ‘to forgive’, לגמ, which are used repeatedly in 50:15-17:

כל־הרעה אשר גמלנו אתו׃ (50:15)  שא נא פשע... והטאותו כדרעה גמלוך... שא נא לגמ
(50:17)

In these two verses, these words, demonstrating the brothers’ desperateness for forgiveness for their wrongdoings, are used nine times. This shows that the brothers are

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230 Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 489.
231 Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 489.
232 Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 489.
obsessed with their past ‘evil actions’ and are asking for Joseph’s forgiveness. This explains Joseph’s second response, which is focused on the brothers’ evil actions. To respond to the brothers’ obsession with their ‘evil actions,’ Joseph is obligated to mention the brothers’ evil actions of the past in his response, reassuring them with forgiveness, reconciliation and care for them. Thus, Joseph’s different emphasis in Gen 50:15-21 does not support the view of this section as mere repetition of the first reconciliation, but is an appropriate response to the development of the story line.

In fact, considering what the brothers have gone through in their first encounter with Joseph in Genesis 42-44, their fear of Joseph’s revenge after their father’s death is natural. This matter is well summarized by L. A. Turner:

> Perhaps their journey back to Canaan refreshed their memories of how they had travelled that road before, on their trips to Egypt to buy grain, and of how Joseph had toyed with them and their father mercilessly.\(^233\)

In this statement, Turner asserts cogently that Gen 50:15-21 is a natural development of the story line, contrary to many interpreters’ view of Gen 50:15-21 as a secondary addition to the reconciliation account, which has no function in the development of the Joseph narrative.

In a similar way, Wilson convincingly argues that Gen 50:15-21 demonstrates the final resolution of the conflict between Joseph and his brothers:

> the breakdown in relationships within the family. . . . is not resolved in any substantial way until chapter 45. . . . In chapters 46 and 47, Jacob and the brothers move to the land where Joseph is a powerful figure, which raises the possibility of Joseph using his power to gain revenge. Chapters 48 and 49 serve to both remind the reader of the imminent death of Jacob (a fearful possibility in 50:15) and also to raise the problem of the future relationships between the families of each of the brothers. . . . Finally, . . . Jacob’s death (50:15) . . . clearly shows that the breakdown has not fully been resolved

from the perspectives of the brothers. . . . Thus, the family relationships are only finally restored by Joseph’s words of reassurance in 50:19-21.  

In this way, as these interpreters' discussions show, Gen 50:15-21 is not redundant to the original account of the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers, but a necessary part of the conclusion to the original Joseph story in that it plays a critical role in the development of the story line of the Joseph narrative as a whole.

1.6 Gen 50:22-26 as the Most Logical Ending of the Joseph Narrative and Its Other Links to the Original Joseph Story (Gen 41:50-52) and Other Redactional Material (Gen 47:28-50:14)

The passage, Gen 50:20-26, has long been considered to be redactional material, as scholars have concluded that it was composed to link the Joseph tradition to the other traditions. It has been considered to function as a bridge between the Joseph tradition and the preceding patriarchal traditions, as well as between the patriarchal traditions and the Exodus tradition, as Joseph mentions the patriarchs, the exodus event and the possession of the land (cf. 50:24).  

As Ausloos points out, “Gen 50:22-26 not only reports the last days of Joseph, but at the same time functions as a hinge between the preceding patriarchal narratives, the Exodus and the taking possession of the promised land.”  

However, the passage in Gen 50:22-26 also functions as the most logical conclusion to the Joseph narrative, which starts with Gen 37:2, because it recounts the death of the

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235 Indeed, some scholars have considered this verse (Gen 50:24) as part of a deuteronomistic redaction because of its similarity with deuteronomic language. For example, Wilson, Joseph, Wise and Otherwise, 226, says that Joseph’s burial “serve[s] to link the Joseph story with the remaining books of the Pentateuch and beyond (for example, Josh 24:32).”

main character, Joseph. Coats insightfully points out the close parallels between Gen 50:22-26 and Gen 47:28-50:14, even calling them “a conscious imitation”:

1. Gen 50:22 parallels Gen 47:28
2. Gen 50:23 parallels Gen 48:3-7

With this recognition of the parallels between Gen 50:22-26 and Gen 47:28-50:14, Coats concludes that Gen 50:22-26 is an appendix, which “plays no integral role in a narrative but serves simply as a device to round off the Jacob-Joseph narration.” However, this is not fully convincing. Gen 50:22a assumes the migration and settlement of Jacob’s family as a reference to Joseph’s וּבֵית אָבִיו (50:22a) shows. This indicates that Gen 50:22-26 makes a clear reference to Gen 45:16-47:12, which concerns the migration and settlement story of Jacob and his household. The interconnectedness of Gen 50:22-26, both to the original Joseph story and the preceding redactional materials, is further supported by the reference to Joseph’s two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. First, by mentioning Joseph’s sons, Ephraim and Manasseh (50:23), whose births are recounted in Gen 41:50-52, this episode invites the reader to read in connection with the original Joseph story. Secondly, as Ausloos observes, “Ephraim is mentioned in the first place . . . [and this] undoubtedly refers to Jacob’s blessing of Joseph’s sons in Gen 48, 17-20,

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237 Coats, “Joseph, Son of Jacob,” 977, says, “The position of the Joseph death report in Gen 50:22-26, an element which forms a counterpoint to the Joseph birth story, suggests that the patterns of a Joseph saga can still be seen in the Genesis narrative.”


where Ephraim’s position becomes more important.” The reference to Ephraim and Manasseh in Gen 50:23 supports the argument that Gen 50:22-26 is linked to the account of the reversal of the primogeniture in Gen 48:17-20. Furthermore, as Van Seters points out, “50:22-26 is also closely connected with 48:21 and 46:1-4 in its clear reference to the exodus.” In this way, the interconnectedness between Gen 50:22-26 and the rest of the Joseph narrative demonstrates that Gen 50:22-26 does not function only to round off the Joseph narrative in its larger literary context.

In sum, these integral interconnections of the redactional material (Gen 46-50), both to the original Joseph story and to itself, support the argument that the materials are deliberately and carefully redacted and added in order for them to be read as an integral part of the rest of the Joseph narrative although they may have come from different sources. As Stone puts it, “the combination of written documents involved much more than mere ‘scissors and paste’ work, and flowed out of a profound interpretative mindset.” In fact, the redactional materials offer great thematic/theological insight into the development of the plot of the original Joseph story by way of a continuing storyline. Now that we have established the unity of the original Joseph story and the redactional materials, we must turn to an examination of the function and purpose of the redactional materials.

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240 Ausloos “The Deuteronomist and the Account of Joseph’s Death (Gen 50,22-26),” 389.
241 Van Seters, Prologue to History, 323.
2. The Function and Purpose of the Redactional Materials: Theological, Thematic, and Literary Parallels between the Redactional Materials and the Jacob Narrative

Utilizing the interpreters' observations and discussions of the parallel features of the redactional materials with the Jacob narrative as a foundation and point of departure for my discussion, in what follows, I seek to give satisfactory answers to the question, why the redactional materials are put into the present position, that is, at the end of the Joseph narrative. To do so, the main thematic/theological elements of the redactional materials and the literary devices and their parallels with the Jacob narrative are discussed.

2.1 Thematic/Theological & Literary Interconnectedness of Genesis 38 both to the Original Joseph Story and to Genesis 26

As discussed above, scholars have attempted to read the story of Judah and Tamar within its literary context.\textsuperscript{243} This story can be understood in several ways within its setting. In spite of this, some discussions of themes focus on secondary themes of the story. For instance, as discussed above, Genesis 38 can be read as the character transformation of Judah when read in its context. However, the focus of Genesis 38 on the character transformation of Judah can only be developed as an attempt to contextualize this story. It is true that Judah admits his fault when he confesses, “She is in the right, not I” (38:26). But this story itself does not emphasize a change in Judah because Judah’s changed behavior is not demonstrated until Gen 44:18-34, where Judah’s acting in a commendable way plays an important role in the development of the storyline. Only at this point can it be assumed that Judah may have changed through the incident in Genesis 38. Thus, although the reading of Genesis 38 as the story of the transformation of Judah’s character

\textsuperscript{243} It was discussed in this chapter, section 1.1 “The Interconnectedness of Genesis 38 to the Original Joseph Story and to Other Redactional Materials.”
is valid within the broader context, it is not an intrinsic message based on Genesis 38 itself.

The reading of Genesis 38 as a story of “measure-for-measure”\textsuperscript{244} is not fully convincing. This reading of Genesis 38 is based on many interpreters’ views of the chapter in terms of its function of showing “the doctrine of retribution . . . set in clear relief by the juxtaposition of Gen 37 and 38.”\textsuperscript{245} For example, Wilson argues, “A strong notion of retribution—Judah’s deceit being matched at so many points by his being deceived—is woven into the two stories [chapters 37 and 38] when they are juxtaposed.”\textsuperscript{246} To these scholars such a parallel points to divine retribution. However, this understanding of Genesis 38 as a story of divine retribution, that is, Judah’s being deceived (Genesis 38) as a punishment of his deception of his father Jacob (Genesis 37), is not the purpose of the story for two reasons. First, the tragic incidents of the deaths of Judah’s two sons, Er and Onan, take place before Judah’s deception of Tamar and were the results of God’s punishment for their own wickedness. Secondly and more importantly, Tamar’s deception of Judah is not a punishment or judgment but rather a reward, because it results in the birth of two sons, one of whom, Perez, would be the ancestor of David, the great king of Israel. Thus, the approach that sees Judah being deceived as a punishment for his deception of his father Jacob is mistaken. The following demonstrates that the intrinsic theme of Genesis 38 is the preservation of the promised line through an analysis of the structure and the content of the chapter.

\textsuperscript{244} Wilson, \textit{Joseph, Wise and Otherwise}, 167. Victor P. Hamilton, \textit{Handbook On the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy} (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 128, also points out the parallel between Genesis 38 and Genesis 37 in terms of the similar plot such as the deception (all three characters of Jacob, Judah, and Potiphar are deceived in Genesis 37, 38 and 39 respectively) and the echo of the verb in 37:33 and 38:26, and thus does not read Genesis 38 as the story to show the retribution doctrine.

\textsuperscript{245} Curtis, “Genesis 38: Its Context(s) and Function,” 251.

\textsuperscript{246} Wilson, \textit{Joseph, Wise and Otherwise}, 91.
2.1.1 The Preservation of Judah’s Line Despite His Wrongful Deception

Childs raises a question of the function of the last section of the book of Genesis (37:2-50:26): “If Joseph is not the bearer of the promise in the same way as his forefathers, what then is his role in Genesis?” He contends that one of the keys to the answer to the question is in the story of Judah in Genesis 38. Childs contends that the function of Genesis 38 parallels that of the whole story of Jacob’s family (37:2-50:26) in that both Judah and Joseph are threats to the promise. As Joseph brought about a new threat to the promise of the land, so Judah “demonstrated an unfaithfulness which threatened to destroy the promise of a posterity.” In spite of that, according to Childs, Judah is superior to Joseph as shown in the ‘blessings of Jacob’ (Genesis 49), because Judah’s unfaithfulness was “restored by the faithfulness of a Canaanite wife.” In this way, Childs reads Genesis 38 as a story demonstrating the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise of posterity. Likewise, Mathewson directly connects the theological purpose of Genesis 38 with the Abrahamic promise theme as follows:

The central theme of Genesis is the sovereignty of Yahweh in His establishment of a nation through which to bless all the peoples of the world . . . . First, this chapter teaches that Yahweh would accomplish His purpose, even if He had to use a Canaanite woman to do it . . . . The closing verses of Genesis 38 confirm that Yahweh’s purpose was being carried out.

Here Mathewson reads Genesis 38 in terms of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise theme in that it concerns the continuation of the promised line its connection with the Davidic line through Perez. In fact, these interpreters' readings of Genesis 38, in terms

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of the Abrahamic promise theme seem to be supported by its literary structure and content.

Genesis 38 deals with the family, which Judah built in the land of Canaan, and can be divided into four sub-sections as follows:

I. The background information about Judah’s family; the birth of Judah’s three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah (vv. 1-5)

II. Judah’s line is threatened as Judah’s two sons are dead and Tamar is left childless by the deception of Judah and Onan (vv. 6-11)

III. Tamar takes initiative and becomes pregnant by deceiving Judah (vv. 12-26)

IV. Tamar gives birth to Perez and Zerah; Judah’s line is propagated (vv. 27-30)

The first section (vv. 1-5) concerns ילד, that is, giving birth or having children, as it reports the birth of Judah’s three sons. The second section (vv. 6-11) deals with זרע, offspring or progeny. The crisis of the chapter begins to arise in this section as Tamar, a wife of Judah’s eldest son, Er, becomes a childless widow (זרע, three times in v. 8, two times in v. 9) at Er’s death. Thus, Judah instructs his second son, Onan, to fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law following the levirate custom. In verse 8, the purpose of Judah’s instruction to Onan to go into Tamar is clearly reported in the expression, זרע והקם, that is, to raise up offspring (seed). But Onan intentionally fails to fulfill that responsibility. His

252 The relevant key terms which most frequently appear are בָּאוּ (five times: vv. 2, 9, two times in 16, 18), הָרִים (four times: in verbal form, vv. 3, 4, 18; in adjectival form, v. 24), ילד (six times: vv. 3, 4, two times in 5, 27, 28), and זְרֻעַ (three times: v. 8, two times in v. 9). Thus, O’Callaghan, “The Structure and Meaning of Genesis 38,” 73, correctly points out, “the significant vocabulary of the chapter shows that we are meeting constantly with brothers, wives, sons, father-in-law, daughters-in-law, fathers and widows; with marriage, intercourse, pregnancies, births and name-giving; and with death.”
act angered Yahweh because it prevented Tamar from producing זרע (v. 9). Onan’s refusal to fulfill the levirate responsibility caused Yahweh to put Onan to death (vv. 9-10). This explicit explanation for Onan’s death is contrasted with the ambiguous allusion to Er's death (v. 7). This also supports the argument that the plot of this section revolves around the motif of progeny. This matter is summarized well in the statement of M. G. Brett:

In leaving Er’s demise unexplained, while specifying the reason for Onan’s death, the narrator has drawn attention to the thematic focus of the chapter as a whole: the issue of ‘seed’ (зерא). . . . The divine blessing of procreation is expressed in distinctive ways in Genesis, but in some contexts Abram/Abraham is specifically promised זרה (e.g., in 15.5; 17.7-8). In Hebrew, this word is ambiguous between ‘semen’ and ‘descendants’, and while English translations often attempt to resolve the ambiguity, the translation ‘seed’ expresses the nuance of the language in a way that safeguards the visibility of the thematic connections.

In the third section (vv. 12-26), the crisis is heightened when Tamar finds out that Judah did not give her his third son, Shelah, though Judah had promised to do so. Judah had told Tamar that when the third son, Shelah, was old enough, he would instruct him to fulfill his levirate responsibility (v. 11). But the text tells that Judah does not intend to let Shelah take that responsibility because he mistakenly considers Tamar to be the cause of the other two sons’ deaths. Thus, Tamar acts on her own to obtain her right. The whole purpose of Tamar’s action is to have a child. As a result, Tamar becomes הרה (two times in this section: once in verbal form, v. 18 and once in adjectival form, v. 24). As Coats points out, Tamar is of “a heroic stature . . . [and] fights for her rights within the family of her dead husband.” In the last section of the chapter (vv. 27-30), finally with Tamar’s two sons, the crisis is resolved. Tamar’s action does not simply resolve her own

253 Brett, Genesis, 114.
issue of childlessness, but brings a blessing to Judah by the propagation of Judah’s line, through which King David will be born. In this way, as Coats points out, “the goal of the plan, indeed, the single issue of the entire plot [of Genesis 38], is conception of a child.”256 This is further demonstrated in the word, זרע, which is used three times in Gen 38:8-9.

T. D. Alexander, who argues that Genesis has been carefully formed to accentuate an important family line from Adam to the sons of Jacob, regards that the continuity of the family line is emphasized by the תֹלְׂדֹות headings and the Hebrew word “seed” (זרע).257 The promise element of seed is particularly dominant in Genesis in that the word “seed” (זרע) occurs “59 times in Genesis compared to 170 times in the rest of the Old Testament.”258 As Alexander further points out, the amalgamation of the תֹלְׂדֹות structure and the theme of “seed” (זרע) is to emphasize the establishment of Davidic royal lineage.259 In fact, in Genesis 38 the royal line is preliminarily established through the זרע of Judah as Judah’s son Perez is born (38:29, cf. 49:8-12). It demonstrates that the story of Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38 revolves around the motif of the birth of the royal line.

What is further worth noting is that the promised line is preserved alive in spite of the threat caused by Judah’s wrongful deception. As Brett points out, “In spite of the obstacles put in her way by Onan and Judah, Tamar has an overriding concern for the continuity of the family, . . . play[ing] a significant role in the fulfillment of the divine promises regarding Abraham’s seed.”260 Thus, “Much of the drama of the chapter

[Genesis 38, which] revolves around the fact that David’s future line is at stake\(^{261}\) ends with resolution or success as the promised line is preserved alive despite the unworthiness of Judah. This unworthiness is confirmed by Judah himself as he confesses that Tamar is “נאמר בצדקה” (v. 26) because her action results in bearing two sons, whereas his action prevents having progeny and this is consistent with the theme of the preceding sections. As S. Greidanus points out, Genesis is full of the stories of God’s unconditional faithfulness because “in his grace, God continually intervenes so that the seed of the woman can advance from Adam and Eve to Seth, to Noah, to Abram, to Isaac, to Jacob, and, by the end of Genesis, to the beginning of numerous seed-the full number of 70 (10x7) people (Gen 46:27; Exod 1:5).”\(^{262}\) This theme of God’s unconditional faithfulness is consistent with the story of the preservation of the royal line through Judah, who confesses to be unworthy, in Genesis 38.

In sum, the passage, Genesis 38, as a whole demonstrates that the main concern, if not the only concern, of the chapter, revolves around having a child. As the passage, Genesis 38, depicts the preservation of the promised line, it can be argued that its main thematic concern revolves around the Abrahamic promise. The birth of the twins, Perez and Zerah, assures the continuation of the promised line and offers a foreshadowing of the fulfillment of the promise despite the unworthiness of Judah.\(^{263}\) The similar thematic/theological motif is demonstrated in the original Joseph story.

\(^{261}\) Carr, Reading the Fractures of Genesis, 249.
\(^{263}\) See Judy Fentress-Williams, “Location, Location, Location: Tamar In the Joseph Cycle,” in Bakhtin and Genre Theory In Biblical Studies (SmeiaSt 63; ed. Roland Boer; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 67.
2.1.2 The Interconnectedness between Genesis 38 and the Original Joseph Story in Terms of the Motif of Preservation and Blessing of the Promised Line Despite their Wrongful Deception

As discussed above, many scholars have shown that Genesis 38 is connected with the original Joseph story in various ways: common key-theme words, recurring main characters and so forth. In addition to these, however, there is an important common thematic/theological motif and underlying theological concept between Genesis 38 and the original Joseph story, which indicates unity of thought.

We have discussed that Genesis 38 demonstrates how the promised line is preserved alive despite Judah’s wrongful deception. In a similar way, the original Joseph story deals with the story of the preservation of the promised line despite the brothers’ wrongful deception. In fact, within the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise in terms of the preservation of the promised line, some scholars argue for the interconnectedness of Genesis 38 and the Joseph narrative. For example, Wilson, who regards the original Joseph story as revolving around the promise of descendants in terms of the survival of the promised line, cogently observes the thematic continuity between Genesis 38 and the Joseph narrative as a whole in terms of the preservation of the promised line as follows:

Chapters 46-50 heighten the focus on the promise of descendants beginning with the explicit mention of the promise in 46:3, followed by the genealogy of 46:8-27. In the midst of famine (47:13), Jacob and his family are amply provided for (47:12), and they multiply abundantly in Goshen (47:27). . . . [T]he testamentary words in chapter 49 are about the future of Jacob’s sons as heads of future tribes. Thus it appears that the patriarchal promise of descendants is woven right through the Joseph story, and not merely added during the closing chapters. What is distinctive in chapters 38-45 is that the promise is preserved not through direct intervention by God, but through the human actions of Tamar and, more importantly, Joseph, who showed initiative in organizing famine relief and shrewdness in accomplishing reconciliation within the family.

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264 It will be discussed how the Abrahamic promise theme is interwoven with the main storyline of the original Joseph story in Chapter Three, section, 3.3 “Brotherly Strife and Reconciliation Interwoven with the Abrahamic Promise Theme in terms of the Preservation of the Promised Line.”

Even Wright, who regards Genesis 38 as an insertion to the Joseph narrative (Genesis 37-50), says, both “originally in pre-Israelite usage . . . [relate] to the basic cult of man’s survival or salvation.” As J. Fentress-Williams articulates, the thematic parallel between chapter 38 and the Joseph narrative revolves around the preservation of the promised line through Tamar and Joseph in that Tamar and Joseph, and thus “function[ing] as the links between the promise of God and the fulfillment of God’s promise.” As Fentress-Williams points out, the unexpected way of the fulfillment in Genesis 38 foreshadows the way the promise of God will be fulfilled in the Joseph narrative: “the lesson in Genesis 38 is that the path to God’s promise is a circuitous one. Joseph’s path to the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abram will be one of delays, imprisonment, exile, and reversals.”

These matters are summarized well in the statement of Brett as follows:

Given the thematic focus in the Tamar story, a number of analogies with the Joseph story suggest themselves. Both Tamar and Joseph preserve Abraham’s seed against a number of obstacles. . . . In both cases, protagonists in the narrative unwittingly seek satisfaction of their needs from people they have wronged. Finally, the stories contain a ‘reversal of primogeniture’ motif, involving both Tamar’s sons (Zerah and Perez) and Joseph’s sons (Manasseh and Ephraim). Both these younger sons acquire a significant status within Israelite tradition . . . [and] both are born to foreign women, i.e. Perez to Tamar (38.27-30) and Ephraim to Asenath (Joseph’s Egyptian wife, 41.50-2).

As this statement demonstrates, the thematic parallels between Genesis 38 and the original Joseph story revolve around the motif of the preservation of the promised line, thus indicating their integral thematic links. What is to be added to these thematic parallels is the fact that both Judah’s line and Joseph’s brothers are not merely preserved

267 Fentress-Williams, “Location, Location, Location,” 67.
268 Fentress-Williams, “Location, Location, Location,” 67
269 Brett, Genesis, 114.
alive, but further receive a special status in that through Judah’s son comes Davidic Kingship and Joseph’s brothers become part of the nation Israel (Genesis 49) despite their wrongful deception. The similar thematic/theological motif of the preservation and blessing is also demonstrated in Genesis 26.

2.1.3 Preservation and Blessing of Isaac and His Family Despite His Wrongful Deception

Genesis 26 emphasizes and highlights what blessing holds for the chosen. This chapter is mainly concerned with the blessed life of Isaac. As Fokkelman points out, the passage in Genesis 26 clearly deals with the blessing:

Using a rather awkward word we could call Genesis 26 “demonstration-material”. What is a blessing, how does it work? The answer we find in some exemplary texts, in a sort of covenant-form such as Deut. 28, which has been enclosed in a homiletic framework. But a real report of the working of a blessing, thus in narrative form, we find (apart from Num. 22-24) here in Genesis 26.

Concerning the rationale for the success and blessings Isaac enjoys, some commentators attribute them to his obedience or peaceful character. S. Walters, for example, argues that Genesis 26 presents a paradigm for relationship with the residents of the land in that it shows Isaac’s “sacrificial self-giving which leads to ‘space’ [26:22] and to mutual acceptance and respect.” Likewise, Alexander argues that Isaac enjoys God’s favour...

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271 Jan P. Fokkelman, Narrative Art in Genesis: Specimens of Stylistic and Structural Analysis (SSN 17; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1975), 114. He further argues that these examples of blessing demonstrated in Genesis 26 motivates Jacob to fight so hard for the birthright and blessing which he had heard about with his own ears and seen with his own eyes from his father Isaac. In this way, Fokkelman, Narrative Art, 115, sees the thematic continuity of Genesis 26 with the Jacob narrative because it is placed between Jacob’s striving for the birthright (25:20-34) and his struggle for the blessing (27:1-45).
because he is viewed as righteous. 274 This interpretation, however, is not fully convincing based on indicators in the text that I discuss below.

The text affirms that all Isaac inherits and enjoys is given to him because of Abraham’s obedience to God rather than his own merits. This is clearly repeated in God’s direct speeches to Isaac that he is blessed because of his father Abraham’s obedience:

Do not go down to Egypt, settle in the land that I shall show you. Reside in this land as an alien, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and I will fulfill the oath that I swore to your father Abraham . . . because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws (26:1-5). 275

Do not be afraid, for I am with you and will bless you and make your offspring numerous for my servant Abraham’s sake (26:24).

In between these divine speeches, which explain why God blesses Isaac, there are two accounts: Isaac’s lying to save his own life (26:7-11) and his prosperity, agricultural success (26:12-14) and the success in finding wells (26:15-23). The text makes clear that this success/blessing, which Isaac enjoys, comes from God, by framing this section with the divine speeches. Thus, when it comes to the relationship of the patriarch’s moral behaviour or virtues with his blessing, the text underscores the underlying theological point: God’s chosen one, Isaac, is blessed because of God’s commitment to Abraham and Abraham’s obedience, not because of Isaac’s merits. In this regard, Wenham’s judgment is certainly right:

It is striking that despite the clear quotation of Gen 22:16-18 here, the merit Isaac inherits is not his own obedience on that occasion but his father’s. His own willingness to be sacrificed is not mentioned, only his father’s readiness to offer him. 276

275 Verse 5 particularly attributes God’s blessings to Abraham’s obedience rather than to Isaac’s; compare almost verbatim: 22:18.
276 Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 190. This is further supported by Abimelech’s speech in verse 28, which ascribes Isaac’s success to God’s presence with Isaac.
This is further supported by some commentators who have pointed out the faulty character of the patriarchs in Gen 26:7-11, comparing the three stories of wife/sister deception with Genesis (12:10-20; 20:1-18). Some scholars indeed have argued that Isaac threatens the fulfillment of God’s promise. Clines, for example, who considers posterity to be the main concern of Genesis 12-50, maintains that Genesis 26 poses the concern about the progeny as central: “Will there be even one son, let alone a posterity?” In other words, Clines regards Isaac in Genesis 26 as functioning as an obstacle to the Abrahamic promise of progeny. Likewise, Garrett points out that in the stories the patriarchs, Abraham and Isaac, “are far less than heroic . . . [telling] a half-truth or an outright lie in order to save themselves.”

This is further supported by the Hebrew word used in the deception story. The narrator defines the nature of Isaac’s deception as אָשָם, “guilt”: “you would have brought guilt upon us (26:10)” The term אָשָם appears in Gen 26:10; Lev 5:19; 7:5; 14:21; 19:21; Num 5:7 in the Pentateuch, and its meaning is transgression for which retribution could be made. It indicates that Isaac’s guilt causes the problem in the story. However, the

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277 Joel S. Kaminsky, “Humor and the Theology of Hope: Isaac as a Humorous Figure,” Int 54:4 (2000): 370, comments on the negative biblical depiction of Isaac’s character, “The humorosity of Isaac’s character is often revealed in his propensity to engage in ‘baser’ activities. Thus the reader is told that Isaac prefers Esau to Jacob because Esau fed Isaac from the game that he caught (Gen 25:28). Such humor is amplified when, in the end of Genesis 24, Isaac gets caught in the midst of a baser act that normally occurs out of the public eye. This scenario has a close analogy in Gen 26:6-11.”

278 Clines, The Theme of the Pentateuch, 45.

279 Although Genesis 26 comes after the birth of Esau and Jacob (Gen 25:19) in its canonical context, some scholars have argued that this chapter comes before the birth of Esau and Jacob chronologically. Skinner, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis, 363; Samuel R. Driver, Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament (rev. and 9th ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1913), 16; Wellhausen, Die Composition, 28, argues that Genesis 26 originally appears before the birth of Esau and Jacob, not after; Georg G. Nicol, “The Chronology of Genesis: Genesis xxvi 1-33 As ‘Flashback,’” VT 46:3 (1996): 337, argues that the reason for the insertion of Genesis 26 in the Jacob narrative is perhaps the need to introduce Jacob into the narrative as quickly as possible even at the expense of a more natural chronological sequence.

280 Garrett, Rethinking Genesis, 131-37.

281 Norman H. Snaith, “The Sin-Offering and the Guilt-Offering,” VT 15:1 (1965): 73, points out that the term אָשָם is used for the quantifiable sins in the Pentateuch. Likewise, J. Milgrom, Cult and Conscience:
real purpose of these stories is not merely to deal with the weaknesses of the patriarchs, but further to demonstrate how God faithfully protected the promise line despite their mistakes.\textsuperscript{282} As J. S. Kaminsky points out, “The fulfillment of God's promises, in spite of Isaac's incompetence, is a way of revealing God's greatness.”\textsuperscript{283}

In sum, there are compelling parallels between Genesis 26 and 38: (1) In both chapters a crisis is caused by God’s promised heirs, Isaac and Judah; (2) In both chapters foreign people, Abimelech and Tamar, act in a noble way, and through them the promised line is saved. In other words, both chapters concern how the immoral, if not sinful, promised line of Isaac and Judah is preserved alive despite their unworthiness; moreover each enjoys (or will enjoy) blessing as a fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise (Gen 26:1-5, 24 and Gen 38:27-30; Gen 49:8-12). The correspondences and placement imply that Genesis 26 and 38 are strategically put into the present position, in order to convey a similar important underlying theological message.

\subsection*{2.1.4 Sudden Literary Interruptions of Genesis 38 and Genesis 26 within Each Story}

 Scholars have long noticed the literary interruption of Genesis 26 in terms of the sudden change of subject from the preceding chapters. For example, Clifford says that “the change of subject is no more abrupt than, say, chap. 26 or chap. 34.”\textsuperscript{284} In his proposal of chiastic structure in the Jacob narrative, Fishbane also entitles Genesis 26, “interlude;

\begin{itemize}
\item The Asham and the Priestly Doctrine of Repentance (SJLA 18; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 7, contends that “the asham offering has to do with restitution or reparation . . . [and] it focuses on man’s sinful condition.”
\item Similary Garrett, Rethinking Genesis, 134, says, the story is “not to point out the character weaknesses of Abraham and Isaac but to show how their actions placed the matriarchs, and thus the offspring, in great danger.”
\item Kaminsky, “Humor and the Theology of Hope,” 374.
\item Clifford, “Genesis 38,” 520.
\end{itemize}
strife; deception; berakhah-blessing; covenant with foreigner.”

This chapter can indeed be considered to be an interlude because Jacob is not mentioned at all in it, whereas throughout the Jacob narrative, Jacob is a dominant figure in the development of the story lines, even in the תֹלְׂדֹות of Esau (36:6-8, 37:1). Although many scholars also regard Genesis 34 as an interlude chapter for the same reason, in that Jacob is nominally presented, in this chapter Jacob plays an important role in the storyline. In fact, based on Jacob’s judgment on the deeds of Simeon and Levi in Genesis 34, they are receiving predictions in Gen 49:5-7. Only in Genesis 26 does Jacob completely disappear. A similar phenomenon occurs in Genesis 38; it is the only episode where Joseph is completely absent. In this respect, Wenham rightly observes, “At first blush, chap. 38 seems to have nothing to do with the Joseph story . . . [and] there is a similar phenomenon in the Jacob narrative. Chap. 26 . . . do[es] not seem immediately relevant to the main plot of the narrative, yet on further examination both chapters make a distinct contribution to the theme.”

This is a literary indication that these two sections may have a balanced structure.

In sum, these thematic/theological and literary parallels imply that Genesis 26 and Genesis 38 are crafted with careful alteration to coherence and integration with both the Joseph and the Jacob narratives.

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286 Thus, most scholars, who propose a chiastic structure of the Jacob narrative, match Genesis 34 with Genesis 26: Fishbane, Text and Texture, 42; Rendsburg, The Redaction of Genesis, 53-54; Walters, “Jacob Narrative,” 600; Clinton Branscombe, “Narrative Structure in the Jacob Cycle” (M. Rel. thesis, Wycliffe College, 1992), 54; and Fokkelman, Narrative Art in Genesis, 240-41.

287 Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 363.
2.2 The Abrahamic Promise Theme in Gen 47:28-50:14; Its Parallels with Genesis 34-35 and Other Thematic Parallels between the Two

There are two ways in which Genesis 48-49 is connected with the Jacob narrative. Firstly, there are occasions when the text of these chapters refers to previous people, places and events, suggesting that they assume the Jacob narrative. Secondly, there are a number of themes shared between these chapters and the Jacob narrative. What follows aims to demonstrate that Genesis 48-49 parallels Genesis 34-35 in the Jacob narrative.

2.2.1 Links and Thematic Parallels between Genesis 48 and Genesis 35 within the Abrahamic Promise of Multiplication in Relation to Nations, Kings, Land

In the theophany in Gen 35:11-12 God gives Jacob a series of promises and in Gen 48:3-4 the same promises are recounted as Jacob recalls the promises and repeats them to Joseph. In fact, many scholars have noted the parallels between these two passages. Carr, for example, discusses the links between Gen 35:9-12 and Gen 48:3-6:

1. Jacob’s reference to God’s revelation to him at Luz or Bethel (35:1, 3, 6 and 48:3);  
2. The designation of God as “El-Shaddai” (35:11-12 and 48:3-4; cf. 28:3-4);  
3. The reference to a “blessing” (35:9 and 48:3, 9, 15-16, 20);  
4. “Be fruitful and multiply” (35:11 and 48:4, 16)  

It is interesting to see that the promise of the plural “nations” is mentioned in Gen 48:19, where the promise of nationhood to Ephraim is expressed as מְלֹא־הַגוֹיִם. The promise of the plural nations occurs in Genesis 17 and 35:11 and it is transferred to Joseph’s younger son, Ephraim in Gen 48:19. Although the promise of multiplication, land, kings and nationhood as well as the designation of God as El-Shaddai occurs in other places in

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288 In Gen 17:1 God appears to Abraham as El-Shaddai.
289 This familiar promise formula, “be fruitful and multiply,” is first mentioned in Gen 1:28 and reiterated throughout the episodes in Genesis (Gen 8:17; 9:1; 17:6; 28:3; 35:11) and for the first time is recounted to be fulfilled in Gen 47:27.
290 See Carr, Reading the Fractures of Genesis, 78-93, esp. 81. Carr also includes other P promise texts in Genesis such as chapters 17, 26:34-35; 27:46-28:9. The Scriptural references outside Gen 35:9-15 and 48:3-7 in italics are mine.
Genesis, there are unique parallel features in Genesis 35 and Genesis 48. The familiar promise formula, “be fruitful and multiply,” occurs in combination with the promises of nations, kings, and land in Gen 35:11-12 and Gen 48:3-4. In fact, the affinities within the unique combination between Gen 48:3-4 and Gen 35:11-12 are almost verbatim:

In addition to these links between Genesis 35 and Genesis 48, there are other thematic connections in terms of the recurrence of Jacob’s reference to Rachel’s death and the burial place:

Jacob’s reference to Rachel’s death and her burial place in Gen 35:19 and Gen 48:7 is almost verbatim. These striking links between Genesis 35 and 48 indicate that the additions to the Joseph narrative are coherent and integral to the Jacob narrative at these points.

2.2.2 Links and Thematic Parallels between Gen 49:1-50:1-14 (cf. 47:28-31) and Genesis 34; 35 within the Abrahamic Promise of Nation, King, Land

Many scholars have noted the connections between Genesis 49 and the plot of the Jacob narrative. For example, Wilson points out that the Jacob narrative is assumed in Genesis 49 as follows:

291 The two verbs, וְיָרָאָה and רְאֵה, are used in Gen 35:11 and Gen 48:4 while in Gen 17:6 the verb, וְרָאָה, is used although the combination of the promise of multiplication occurs with the promises of nations, kings, and land in all of those passages. See also W. Gross, “Israel’s Hope for the Renewal of the State,” JINSL 14 (1988): 102, who argues that this combination between the promise of multiplication and the promises of kings, nations, and land recur not only in Gen 35 and 48, but also in Gen 17 and 28. In fact, in Gen 28:3-4 there is no promise of kings although other promise elements are recounted.
The disqualification of Reuben, Simeon and Levi is necessary for the rise to prominence of Judah that is reflected in the Joseph story. In the wider book of Genesis this is explained by Reuben sleeping with Bilhah (35:22) and by Simeon and Levi’s revenge attack on Shechem (34:22) and by Simeon and Levi’s revenge attack on Shechem (34:25-31).

In this statement, Wilson points out that the misdeeds of Jacob’s three oldest sons in the Jacob narrative are evaluated in Genesis 49. Taking a slightly different direction, Wenham points out a similar redactional method between Gen 49:3-28 and Gen 35:22-26, entitling them “List of descendants” and between Gen 49:29-50:14 and Gen 35:27-29, entitling them “Patriarch’s death and burial.”

Expanding the context, Sarna cogently asserts the connections between Genesis 49 and Genesis 29 and 35 in terms of the order of Jacob’s twelve sons. Sarna argues that Genesis 49 reveals a careful internal structural design. Compared to the sequence of birth in Gen 29:31-30:24; 35:16-21 and to any of the tribal lists found elsewhere in the Pentateuch, according to him, the different order of the tribes reveals a careful structural rearrangement of the materials. The order is as follows: (1) the six sons of Leah, (2) one son of Bilhah, maid of Rachel, (3) two sons of Zilpah, maid of Leah, (4) the other son of Bilhah, and finally (5) the two sons of Rachel. This is diagrammed in a deliberate chiastic arrangement: Leah–Bilhah–Zilpah–Bilhah–Rachel. In this way, Sarna forcefully argues that Genesis 49 reveals a careful and intentional authorial intention in its structure. In addition to these links of Genesis 49 to the plot of the Jacob narrative, Genesis 49 is interwoven with Genesis 35 in terms of the Abrahamic promise theme in

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293 Richard E. Friedman, “Who Breaks the Story?: Deception for Deception,” *BRev* 2:1 (1986): 30, also says that in Gen 49:3-7 the three oldest brothers, Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, are excluded because of their previous wrongdoings which are recounted in Gen 34 and 35.
295 Sarna, *Genesis*, 331; refer also to Wenham, *Genesis* 16-50, 469.
296 Sarna, *Genesis*, 331.
that the fulfillment of the promises of nationhood, kings, and land, which are made to Jacob in Genesis 35 is anticipated in Genesis 49.

Many commentators have pointed out that Genesis 49 is filled with national ideology in that it deals not so much with an individual or a family as with the twelve tribes of Israel (49:28).\(^{297}\) The divine promise of nationhood to Jacob (35:11) has reached its fulfillment, which is articulated in the expression “the twelve tribes of Israel (49:28).”\(^{298}\) Similarly, Westermann states that the goal of Genesis 49 is political in that, in his judgment, Jacob’s sayings are collected and inserted in its place to affirm Israel as a united nation.\(^{299}\) Brueggemann also asserts that Genesis 49 “intends to be political propaganda to advance some tribal claims at the expense of others,” thereby uniting and consolidating the twelve tribes under certain political leadership.\(^{300}\) This view of Genesis 49 as conveying a national ideology is further demonstrated in that the tribes of Judah and Joseph dominate the sayings of Jacob to the extent that "five verses are devoted to each tribe, together totaling ten of the twenty-five verses of the sayings."\(^{301}\) All these elements are summarized well by Longacre in his comments on Genesis 49:

In this chapter, which is probably the peak of the toledot yaʿāqōb which is in turn the highpoint of Genesis, we have a glimpse of the embryonic nation – with the Judah and Joseph tribes destined to have preeminence in the south and north respectively.\(^{302}\)

All these interpreters’ discussions support the argument that the promise of nationhood is implied in Genesis 49. Connected to this, the promise of kingship is implied in this


\(^{298}\) Sarna, *Genesis*, 331.

\(^{299}\) Westermann, *Genesis* 37-50, 277-78.

\(^{300}\) Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 365.

\(^{301}\) See Sarna, *Genesis*, 331.

\(^{302}\) Longacre, *Joseph*, 54.
chapter when the line of future kings is promised in blessing upon Judah (Gen 49:10; cf. 38:29; 48:19). These promise elements, which are destined to be fulfilled through Jacob’s descendants, parallel the promise made to Jacob in Gen 35:11:

In a similar way, the promise of land is anticipated in Genesis 49 in that, as many commentators point out, the sayings of Jacob to his sons in Genesis 49 do not speak of the sojourn in Egypt, but take for granted various features of the occupation of the Promised Land (49:11, 13, 14, 15, 20, 26). Furthermore, the promise of land, which is implied in Gen 49:1-28, is vividly conveyed in its surrounding materials in Gen 47:29-31 and Gen 49:29-50:14.

Many commentators have discussed that the account of the purchase of the “property for a burial place” קֶבֶּר אֲחֻזָה (Gen 23:4, 9, 20), at Machpelah (Gen 23:1-20) does not merely show the burial of Sarah, but is closely related to the possession of the Promised Land. For example, explaining the particular aspects of the purchase story, such as Abraham’s insistence on purchasing the land despite Ephron’s offer of the land for free (23:4, 7-9, 13, 16), and the occurrences of the phrase “in the hearing of the Hittites (23:10, 13, 16, 18),” Wenham says:

And in a sense the purchase of the plot of land at Machpelah was a first step toward Abraham and his descendants’ acquisition of the whole land of Canaan. For this reason, Genesis draws attention twice to the rather obvious point that Hebron is in the land of Canaan (23:2, 19) and repeatedly insists that the negotiations and payment for the land were conducted publicly before the elders of the city (vv 10, 13, 16, 18). There

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304 See Gunkel, *Genesis*, 268-69, where he argues that this account of purchase of the land Machpelah simply shows the custom of “Outstanding people, who . . . do not bury their dead in loaned or donated graves, but on their own property” (269).
was no doubt that this part of Canaan justly belonged to Abraham and his heirs.\footnote{Wenham, \textit{Genesis 16-50}, 130; see also Norman Habel, \textit{The Land Is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies} (OBT; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 123, and Sarna, \textit{Genesis}, 156-57, who reaches a similar conclusion.}

Similarly, concerning the burial place in its relation to the promise, Carr points out, “Those descendants who inherit the promise stay in the land and are buried there. Their bones ground an eternal claim of their descendants to the land.”\footnote{David M. Carr, “βιβλος γενέσεως Revisited: A Synchronic Analysis of Patterns in Genesis as Part of the Torah (Part Two),” \textit{ZAW} 110:2 (1998): 337. Carr expresses his indebtedness “to Brian Schmidt of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, for mention of some examples from cultures outside Israel where the presence of the bones of one’s ancestors in land grounds a claim to it.”} As Deurloo also affirms this view, “Clearly it is not her [Sarah’s] death and burial that is the central theme of chap. 23, but the grave, or more specifically: the \textit{field} with the cave of Machepelah. . . . The grave is a sign of the future fulfillment of the promise of YHWH: to your ‘seed’ I will give this land.”\footnote{Karel A. Deurloo, “The Way of Abraham: Routes and Localities as Narrative Data in Genesis 11:27-25:11,” in \textit{Voices from Amsterdam: A Modern Tradition of Reading Biblical Narrative} (selected, translated and edited by M. Kessler; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 109-10. Likewise, Von Rad. \textit{Genesis}, 249-50. points out, “In the detailed realism of land purchases . . . a fact central to Israel’s faith is being described. . . . In death they were heirs and no longer ‘strangers.’ A small part of the Promised Land – the grave – belonged to them . . . In addition to Sarah, Abraham (ch. 25.9), Isaac (ch. 35.29), Rebekah, Leah (cf. 49.31), and Jacob (ch. 50.13) were also later buried here.” Greidanus, \textit{Preaching Christ from Genesis}, 22, 457-59, also considers burial accounts in Gen 23:1-20; Gen 49:29-50:15 as conveying the motif of the Promised Land.}

In this way, the Abrahamic promise of land is implied in the account of the burial of the patriarchs and their wives.

This promise of the land in relation to the burial place continues to be articulated in 49:29-50:1-14 (cf. 47:29-31), where Jacob gives specific instructions for his burial and makes Joseph swear to bury him, not in Egypt, but in the land of Canaan where his forefathers are buried. Wilson also considers the reference to the burial place as an indication of the promise of the land, “the promise of the land is also behind Jacob (47:28-31; 49:29-50:14) . . . [as] Jacob’s burial in the land of Canaan with the other
patriarchs (49:31) is both a statement that this is where he belongs, as well as an anticipation that this is where his descendants will live. The relation to the Promised Land of Jacob’s deathbed instructions and burial is further reaffirmed by Joseph’s deathbed account. In Gen 50:24-25, Joseph makes the Israelites swear to carry up his bones from Egypt when God brings them out of Egypt to the Promised Land. These last words of Joseph clearly demonstrate the connection between the burial place in Canaan and the Promised Land. This confirms the view that Jacob’s concern about his burial place in Canaan conveys the motif of the Promised Land.

In this way, the accounts of Jacob’s life and death (47:28-31; 49:29-33; 50:1-14) revolve around the Abrahamic promise of land, provide a framework for his deathbed blessings, and reaffirm the promises of nationhood and kings (48:1-49:28). The framework may be schematized as follows:

A Jacob’s lifespan, impending death and burial instruction; the Promised Land 47:28-31
B Jacob’s blessings conferred on his sons; Nationhood and Kings 48:1-49:28
A’ Jacob’s burial instruction, his death in Egypt, and burial in Canaan; the Promised Land 49:29-50:14

It is evident that the two blessings of Jacob (Genesis 48 and 49), which mainly deal with the Abrahamic promise theme, are intentionally separated in the accounts of Jacob’s burial instruction, death and burial (47:28-31; 49:29-33; 50:1-14), demonstrating that Jacob’s descendants enjoy the divine blessing of nationhood and kings (Genesis 48 and 49) in the Promised Land (Gen 47:28-31 and Gen 49:29-50:14), which are the result of the fulfillment of the promises made to Jacob and his descendants. This manifestation of

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the promise elements of nation, king, and land in Genesis 49 is well articulated by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch in their comments on Gen 49:1-28:

. . . so Jacob, while blessing the twelve, pictured in grand outlines the *lineamenta* of the future history of the future nation” (Ziegler). The groundwork of his prophecy was supplied partly by the natural character of his twelve sons, and partly by the divine promise which had been given by the Lord to him and to his fathers Abraham and Isaac, and that not merely in these two points, the numerous increase of their seed and the possession of Canaan.\(^{309}\)

These promises, to be fulfilled through his sons in Genesis 49, are initially made to Jacob in Genesis 35. From all these analyses, it is evident that the main themes of Genesis 49 accord exactly with those of Genesis 34-35, in that Genesis 49 shows the fulfillment of the promise mentioned in Genesis 34-35, envisioning Jacob’s family’s becoming a nation with kings living in the Promised Land. In my view, the deliberate links and thematic parallels between Genesis 34-35 and Gen 47:28-50:14, which are interwoven with the original Joseph story, demonstrate that it has been deliberately planned in order to show its parallels with Genesis 34-35.\(^{310}\)

In sum, these thematic/theological parallels between the redactional materials and the plot of the Jacob narrative indicate that there is a deliberate plan at work for these parallels.

I have attempted to demonstrate the high degree of connection that the redactional materials have with the core Joseph materials. I have further attempted to demonstrate that the redactional materials, which are also interconnected to the Jacob narrative, have

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\(^{310}\) This directly disproves the view that Gen 47:28-50:26 is an anticlimax to the preceding narratives of the reconciliation between the brothers, the reunion between Joseph and his father Jacob, and their settlement in Egypt in Gen 45-47. See Coats, “Redactional Unity in Genesis 37-50” for his view on Gen 47:28-50:14; and Westermann, *Genesis 37-50*, 237. This view fails to recognize the function and purpose of these chapters whose author(s)/redactor(s) intend to show the fulfillment of the promises made Jacob in Gen 35. This failure comes from the conclusion that these chapters are only loosely connected to the original Joseph story.
been positioned to complete a parallel structure that existed between the original Joseph story and the Jacob narrative. In order to demonstrate the existing unique parallels between the Jacob and the original Joseph narratives, in what follows, I will begin by critiquing some modern scholars’ discussions of the Joseph narrative regarding its connections with the wisdom literature and the preceding Genesis narratives.
Chapter Three: The Search for Continuities of the Joseph Narrative with the Wisdom Literature and with the Book of Genesis and for Its Unique Thematic/Theological Parallels with the Jacob Narrative

The Abrahamic promise regarding the progeny, the land, and the blessing has long been considered to be the indispensable theme of the patriarchal narratives in Gen 12-36, binding the narratives together.\(^\text{311}\) When it comes to the last section of the book of Genesis (Gen 37:2-50:26), however, the Abrahamic promise theme has usually been discerned only in the redactional materials (Gen 38; 46-50) where it is regarded as intrinsic. Therefore, the original Joseph story (Gen 37; 39-45) has long been interpreted as thematically and theologically distinct from the preceding patriarchal narratives (Gen 12-36). This understanding of the original Joseph story can be seen, for example, in scholars’ discussions of the original Joseph story in its connection to the wisdom literature.

Focusing on the thematic and theological distinctiveness of the original Joseph story from the preceding patriarchal narratives (Gen 12-36), some scholars have argued for the influence of wisdom literature upon the original Joseph story. This argument starts with von Rad’s well-known wisdom theory. Von Rad locates the original Joseph story in the context of the Solomonic enlightenment.\(^\text{312}\) As M. V. Fox puts it, “[f]ew would still share von Rad’s confidence about the dating of the Joseph narrative and the character of

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\(^{311}\) For the detailed discussion of this subject, see Zimmerli, *Man and His Hope*, 50; Zimmerli, “Promise and Fulfillment,” 111-12; Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 31-43; Westermann, *The Promises to the Fathers*, 128-29; Wolff, “The Kerygma of the Yahwist,” 41-66.

the Solomonic period.”313 But, influenced by von Rad’s theory, many scholars still argue that the original Joseph story is a didactic text informed by wisdom literature, and that its ideals are intended to be followed.314 As a result of this approach, the original Joseph story was often divorced from its canonical context thematically and theologically. In particular, some scholars have noted the absence of any reference to the promise or covenant theme in the original Joseph story.315 Thus isolated from its canonical context, the original Joseph story “has no roots in the classical theological traditions of the Pentateuch.”316 On the other hand, some scholars have attempted to read the Joseph narrative in continuity with the primeval history and the preceding Genesis narratives in terms of brotherly strife. In what follows, studies on some modern scholars’ discussions of the Joseph narrative in its connections with the wisdom literature and the preceding Genesis narratives are reviewed and evaluated.

1. Modern Search for the Wisdom Elements in the Original Joseph Story317 (Gen 37; 39-45)

Although the idea that Joseph is to be emulated is much older,318 the ideas of Joseph as a wisdom figure and of the wisdom literatures influencing the original Joseph story are relatively recent. It starts with von Rad’s famous theory of the Joseph story as wisdom literature. Von Rad’s theory is based mainly on his understanding both of Joseph as an

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316 Coats, From Canaan to Egypt, 4.
317 I limit the scope of text to the original Joseph story since most scholars’ discussions on this topic concern mainly chapters 37, 39-47, where the accounts of Joseph’s rebuff of sexual temptation, his dream interpretation, his rise to prominence and his treatment of his brothers are described.
318 Wilson, Joseph, Wise and Otherwise, 7, says, “the view that Joseph was a teacher of wisdom is reflected in Ps 105:22, and thus is quite respectably ancient.”
ideal character and of the wisdom-like theological ideas underlying the original Joseph story.\textsuperscript{319} Although not many would argue that the Joseph narrative is wisdom literature itself instead of merely being influenced by it as von Rad did,\textsuperscript{320} many scholars since von Rad have appealed to the wisdom elements of the story based on the views of Joseph as the exemplary figure and the underlying theological presuppositions of the Joseph narrative as being identical to those of the wisdom literature.\textsuperscript{321}

In what follows, some modern scholars' discussions of the original Joseph story in relation to wisdom literature, based both on the view of Joseph as an exemplary figure in terms of his character and skill and on the theology of the story, are reviewed and critiqued.

1.1 The Characterization of Joseph: Joseph as an Exemplary Figure (Genesis 37; 39; 42-44)

When it comes to the issue of whether or not Joseph is described as an ideal person to be emulated, scholars have discussed Joseph’s underlying character demonstrated in the biblical portrayal in Genesis 37, 39, and 42-44, where Joseph’s interactions with his brothers and Potiphar’s wife are depicted.

1.1.1 Joseph’s Initial Interaction with His Brothers (Genesis 37)

With regard to the biblical portrayal of the characterization of Joseph, scholars have commented on Genesis 37, which recounts Joseph’s רָעָה report about the brothers to his father (37:2) and his telling of his dreams to his family (37:5-11). Although the word רָעָה carries a negative connotation in itself, some scholars have evaluated Joseph positively, based on the truthfulness of the content of his report and the good motivation behind his

\textsuperscript{319} Von Rad, “The Joseph Narrative and Ancient Wisdom,” 9, argues that “the Joseph narrative is a didactic wisdom-story . . ., not only with regard to its conception of an education ideal, but also in its fundamental theological ideas.”

\textsuperscript{320} This point is made by Stuart Weeks, \textit{Early Israelite Wisdom} (OTM; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 92.

\textsuperscript{321} For a detailed discussion of the supporters and critics of von Rad’s theory, see Wilson, \textit{Joseph, Wise and Otherwise}, 7-17.
In this way, whether Joseph’s report is true or not, the text suggests a negative portrayal of Joseph in chapter 37. This is well articulated in H. M. Morris’ comment when he admits that “it is questionable whether Joseph should have become a talebearer in this way” 326 although he points to the truthfulness of Joseph’s report about his brothers.

and its necessity for his father Jacob. Some scholars who argue for wisdom elements in the original Joseph story or for Joseph as an ideal figure have pointed out that Joseph is described as immature and unwise in this. For example, J. A. Loader, who maintains that the Joseph narrative is “not only a propagandist of certain chokmatic virtues, but that it expounds the most fundamental theological structure of the old Israelite wisdom,” admits that the portrayal of Joseph in Genesis 37 is negative:

Von Rad pictures Joseph as the ideal ḥākām without more ado. But this cannot satisfy the critical reader of the first part. In ch. 37 the young man is quite opposite of a wise man. He is tell-tale bearing rumours about other people, and according to Prov. 25:9 such a behaviour is not chokmatic. . . . Twice he tells of his transparent dreams that need no exposition. His own mouth speaks of his honour, and not the mouth of another as Prov. 27:2 wants it–so much so that his father has to scold him. . . . This disposition does not merely represent the transgression of a few isolated technical precepts. It is a distortion of the inner essence of chokma.

Likewise, Humphrey, who regards the portrayal of Joseph in Genesis 40-41 as that of a wise model suggesting a close influence of wisdom literature, says that Joseph in Genesis 37 is described as “the spoiled and boastful brat;” as “pampered and insensitive of the impact of his tale-bearing and his dreams.” Even Fritsgh, who sees Joseph as “one of the most perfect characters in the Old Testament . . . [who] is a model for all to follow,” says that Joseph’s evil report about his brothers shows a character flaw. Thus, Kugel says, “Rabbinic exegetes were no less lavish in their praise of Joseph; . . . ‘Joseph the virtuous’ [i.e. because of his refusal of sexual temptation in Genesis 39];” but “the Rabbis did not hold Joseph to be a blameless victim of fate. Of Joseph’s boyhood the

329 Humphreys, Joseph and His Family, 147-48.
330 Humphreys, Joseph and His Family, 25, 87.
331 Fritsgh, “God Was With Him,” 23-24. See also Wilson, Joseph, Wise and Otherwise, 251, who argues that “even if Joseph’s character in chapter 37 were not to be regarded so neutrally . . . [Joseph] would be still be a model of a young man who learns wisdom by turning away from his earlier folly.” Although Wilson attempts to smooth out Joseph’s character portrayal in Gen 37 by focusing on Joseph’s character development, he also could not help but admit the negative portrayal of Joseph in the chapter.
Genesis narrative notes that he used to bring back ‘evil reports’ about his brothers – he was a tattle-tale – and this, as much as his dreams, is what set his brothers against him.”

As these interpreters’ discussions show, Joseph in Genesis 37 is at best to be considered as a naïve youth, if not a sinner to be punished. In this connection, Docherty’s work is worth noting. Surveying the Inter-Testamental period among Jews of both Palestine and the Diaspora, Docherty concludes: “Almost all of them idealize the figure of Joseph, as part of the general tendency of later works to smooth out any perceived difficulties in the canonical text and present the patriarchs in a most positive light.” However, according to Docherty, two places in Jewish literature retain recognition of the questionable aspects of the biblical Joseph’s character. Docherty notes that although rabbinic commentators present Joseph as an ideal figure, in Genesis Rabbah Joseph is described as immoral. Joseph did wrong because he misused his father’s love towards him, and thus bringing a false report about them to his father. Thus, Docherty points out, "Joseph’s slavery and imprisonment in Egypt are therefore understood as his just punishment from God, an interpretation that fits perfectly with the rabbinic view that any suffering must be a result of sin.” Although the validity of this analysis of Joseph’s suffering as his due punishment is disputable, the discussion of the questionable aspects

333 In fact, Maren Niehoff, The Figure of Joseph in Post-Biblical Jewish Literature (AGAJU 19; New York: E.J. Brill, 1992), 117, quotes the Midrash Genesis Rabbah’s reading of Joseph’s evil report about his brothers as God’s punishment: “Joseph’s three troubles, namely his brother’s assault, their sale of him and the advances of Potiphar’s wife, are in reality Divine punishments for each of his slanders.”
of the biblical portrayal of Joseph’s character and behaviour in Genesis 37 is worth noting.

In any case, the view that Joseph in Genesis 37 is portrayed as an ideal figure to be emulated is not fully convincing.

1.1.2 Joseph’s Second Interaction with His Brothers (Genesis 42-44)

To scholars who regard Joseph as an exemplary person, Joseph’s harsh treatment of his brothers in Genesis 42-44 is probably the greatest challenge. Thus, these scholars have had to come up with explanations for Joseph’s harsh treatment of his brothers in order to justify his actions. Many scholars have attempted to justify Joseph’s apparently harsh actions by arguing that they are a necessary well-intended test with a view to promoting reconciliation. Thus, according to these scholars, Joseph’s harsh treatment of his brothers, in fact, shows his wisdom.

For example, von Rad, who understands Joseph as a model of prudence, justifies the necessity of Joseph’ harsh treatment of his brothers for the reconciliation and restoration of his family as follows:

Clearly he [Joseph] does not intend to punish the brothers; rather, Joseph . . . wants to “test” them. . . . they [i.e. Judah’s words] show how the brothers have changed . . . It is not clear that the brothers have passed the great test which Joseph set them.

Likewise, Westermann comments on 42:9:

Joseph, as soon as he had recognized his brothers, was resolved to try to apply healing to the breach. That cannot happen, however, unless the brothers, for their part, are first brought to “perception.” This is the reason that Joseph permits them to experience the full harshness of what it means to be at the mercy of the mighty. The narrator means to say here that pardon at this point

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337 Thus, even Coats, who warns against the temptation to beautify the character of Joseph, considers Joseph’s harsh treatment of his brothers in Gen 42-44 as his acting out of character for a greater purpose. See his book, From Canaan to Egypt, 44, note 50.

338 Von Rad, Genesis, 383, 395.
immediately after the arrival of the brothers could not have led to a genuine solution. What had happened was too serious for that.\textsuperscript{339}

In this way, both von Rad and Westermann argue that, with a view to promoting reconciliation, Joseph wisely tests his brothers for their own good to see if they are changed men. But the text does not seem to support this argument. In fact, the text already points to their change of heart before Joseph begins with the series of bizarre actions toward his brothers. The passage, Gen 42:21-23, recounts Joseph’s overhearing the brothers’ confession and regret for their wrongdoings to him. In other words, the text demonstrates that Joseph has already seen the brothers’ change of heart. Thus, the text seems to challenge some scholars' argument that Joseph’s harsh treatment of his brothers is a test to see if the brothers are changed men as a necessary preliminary step for the reconciliation. Thus, Turner comments on the passage in Gen 42:21-22, “If Joseph is looking for a ‘confession’ or ‘reformation’ before he reveals himself, then here he has it.”\textsuperscript{340}

With regard to the lack of necessity for a test on Joseph’s part, Turner says further that “the view that Joseph’s harsh treatment is designed to discover whether his brothers have repented and are now acting properly toward Jacob is a question which seems reasonable to the reader, who knows how they deceived Jacob, but is not so reasonable to ascribe to Joseph, who knows nothing of the deception of his father.”\textsuperscript{341} In this way, Turner convincingly questions the necessity for Joseph’s test. Thus, even Humphreys, who attempts to justify Joseph in Genesis 42-44,\textsuperscript{342} says at one point that although the

\textsuperscript{339} Westermann, \textit{Joseph}, 66.

\textsuperscript{340} Laurence A. Turner, \textit{Announcements of Plot in Genesis} (JSOTSup 96; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 158.

\textsuperscript{341} Turner, \textit{Announcements}, 157-58.

\textsuperscript{342} Humphrey, \textit{Joseph and His Family}, 181, says that in Gen 42-44 Joseph is presented as “the very model of the self-controlled man. It is the control of emotion, and not its denial, that the wise valued.”
family is finally saved from the deadly famine, “the course was in significant respects brutal . . . [and] Joseph need not have . . . toyed with his brothers later when they in turn fall into his hands.”

Like von Rad and Westermann, Wilson argues for Joseph’s harsh treatment of his brothers in 42-44 as a wise action, saying that “Joseph’s actions were necessary for him to test whether his brothers had changed, and so bring about an enduring reconciliation within the family.” To support this argument, Wilson sees the fact that God allows Job to suffer (cf. Job 1:13-19; 2:7) in order to be tested as a parallel to Joseph’s testing his brothers by causing them to suffer. However, Wilson’s argument for a positive view of Joseph’s harsh actions is not fully convincing for the following reasons. First, in his comparison between Joseph’s actions and God’s actions in the book of Job, Wilson assumes Joseph’s course of action is simply a well-intended test, but does not prove it. The writer of the book of Job directly articulates the nature of God’s harsh treatment of Job as His test (cf. Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6) while Genesis 42-44 does not define Joseph’s harsh treatment of his brothers in this way. Secondly and more importantly, Wilson’s analogy fails because he does not consider the theological differences between the book of Job and the Joseph narrative. The book of Job deals with the suffering of an innocent man as God mysteriously tests his faith. When it comes to the issue of the suffering or hardship in relation to unrighteousness, however, the Joseph narrative portrays the opposite theological concept to that in the book of Job. As Joseph himself explains, God intends to save his brothers and his family despite their wrongdoings (cf. 45:5-8; 50:19-20). In other words, God intends Job to suffer despite his innocence while God intends Joseph’s

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343 Humphreys, *Joseph and His Family*, 128-29.
brothers to be saved despite their wrongdoings. Therefore, Wilson’s argument for a positive view of Joseph’s harsh treatment of his brothers as a well-intended test based on its parallel to God’s action towards Job is less than fully convincing. The text does not approve Joseph’s harsh treatment of his brothers, but on the contrary, condemns his actions as being inconsistent with God’s merciful plan for them. Thus, Joseph’s motivation for the harsh treatment of his brothers is unexplained and his character in Genesis 42-44 cannot be necessarily viewed positively.

Joseph’s actions, being inconsistent with God’s merciful plan for his brothers and his family, are even more questionable when we consider his ability to interpret dreams and foresee God’s plans (cf. 45:5-8; 50:19-20). As the text demonstrates, Joseph has the ability to foresee God’s plans revealed through dreams (cf. Genesis 40; 41); therefore, he might well have realized God’s merciful plan for his brothers and his family through his youthful dreams. Thus, though Joseph’s cruelty to his brothers is understandable in view of their past cruel treatment of him, Joseph should have not treated them harshly because he had foreknowledge of God’s merciful plan for them. In other words, the text not only fails to demonstrate the necessity for Joseph’s actions as a test, but also provides support for the view that Joseph’s treatment of his brothers goes against God’s merciful plan for his family. As Jacobs points out, “his [Joseph’s] actions hardly seem

346 Although Joseph might have not known about the true meaning of his dreams and God’s plans in his youth, it is easily possible that he has realized it by the time he encounters his brothers, as his abilities have been proven in his interpreting the dreams of the two courtiers and of Pharaoh.
347 This directly challenges von Rad’s argument based on the statements (45:5-8; 50:19-20) that Joseph is a wise person to be emulated because of his foresight of God’s plan: “He had authority because he alone know something that was hidden from all others.” See his article, “The story of Joseph,” 31.
justified in light of that insight. It would be more plausible . . . if the insight had dissuaded him from the scheming and harsh treatment of his brothers."\textsuperscript{348}

Furthermore, to support his view of Joseph’s harsh treatment as a wise act, Wilson argues that it parallels Solomon’s wise test in 1 Kings 3.\textsuperscript{349} According to Wilson, the parallel between Solomon’s test of the two women and Joseph’s test of his brothers in Genesis 42-44 indicates that Joseph is depicted as a wise person. But, the analogy of Joseph’s actions to Solomon’s test is faulty because Solomon’s motive for the harsh treatment of the two women is explained as a well-intended test to find the real mother of the baby (1 Kgs 3:28), while Joseph’s actions are not even defined as a test, nor is his motivation clear, as the text is quiet on that matter. Thus, Wilson’s argument for a positive view of Joseph’s harsh treatment of his brothers as a well-intended test based on his proposal of parallels between Solomon’s test of the two women and Joseph’s actions toward his brothers is not fully convincing.

All these interpreters' readings of Joseph’s course of action in Genesis 42-44 demonstrate how the conventional reading of Joseph as an ideal character has influenced some scholars, and thus overriding the other suggestions of the text.\textsuperscript{350} For example,

\textsuperscript{349} See Wilson, \textit{Joseph, Wise and Otherwise}, 148-49.
\textsuperscript{350} In fact, as Turner, \textit{Announcements}, 156, points out, the views of Joseph’s use of deceptions and harsh treatment of his brothers as a necessary preliminary step for the reconciliation is “almost universal.” Thomas L. Author Brodie, “Genesis as Dialogue: Genesis’ Twenty-Six Diptychs as a Key to Narrative Unity and Meaning,” in \textit{Studies in the Book of Genesis: Literature, Redaction and History} (BETL 155; ed. A. Wénin; Leuven: University Press, 2001), 308, says that “when Joseph meets his brothers he saves them an immediate embarrassing revelation, and he begins instead to help them to remember their sin in a positive way (Ch. 42) . . . to freedom and restoration”; Wenham, \textit{Genesis 16-50}, 432, argues that “ when at last he is convinced of their change of heart, he weeps freely over them (45.1-2, 14-15)”; Humphreys, \textit{Joseph and His Family}, 181, justifies Joseph’s harsh treatment of his brothers on the grounds that “the situation at the end of chapter 37 is one of complete dissolution and of utter disharmony; protracted and extreme measures, it can be argued, are needed to heal it”; and D. A. Seybold, “Paradox and Symmetry in the Joseph Narrative,” in \textit{Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives} (ed. K.R.R. Gros Louis; Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), 69-70, argues that “the set of tricks that Joseph plays on the brothers . . . allow[s] them to
Williams analyzes the deception stories in the book of Genesis and identifies fifteen examples of positive deception stories in Genesis, including Joseph’s two deceptions of his brothers in Genesis 42-44. He comments: “deception is evaluated positively when the perpetrator deceives one who has previously wronged him in order to restore his own condition to what it would have been had it not been disrupted, while at the same time, not harming the victim.” Then he concludes that one of the three deception stories to be evaluated positively is Tamar’s deception of Judah (Genesis 38). In fact, William’s methodological approach is helpful in justifying Tamar’s deception of Judah (Gen 38:26). Tamar, as the perpetrator, deceives Judah in order to restore what she would have had if he had not disregarded her rights by failing to marry her to his son Shelah. As a result, Tamar has regained her rights through conceiving children, while Judah has not been harmed. In fact, Judah is rewarded by Tamar’s deception by the birth of the twin sons, Perez and Zerah, through whom the tribe of Judah is established. Judah himself admits that Tamar’s action is rightful (Gen 38:26), thus justifying Tamar’s deception. However, by grouping the stories of Joseph’s deceptions with Tamar’s, Williams reaches a conclusion that cannot be fully supported by analysis of the text.

The first question concerns the necessity for Joseph’s deceptions in relation to what Joseph has lost because of his brothers’ deception of, and wrongdoings to, him. What he has lost is security or well-being and family, especially his father who loves him. But the question is whether his deception of his brothers is necessary to restore these things, and thus can be justified. The answer is no. When it comes to the restoration of his ability to obey and to show love and loyalty to both Jacob and their brothers – in short to reunite the family and preserve it.”


352 Williams, *Deception in Genesis*, 54. Italics in original.
security or well-being, Joseph does not need to deceive his brothers because it has already been restored to him. It is proven in his confession, by his naming the firstborn Manasseh, “For . . . God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father’s house” and by naming the second, “For God has made me fruitful in the land of my misfortunes (Gen 41:51-52).” The text demonstrates that God has already restored part of what Joseph had lost because of his brothers’ wrongdoing to him. Furthermore, as Joseph himself articulates in Gen 45:5-8, he knows that God has a salvational purpose for his family. As Ross points out, “God was able to turn human wickedness to serve the divine purpose. Consequently, if it was ‘the will of God’ throughout, Joseph had no right to retaliate or need to forgive—God does both.”

When it comes to the restoration of family, as a person with power, Joseph could easily have restored what he lost. He could simply have commanded his brothers to bring their families, especially his loved ones, Jacob and his younger brother Benjamin, to Egypt when they first appeared before him. It was in Joseph’s power to complete the restoration of family without deception. Turner’s comments on the parallels between the Joseph narrative and the story of Esau support this point:

Both he [i.e. Joseph] and Esau . . . are in a position of power- Joseph as Grand Vizier, Esau with four hundred men . . . Yet Esau acts in a completely different manner. He does not concoct an elaborate series of self-concealments and deceptions . . . ch. 33 shows that testing, trial and confession are not a necessary route to reconciliation. Esau has shown a better way.

Although Turner does not explain in detail his support for the view that Joseph’s actions towards his family were not necessary, he well shows the questionable aspects of Joseph’s actions. In other words, Joseph’s deceptions of his brothers are not necessary,

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353 Ross, *Creation & Blessing*, 713.
354 Ross, *Creation & Blessing*, 54.
and thus cannot be viewed positively, even though Williams attempts to justify Joseph’s deceptions as needed “in order to bring about the restoration of the family.” However, Williams does not explain why he regards Joseph’s deceptions as a necessary step for family restoration. Instead, Williams assumes that Joseph’s deceptions are positively depicted.

Two factors, which are the lack of explicit explanation in the narrative and the usual view of Joseph as an exemplary figure, may help to explain this almost universal view of Joseph’s actions as a well-intended test. However, the view of Joseph’s motive for testing his brothers to see whether they have changed as a precondition for his decision to forgive and reconcile with them seems to work from the assumption that Joseph is an exemplary figure throughout the Joseph narrative, even when careful consideration of the text would suggest the opposite.

In conclusion, neither the text itself nor the arguments of the scholars demonstrate that Joseph’s harsh treatment of his brothers is a necessary preliminary test to the reconciliation fail to demonstrate that Joseph is a wise person to be emulated.

More recently, Ackerman and others have attempted to connect Joseph's harsh treatment of his brothers with his role in the fulfillment of the dreams. Ackerman, thus, attempts to justify Joseph’s suspicious series of actions, saying, “Joseph’s dream sequence establishes the pattern for his course of action after his brothers come to Egypt: obeisance of all the brothers is of first importance . . . . [T]he interpretation will not be clear to him until after the dreams have been fulfilled—because he himself must play a

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355 Ross, *Creation & Blessing*, 54.
role in bringing the dreams to fulfillment.”\textsuperscript{356} In this way, Ackerman tries to justify Joseph’s course of action in Genesis 42-44 possibly as an attempt to play a role to bring about the fulfillment of his dreams. Likewise, Turner proposes that Joseph is not motivated by revenge but is attempting to fulfill the second dream.\textsuperscript{357} In this way, these scholars provide a positive view of Joseph’s deceptions, false accusations, and imprisonment of his brothers in Genesis 42-44. However, readings of these series of questionable actions towards his brothers as Joseph's attempts to fulfill his dreams are less than fully convincing on several accounts.

Firstly, if the intention of the harsh treatments is to fulfill his dreams, Joseph’s failure to contact his family cannot be explained, especially when all the countries come to him for food because the famine is severe over the world. In fact, some commentators have expressed the difficulty of explaining Joseph’s failure to contact his family. A. Ages, for example, points out that “the Joseph saga becomes the paradigm of the Jew who lives in a non-Jewish culture so completely that he forgets to call home.”\textsuperscript{358} In particular, Kugel criticizes Joseph for his failure to contact his father Jacob:

A still more problematic element in Joseph’s character was the fact that he apparently made no attempt to contact his beloved father, not when he was set in charge of Potiphar’s household (and presumably could have done so without difficulty), and not even when he became a high official in Pharaoh’s court. That he felt no attachment to his brothers is understandable, but his father? This too bespeaks a less than laudable character, and might have led early exegetes to look deeply into the incident of Potiphar’s wife for some hint of similar flaws.\textsuperscript{359}

On this point, even Wilson, who provides a positive view of Joseph’s treatment of his brothers in Genesis 42-44, admits, “Admittedly, Joseph’s failure to contact his father at

\textsuperscript{357} Turner, Announcements, 159-60.
\textsuperscript{359} Kugel, “The Case Against Joseph,” 276.
an earlier stage is difficult to explain, and . . . his explanation for the naming of Manasseh (41:51) reflects a less-than-filial piety." 360

Joseph’s failure to contact his family is even more inexplicable if his actions are an attempt to fulfill his dreams. The fulfillment of his dreams could easily have been achieved by his contacting his family at an earlier stage or even by self-disclosure at the first meeting with his brothers in Genesis 42. Thus, the fact that Joseph attempts neither to contact his family when the famine gets severe nor to reveal himself in his first encounter with his brothers rules out the validity of the reading of his treatment of his brothers as an attempt to fulfill his dreams. Furthermore, the text indicates that Joseph knows that the choice of how to respond to the dreams is left to a human agent. This is demonstrated in his suggestions to Pharaoh when he interprets his dreams. Joseph wisely suggests to Pharaoh how to react to the dreams for the maximum benefit. Joseph must have known that he had a choice in his response to the dreams for either maximum benefit or otherwise. But when he remembers his dreams in his encounter with his brothers (cf. 42:9), Joseph does not choose to act proactively in order to cope with the situation of famine which his family faces. Such a reaction contrasts with his proactive and impressive administrative skill with regard to Pharaoh’s dreams. Joseph chooses to make his brothers go through a series of hardships instead of choosing to reveal himself and carry out a constructive role he could play for his family.

Secondly and more importantly, the reading of Joseph’s action as an attempt to fulfill his dreams is implausible considering the fulfillment of dreams in the preceding episodes. In the preceding dream episodes, Joseph never plays a role in bringing the dreams to fulfillment, although he interprets them. For example, the fulfillment of the

360 Wilson, Joseph, Wise and Otherwise, 246.
dreams of the butler-baker and Pharaoh, which Joseph has interpreted, happens without any human intervention. This suggests that Joseph knows that there is no necessary part for him to play in terms of the fulfillment of the dreams. This is further verified in Joseph’s own words when he says: “And the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about (41:32).” In other words, Joseph knows that the fulfillment of the dreams does not require any human agent and that the dreams are intended only to foretell the fixed future. Thus, the reading of Joseph’s questionable action towards his brothers as his attempt to fulfill his dreams seems hardly to be supported by the biblical understanding of the role of human beings in fulfilling dreams in the Joseph narrative.

In sum, none of these interpreters' proposals for the portrayal of Joseph as a wise person in Genesis 42-44 is fully convincing. In fact, I argue that Joseph’s harsh treatment of his brothers in Genesis 42-44 suggests a desire to get revenge against his brothers although in his encounter with his brothers (Gen 42:9), he remembers the dreams which are meant to lead him to consider God’s merciful plan for his family (cf. Gen 45:5-8). Although Joseph's motivation may come from his desire to test his brothers, there is also a suggestion in the text that at times Joseph is driven by an impulse to punish his brothers in that the series of events in Gen 41:46-46:27 are "almost an exact re-

361 Regarding Joseph's struggling between two different desires of forgiving his brother and punishing them, "his psychological dilemma," it is worth noting the comments of Pete Wilcox, Living the Dream: Joseph for Today: A Dramatic Exposition of Genesis 37-50 (London: Paternoster, 2007), 57, "if Joseph did not respond at once with delight, generosity and forgiveness to the presence of his brothers, it may well owe more to an understandable resurgence of unresolved anger and a desire for some kind of revenge, than to a divinely prompted intention to assess and assist his brothers’ spiritual development . . . . ‘Remembering his dreams’ (verse 9) also meant remembering how and why his brothers acted in the way that they did . . . the path he chooses to take will bring considerable distress on his brothers and his father."
enactment of the trials which Joseph had undergone because of his brothers’ selling him (37:2–41:36).\(^{362}\)

Firstly, Joseph is sold to the Ishmaelites who carry gum (נְכֹאת), balm (צְרִי) and resin (וָלֹט) to Egypt in Gen 37:25; thus he makes his brothers take Benjamin to Egypt, carrying the same items, gum (נְכֹאת), balm (צְרִי) and resin (וָלֹט) in Gen 43:11. Secondly, in Egypt, Joseph is falsely accused by Potiphar’s wife and confined to prison (הַסֹהַר in Gen 39:20; הַסֹהַר in 41:10). Now Joseph creates a similar situation so that his brothers experience the same trial. Thus, Joseph falsely accuses his brothers and confines them to prison (הַסֹהַר in Gen 42:1–25). Some commentators regard Joseph’s replication of his trials as a test of his brothers so that they will recognize their former wrongdoings to him.\(^{363}\) But the replication cannot be a test or an action intended to make his brothers repent because they do not know what Joseph has gone through after they sold him. In other words, the fact that Joseph replicates the trials to his brothers is not so much to make his brothers’ recall their fault as to exact revenge for his past trials. In this sense, these narrative indicators, which display Joseph’s actions as exact reenactment of the past trials caused by his brothers, should incline the reader to see Joseph as being tempted to enact revenge upon his brothers. As M. Sternberg points out, “the hypothesis that Joseph is bent on revenge gains further psychological support from the object remembrance—the

\(^{362}\) Ackerman, “Joseph, Judah and Jacob,” 88-94; M. A. O’Brien, “The Contribution of Judah’s Speech, Genesis 44:18-34, to the Characterization of Joseph,” CBQ 59 (1997): 439. In fact, more recently, some commentators have pointed out that Joseph’s treatment of his brothers in Genesis 42-44 indicates an element of punishment. For example, S. Weeks, Early Israelite Wisdom, 94, sees at least a degree of revenge at work: “Given the considerable anguish and humiliation which Joseph inflicts upon his brothers, it is hard to believe that there is no element of punishment present, and this is never denied in the narrative.” Even Wilson, Joseph, Wise and Otherwise, 247, who reads Joseph’s harsh treatment of his brothers as a necessary test of whether they have changed with a view to promoting reconciliation, admits, “One cannot, of course, rule out entirely that there was an element of punishment in Joseph’s treatment of his brothers.” In the same way, although Peter D. Miscall, “The Jacob and Joseph Stories As Analogies,” JSOT 6 (1978): 34, does not explicitly express Joseph’s series of actions in Genesis 42-44 as a sign of his revenge, he says that “He [Joseph] is a ruthless, arbitrary despot in this part of the narrative.”

\(^{363}\) See Ackerman, “Joseph, Judah and Jacob,” 274-75.
dreams, whose narration led to the crime and whose fulfillment enables the punishment—and more subtly from the playacting that follows.” As Steinberg puts it, “[t]he trumped-up charge makes sense not only as a prelude to retribution but also as the first step in the tit-for-tat process itself, for it reenacts the final phase of Joseph’s own suffering: vilification, by Potiphar’s wife, leading to imprisonment.”

In sum, the portrayal of Joseph’s character demonstrated in his interactions with his brothers in chapters 37 and 42-44 does not rule out the suggestion that Joseph has weakness in his character and is tempted by his desire to punish his brothers, although he is described as commendable in other parts of the Joseph narrative (e.g. his refusal of sexual temptation in Genesis 39 and forgiveness of his brothers in the end). In fact, this is in line with the descriptions of the other characters in the Old Testament, particularly in Genesis, where none of the biblical characters such as Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac or Jacob is depicted as a character without flaw. Even though Noah and Abraham, are commended by God as righteous or faithful men (cf. 6:9; 15:6; 22:12ff), they are at some points described as men with character flaws (cf. Gen 9:21ff; 12:10ff; 20). As Sternberg puts it, “None of his (i.e. the narrator’s) righteous men is perfect and few of the unrighteous wholly evil.” Joseph is also not described as a complete saint, but, like all the other characters in the book of Genesis or even in the entire Old Testament, he shows both flawed and commendable characteristics. Thus, Joseph is not described as an ideal/ perfect figure to be emulated.

1.1.3 Joseph’s Virtue and Success (בראשית, Gen 39:2, 3, 21, 23)

Some scholars regard Joseph’s success in Potiphar’s household as a reward for virtues such as diligence or avoiding sexual temptation, thus reinforcing the story as following the principles of wisdom literature, especially the book of Proverbs. Wilson, for example, argues that Joseph’s expression of ‘sin against God’ “is reminiscent of Prov 5:21-22, which is part of a passage dealing with an adulteress.” Wilson argues for the connection between Joseph’s success and his virtue, thus regarding it as a sign of the presence of the wisdom principles in Genesis 39. Similarly, commenting on Gen 39:21-23, Ross sees Joseph’s success as a reward for his obedience or virtue, although he does not mention the book of Proverbs:

The point of this section is to confirm that Joseph did the right thing, even though he suffered for it. Joseph’s phenomenal success in prison was clearly evidence of God’s approval. This event confirmed that Joseph remained faithful to his God. . . . The wise young man recognized that allegiance to God was the first requirement of the ideal ruler.

However, whether this story reinforces the principles of Wisdom literature, in particular the book of Proverbs, is questionable.

Firstly, as Fox points out, “Any wise men–as well as prophet and priest–would have approved of Joseph’s rebuff of the advances of Potiphar’s wife.” Joseph’s avoiding sexual temptation does not necessarily establish him as a wise figure of wisdom literature, although it is a commendable act. Secondly, when it comes to the connection between virtue and success, the teaching in the Joseph narrative is completely different from that of the book of Proverbs. In fact, the ethical teaching to avoid adultery in Prov 5:21-22 makes a connection between the virtue of avoiding sexual temptation and a

367 Wilson, Joseph, Wise and Otherwise, 251.
368 Wilson, Joseph, Wise and Otherwise, 253-54.
369 Ross, Creation and Blessing, 627-28.
favourable outcome. It teaches that one’s sexual immorality will bring about disaster: “The iniquities of the wicked ensnare them, and they are caught in the toils of their sin (Prov. 5:22).” It directly contradicts Joseph’s experience. Contrary to this principle, Joseph’s sexual virtue, not his sexual immorality, leads to his being thrown into prison. As Fox puts it, “Wisdom literature recognizes that the wise and righteous might find themselves in hard times despite their virtues (e.g., Prov. xxiv 16; Tobit; Ahiqar; ‘Anchsheshonq), but it never concedes that they might fall into difficulties because of them.”

371 As Weeks points out, “it is a strange didacticism indeed which promises a prison sentence as the reward for virtue!”

372 In other words, although Joseph’s sexual virtue makes him a good role model, it does not reinforce the principles of Proverbs. This is further supported in the literary structure of Genesis 39 which recounts Joseph’s success.

Chapter 39 begins with an authorial statement giving credit for Joseph’s success to God, not to Joseph’s diligence or virtues (Gen 39:2, 3, 5 [bis], 21, 23). The designation of God as יהוה occurs six times in Genesis 39 and all of these occur in their relation to Yahweh’s giving success to Joseph. Thus, although Joseph in chapter 39 is depicted as commendable for his diligence and loyalty to his master Potiphar, the fact that the author articulates the connection between Joseph’s success and Yahweh’s presence with him at the beginning of the chapter precludes any significant wisdom influence in this episode. In fact, the text emphasizes God’s role in Joseph’s success by

372 Weeks, Early Israelite Wisdom, 98. Weeks also says, “Whether we understand the ‘sin against God’ to be a description of the ethical basis for refusal, or a second, religious basis, it too is an expression quite unknown in the wisdom exhortations against adultery.”
attributing Joseph’s success to God’s presence with him, as the outline of this chapter demonstrates:

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<th>Verse</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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<tr>
<td>39:1</td>
<td>Joseph in Potiphar’s house</td>
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<tr>
<td>39:2-6</td>
<td>The Lord’s being with Joseph and his being prosperous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39:7-19</td>
<td>Joseph’s refusal of the seduction and the false accusation</td>
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<tr>
<td>39:20-23</td>
<td>Joseph’s being put in prison as the outcome of his sexual virtue and the Lord’s being with Joseph and giving him success in prison</td>
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As the outline above shows, the writer emphasizes the importance of Yahweh’s presence with Joseph for his success, by articulating it in the beginning and at the end of the chapter (verses 2, 3 and 23). The author ascribes Joseph’s success directly to God (39:2, 3, 5, 21, and 23), by the expression, יהוה צלח, in 39:3, 23, where the hiphil form of the verb, צלח, with the subject of יהוה is used. It clearly indicates that Yahweh’s presence with Joseph is the sole source of Joseph’s success. This is summarized by Alter:

These six verses [Gen 39:1-6] are the introductory frame for Joseph’s encounter with his master’s wife, setting the scene for it not only in regard to narrative date but also in the announcing of formal themes. . . . Joseph is successful (matzliah as an intransitive) and God makes him succeed (matzliah as a causative verb). God repeatedly “is with” Joseph, a condition that clearly relates to success as cause to effect and that, spreading from the man to whatever he touches, manifests itself as blessing. . . . The formula of the Lord’s being with Joseph that introduced the whole account of his activities in Egypt (verse 2) now recurs near the end of the concluding verse [verse 21-23] of the episode, and the very last word of the story is, most appropriately, matzliah, “causes to succeed.”

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374 Alter, The Art of Biblical Narrative, 111-12. Cotter, Genesis, 290, also points out, “Because YHWH is so evidently with him (we are told this four times), Joseph finds favor in his mater’s eyes . . . Joseph is blessed with success.”
The main concern of chapter 39 is to describe Joseph as “a god-favored man,” not as an ideal man to emulate. This means that it is Yahweh who makes Joseph’s work prosper and makes him to find favour in the eyes of Potiphar (39:3-4) and the warden (39:21-22), not his diligence or loyalty to his master Potiphar. The strategically placed expression which attributes Joseph’s success to God emphasizes that Joseph’s success comes not from his own virtue but from God, forming an inclusio, a bracket or frame for chapter 39 which recounts the story of Joseph’s success in Potiphar’s house and in prison. Thus, some scholars’ argument of the wisdom elements in Genesis 39 based on the connection between Joseph’s virtue and success seems hardly to be convincing, as the text does not adduce Joseph’s success to his virtues, but to God’s presence with him, proposing a radically different theological principle from that of the book of Proverbs.

1.2 Joseph’s Skills: Dream Interpretation, Administrative Skill, and Rise to Power (Genesis 40-41)

As evidence for the connection of the original Joseph story with wisdom literature, scholars have also maintained that Joseph’s dream interpretation skill and his administrative skills lead to his rise to power. Von Rad, for example, argues that “Joseph himself is an administrator, who became one by demonstrating to Pharaoh that he possessed the twin virtues of outspokenness and good counsel [Gen 41]—precisely the qualities upon which the wisdom-teachers continually insist.” Wilson also argues that Joseph’s administrative skill “reflects values that would be regarded as important in court wisdom circles (see Prov 22:29).” Likewise, Coats argues that Genesis 39-41 has “an

375 Fox, “Wisdom in the Joseph Story,” 31. Cotter, Genesis, 290, also points out, “Because YHWH is so evidently with him (we are told this four times), Joseph finds favor in his master’s eyes.”
376 Contra Wilson, Joseph, Wise and Otherwise, 8, argues, “Neither the wisdom writings nor the Joseph story contain many statements about God’s direct activity, focusing instead on human accomplishment.”
378 See Wilson, Joseph, Wise and Otherwise, 239.
obvious didactic function . . . demonstrat[ing] to future administrators the proper procedure for using power."

However, the text itself refutes the connection between Joseph’s skills and the wisdom literature in that the divine origin of Joseph’s skills is articulated. Gen 41:25-40 recounts the story of Joseph’s interpretation of Pharaoh’s dreams (vv. 25-32), his proposal for the forthcoming famine (vv. 33-36), and his subsequent rise to power as the structure of this passage shows:

- **41:25-32** Joseph’s interpretation of Pharaoh’s dreams
  - v. 25 Joseph’s attributing the interpretation to God
  - v. 28 Joseph’s attributing the origin of Pharaoh’s dreams to God
  - v. 32 Joseph’s attributing the origin of Pharaoh’s dreams to God

- **41:33-36** Joseph’s proposal for the forthcoming abundance and famine
- **41:37-40** Pharaoh’s appointment of Joseph as his second in command
  - v. 38 Pharaoh’s attributing Joseph’s dream interpretation and proposal for the forthcoming crisis to God
  - v. 39 Pharaoh’s attributing Joseph’s dream interpretation and proposal for the forthcoming crisis to God

It is true that Pharaoh puts Joseph in charge of his palace (vv. 37-40), acknowledging Joseph’s dream interpreting skill and his wise proposal. But it is clearly articulated that Joseph’s skills come from God. Throughout the original Joseph story, the designation of God as אלהים occurs only 20 times. Out of those 20 mentions of God, eight are associated with an insistence either by Joseph or Pharaoh in this short passage of 16 verses in Gen 41:25-40 (40:8; 41:16, 25, 28, 32 (2); 41:38, 39) that dreams originate from God and the

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379 Coats, “The Joseph Story and Ancient Wisdom,” 290. Likewise, Davidson, *Genesis*, 287, argues that Gen 47:13-27 is “another illustration of Joseph’s wisdom and political skill.” See also von Rad, *Genesis*, 410. Although these scholars have rightly observed that Joseph’s administrative skill is portrayed in a positive way in Gen 47:13-27, showing how his skill brings about the preservation of the lives of both the Egyptians and the Israelites during the severe famine, the focus of this passage is not on Joseph’s wisdom or skill, but on the privileged status of the promised line. As discussed in Chapter Two, Section 1.3.1 “Gen 47:13-27 and Gen 41:53-57; Gen 45:5-13; Gen 50:15-21 within the Motif of Preservation, Gen 47:13-27 in its connection to Gen 45:5-13” focuses on the providential work of God. This will be further discussed in Chapter Four, Section 6.1 “The Preservation of the Lives of the Promise Line and The Abrahamic Promises Partially Fulfilled or Re-Assured to Them Despite Their Unworthiness.”
interpretations come from God.\textsuperscript{380} Joseph is depicted even by the foreign king as one in whom the spirit of God resides, \textsuperscript{381} \textit{ויאמר פרעה אל־עבדיו הנמצא כזה איש אשר רוח אלהים בו} (41:38). These verses are emphasizing that Joseph’s ability to interpret dreams and his administrative skills originate from God, not from Joseph’s intellectual powers or wisdom.

In this way, the text itself testifies that Joseph’s skills in interpreting dreams and administration are not cultivated virtues which anyone can emulate. As Fox points out, “[i]f interpretations come from God, Joseph’s report of the dream’s meaning cannot serve as a model for those not blessed with such communication. Ordinary people can only look upon him with awe.”\textsuperscript{381} Similarly, R. Gnuse points out, “Joseph gives credit to God for this ability (Gen 40.8; 41.16), and thereby the narrative implies that he is more of a prophet than an oneirocritic. In his rendition of the Joseph accounts, Josephus likewise stresses the prophetic dimension (Ant. 2.9-17, 59-86).”\textsuperscript{382} Thus, some scholars’ argument for the wisdom influence in the original Joseph story based on Joseph’s ability to interpret dreams and his administrative skills is open to question.

This is further demonstrated as Pharaoh attributes Joseph’s ability to interpret dreams and his advice for the forthcoming crisis to “the Spirit of God” \textit{רוח אלהים} (41:38). This attribution of Joseph’s ability to God’s spirit directly disputes a wisdom-related element in these skills and success. This is well summarized by Redford:

\textsuperscript{380} Wenham, \textit{Genesis 16-50}, 399, points out, “the double mention of God [in Gen 41:32] emphasizes the divine origin both of the dream and of its interpretation.” Wenham also says, “Pharaoh himself acknowledges the divine inspiration possessed by Joseph.”

\textsuperscript{381} Fox, “Wisdom in the Joseph Story,” 33.

\textsuperscript{382} Robert Gnuse, “The Jewish Dream Interpreter in a Foreign Court: The Recurring Use of a Theme in Jewish Literature,” \textit{JSF} 7 (1990): 37. Weeks, \textit{Joseph, Dreams and Wisdom}, 23, also says that “the accounts of dreams in the JN [Joseph Narrative] show no particular knowledge of, nor interest in, any system or branch of learning concerned with dreams, and Joseph is not depicted as ‘learned or as an ‘expert’ in his interpretation.”
Good speech before kings and competent work in one’s office recall us to chapter 41, and suggest that at least here the writer has in mind the paragon of the Wisdom Literature, when he speaks of Joseph. But the unmistakable fact is that nowhere in this chapter is Joseph’s excellence of speech or superior counsel held up as an object of admiration. But the butler and Pharaoh are impressed by only one thing, viz. that by virtue of divine inspiration Joseph can interpret dreams and thus forecast the future. Joseph’s suggestions are extremely valuable, and are characterized by wisdom, but only because God has revealed it to him (cf. vs. 39).

Thus, Redford disputes the connection between Joseph’s skills and wisdom literature:

“Divine inspiration takes us out of the practical world of the Wisdom school. . . . By its very nature it is miraculous, a gift of God, not a cultivated virtue. A man so gifted cannot be emulated.”

The usage of the expression, “the Spirit of God,” in the rest of the Old Testament further supports the argument against the connection between Joseph’s skills and those of a figure in wisdom literature. This phrase occurs only four times in the Pentateuch: it occurs once in Gen 41:38, twice in the book of Exodus and once in the book of Numbers. All these occurrences demonstrate that “the Spirit of God,” who comes in or upon the human agent, enables the human agent to do a specific task in occasional and unique circumstances as follows:

אַמָּלָה אַתָּה רֹצִית אֱלֹהִים חֲבֵנָה יִבְּרַח וּבְלָד הַמַּלְוָא (Exod 31:3)
יָמַלָה אַתָּה רֹצִית אֱלֹהִים חֲבֵנָה יִבְּרַח וּבְלָד הַמַּלְוָא (Exod 35:31)
רִשָּׁא בִּלַּעְמָא אָתָּה אֱלֹהִים חֲבֵנָה יִבְּרַח וּבְלָד הַמַּלְוָא (Num 24:2)

These occurrences in Exodus recount how God fills Bezalel with “the Spirit of God.” רוח אלהים, to do a specific task, to make the Tabernacle. As a result of being filled with “the

383 Redford, A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph, 103. Weeks, Early Israelite Wisdom, 96, also points out, “the character of Joseph in chs. 39-41 . . . is a rather pale figure, whose behaviour is described in general terms, and whose administrative successes are ascribed not to his own ability, but to divine intervention (39. 3, 5, 23; cf. also 40. 8; 41. 16).”

Spirit of God,” Bezalel comes to have “wisdom (חכמה),” “understanding (ｔבונה),” and “knowledge (דות).” Likewise, in Numbers, this verse recounts that “the Spirit of God” comes upon Balaam. In verse 3, as a result, Balaam is able to utter God’s oracle. The parallel between Gen 41:38-39 and Exod 31:3; 35:31 is striking.

These verses show a similar effect of “the Spirit of God” when the Spirit is in Joseph. As Bezalel comes to have “wisdom (חכמה)” and “understanding (ｔבונה)” with “the Spirit of God,” so Joseph comes to be “wise (חכם)” and “understanding or discerning (בין)” with the Spirit. The word in Gen 41:39, נבון, is the niphal form of the verb, נון, meaning “to understand,” and the noun, תבונה, “understanding (תבונה)” (Exod 31:3; 35:31) comes from the same root verb, בינ. In other words, both the general usage of the expression “the Spirit of God” and the parallel between Gen 41:38-39 and Exod 31:3; 35:31 indicate that the nature and the origin of Joseph’s ability to interpret dreams and his administrative skill are affiliated with supernatural empowerment rather than with the didactic and practical wisdom of wisdom literature. In other words, Joseph’s ability or skill is not something that anyone can emulate because it is a gift which God gives to a human agent for a specific task. 385

In this way, throughout the Old Testament, God’s spirit is depicted as equipping the skilled workman like Bezalel (Exod 31:3; 35:31), and “imparting extraordinary physical energy and drive to the victorious warrior (cf. Judg 6:34; 14:6) and especially to

385 The connection between God’s presence with Joseph and his ability to interpret dreams in Gen 40:1-41:57 will further be discussed in Chapter Four, Section 4. “D. The Chosen Jacob Becomes Prosperous Despite the Hardship, Laban’s Deception (Gen 29:1-30:43);” “D’. The Chosen Joseph Rises to Power Despite the Hardship in Egypt (Gen 40:1-41:57).”
the wise ruler (1 Sam 10:6; 16:13; Isa 11:2; cf. Dan 5:14).\textsuperscript{386} In the same way, wisdom, as one of the gifts of the spirit of God, plays a crucial role in presenting the solution to the impending disaster in the original Joseph story. In this way, the theological explanation of Joseph’s wise skills and success in Genesis 40-41 preclude any significant wisdom elements or influence in the original Joseph story. The original Joseph story, therefore, does not reinforce the principles or ideals of Wisdom literature, which teaches how to gain God’s blessing and how to achieve success through one’s own wisdom and virtues.

In sum, the present examination shows, neither in its depiction of Joseph, nor in the theological ideas underlying the Joseph narrative, is there a connection between wisdom literature and the Joseph narrative. As Redford puts it, “von Rad’s thesis that a connexion exists between Wisdom and the Biblical Joseph Story is a misinterpretation of the evidence.”\textsuperscript{387} Having carefully attended to the discussions and evaluations of other scholars’ discussions on wisdom influence on the Joseph narrative, we must turn to critique some modern interpreters' discussions of the Joseph narrative in its connections with the preceding narratives of the book of Genesis.

2. Modern Readings of the Joseph Narrative within the Book of Genesis

Many scholars who discuss the thematic/theological continuities of the Joseph narrative within the book of Genesis have found in it connections with the primeval history (Genesis 1-11).\textsuperscript{388} They also argue that the Joseph narrative is thematically linked to the


\textsuperscript{387} Redford, \textit{A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph}, 105.

\textsuperscript{388} Brodie, \textit{Genesis as Dialogue}, 372, also talks about the relationship between Noah’s works (Gen 6:22) and Joseph’s (Gen 41:55) and thus regards the two stories as having parallels. Likewise, E. Fox, “Can Genesis Be Read as a Book?,” \textit{Semeia} 46 (1989): 36, asserts the parallels between the two stories by recognizing the
preceding narratives with the motif of brotherly strife, a recurring theme in the book of Genesis. The following analysis reviews and evaluates these interpreters’ readings of the Joseph narrative. This will lead to a new proposal for understanding the Joseph narrative in its unique thematic and theological parallels with the Jacob narrative.

2.1 The Joseph Narrative and the Primeval History (Genesis 1-11)

To begin with, E. Fox proposes a synthetic literary structure for the book of Genesis. He divides the book of Genesis into the usual four sections: the primeval history (Gen 1-11), the Abraham cycle (11:27 or 12:1-25:11), the (Isaac-) Jacob cycle (25:12-36:43), and the Joseph narrative (37-50). Fox finds a complex chiastic structure in the book of Genesis.

A. The Primeval History
   B. The Abraham Cycle
   B’. The Jacob Cycle
A’. The Joseph Cycle

The following is Fox’s proposal of a parallel structure between the primeval history and the Joseph narrative:

* Primeval History
  A Chosen Figure (Noah)
  B God favors Youngest Son (Abel); Hatred (Cain-Abel)
  C Family Continuity Threatened (Abel murdered)
  D Ends with Deaths (Haran, Terah)
     E Humanity Threatened (Deluge; repeated use of ל in 7:21-23)
     F Ends Away from land of Canaan (“in Haran”)

* Joseph Cycle
  A Chosen Figure (Joseph)
  B God favors Youngest Son (Joseph); Hatred (Brothers-Joseph)
  C Family Continuity Threatened (Joseph almost killed; Judah’s sons die: family almost dies in famine)
  D Ends with Deaths (Jacob, Joseph)
     E Humanity Threatened (Famine; repeated use of ל in 41:54-57)
     F Ends Away from Land of Canaan (“in Egypt”)

repeated and concentrated occurrence of ל in both stories, specifically in 7:19-23 (8 times) and 41:54-57 (8 times), to express the severity of both disasters and the universal object of the disasters, the whole earth.

389 Fox, “Can Genesis Be Read as a Book?” 36. Fox, “Can Genesis Be Read as a Book?,” 37, argues that a significant message conveyed through this chiastic structure in the book of Genesis is “hope” and “confidence” in God’s redeeming power coming from the themes of “selection” and “survival” in the midst of struggle. Fox, “Can Genesis Be Read as a Book?,” 36-37, argues for four major recurring sections in the book of Genesis, A (selection; the continuation of the promises), B (favor to younger sons), C (struggle between those living in close intimacy), D (serious threats to the lives of the characters), thus presenting a unifying scheme for the book.
In his presentation, however, Fox randomly rearranges the plot of the primeval history sections to make them parallel to the Joseph narrative, thus changing the order of the Cain and Abel story and the Noah story. Fox also overlooks some important sections of the book of Genesis such as the creation story. More importantly, he completely ignores key thematic features of the Joseph narrative. For instance, Fox fails to discuss the stories of reunion and reconciliation (Genesis 42-45), which are directly connected to the main theme of the Joseph narrative, that is, the deliverance of Joseph’s family and the whole world. Fox also fails to mention Joseph’s rise to power (Genesis 39-41), which is important in the development of the Joseph narrative. Furthermore, D and D’ have nothing to do with each other. Although both deal with deaths of the characters, this is not a main theme in D’. While D deals with the deaths of Haran and Terah, D’ does not focus on the deaths of Jacob and Joseph, but rather on Jacob’s transferring the promises to his sons through his blessing on his deathbed and Joseph’s reiteration of the return to the Promised Land on his deathbed. For these reasons, Fox’s construction of parallels between the primeval history and the Joseph narrative is unconvincing, although his observation identifies some possible common patterns between the Joseph narrative and the preceding narratives in the book of Genesis.

B. T. Dahlberg also argues that the Joseph narrative (Genesis 37-50) forms “an inclusio for the whole of Genesis”\textsuperscript{390} with the primeval history acting as a foil to the history:

Joseph appears to have been drawn intentionally as an antitype to Adam and . . . to other main representatives of humanity who figure in chapters 1 through 11 . . . . The book of Genesis, which begins in the dilemma of the human condition after man’s creation, a condition to which God responds

with the call to the patriarchs, finds its telos or end in the Joseph story: Joseph is an ideal for Israel and for the human race, and toward this ideal the whole Genesis narrative moves.\textsuperscript{391}

In this way, Dahlberg regards Joseph, "an ideal administrator, as a counterfoil to the figures who fail to fulfill the responsibilities commanded in Genesis 1-11"\textsuperscript{392}: “the universal famine in the Joseph narrative reminds us of the universal deluge in Genesis 6-9 of the primeval history, except that Noah’s earth is destroyed whereas Joseph’s, because of his fidelity and virtue, is spared. In this respect, again, Joseph is what I have called an ‘antitype’. . . especially to Noah.”\textsuperscript{393} Dahlberg also regards Joseph as the figure who recovers what the primeval ancestors of humanity had lost in terms of the Abrahamic promise:

Concerning the Joseph story and its relation to the rest of Genesis, one is reminded that the election of the patriarchs, seen in its universal aspect as a blessing to all the peoples of the earth (“By you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves” - 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 28:14, etc.) is, for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, a promise for the future. In the Joseph story this promise is, \textit{for the first time}, fulfilled: “The Lord blessed the Egyptian’s house for Joseph’s sake; the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had, in house and field (39:5).\textsuperscript{394}

Dahlberg continues to argue for the Joseph narrative as an antitype to the stories in the primeval history in that the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers is a reversal of the state of “alienation and [being] unreconciled with one another”\textsuperscript{395} in Genesis 1-11. In this way, Dahlberg reads the Joseph narrative as forming an \textit{inclusio} with the primeval history because it is a reversal of the disastrous incidents of the primeval history in Genesis 1-11.

\textsuperscript{391} Dahlberg, “On Recognizing the Unity of Genesis,” 365.
\textsuperscript{392} Dahlberg, “On Recognizing the Unity of Genesis,” 364.
\textsuperscript{393} Dahlberg, “The Unity of Genesis,” 130.
\textsuperscript{394} Dahlberg, “The Unity of Genesis,” 131. Italics mine.
\textsuperscript{395} Dahlberg, “On Recognizing the Unity of Genesis,” 364.
Although Dahlberg’s reading can be provocative and contains some insights, there are some difficulties. Firstly, Dahlberg’s reading of the Joseph narrative as an end to the problems of the primeval history is mistaken, as the story itself contains problems which remain to be solved. For example, the Joseph narrative ends with Jacob’s family living in Egypt away from the Promised Land. As Clines says, the Joseph narrative “can only be a merely provisional and low key riposte to Genesis 1-11; for Joseph’s bones have yet to be carried up out of Egypt into the land sworn to the forefathers (50:25).”

Secondly, Dahlberg’s understanding of Joseph as an ideal figure through whom people are saved, compared with Noah as a failure, is problematic. As discussed above, the biblical depiction of Joseph is not exclusively positive. In contrast, Noah is one of the few biblical characters, whom the authors evaluate directly as אוש צדק טוב (Gen 6:9).

Thirdly, the features of the Joseph narrative, which Dahlberg sees as a reversal of certain disastrous tendencies of the primeval history, do not appear uniquely in the Joseph narrative. For instance, he argues that the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers brings an end to the alienated state in Genesis 1-11. However, this is not the first reconciliation between brothers because the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau is recounted in the Jacob narrative (cf. Genesis 33). Likewise, the fulfillment of the promise of being a blessing to the peoples of the earth (39:5) in the Joseph narrative is not recounted as being fulfilled for the first time but has already been described in the Jacob narrative.

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396 Clines, The Theme of the Pentateuch, 85.
397 Joseph’s character flaw has been discussed in this chapter, Section 1.1 “The Characterization of Joseph: Joseph as an Exemplary Figure.”
398 The Hebrew word טוב is also used in Job 1:1, 8; 2:3; 8:20; 9:20, 21, 22, Psalm 37:37; 64: 4(5), and Proverbs 29:10. In these passages it means “perfect,” “blameless,” “undefiled,” or “upright.” In any case, it is a term used to describe the character of a man of moral integrity. Abraham is also referred to as a righteous or faithful man (cf. 6:9; 15:6; 22:12ff)
narrative in that Laban is blessed because of Jacob (Gen 30:27, 30).\textsuperscript{399} This indicates that the Joseph narrative does not form an *inclusio* with the primeval history. The fact that a reversal of elements of the primeval history takes place not only in the Joseph narrative but also in the Jacob narrative is not surprising because the reversal has already been set in place by the Abrahamic promise in Genesis 12 and confirmed as beginning to take effect ever since Abraham’s unswerving obedience in Genesis 22. This has been pointed out by many scholars. Clines, for example, points out:

A sharp disjunction can then be made between universal history (Gen 1-11) and ‘salvation history (Gen 12 onward), with the themes of the two units being set in contrast . . . the narrowing of vision to Abraham opens the way for an era of blessing, that is, for salvation history . . . . Read by itself, the primeval history defined as Gen 1:1-11:5 could well have a negative tendency; once it is followed by the patriarchal and Pentateuch history [but] . . . such a tendency is totally reversed . . . . mankind tends to destroy what God has made good. Perhaps only the addition of a divine promise (Gen 12) to a divine command (ch. 1) can counteract that tendency.\textsuperscript{400}

Thus, as T. W. Mann points out, “[i]n composing this passage [i.e. Gen 12:1-3], the author clearly had in mind not just the story of Abram and Sarai that follows but also the primeval stories that precede, with . . . the contrasting motif of the curse (3:14-19, 4:11, 8:21, and 9:25-26).”\textsuperscript{401} In other words, as Mann notes, along with many other scholars, “the resolution to the recurring problems of the primeval history (such as disobedience, fratricide, and curses) starts with the promise of blessing through Abraham to all the families of the earth, which has already taken effect from the Abraham story onward.”\textsuperscript{402}

But Dahlberg fails to take into consideration the fact that the reversal of the problems of the primeval history has already begun with Abraham. Thus, he fails to observe that the

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\textsuperscript{399} This will be further discussed in Chapter Two, Section 2.2 “Blessing upon the Peoples (Gen 39:5; 41:56-57 and Gen 30:27, 30).”
\textsuperscript{400} Clines, *The Theme of The Pentateuch*, 77-79.
\textsuperscript{402} Mann, “All the Families of the Earth,” 345.
\end{flushleft}
reversal has begun to take effect from the Abraham story onwards, not with the Joseph narrative.

With similar mistaken readings, which fail to take adequate account of the new theological movement started in Genesis 12 and confirmed to take effect in Genesis 22, some scholars have argued for unique links between the Joseph narrative and the primeval history. For example, T. L. Brodie argues that "both the flood story and the Joseph story are inseparably interwoven with human violence shown by the sin of the people of Noah’s time and of Joseph’s brothers (41:9; 42:27-28)."403 Similarly, B. Peckham states that “the fact that the world was filled with violence and was destroyed by a flood acquires immediacy in the crime of Joseph’s brothers and the ensuing world famine.”404 In this way, these scholars link the famine to Joseph’s brothers’ sin against Joseph, believing the first to be the consequence of the latter. But the problem with this reading is that the worldwide disaster of famine in the Joseph narrative is not described as a consequence of human sin while the disaster in the Noah story is articulated as the consequence of human sin (cf. Gen 6:12-13). This is further supported by the differences between the deliverance from the disaster in the Jacob narrative and that in the Noah story.

Obviously, in both stories the deliverance story follows the worldwide disaster. The expression, “to keep alive” (Hiphil form of חיה) occurs five times in the book of Genesis (6:19, 20; 19:19; 45:7; 50:20). Of these, only one case appears outside the Noah and the Joseph stories (19:19). Although deliverance from universal disaster is a common theme in both the Noah story and the Joseph narrative, the nature of deliverance in

403 Brodie, Genesis as Dialogue, 372.
connection with human actions in the Joseph narrative is very differently described from that of the Noah story. This indicates the distinct theological backgrounds of the two stories. In the Noah story, God delivers only Noah, who is righteous among the people of his time, (ह आश एशः स्वंतूः यह बृहस्, Gen 6:9) and his family who listen to Noah’s proclamation, while the rest of the people are destroyed because of their sin (क के के भरस भरस, Gen 6:13). It is obvious that God’s deliverance is conditional since it is contingent upon human actions such as righteousness and sin. However, in the Joseph narrative, God’s deliverance expands unconditionally to all the people in the world including the Egyptians (cf. Gen 41:57; 47:13-27; 50:20) as well as Joseph’s brothers, regardless of their worthiness. Thus, the narrator in the Joseph narrative articulates that God uses even human evil for God’s saving plan (cf. Gen 50:20).

In sum, the view of the Joseph narrative as an inclusio with the primeval history fails to take into consideration the fact that the theological reversal has already begun with Abraham and taken effect in the Abraham story. God’s unconditional deliverance is described not only in the Joseph narrative, but also in the Jacob narrative, whereas God’s deliverance in the Noah story is seen as conditional.

2.2 The Joseph Narrative and the Preceding Narratives in Terms of Brotherly Strife

Many scholars have argued that the Joseph narrative takes up the thread of the preceding narratives within the motif of familial strife or brotherly strife. Coats, for example, says,

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405 Jacob receives God’s promise when he flees from Esau out of fear for his life due to the deception (Gen 28:12). As Jacob himself confesses (Gen 32:10), by keeping the promises at Bethel: giving him offspring (29:31-30:25) and making him exceedingly prosperous with livestock (30:25-43), God has been faithful to him despite his unworthiness. God has proven once again to be faithful by protecting Jacob from danger and removing obstacles which could prevent him from going back to the land of promise. Jacob has experienced God’s protection from Laban on his journey back to the land of promise (31:24, 29). God’s unconditional grace and faithfulness in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives will be further discussed throughout Chapter Three, Four, and Five.
“The strife theme belongs to the complex of narrative motifs developed throughout the range of the Abraham saga and the Jacob saga . . . From its larger context the Joseph narrative inherits a milieu of strife.”

Likewise, Dahlberg points out that the Joseph narrative resonates thematically with the rest of Genesis in the strife between Joseph and his brothers and its resolution in reconciliation. According to him, the Joseph narrative forms “a concluding and conclusive word [i.e., Gen 45:5-8; 50:20] in Genesis on the conflict between brothers, which is introduced initially in the Cain and Abel story and recurs in the stories of Isaac and Ishmael and of Jacob and Esau.”

Carroll, who attempts to find common patterns and styles beneath many of the similar stories in Genesis, also recognizes a pattern which is observed in three independent stories: Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, and Joseph and his brothers. Carroll identifies as a pattern the plots by Cain, Esau, and Joseph’s brothers to kill a brother. Westermann, who regards the original Joseph story as Genesis 37, 39-45 and parts of Genesis 46-50, also argues that within the motif of familial strife, the original story has a thematic continuity with the preceding patriarchal stories in Genesis 12-36.
In this way, these scholars, who have discussed the thematic continuities of the Joseph narrative with the preceding narratives in terms of the theme of brotherly strife, have argued that it is a recurring theme, beginning with Cain and Abel (Genesis 4). Although each of these readings contains a certain amount of truth and insight, these scholars fail to address the distinctive features, apart from brotherly strife, which recur only in the stories of Jacob and Esau and Joseph and his brothers.

3. Unique Thematic/Theological Parallels between the Jacob Narrative and the Original Joseph Story (Genesis 37; 39-45)

Utilizing the comparisons, observations, and evaluations of the Joseph story and the preceding narratives discussed above as a foundation and point of departure, the following demonstrates the unique thematic parallels in terms of the motif of brotherly strife and reconciliation between the Jacob narrative and the original Joseph story, and also demonstrates that exactly the same plot are employed for the two stories. It also demonstrates how this motif is interwoven with the Abrahamic promise theme in the Jacob and the original Joseph stories. Then, we turn to examine the unique promise elements in the Jacob and the original Joseph stories.

Likewise, Steinmetz, *From Father to Son*, 35-44, 50-60, regards the family conflict as the recurring theme in the patriarchal narratives and the Joseph story, as each succession story concerns mortal danger for the sons, Isaac (Gen 22), Jacob (Gen 28), Joseph (Gen 37) because of the family conflict.  

3.1 Brotherly Strife as an Intrinsic Theme and Its Occurrence in Relation to the Motif of Parental Favouritism and Divine Election of the Younger Son over the Older⁴¹²

Although scholars have discussed brotherly strife beginning with Cain and Abel (Genesis 4) as a recurring theme in the book of Genesis, there are distinctive features that do not occur in the other brotherly strife stories but recur in those of Jacob and Esau and Joseph and his brothers. The emphasis on brotherly strife is such a minor part of the Abraham story that it is recorded in only one editorial statement, in the story of Isaac and Ishmael (Gen 21:9; cf. Gen 16:4-6). As Amos says, “the antagonism is not expressly between Isaac and Ishmael, but between their respective mothers.”⁴¹³ Mann also comments on the lack of intensity in the telling of the brotherly strife between Isaac and Ishmael, saying that “[t]he tension within the Jacob cycle . . . includes an overt rivalry between siblings that was not present in the Abraham cycle.”⁴¹⁴ these interpreters’ discussions support the argument that, in the Abraham story, the theme of brotherly strife between Isaac and Ishmael is presented only as a minor theme. In contrast, the motif of brotherly strife between Jacob and Esau and Joseph and his brothers is not only so intense that the lives of the heirs of the promise, Jacob and Joseph (Genesis 27 and 37), are endangered,⁴¹⁵ but is also presented as an intrinsic theme in the development of the Jacob and the Joseph narratives.

⁴¹² Besides these common features, both in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives the theme of brotherly strife and separation is related to the deception of the father through the use of clothing. Just as Jacob deceives his father Isaac using clothing to obtain the blessing in Gen 27:15-29, so Joseph’s brothers deceive his father Jacob using Joseph’s robe in Gen 37:31-35. For example, Waltke, Genesis, 505, says, “As Joseph worked deception against Esau with a goat and a cloak, his sons use a goat and cloak to deceive him. As Rebekah’s desire to advantage Jacob and to disadvantage Esau led to Esau’s desire to murder Jacob, so Jacob’s desire to advantage Joseph leads to the brothers’ desire to murder Joseph.”


⁴¹⁴ Mann, “All the Families of the Earth,” 348.

⁴¹⁵ See Wilson, Joseph, Wise and Otherwise, 227-28, who says, “in chapters 37 . . . brotherly strife is so strong that the brothers nearly kill the favoured son . . . threat[ening] . . . the line of promise.” Although the story of Cain and Abel also shows the intensity of the brotherly strife in that Abel is killed, the story is neither comprehensive in length, nor about the promised heir.
The Jacob narrative begins with the struggle between Jacob and Esau in the womb (Gen 25:22). The struggle is further developed in Gen 25:27-34 and 27:1-40 and comes to its end in Gen 33:1-11. These conflicts, which arise out of incidents such as the birthright in Gen 25:21-28 and the taking of the blessing in Genesis 27, provide the reason for Jacob’s flight and his long stay with his uncle Laban. As Waltke points out, “the twins’ struggle in the womb foreshadows the struggles between Jacob and Esau” (25:19-26). In the following episodes, Jacob’s purchase of Esau’s birthright (25:27-34) and Jacob’s stealing of Esau’s blessing (27:1-40), the brotherly conflict is only intensified. The struggle between Jacob and Esau, which started in the womb, also sets the stage for the later reconciliation between the two brothers in Genesis 33. In this way, the brotherly conflict is presented as the introduction to the development of the Jacob narrative.

Likewise, the original Joseph story starts with brotherly conflict between Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 37). This brotherly conflict leads to Joseph being sold to foreigners (37:19-20) and subsequently to the following scenes of Joseph’s ordeals, his rise in Egypt (Genesis 39-41) and the reunion and reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 42-45). In this way, the theme of brotherly strife functions to lead into the rest of the original Joseph story. This is well summarized by Westermann:

The [Joseph] story leads from the threatened break between the sons of Jacob (chapter 37) to the healing of the family bonds (chapter 45), which is made possible by Joseph’s elevation to authority in the Egyptian court. There are really two separate story lines: chapters 39-41, describing Joseph’ ascent to power, and chapters 42-45, which recount the brothers’ journeys and eventually leads to the unification of the two story lines.

416 Waltke, Genesis, 355.
417 Westermann, Genesis 12-36, 418, also regards Gen 25:19-34 as the introduction to Gen 25-36. See also Fokkelman, Narrative Art in Genesis, 88.
In this statement, Westermann demonstrates how the theme of brotherly strife is intrinsic to the original Joseph story, as it revolves around the motif of brotherly strife and its resolution.

In fact, many scholars have discussed the fact that the motif of brotherly strife is an intrinsic theme in the Jacob and the original Joseph stories. For example Miscall, who recognizes a common three-section plot structure in both the Jacob and the Joseph narratives, points out how the stories revolve around "the motif of brotherly strife: family strife, twenty-year separation, and reconciliation between the brothers." Likewise Coats, who regards the motif of family strife as an intrinsic narrative theme in the Jacob narrative, notes that it “provides unity for the narrative as a whole, not just a portion of it;” and that the Joseph narrative presents “the same themes of broken family” as the Jacob narrative. Wenham’s comment on the motif of brotherly strife in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives further supports the observation of the motif of brotherly strife as an intrinsic theme: “Chapter 37 invites comparison with the opening to the story of Jacob, which as here relates to background incidents illustrating the rivalry of brothers before describing more fully the episodes that parted them for twenty years in different countries.” This feature of brotherly strife as an intrinsic theme in the Jacob and the original Joseph stories demonstrates a unique parallel between the two stories.

Another distinct feature of the Jacob and the original Joseph stories is their interweaving of brotherly strife with the divine election of the younger son over the older,

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419 Miscall, “The Jacob and Joseph Stories as Analogies,” 31-32.
422 Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 349.
along with parental favouritism. The motif of the divine election of the younger son over the older recurs throughout the book of Genesis: Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Joseph over his brothers, and Ephraim over Manasseh. In fact, scholars have regarded this motif as one of the thematic continuities between the Joseph narrative and the preceding narratives. Kaminsky, for example, contends that one of the major elements tying the Joseph narrative to other sibling rivalry stories in Genesis such as those of Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, and Jacob and Esau is the theme of the reversal of the right of primogeniture in relation to divine election. \(^{423}\) Similarly, S. Niditch comments:

> The recurrence of the underdog pattern in the heart of Genesis leads surely to Joseph. He is the next generation’s Jacob, the successful younger son whose youngest son in turn will carry on his leadership. The Joseph tale is not an isolated work but through traditional patterning fully integrated into a larger tale of generations. \(^{424}\)

Along with this interweaving of the theme of brotherly strife with divine election, commentators have also noted that the theme is intertwined with parental favouritism in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives. For example Steinmetz explains, “the competition [caused by parental favouritism] . . . is transferred to the brothers. While Esau is first-born and his father’s favourite, . . . Rebecca favors her younger son and intends to see him succeed Isaac (25:28; 27:10).” \(^{425}\) Likewise Ackerman points out, in the Joseph narrative “divinely inspired dreams, given to a younger son who wears a special garment, continue and intensify the theme of divine and parental favouritism that produces

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\(^{423}\) See Kaminsky, Yet I Loved Jacob, 76-77.

\(^{424}\) Susan Niditch, Underdogs and Tricksters (NVBS; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 78. James G. Williams, “Number Symbolism and Joseph as Symbol of Completion,” JBL 98:1 (1979): 86-87, also notes that Joseph as the favoured younger son over his brothers is similar to Isaac over Ishmael in the Abraham story and Jacob over Esau in the Jacob narrative.

\(^{425}\) Steinmetz, From Father to Son, 40.
conflict." These interpreters' discussions demonstrate that divine election, along with the motif of parental favouritism, is intertwined with the theme of brotherly strife in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives. This interweaving occurs uniquely in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives and not in the other brotherly conflict stories such as those of Cain and Abel and of Isaac and Ishmael, thus indicating a unique parallel between the two stories.

Now we turn to another unique thematic parallel feature in the brotherly strife in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives.

3.2 Reconciliation between Brothers
With regard to the motif of brotherly strife, there is a crucial distinction between the stories of Cain and Abel and Isaac and Ishmael and those of the stories of Jacob and Esau and Joseph and his brothers. The distinctiveness lies in the resolution of the strife. For example, the strife between Cain and Abel ends with the killing of Abel. Thus, there is no reconciliation between the brothers. Similarly, the brotherly strife between Isaac and Ishmael ends with their separation (cf. Gen 21:8-21). But Isaac and Ishmael are not reconciled as Jacob and Esau and Joseph and his brothers are. In fact, reconciliation occurs uniquely between Jacob and Esau and Joseph and his brothers in the Jacob and the original Joseph stories.

3.2.1 Reconciliation between Jacob and Esau
In spite of the moving reunion between Jacob and Esau in Gen 33:1-11, there are some commentators who have raised a question about the genuineness of the reconciliation between them. Coats, for example, has questioned the validity of the reconciliation

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426 Ackerman, “Joseph, Judah and Jacob,” 97. Sarna, Understanding Genesis, 212, also points out the role of parental favouritism and divine election in the brotherly strife between Joseph and his brothers, as the special coat given to Joseph by Jacob becomes “a hated symbol of favouritism and a cause of discord”; Joseph’s dreams, as a sign of divine election, are “even more potent a source of disharmony.” Waltke, Genesis, 504, also points out, “It isn’t just Jacob's favouritism or Joseph’s manner that the brothers hate. It is the dream.”
between Jacob and Esau, pointing out the lack of physical reunion. He argues “Reconciliation should . . . be symbolized by physical community.” On this basis, he argues that reconciliation has not happened between Jacob and Esau. Similarly, F. A. Spina points out the questionable nature of the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau compared with the reconciliation between Laban and Jacob who made a mutual agreement and ate a meal together (Gen 31:44, 46). He points out Jacob’s reluctance to accept Esau’s offer of assistance and hospitality in Seir, and more importantly, Jacob’s excuse for not joining Esau in Seir (Gen 33:12-17). In fact, Jacob preferred to buy land from Hamor to settle on rather than to join Esau, as Jacob himself implies (Gen 33:18-20; cf. 34:1-31). In this way, scholars who regard the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau as incomplete or inauthentic appeal to Jacob’s response to Esau’s offer and subsequent physical separation in Gen 33:12-20. The difficulty with this reading is that it is based on the disputable assumption that physical union must accompany reconciliation. Although physical separation could be a sign of a lack of reconciliation, it should not itself be regarded as proof of it. More importantly, this assumption that the physical separation is the sign of a lack of reconciliation ignores the textual details relevant to the matter of reconciliation.

In fact, there are some scholars who attempt to explain the physical separation as not compromising the genuineness of the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau. Crüsemann, for example, argues that "the separation reflects the political situation

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428 See F. A. Spina, “The ‘Face of God’: Esau in Canonical Context,” in The Quest for Context & Meaning: Studies in Biblical Intertextuality in Honor of James A. Sanders (BIS28; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 18. Likewise, Walters, “Jacob Narrative,” 605, says, “Jacob’s acceptance by Esau could have been marked by a meal; its absence suggests that the reconciliation fell short of the solidity . . . and the narrative expresses this overtly by Jacob’s wariness of Esau’s two offers of company and assistance” in Gen 33:12-16.
between Israel and Edom which existed in freedom and at peace with each other. In this way, to Crüsemann, the separation between Jacob and Esau does not reflect the incompleteness of the reconciliation of the brothers, but rather demonstrates the national situation of the two nations, Israel and Edom, whose eponymous ancestors are Jacob and Esau respectively. Although this explanation might be right, a difficulty with it is that it only assumes the redaction of the historical situation behind the story. This reading also tends to fail to note the textual details concerning the authenticity of the reconciliation.

With regard to the textual details suggesting the genuineness of the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau, it is worth quoting Agyenta:

Gen 33,1-11 is generally considered as the turning point in the conflict between the twin-brothers . . . [since] we have come a long way from the situation of tension and strife in Gen 25,27-34; 27,1-45. One could speak of a visible common interest of the brothers in Gen 33,1-11, where Jacob admits his guilt and asks for pardon from his brother by means of the powerful symbolic gesture of falling on his face seven times (cf. v. 3), and Esau renounces his threat of revenge (cf. Gen 27,41) and receives him with deep affection (cf. v. 4).

Thus, pointing out that Gen 33:3-4 suggests both characters’ willingness to give up the divergent past interests which had caused conflict, Agyenta regards the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau as authentic. In fact, the renunciation of the past conflicting interests which have engendered the strife between the brothers is even more obvious in the following scene of Jacob’s reaction to Esau’s warm and kind reception of him in Gen 33:5-15.

First, Jacob renounces his past trade of the birthright which had engendered the conflict with his brother Esau (cf. Gen 27:36) in that he calls himself Esau’s servant (ךֶָּעַבְד).

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33:5; 33:14) while calling Esau his lord five times (אֲדֹנִי, 33:8, 13, twice in v. 14, 15). By trading the birthright (cf. Gen 25:29-34) Jacob must have expected to lord it over his brother Esau, as the birthright concerns God’s special treatment of the heir of the Abrahamic promises and also of the kingdom. But Jacob’s presenting himself as Esau’s servant is his gesture of renouncing the birthright which he had traded with Esau. Such a gesture from Jacob is his attempt to resolve the past conflict with his brother, since Jacob’s trade of birthright engendered the conflict between them despite its legitimacy (cf. Gen 27:36).

Secondly, Jacob also renounces the most problematic element which is at the root of the brotherly conflict. Jacob’s taking away the blessing which originally belonged to his brother Esau by deception under the direction of his mother Rachel engendered the brothers’ conflict and separation (cf. Gen 27:1-46). To Esau’s offer of reconciliation, which is demonstrated by his affectionate bearing, Jacob responds with his offer of blessing: “Take the blessing” (אֶת־בִרְכָתִי קַחְ-נָא, 33:11). Using the same wording in 33:11 as that of Esau’s complaint about Jacob’s stealing of the blessing in 27:36, “he took my blessing” (לָקַח בִרְכָתִי), the narrator invites the reader to regard Jacob’s act as a sign of mutual agreement with Esau’s offer of reconciliation. In other words, by returning the blessing, Jacob renounces and resolves the source of the conflict. The fact that Esau accepts the blessing (33:11) further demonstrates the resolution of the conflict between

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432 Commentators commonly regard Esau’s affectionate bearing in Gen 33:4 as a gesture of reconciliation. For example, Coats, “Strife Without Reconciliation,” 103, talks about Esau offering reconciliation to his brother Jacob. Likewise, Westermann, Genesis 12-36, 525, comments on Gen 33:4-5, “the warm welcome includes the forgiveness. . . . The gestures are of great significance in the world in which this story takes place. They are essential and indispensable elements of communication. There are silence with regard to the explicit concepts of confession and forgiveness; but in the silence a modest restraint is at work which testifies to a deep human awareness. In fact both can be genuine and honest where they are included in the execution of the action.”
Jacob and Esau which had begun primarily with Jacob’s stealing of Esau’s blessing (ברכה) in 27:1-45. In fact, many commentators who have tried to reconstruct the chiastic structure of the Jacob narrative have noted that the word blessing (ברכה) which appears in Gen 27:36 reappears in 33:11. The use of the word blessing (ברכה) in 27:36 and 33:11 is important because the word blessing (ברכה) appears exclusively in these two sections (27:12, 35, 36 (2), 38, 41; 28:4; 33:11).\(^{433}\) This demonstrates that Jacob’s returning of the blessing in chapter 33 is a resolution of the direct cause of the brotherly conflict, which started with Jacob’s stealing of the blessing in chapter 27. Therefore, Jacob’s aim is to reconcile with his brother Esau, not just to appease him.

This argument is further supported by the specific word used in their encounter scene. In Gen 32:21 [Eng. 32:20], “For he thought, ‘I may appease (כפרה) him with the present that goes ahead of me, and afterwards I shall see his face; perhaps he will accept me,’” the narrator uses the word, כפר. This word denotes the action of making atonement, indicating that Jacob’s action is to be regarded "as atonement in the judicial sense and in the symbolical sense as a sin-offering.”\(^{434}\) Jacob has prepared a “gift” (מנחה, 32:8-9, 22; 33:10) to appease (כפר, to atone) Esau’s anger (32:20). Attempts to “appease” (כפר) someone are found frequently in ritual texts in the Bible as acts that will remove barriers within divine and human relationships. As Arnold points out, an act of reconciliation is

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\(^{434}\) See Brett, *Genesis*, 98-100.
necessary before the actual reconciliation. This use of the term כפר (to atone) demonstrates that Jacob is initially attempting to win Esau’s forgiveness with his gift (ןְָּוָּ, 32:8-9, 22; 33:10). The fact that Esau accepts Jacob’s act of atonement for his wrongdoings (cf. Gen 33:11) suggests that Jacob’s atonement for his earlier wrongdoings is successful in establishing reconciliation between them.

There is also another narrative detail suggesting the genuineness of the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau in that there is no threat of violence on Esau’s part, even after his father’s death. Esau had articulated that he would eliminate his brother Jacob for the deception and stealing his blessing as soon as their old father was dead (cf. Gen 27:41). But Esau does not pursue this articulated plan to kill his brother Jacob even when there is a perfect opportunity to carry out that plan when they meet for their father’s burial (cf. Gen 35:29). The fact that threat of violence on Esau’s part is not mentioned either in the immediate context of their reunion scene in Genesis 33 or in the wider context of the Jacob narrative as a whole demonstrates that the reconciliation between the brothers is genuinely established. As Brett points out, “From the elder brother’s point of view, the reconciliation is authentic; there is no evidence of residual animosity.”

In sum, all the narrative indications discussed above suggest the genuineness of the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau. In other words, the physical separation between Jacob and Esau is not sufficient to the argument of some scholars that separation suggests the lack of reconciliation between them.

435 Arnold, Genesis, 282. See also Amos, The Book of Genesis, 208.
436 See Fishbane, Text and Texture, 52. See also Miscall, “the Jacob and Joseph Stories as Analogies,” 38, who says, “Both reunions [i.e. between Jacob and Esau and between Joseph and his brothers] . . . [do] not entail forgiving the past sins or atoning for them, simply regarding them as past, as over and done.” See also Brett, Genesis, 98-100.
437 Brett, Genesis, 100.
3.2.2 Reconciliation between Joseph and His Brothers

Scholars have also questioned the authenticity of the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers. Amos, for example, raises the question of the authenticity of the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers, pointing out the unbalanced expression of emotions between them. Amos says, “it is striking as to how onesided the emotion and speech in this passage . . . [and] how dismayed they [i.e. Joseph’s brothers] were initially by this presence and how difficult they found it to talk to him [i.e. Joseph] (45:3)” compared with Joseph’s weeping and warm words (45:1-11) to them. Likewise, M. A. O’Brien says that “the level of reunion and reconciliation is left delicately unresolved; it is Joseph who kisses his brothers and weeps, whereas they “talked with him” (v. 15). Pointing out the lack of explicit expressions both of apology from the brothers and of forgiveness from Joseph, some scholars have also raised the question of the authenticity of the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers.

However, the lack of an explicit expression of forgiveness on the part of Joseph should not be used to question the actuality of the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers. Joseph overhears through his brothers’ conversation that they think they are experiencing trouble because of their past wrongdoing in selling him to foreigners. This informs Joseph that the brothers consider their troubles to be a due punishment. Joseph, who already knows about his brothers’ sense of guilt, expresses his forgiveness aptly by explaining that it is not they, but God, who has sent him to Egypt to save them. The fact

441 Miscall, “The Jacob and Joseph Stories as Analogies,” 38, says, “The avoidance of explicit forgiveness is stressed in a closing incident. After Jacob’s burial (49:29-50:14), the brothers are fearful that Joseph will take revenge, and in their request to him, they twice mention forgiveness of sin. Joseph’s response is reassuring but carefully avoids any hint of forgiveness of or atonement for the brothers’ past crimes.” Coats, From Canaan to Egypt, 83, also says, “Joseph requires no ritual of repentance from the brothers for their past sins. . . . They ask no mercy. They offer no apologies.”
that Joseph removes the cause of the brothers’ sense of guilt in this way should be considered to be a sign that the offer of reconciliation on Joseph’s part is genuine. The lack of response on the part of the brothers when Joseph finally reveals himself to them is also understandable considering what they have been put through until then. The brothers have been falsely accused and imprisoned, and have almost lost their brother Benjamin because of the Egyptian vizier. Then, all of sudden, the vizier tells them that he is their brother Joseph whom they have thought dead. There is no doubt that Joseph’s exposure is a shock to them. They are dumbfounded while the portrait of Joseph’s character is much more emotional than his brothers. The brothers’ lack of response to Joseph and his offer of reconciliation is natural and therefore cannot be used as evidence for the incompleteness of reconciliation.

3.2.3 The Uneasiness of the Reconciliation on the Victimizers’ Part

As discussed above, the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau is genuine. Despite the genuineness of the reconciliation between the brothers, however, there are textual signals pointing to the uneasiness on the perpetrator’s part. In fact, this has been noted by many scholars. For example, Sternberg has pointed out that the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau is not complete because Jacob still does not trust Esau in that he settles in Succoth (Gen 33:17) contrary to what he implied (Gen 33:13-14). As Carr points out, such hesitance in Jacob is understandable and wise, “since from the start, Esau had planned to wait until Isaac was dead to kill Jacob (Gen 27, 41; cf. Gen 35, 29).”

Similarly but taking a different direction, Agyenta explains:

After twenty years of living in continuous fear of his brother it seems unrealistic, even at the level of the narrative, to expect that such feelings would disappear overnight and make way for an instant convivial relationship between Jacob and

443 Carr, “βιβλος γενέσεως Revisited,” 338.
his brother . . . In this regard, Jacob’s evasive answers to his brother and his refusal to follow him to Seir may be honourable.\footnote{Agyenta, “When Reconciliation Means More Than the ‘Re-Membering,’” 131-32.}

In this statement, Agyenta points out that the physical separation is understandable considering the intensity of the conflict between Jacob and Esau and thus, should not be used as evidence for the lack or incompleteness of the reconciliation between the brothers. In fact, as Jacob’s deadly fear of his brother Esau is so vividly described (cf. Gen 32:3-21, 33:1-3), Agyenta’s explanation of Jacob’s unwillingness to join physically with Esau seems to be plausible. Considering both the intensity of the conflict between the brothers and the long period that Jacob feared his brother, it is understandable that Jacob would take time to see if his brother’s grace and offer of reconciliation would last. Such hesitance is especially understandable because Jacob is the instigator of the conflict with his brother Esau.

In this way, all these textual signals indicate the uneasiness of the reconciliation on the part of the perpetrator Jacob despite the validity of the reconciliation. This foreshadows the confirmation of the reconciliation, which is demonstrated by the reunion of Jacob and Esau for their father’s burial and peaceful separation in Gen 35:27-29 and Gen 36:6-7. A similar pattern recurs in the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers.

Despite the moving scene of the reunion and reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers in Genesis 45, the uneasiness of the reconciliation on the brothers’ part is demonstrated in the text. As Crüsemann notes:

\begin{quote}
Wie offen hier noch alles ist, zeigt nichts deutlicher als die Beobachtung, daß der Erzähler-außer der kurzen Bemerkung in 45,15-die Brüder von c. 44 bis c. 50 gegenüber joseph schweigen läß. Kein einziges Wort sagen sie zu ihm.
\end{quote}
Äußerlich haben sie die Sonderrolle Josephs anerkannt, innerlich ist das Grundproblem von c. 37 her noch keineswegs gelöst. 445

In this statement, Crüsemann points out that the brothers hardly speak upon realizing the real identity of the Egyptian vizier and concludes that this indicates the fact that they do not appear convinced of Joseph’s offer of reconciliation. Similarly, Kaminsky points out the difference between the brothers’ reactions and Benjamin’s in their response to Joseph’s actions of reconciliation. The brothers only speak to him in response, 446 but Benjamin responds actively to Joseph’s embracing him and weeping on his neck and embracing Joseph and weeping as well (45:14). The text indicates the fact that that the brothers’ response to Joseph’s actions of reconciliation, kissing them and weeping over them, is rather passive and demonstrates the uneasiness toward the reconciliation on the brothers’ part. This uneasiness toward the reconciliation on the brothers’ part is consistent with their fear that with Jacob’s death in Gen 50:15-19 Joseph will reveal his true animosity toward them. As Crüsemann points out, “Der gesamte Knoten der Josephsgeschichte löst sich erst in 50, 15ff,” 447 thus, foreshadowing the forthcoming second reconciliation in Gen 50:15-21.

3.3 Brotherly Strife and Reconciliation Interwoven with the Abrahamic Promise Theme in Terms of the Preservation of the Promised Line
Dealing with some scholars’ discussions which consider the promise texts as secondary materials which have been attached to the patriarchal narratives, Coats asks, “If, indeed, the promise tradition is secondary in many of the patriarchal narratives, what was the controlling narrative theme in the primary stage of the tradition?” 448 Coats answers that it

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446 See Kaminsky, Yet I Loved Jacob, 71.
447 Crüsemann, Der Widerstand Gegen das Königttum, 152.
is the theme of familial strife. In this way, Coats considers the theme of familial strife, along with the promise motif, as crucial in the book of Genesis. In fact, the validity of Coats’ observation of the interconnectedness between the motif of familial strife and the promise theme is demonstrated in the Jacob and the original Joseph stories in that the two motifs are interwoven together in the two stories.\(^{449}\)

This interconnectedness between the motif of familial strife and the promise theme can be well observed in some scholars' proposals of the chiastic structure of the Jacob narrative. Among many commentators who have proposed some chiastic arrangements of the Jacob narrative, Fishbane’s proposal is noteworthy for the discussion of the interconnectedness between the theme of brotherly strife and the Abrahamic promise theme:

(preceded by *toledot*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>oracle sought; Rebekah struggles in childbirth; <em>bekhorah</em>-birthright; birth; themes of <em>strife</em>, deception, fertility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>interlude; <em>strife</em>, deception; <em>berakhah</em>-blessing; covenant with foreigner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>deception; <em>berakhah</em>-stolen; fear of Esau; flight from land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>encounter (verb: <em>paga‘</em>) with the divine at sacred site, near border; <em>berakhah</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>internal cycle opens; arrival; Laban at border; deception; wages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Rachel fertile; Jacob increases the herds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>internal cycle closes; departure; Laban at border; deception; wages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>encounter (verb: <em>paga‘</em>) with divine beings at sacred sites; near border; <em>berakhah</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>deception planned; fear of Esau, <em>berakhah</em>-gift returned; return to land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>interlude; <em>strife</em>, deception; covenant with foreigner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>oracle fulfilled; Rachel struggles in childbirth; <em>berakhah</em>; death, <em>resolutions</em></td>
</tr>
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(continued)

\(^{449}\) The brotherly strife between Cain and Abel is not related to the Abrahamic promise theme in that the promise is not yet pronounced. As discussed above, the story of Isaac and Ishmael is better regarded as one of family strife rather than brotherly strife. Furthermore, the lack of reconciliation in the strife between Isaac and Ishmael does not affect the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises. Bold are mine.

\(^{450}\) Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 42. Italics mine. See also Walters, “Jacob Narrative,” 600.
As Fishbane’s chiastic analysis of the Jacob narrative well demonstrates, the theme of brotherly strife and reconciliation is interwoven with the Abrahamic promise theme.\(^{451}\) The brotherly strife revolves around the blessing and power in Genesis 25; 27; 28; and 29-31. Likewise, the reconciliation between the brothers in the Jacob narrative is directly related to the blessing in Genesis 33. The interconnection between the reconciliation theme and the Abrahamic promise theme is further expressed in Jacob’s prayer in 32:9-12:

- v. 9 Jacob recalls *God’s promise* of prosperity
- vv. 10 Jacob confesses his unworthiness of the prosperity God has given him
- v. 11 Jacob makes a plea for God’s protection from Esau’s attack
- v. 12 Jacob recalls *God’s promise* of multiplicity of his descendants

In his prayer, Jacob first recalls God’s promise of prosperity and expresses a gratitude to God for keeping the promise despite his unworthiness, asking for the protection from Esau’s attack. Jacob finishes his prayer reminding God of the promise of multiplicity of his descendants. Jacob points out that the fulfillment of God’s promise of multiplicity is now at stake because the promise is to be fulfilled only through his survival, which can be possible through the resolution of the brotherly strife with Esau, that is, the reconciliation. In this way, the interconnectedness between the motif of brotherly strife and the promise theme is demonstrated throughout the Jacob narrative. In the same way,

\(^{451}\) Although Fishbane omits these sections, there is no reason to exclude them from the Jacob narrative. The omitted sections, the list of Jacob’s twelve sons and Isaac’s death in Gen 35:23-29 and Esau’s genealogy and Jacob’s settlement in Gen 36:1-37:1, also revolve around the Abrahamic promise theme. The list of Jacob’s twelve sons in 35:23-26 is the preliminary step to the fulfillment of a nationhood promised in 25:23 and 35:11. The connection of the burial site of Mamre in 35:27 with the Promised Land will be discussed in Chapter Three. In my view, the oracle in the beginning of Jacob narrative (25:19-34) that deals with the struggle of two nations and their division (Jacob-Israel and Esau-Edom) is described as being fulfilled in 35:23-37:1. The latter passage recounts the birth of Jacob’s twelve sons to become Israel (35:23-26) and the birth and growth of Edom (36); it recounts as well the separation of Esau from Canaan to Seir (36:6-8) and Jacob in Canaan (37:1). Although Fishbane omits these sections, there is no reason to exclude them from the Jacob narrative.
the interconnection between the motif of brotherly strife and the promise theme is shown in the original Joseph story.

The Joseph narrative has long been regarded as a story of divine providence. For instance, Longacre says, “as we are explicitly told, this [i.e. the Joseph narrative] is a tale of divine providence.”452 As de Hoop points out, “The theme of divine providence is especially emphasized (although not exclusively) by those who consider the Joseph Story to be a product of Wisdom circles.”453 Thus, this view of the Joseph narrative as a story of divine providence tends to overlook the characteristic of the Joseph narrative in which the promise elements are interwoven with the divine providence story. This characteristic is well described in de Hoop’s statement:

> The theme of the [Joseph] Story can be described in a two twofold sense: divine providence and the (family) struggle for power. The aspect of divine providence is usually connected with the ideal that the promise to the patriarchs could be passed on: Joseph was sold to Egypt where he rose to power, so he could preserve a whole nation alive. Hence the theme of divine providence has to be connected with the theme of the blessing promised to Abraham.454

This characteristic of the amalgamation of divine providence and the promise elements in the original Joseph story is further well demonstrated in the resolution of brotherly strife in Genesis 45. Thus, even Coats, who argues for familial strife as “the dominant theme in the Joseph story,” says, “[s]ome indication of a critical role for the promise theme in the patriarchal traditions appears here. For example, in Joseph’s speech, 45:4b-13, . . . The many survivors fulfill the promise for great posterity, the promise that descendants would become a great nation.”455

452 Longacre, Joseph, 42.
453 De Hoop, Genesis 49, 323.
454 De Hoop, Genesis 49, 323.
455 Coats, “Joseph, Son of Jacob,” 977.
This promise element in the original Joseph story is further interwoven with the motif of reconciliation. The reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers is interconnected with the Abrahamic promise theme because the survival of Joseph’s family, the promised line, through which the promise is to be fulfilled, is only made possible by the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers. It is further supported by Joseph’s theological interpretation of the whole set of incidents in the reconciliation scene of 45:1-7 where God’s providential plan to save the lives of his family and of the earth is inextricably connected to Joseph’s reconciliation with his brothers. The interconnectedness between the brotherly strife motif and the Abrahamic promise in the original Joseph story (Genesis 37; 39-45) is well summarized by Wilson:

If the promise of descendants includes the survival of Jacob and his family, then the whole Joseph story is riddled with this theme [i.e. the promise of descendants] . . . In chapters 39-41, Jacob’s family is backgrounded and thus there is no overt connection with the promise of descendants. However, Joseph’s rise to power, and his ensuring supplies of grain for the years of famine, become important preliminaries for the events of chapters 42-45.456

Only through the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers can the heirs of the promise be preserved alive and subsequently ensured the prospective fulfillment of the promise of nationhood (Gen 12:1-3). In this respect, in the original Joseph story, the theme of brotherly strife and reconciliation is intrinsically interwoven with the Abrahamic promise in that “Joseph’s actions [i.e. forgiving his brothers for reconciliation] ensure the partial fulfillment of this promise [i.e. the Abrahamic promise of descendants].”457

This recognition of the interconnectedness between the theme of brotherly strife/reconciliation and the Abrahamic promise theme is important because without it the rest

456 Wilson, Joseph, Wise and Otherwise, 227.
457 Wilson, Joseph, Wise and Otherwise, 230.
of the plot of the Jacob and the Joseph narratives cannot be explained. Miscall, among others, illustrates the problem with his claim that the Jacob and the Joseph narratives are parallel in that they contain the common plot within the motif of brotherly strife: “treachery between brothers, a twenty year separation, and a subsequent reunion.” The difficulty with this view of the Jacob and the Joseph narratives lies in that the rest of the Jacob narrative (Genesis 26; 34-36) and of the Joseph narrative (Genesis 38; 46-50, i.e., the redactional materials), which both revolve around the promise theme, cannot be explained because they are not related to the motif of brotherly strife. However, with the recognition of the interconnectedness between the theme of brotherly strife/reconciliation and the Abrahamic promise theme in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives, the chapters (Genesis 26; 34-36 and Genesis 38; 46-50) can be explained. For example, Genesis 35-36 show how the promise of nationhood, king, and land can be reiterated to Jacob and the promise of nationhood to Esau is fulfilled after the reconciliation between the brothers. Likewise, Genesis 46-50 demonstrate how the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers enables the promise of nationhood, kingship, and land to be transferred to them and their descendants and enables the promise to be fulfilled through them. In this way, this observation of the interconnectedness between the theme of brotherly strife/reconciliation and the Abrahamic promise theme in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives shows how my proposal of a parallel structure between the Jacob narrative and the Joseph narrative differs from other scholars’ discussions of the parallel features, particularly in terms of the motif of brotherly strife.

459 The Abrahamic promise theme in Gen 26; 34-35 and the redactional materials is the result of Chapter Two, Section 2. “The Function and Purpose of the Redactional Materials: Theological, Thematic, and Literary Parallels between the Redactional Materials and the Jacob narrative.”
Now that we have argued that the motifs of the brotherly strife and reconciliation, which are intrinsic to, and uniquely recur in, the Jacob and the original Joseph stories are interwoven with the Abrahamic promise theme, we turn to examine other promise elements, uniquely and more directly appear in the two stories.

3.4 God’s Being With and Its Outcome (Gen 39:2-3, 21, 23 and Gen 26:3, 24; 28:15)

Von Rad is representative of those who regard Gen 12:1-3 as key to an understanding of the book of Genesis, in particular the work of Yahwist, considering its context in Genesis 1-11:

Is the catastrophe of ch. 11.1-9 final? . . . The Yahwistic narrator shows something else along with the consequences of divine judgment . . . . Our narrator does give an answer, . . . Here in the promise that is given concerning Abraham something is again said about God’s saving will and indeed about a salvation extending far beyond the limits of the covenant people to “all the families of the earth” (ch. 12.3) . . . . With this firm linking of primeval history and sacred history the Yahwist indicates something of the final meaning and purpose of the saving relation that God has vouchsafed to Israel.\(^{460}\)

Likewise, commenting on Gen 12:1-3 R. W. L. Moberly says:

It is perhaps unusual for a book within the Old Testament to have one particular text that can be regarded as a possible interpretive key to the book as a whole, and even to the Old Testament as whole. Yet such a case has been made in relation to God’s call of Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 . . . [making] a bridge between God’s dealings with the world in general in Genesis 1-11 and his dealings with the patriarchs in particular in Genesis 12-50.\(^{461}\)

In a similar vein, Clines comments on Gen 12:1-3, “The promise or blessing is both the divine initiative in a world where human initiatives always lead to disaster, and a reaffirmation of the primal divine intentions for man.”\(^{462}\) In this way, these scholars regard Gen 12:1-3 as an interpretive key to the book of Genesis or even to the Pentateuch as a

\(^{460}\) Von Rad, *Genesis*, 152-54.


\(^{462}\) Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 29.
whole. That the Abrahamic promise functions as a continuous thematic thread is further supported in that it is repeated in the Genesis stories. The Abrahamic promise in Gen 12:1-3 is "nationhood, a great name, divine protection and mediatorship of blessing"; this promise is repeated as it is recounted in its transfer from Isaac to Jacob (28:1-4) and from Jacob to his sons (48:9, 15, 16; 49:25-26).

However, God’s reaffirmation of the promise to Jacob in Gen 28:13-15 introduces a new element to the promise. The content of the promise in Gen 28:13-14 is the same as that of the promise given to Abraham in 12:2-3 and 13:14-17: the promise of land, the promise of numerous descendants, and the promise of being a blessing to all the peoples of the earth. But the promise of divine presence with Jacob and guidance/protection on his journey and bringing him back to the land in Gen 28:15 is a new element.

In the Abraham story, there is only one passing reference to God’s presence with Abraham, made by the foreign king Abimelech and the commander Phicol in Gen 21:22, אָלָהֵמִים עַמְּךָ בָּכָל אַשְׁרֶיךָ עָשָּׂה׃ Based on the view that the promise of God’s presence is implicit in the promise of relationship or blessing, some scholars have understood that the promise of God’s presence occurs or is at least implied in the Abraham story (12:2; 17:1-11; 17:16, 17ff). Although it is true, however, the (implied) occurrence in the Abraham story is different from the appearance of the promise of God’s presence in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives. In the Jacob narrative, this promise of God’s presence which plays an important role in the development of the story is clearly articulated and addressed directly to the patriarchs, Isaac and Jacob: כְּרִיְאָהּ עֲנֵנָּה (26:3); וַאֲרוֹרָה עַמְּךָ (26:15, 20); and וַאֲרוֹרָה עַמְּךָ (31:3, 5; cf. 31:42, 35:3). The prominence of

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463 Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 275. If 12:7 is included, this can be fivefold.
464 Fox, “Can Genesis Be Read as a Book?,” 34. See also Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 214.
465 See Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 33-34.
the promise element of divine presence in the development of the Jacob narrative is further articulated by Jacob in Gen 35:3, "ויהי עמּי דֵּי בדרך אשר הלכתי," when he summarizes his journey saying that God’s presence has been with him throughout the journey. As Westermann points out, “the promise of God’s presence appears only in 26-50.”

In the same way, the element of the promise of God’s being with recurs and plays a crucial role in the thematic/theological development of the original Joseph story (Gen 39:2, 3, 21, 23).

Despite these articulations of the promise element of “God’s being with” in the original Joseph story, some scholars have disputed the unique occurrence of this promise because they mistakenly argue that the promise of divine presence counts only when it occurs in connection with a journey or movement. Preuss, for example, has argued that the promise of “God’s being with” is absent from the original Joseph story because the promise in the story does not appear in the setting of a journey. However, as the promise of “God’s being with” appears in the context of settlement in Isaac’s settlement in Gerar (26:3, 24), the occurrence of the promise element of “God’s being with” is not confined to its connection with a journey or movement. Thus, Preuss’s argument against the occurrence of this promise in the original Joseph story, based on the view that it only occurs in the context of a journey/movement, is not convincing.

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466 Westermann, The Promises to the Fathers, 140. Westermann articulates this in another book, Genesis 37-50, 62-63, “The narrator wants to link God’s presence with Joseph to this presence with the patriarchs by taking over the fixed formula of Yahweh’s assistance which is firmly rooted in the Isaac-Jacob transition.”

467 Clines, The Theme of the Pentateuch, 35, also points out that this promise sometimes occurs in a non-moving context with the reference to Gen 26:3 and 31:5. Although the reference of 31:5 does not support his point because the promise of God’s presence with Jacob in 31:5 is addressed in the divine command to journey back to the land of Canaan, it is obvious that the promise is not exclusive to the context of journey and movement.
What is worth noting is the nature of the promise of God’s presence in the original Joseph story. The connection between “God’s being with” and success is articulated and emphasized in the original Joseph story in Genesis 39 in that God’s presence with Joseph forms a frame for Joseph’s success:

I have dealt with this in this chapter, Section 1.1.3 “Joseph and Potiphar’s Wife: His Sexual Virtue and Success (תַּנְשֵׁה, Gen 39:2, 3, 23).”

This connection between God’s presence and success/prosperity is further demonstrated in the second occurrence of the promise of “God’s being with” in Gen 28:13-15. In Gen 28:13-15, Jacob learns that God’s presence with him will enable the fulfillment of a series of promises such as land, multiplication of descendants, and becoming a mediator of blessing to other nations.470

In sum, the new promise element of “God’s being with,” which does not appear in the Abraham story—neither in the setting of a journey/movement nor even in the context of settlement—occurs in both the Jacob and the Joseph narratives in connection with success, protection, and blessing. This indicates a unique connection between the Jacob and the original Joseph stories. This unique connection is further demonstrated in the promise element of the mediatorship of blessing, which recurs in the Jacob and the original Joseph stories.

3.5 Articulation of Fulfillment of Being a Blessing to the Peoples (Gen 39:5; 41:56-57 and Gen 30:27)

Many commentators who would see Gen 12:1-3 as a key to understanding the book of Genesis have argued for the promise of the mediatorship of blessing in Gen 12:3 as the central of the Abrahamic promise.471 For instance, Wolff, who regards the theme of

470 This subject will be further discussed in Chapter Four, sections 3, 4, and 5.
471 T. Desmond Alexander, “Abraham Re-assessed Theologically: The Abraham Narrative and the New Testament Understanding of Justification by Faith,” in He Swore an Oath: Biblical Themes from Genesis 12-50 (2d ed.; eds. R. S. Hess, G. J. Wenham & E. Satterthwaite; Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 13, argues that “The promise that Abraham will become a great nation . . . must be understood as being subservient to God’s principal desire to bless all the families of the earth.” Janzen, Genesis 12-50, 17, comments that Gen 12:1-3 “suggests a deep relation between the call and destiny of Abram and his descendants, and the call and destiny of all human communities . . . Abram and his descendents are called to serve the well-being of all human communities, by becoming the kind of community they all would like to become (cf. Deut. 4:5-8);” Gordon J. Wenham, “The Face at the Bottom of the Well: Hidden Agendas of the Pentateuchal Commentator,” in He Swore an Oath: Biblical Themes from Genesis 12-50 (2d ed.; eds. R. S. Hess, G. J. Wenham & E. Satterthwaite; Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 203, argues that the climax of Gen 12:1-3 is the promise of ‘in you all the families of the earth shall find blessing;’” Brevard S. Childs, Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context (London: SCM, 1985), 92, says, “Israel was indeed chosen ‘from all the families of the earth’ (Amos 3.2), but with the explicit purpose that all the nations of the world would be
blessing to all the peoples as the kerygma of the Yahwist, argues that the kerygma is developed throughout the patriarchal narratives. Commenting on Gen 12:1-3, P. Williamson also says, “There can be little doubt that the central theme of this pericope is that of blessing. This is reflected, not only by the frequent occurrence of the root בָּרֶךְ [i.e. used five times in 12:2-3], but also its climactic position at the end of this speech.” In a similar vein, Mann, who sees a thematic and theological unity in Genesis, argues that unity is created through the central promise element of Gen 12:1-3, “In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” According to Mann, this is depicted "in the strategic occurrences" throughout Genesis (Gen 1:28; 5:2-3; 9:1; 17:5-6; 28:3; 35:11; 48:4).

In fact, many scholars have discussed that the theme of mediatorship of blessing plays a crucial role in the original Joseph story. In particular, many scholars have argued that in the original Joseph story the promise of the mediatorship of blessing (Gen 12:3b) is articulated as being fulfilled, not just promised.

Alter, for example, says, “The word ‘all’ (כל) [in Gen 39:1-6] is insisted upon five times, clearly exceeding the norm of biblical repetition and thus calling attention as a thematic assertion: the scope of blessing or success this man [Joseph] realizes is virtually unlimited; everything prospers, everything is entrusted to him.” Likewise, Wolff maintains that the Joseph narrative is “a capsule drama showing how . . . [through

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blessed (Gen 12.3);” and commenting on Gen 12:1-3, Paul R. Williamson, Abraham, Israel and the Nations: The Patriarchal Promise and its Covenantal Development in Genesis (JSOTSup 315; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 229, points out that “Abraham is to be a recipient of blessing; . . . Abraham is to be the mediator of blessing.”

473 Williamson, Abraham, Israel and the Nations, 229.
474 Mann, “All the Families of the Earth,” 341.
475 Mann, “All the Families of the Earth,” 343.
476 Alter, The Art of Biblical Narrative, 107-08
Joseph] blessing came even upon the powerful empire of Egypt (39:5, 41:49, 57; 47:13-26). Westermann supports the blessing as the dominant theme in the original Joseph story, although he fails to pay attention to the role of blessing, arguing shalom as the main motif of the Joseph narrative. Westermann defines the concept of blessing as follows:

It is not possible to restrict our study to the occurrence of the various forms of the rook brk. That is the starting point, but since the terminology can also represent the state of being blessed, descriptions of that state, even where the terminology does not occur, are to be included . . . . Where blessing is spoken of, there develops a specific vocabulary in which such terms as success, succeed, presence of God, and peace recur.

The fact that the original Joseph story revolves around Joseph’s success in relation to God’s presence with him (Genesis 39-41) and the subsequent restoration of peace or reconciliation (Genesis 37, 42-45) definitely supports the argument that the theme of blessing plays a key role in the original Joseph story. It is obvious that Westermann’s definition of blessing as the state of being blessed in the form of success, divine presence, and peace, can perfectly be applied to the original Joseph story.

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480 The passage in Genesis 37 can be considered to be a part of the motif of peace as it is the counterpart to the restoration of peace in Genesis 42-45.
481 At this point it is worth noting Westermann’s proposal of the concept of salvation in relation to blessing. As a reaction to the heavy emphasis on deliverance or the idea of salvation which has tended to dominate biblical theologies in his time, Westermann, Blessing in the Bible, 1-14, argues that salvation in the Bible accompanies not only deliverance, but also blessing, the divine action which produces growth and maturation. Thus, Westermann, Blessing in the Bible, 8, says, “It is not possible to restrict God’s activity to one or the other of these aspects [i.e. God’s saving activity and bestowal of blessing].” Despite this insightful proposition, Westermann fails to point out that the proposition can most properly be applied to the account of the Jacob’s descendants who are saved in Egypt (Gen 45:9) and subsequently blessed after the deliverance in Gen 47:13-27 and Genesis 48-49. Although Westermann is aware that the Joseph story reports two lengthy chapters of blessing (chaps. 48 and 49) followed by Gen 47:13-27, he gives no indication that the blessing theme in these chapters plays an important role in the Joseph story (chaps. 37-50) because of his understanding of the nature of these chapters as the non-original
In fact, this theme of Joseph as a medium of blessing is prominent throughout the original Joseph story, as Joseph is depicted as a blessing to all whom he meets: Potiphar’s household (39:2-5), the chief gaoler (41:21-23), Pharaoh (41:46-49), all the Egyptians and even all the world (41:56-57), as well as his family (45:10-12). Thus, Wilson, who argues that the blessing theme links the Joseph narrative with Gen 1-11 as well as with the patriarchal narratives, says, “the Joseph story begins to flesh out the least developed aspect of the Abrahamic promises— that of blessing to the nations . . . [as] a foretaste of what it means to bless the nations.” In the same way, Dahlberg argues that the Abrahamic promise of being a mediator of blessing to all the peoples is for the first time clearly fulfilled in the Joseph narrative in that the Egyptian’s house is blessed because of Joseph (Gen 39:5). Genesis 39:5 clearly shows that the promise of Abraham’s descendents as a mediators of blessing is realized through Joseph (Gen 12:3). These scholars have aptly observed that the promise element of mediatorship of blessing is present in the original Joseph story. This supports the argument for thematic/theological continuity between the original Joseph story and the patriarchal narratives, in particular, between the Jacob and the original Joseph stories.

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482 Wilson, Joseph, Wise and Otherwise, 230-32; the quotation is from 230.
483 See Dahlberg, “The Unity of Genesis, 126-33, especially 131.
484 See Waltke, Genesis, 520; Ross, Creation & Blessing, 625. McKeown, Genesis, 168, also says, “Yahweh had promised Abraham that through him and his offspring all the nations would be blessed, and not in this passage [i.e. 39:1-5] Yahweh blesses the Egyptian because of Joseph. The importance of this rather unusual statement that Yahweh blesses the Egyptian is underlined by repetition.”
485 Contra some scholars who do not regard the occurrence of the Abrahamic promise theme in the original Joseph story. For example, Mann, “All the Families of the Earth,” 341-53, argues that this promise of blessing is the central theological focus that unites the book of Genesis as a whole based on the occurrences of the promise of being a blessing first made to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3) being repeated to Isaac (26:2-4), to
Although these scholars cogently point out the presence of the mediatorship of blessing in the original Joseph story, the argument that this theme is for the first time presented as being fulfilled in the Joseph story seems to be mistaken. In fact, this promise is articulated as being fulfilled for the first time in the Jacob narrative as Jacob is depicted as a medium of blessing to Laban (Gen 30:27, 30). As discussed above, when they deal with the subject of mediatorship of blessing, many scholars either fail to mention these verses or to refer to Jacob as a mediator of blessing as a whole.\textsuperscript{486} For example, although Turner refers to Jacob’s bestowal of blessing on Pharaoh in Gen 47:7 and on his sons in Genesis 48 and 49, he does not mention the obvious textual reference to Jacob as a mediator of blessing in Gen 30:27, 30.\textsuperscript{487} However, when it comes to the promise element of the mediatorship of blessing, Gen 30:27 (cf. 30:30), which articulates Jacob as a mediator of blessing, is important because it indicates the interconnectedness of the Jacob narrative with the original Joseph story. Indeed, Jacob and Joseph as mediators of blessing are depicted in a strikingly similar way:

\begin{align*}
\text{ויברכני יהוה בגללך (Gen 30:27)} \\
\text{ויברכ יהוה את־ביתי המצרי בגלל יוסף (Gen 39:5)}^\text{488}
\end{align*}

The Hebrew word, \textit{גלל}, occurs seven times in the Old Testament (Gen 12:13; 30:27; 39:5; Deut 15:10; 1 Kgs 14:16; Jer 11:17; 15:4). Genesis 30:27 and 39:5 are the only

\textsuperscript{486} In addition to above mentioned scholars such as Dahlberg and Wilson, McKeown, \textit{Genesis}, 241, does not mention Jacob, but Joseph only as a mediator of blessing. Cf. Wolff, “The Kerygma of the Yahwist,” 58, includes Jacob as a mediator of blessing commenting on Gen 30:27, “This time the blessing comes to the nations in the form of sheep: with his skill as a shepherd Jacob produces abundance among the Arameans.”

\textsuperscript{487} Turner, \textit{Announcements}, 172, says, “The two main characters, Joseph and Jacob, act in ways which see the third element of the Abrahamic Announcement – being a blessing – brought once again to the reader’s attention.”

\textsuperscript{488} Kselman, “Genesis,” 115, also mentions Gen 30:27-30 along with Gen 39:5 when he discusses the promise of the mediatorship of blessing.
occurrences in which the word is used in relation to the mediatorship of blessing.\textsuperscript{489} This observation that Jacob and Joseph in the book of Genesis are the only characters who are presented as becoming mediators of blessing to other nations or peoples is important to this study because it indicates a unique parallel between the Jacob narrative and the original Joseph story.

The promise element of the mediatorship of blessing is mentioned in promise form in Gen 12:3b. But although this promise is mentioned in the Abraham story, Abraham himself is not really described as fulfilling this role. Wolff says not only Jacob and Joseph, but also Abraham is portrayed as a mediator of blessing.\textsuperscript{490} According to Wolff, Abraham is portrayed as a mediator of blessing as shown in Abraham’s intercession for the people of Sodom who were about to be destroyed (cf. Gen 18:16-33). However, Wolff’s argument that Abraham functions as a mediator of blessing, “bringing annulment of guilt and punishment, community life without strife, [and] effective material aid for life,”\textsuperscript{491} seems to be less than fully convincing because the Sodomites are destroyed instead of finding salvation by Abraham’s intercession. Likewise, contrary to Wolff’s argument, Abraham does not fully bring a blessing to his own kinsman Lot, as Lot’s family ends up being killed despite Abraham’s generous treatment of Lot (Genesis 19).\textsuperscript{492} Thus, even Wolff himself admits at some point that there is a difficulty with regarding Abraham as a mediator of blessing: “However, . . . by lying and passing off his wife as his sister, Abraham brings evil upon Egypt instead of blessing (12:10ff.).”\textsuperscript{493}

\textsuperscript{489} Although the word, \textit{גֵּלֶל}, occurs in relation to blessing in Deut 15:10, it doesn’t concern the mediatorship of blessing. Rather the word in its relation to blessing occurs as a reward of a good deed.
\textsuperscript{490} Wolff, “The Kerygma of the Yahwist,” 55-60.
\textsuperscript{492} Wolff, “The Kerygma of the Yahwist,” 56, argues that Abraham becomes a blessing to Lot “by giving his brother free choice of the land.”
is further supported by McKeown’s contrast between Abraham and Joseph as mediators of blessing:

Although God promised Abraham that through him blessing would flow to the nations, there was little evidence of this in the Abraham narrative. However, this promise comes into clear focus with the story of Joseph. . . . As a result of Abraham’s visit the Pharaoh is cursed (12:17). But through Joseph Pharaoh, the Egyptians and the surrounding nations are blessed.494

The presence of these promise elements—divine presence and articulation of fulfillment of mediatorship of blessing in the Jacob and the original Joseph stories, but not in the Abraham story—support the argument that there is a unique thematic/theological continuity between the two stories.

In sum, I argue that all these key thematic/theological similarities between the Jacob and the original Joseph stories point to a hitherto overlooked inherent connection between the Jacob narrative and the original Joseph story, the latter of which has traditionally been regarded by historical-critical scholars as largely extraneous to the theme and content of the earlier portions of the book. This may indicate the unity of thought of the final form of the Jacob and the original Joseph stories.495 This is further supported by the parallels of the redactional materials, which create continuity between the original Joseph story and the Jacob narrative. As we have seen as well, the connection between the Jacob narrative and the original Joseph story carries on into the redactional Joseph material. Although widely recognized, these connections must no longer be regarded necessarily as discontinuous with the original Joseph story.

Now that we have established the unique thematic/theological continuities between the Jacob and the original Joseph stories as well as between the redactional

494 McKeown, *Genesis*, 240.
495 Although the original Joseph story is initially an independent work distinct from the patriarchal narratives, it is expanded to enhance its parallels with the Jacob narrative without changing the older version of the original Joseph story.
materials (Genesis 38; 46-50) and the Jacob narrative, we must turn to an examination of the parallel between the Jacob and the Joseph narratives as a whole.
Chapter Four
Analysis of a Parallel Structure between
the Jacob and the Joseph Narratives in Terms of Similar Key Motifs, Roles and Experiences of the Characters

Given the findings of the parallels between the original Joseph story (Genesis 37, 39-45) and the Jacob narrative (Gen 25:19-37:1)\(^{496}\) and between the redactional materials (Genesis 38, 46-50) and the Jacob narrative,\(^{497}\) it is appropriate to move on to examine the thematic/ theological parallel features of the Jacob narrative (Gen 25:19-37:1) and the Joseph narrative (Gen 37:2-50:26) as a whole. In so doing, this chapter aims to understand the message and theology, which are conveyed through this deliberate parallel structure, of the Jacob and the Joseph narratives. Before getting into the discussion of each pair of units, a chart of the proposed parallel structure as a whole is presented as follows:

1. A. Oracle as Introduction: Younger over Older Son and Brotherly Conflict (Gen 25:19-34)
   A’. Dreams as Introduction: Younger over Older Sons and Brotherly Conflict (Gen 37:2-36)
2. B. Isaac Blessed Despite His Wrongful Deception (Gen 26:1-35)
   B’. Judah’s Descendants Preserved Despite His Wrongful Deception (Gen 38:1-30)
3. C. God’s Presence with Jacob and Its Effect in a Time of Exile Caused by Brotherly Conflict (Gen 27:1-28:22)
   C’. God’s Presence with Joseph and Its Effect in a Time of Exile Caused by Brotherly Conflict (Gen 39:1-23)
   D’. Ongoing Effect of God’s Presence: Despite Hardship Joseph Rises to Power in Egypt and Becomes a Blessing to Egypt and the Whole World (Gen 40:1-41:57)
5. E. Reunion of Jacob and Esau and their Settlement (Gen 31:1-33:20)
   E’. Reunion of Joseph and His Brothers and their Settlement (Gen 42:1-47:12)
   5.1 God’s (Promise of) Presence with and Its Effect in Time of Crisis Despite Unworthiness: Successful Settlement and Gaining of the Property

\(^{496}\) See Chapter Three, Section 3. “Unique Thematic and Theological Parallels between the Jacob narrative and the Original Joseph Story (Gen 37; 39-45).”

\(^{497}\) See Chapter Two, Section 2. “The Function and Purpose of the Redactional Materials: Theological, Thematic, and Literary Parallels between the Redactional Materials and the Jacob narrative.”
5.2 The Rejected/Non-chosen as the Medium for Reconciliation and for the Chosen to Realize/Embrace His Destiny as a Chosen One

6. F. Many Lives in Danger; God Protects the Promised Line Despite Unworthiness and Reaffirms the Promises; and the Death and Burial of Rachel and Isaac in the Promised Land (Gen 34:1-35:29)

F’. Many Lives Saved; God’s Blessing/Promises are Transferred to the Promised Line Despite their Unworthiness; and Jacob’s Death and Burial in the Promised Land (Gen 47:13-50:14)

6.1 The Destiny of the Chosen Heir: Success or Failure

6.2 The Abrahamic Promises Partially Fulfilled or Re-Affirmed to the Chosen Heirs Despite their Unworthiness

7. G. Esau’s Genealogy and the Peaceful Separation between Esau and Jacob
   (Gen 36:1-43)

G’. Second Reconciliation of Joseph and His Brothers (Gen 50:15-21)

7.1 The Settlements of the Uneasiness of the First Reconciliations between the Brothers after the Death of their Father

7.2 The Fulfillment of God’s Oracle/Promise: The (Supposedly) Non-chosen Prosper/Preserved Alive

8. H. Jacob’s Settlement in the Promised Land: The Promised Land Anticipated (Gen 37:1)

H’. Joseph’s Reassurance of the Promised Land: The Promised Land Anticipated (Gen 50:22-26)

1. A. Oracle as Introduction: Younger over Older Son and Brotherly Conflict (25:19-34)

A’. Dreams as Introduction: Younger over Older Sons and Brotherly Conflict (37:2-36)

As discussed in Chapter Three, the motif of brotherly strife in relation to divine election along with parental favouritism is intrinsic to the development of the Jacob and the Joseph narratives. Another common feature of these sections is the key function of oracle and dreams in the Jacob narrative and the Joseph narrative respectively, as many commentators have noted. Fokkelman, for example, says that the birth oracle (Gen 25:19-26) “obliges the reader to read all of the events of Jacob’s life in the light of the oracle.” Likewise, Redford says, “Remove the dreams from chapter 37, and the Joseph

498 These observations are the results of Chapter Three, in the section 3.1 “Brotherly Strife as an Intrinsic Theme and Its Occurrence in Relation to the Motif of Parental Favouritism and Divine Election of the Younger Son over the Older.”

499 Fokkelman, Narrative Art in Genesis, 94. See also von Rad, Genesis, 265, who says Gen 25:21-28, of which v. 23 is the kernel, forms “an expository preface to the whole” Jacob narrative; Brueggemann,
Story as a coherent whole is reduced to nothing.” In this way, as the oracle of the Jacob narrative sets in motion the plot of the story by carrying hints of how the story will develop within God’s purpose, so the dreams of the Joseph narrative function as the beginning of the development in the Joseph narrative. In this respect, Brueggemann correctly puts it, “The dream functions in the Joseph narrative as the oracle does for the Jacob materials . . . [in that] the dream of chapter 37 governs all that follows.”

This function of the oracle and dreams as the introduction to the Jacob narrative and the Joseph narrative respectively is further supported by the conclusion of each story. The birth oracle mentions Jacob and Esau becoming two nations (25:23). The fulfillment of this prediction is foreshadowed in Gen 35-37:1, as 35:22-26 recounts the birth of the twelve sons of Jacob, who will constitute the nation Israel, while Esau’s descendants are shown to become the nation Edom in Genesis 36. The separation of the two nations predicted in the oracle is also foreshadowed to be fulfilled as the separation of Esau and Jacob is recounted: “Jacob settled . . . in the land of Canaan” (37:1, וישב יעקב בארץ מגורי אביו בארץ כנען), while “Esau settled in the hill country of Seir; Esau is Edom” (36:8, וישב עשו בהר שעיר עשו הוא אדום). In this respect, the oracle functions as the introduction to the Jacob narrative as a whole in that the fulfillment of the oracle is

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*Genesis,* 208, comments, “Clearly the oracle of designation (25.23) governs the narrative”; *Coats,* *Genesis,* 185, refers to the oracle as “set[ting] the tone for the entire scope of the Jacob narrative.”

500 Redford, *A Study of the Biblical Narrative of Joseph,* 69. See also *Coats,* *From Canaan to Egypt,* 12; von Rad, *Genesis,* 352; *Wilson,* *Joseph,* *Wise and Otherwise,* 63, says that “the dreams are pivotal for the story as a whole;” *Westermann,* *Joseph,* 11, regards Joseph’s dreams as “a hidden sign from God;” *Turner,* *Announcement of Plot in Genesis,* 144, considers Joseph’s dreams as “divine revelation;” and von Rad, *Genesis,* 351, attests to the prophetic substance of Joseph’s dreams. This prophetic nature of the dreams in the Joseph story is indeed affirmed by the fulfillment of the dreams in Gen 45 and 50, where Joseph’s brothers bow down to Joseph for food and are survived through Joseph.


502 See the passage in Gen 36:6-8.
depicted in Genesis 35-37. Likewise, Joseph’s dream is fulfilled in the last chapter of the Joseph narrative (Gen 50:15-21) as the brothers bow down to Joseph. As Turner points out, it can be argued that this is the real fulfillment of the first dream in that “[p]revious prostrations were done when they did not know Joseph’s identity (42.6, 36; 43.28; 44.14). They now know who he is, and they know that this action fulfils to the letter the dream that predicted their subservience.”

2. B. Isaac Blessed Despite His Wrongful Deception (Gen 26:1-35) B’. Judah’s Descendants Preserved Despite His Wrongful Deception (Gen 38:1-30)

It has been shown that Isaac and Judah enjoyed God’s protection and blessing despite their wrongful deceptions in Genesis 26 and Genesis 38 respectively. It is not necessary to reiterate them, but it suffices to say that in these chapters, Isaac and Judah experience God’s faithfulness and grace despite their unworthiness.


The connection between God’s being with Joseph and its effect in a time of exile caused by brotherly conflict and his success in Genesis 39 has been shown in that Joseph’s success in Potiphar’s house occurs because of God’s presence, not because of Joseph’s merits. As discussed above, although he, loyal to Potiphar and God, repudiates the advances of Potiphar’s wife, Joseph is thrown into prison. However, this hardship does
not prevent Joseph from prospering thanks to God’s presence as is recounted in Gen 39:20b-21 and 23:

As Von Rad says, “Obviously the statement [vv. 21-23] ‘Yahweh was with him’ implies quite real protection and promotion in the matters of his external life . . . in the midst of distress.”

In this way, Genesis 39 demonstrates that God’s presence with Joseph makes him prosper in time of crisis when Joseph, who was a beloved son, is sold into slavery to Potiphar’s house (vv. 2-6) and when he is thrown into prison (vv. 21-23).

Similarly, Jacob experiences God’s presence and its beneficial effects in a time of exile or of deepest crisis caused by brotherly conflict.

In Gen 27:1-28:9, with the orchestration of his mother Rebekah, Jacob steals Esau’s blessing. As a result, Jacob is thrown into the darkest time of his life. As Wenham points out, “the quiet home-loving boy had been forced to flee for his life because of the hatred [and threat] of his brother.”

In this darkest time of his life, God appears to Jacob and assures him of God’s presence and the promises in Gen 28:10-22. Jacob experiences God’s presence with him in his moments of deepest crisis and learns that this will eventually bring the promises to fulfillment. This is well summarized by Fokkelman:

508 See Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 381, says that the “comment on divine providence at work in Joseph’s life . . . implies quite real protection and promotion in the matters of his external life, not, to be sure, protection from distress, but rather in the midst of distress . . . the terminology of vv 21-23 clearly echoes vv 2-6, emphasizing that, despite all appearances, God was on Joseph’s side in his deepest humiliations.”
509 This subject will be discussed in Chapter Five, Section 1.1 “Jacob’s Ongoing Struggles for Blessing and Power.”
511 It is evident that God’s theophany in Gen 28:10-22 is linked to its surrounding chapters. As Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 219, points out, “v 10 [is] a summary of Jacob’s journey, linking this episode to the surrounding materials in chaps. 27 and 29 [and] . . . vv 20-22 . . . looks back to his departure from home and forward to his eventual return.” See also Walters, “Jacob Narrative,” 602, who says, “The stairway . . . is a symbol of the accessibility of God’s help and presence.”
Jacob’s life has become stuck, he has made only blunders. Being persona non grata in Canaan he is on his way to Haran, lonely, as a refugee; in a yet unknown stopping place he prepares a hard bed for himself. His sun has set. In that darkness the light of Revelation shines suddenly and surprisingly. . . . Election and blessing prevail over judgment and punishment.\footnote{Fokkelman, Narrative Art In Genesis, 121. Von Rad, Genesis, 287, points out, “Jacob and his human nature, i.e., any worthiness that he may perhaps possess . . . namely, that the fleeing deceiver received such a word of grace;” Cornelis Houtman, “What did Jacob See in His Dream at Bethel?: Some Remarks on Genesis xxviii 10-22,” VT 27:3 (1977): 351, says, “the impression is made that the narrator wishes to express that the communication between heaven and earth is established by an initiative from on high . . . The contact between heaven and earth exists by the grace of God;” and Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 216, says, “Jacob, of course, has to flee from home to escape his brother’s fratricidal wrath . . . . By setting this new step forward in the history of salvation in the context of such unprincipled behaviour by every member of the family, each self-centeredly seeking his or her own interest, the narrator is not simply pointing out the fallibility of God’s chosen, whose virtues often turn into vices, but reasserting the grace of God. It is his mercy that is the ultimate ground of salvation.”}

As God’s presence with Joseph enables him to prosper, so God’s presence with Jacob in the darkest moments of his life, not only enables him to look forward to God’s protection and blessing (28:13-15), but also brings about an immediate positive change in him. This is well summarized by Waltke:

Until God reveals his presence at Bethel, Jacob’s place appears dark, stony, and hard. However, when his eyes are opened to see beyond his physical surroundings to the metaphysical, his hard place is transformed into an awe-inspiring sanctuary, the axis between heaven and earth. . . . In sum, the story [in Gen 28:10-22] is filled with transformations due to God’s presence.\footnote{Waltke, Genesis, 395-96. Cotter, Genesis, 216-17, also says, “Fully awake now, Jacob recognizes the presence of YHWH in what had seemed like an anonymous piece of ground. . . . Jacob knows a kind of feat that is indistinguishable from joy. He marks the place with a memorial pillar, which he anoints with oil. In his exultation he renames the place Bethel, the House of God.”}

In this statement, Waltke explains that God’s presence with Jacob enables him to be encouraged and anticipate the future with hope. As Ross points out, “The promise of God’s presence and protection would bring continued encouragement during the twenty years with Laban.”\footnote{Ross, Creation & Blessing, 484.}

In sum, in these sections, God’s being with Jacob and Joseph and its effect in a time of exile caused by brotherly conflict (Gen 27:1-28:22) are depicted.

The outcome of God’s being with a time of exile, which brings out
success/prosperity, is demonstrated to have ongoing beneficial effects in the following episodes.

4. **D. Ongoing Effect of God’s Presence: Despite Hardship Jacob Becomes Prosperous in Laban’s House and is a Blessing to His Household (Gen 29:1-30:43)**

D’. **Ongoing Effect of God’s Presence: Despite Hardship Joseph Rises to Power in Egypt and is a Blessing to Egypt and the Whole World (Gen 40:1-41:57)**

In the previous section, it has been shown that divine presence with Jacob in Genesis 28 not only brings about an immediate positive change in Jacob but also promises success and prosperity. It was also demonstrated that in Genesis 39 God’s presence with Jacob brings about success/prosperity.\(^{515}\) In Gen 29:1-30:43 and Gen 40:1-41:57, the beneficial effects of God’s presence with Jacob and Joseph are described as continuing. When it comes to Gen 29:1-30:43, such ongoing beneficial effects of God’s presence are well demonstrated in the commentators’ proposals of a chiastic structure in the Jacob narrative.

For instance, Fishbane renders Genesis 29 as “Laban at border; deception; Rachel barren; Leah fertile” and Genesis 30 as “Rachel fertile; Jacob increases the herds (30).”\(^{516}\)

Likewise, Rendsburg presents Gen 29:31-30:24 as “Jacob’s wives are fertile” and Gen 30:25-43 as “Jacob’s flocks are fertile.”\(^{517}\) These scholars’ renderings of Genesis 29-30 show how Jacob, with God’s presence, becomes prosperous and builds a family at Laban’s house as God has promised in Gen 28:13-15. The connection between Gen 28:13-15 and Genesis 29-30 is further supported in that the promise in the first is shown

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\(^{515}\) I have dealt with this in Chapter Three, Section 3.4 “God’s Being with and Its Outcome (Gen 39:2-3, 21, 23 and Gen 26:3, 24, 28; 28:15; 31:3, 5-13, 42).”

\(^{516}\) Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 42.

to be partially fulfilled in the latter: the promise of descendants begins to be fulfilled as the sons are born in Gen 29-30:24. In addition to this fulfillment, the promise element of the mediatorship of blessing in Gen 28:14 is depicted to be fulfilled in Gen 30:27 (cf. 30:30), thus indicating that God’s presence with Jacob continues to take effect. The beneficial effect of God’s presence is further confirmed by Laban’s acknowledgement: רָבְכִּי יְהֹוָה בֵּיתִי (30:27). This is also articulated by Jacob himself when he recalls his experience at Laban’s house: לוֹלֶלֶל יְהֹוָה אֶלֶל אֲבָרְם אֲבָרְבָּה יְשָׁמַח וֹה ל (31:42). As Wenham points out, “This combination of divine titles resembles 28:13, ‘I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac,’ . . . There he had promised, ‘I am really with you and will guard you wherever you go, . . . . Here Jacob confesses that his preservation and his wealth are all due to God’s power overriding the meanness of his uncle Laban.”

In fact, this ongoing effect of God’s presence on Jacob’s prosperity is articulated in the text itself in Gen 28:13-15: “I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” This verse clearly shows how God’s presence with Jacob will last until the fulfillment of God’s promise and blessing in Jacob’s life (28:15, כי לא אצנו עלrente יְהֹוָה יִשָּמַח וּאֶשְׁרִי בר וֹה ל). In other words, this verse demonstrates that the divine promise of being with Jacob in Gen 28:15 functions as a preview for the

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518 See also Westermann, *The Promises to the Fathers*, 132-33, who points out that the promise of descendants includes the promise of a son logically and the two promises are linked together as shown in Gen 15:1-6; 16:7-12; 21:12-13.


520 The promise of “God’s being with,” which is expressed in a negative expression, “I will not leave you,” is connected with God’s confirmation of the promises as shown in the subordinate clause, כִּי לֹא אָצַנְנוּךָ ... אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתֶּם אָשֶׁר אָשֶׁר דֹּברִיתָם לִרְאֵהּ.
following chapters because the fulfillment of the promise is recounted in Genesis 29-30.

This matter is well summarized by Vetter as quoted by Westermann:

Vetter argues . . . ‘Yahweh’s presence . . . is stated as a fixed datum, . . . it refers to a constant action on the part of God’ (p. 8). He rightly notes, ‘Nowhere does Yahweh’s presence refer to a single unique event;’ but if God’s presence means protection during a journey, it does indeed refer to a series of events. And if it is assured before departure, although it does not refer to a single later date, it does refer to a series of later dates; the perilous situations to be encountered on the journey. God’s accompanying presence during the journey is constant in that it is not a momentary event like the alleviation of a need.\(^{521}\)

This statement, which argues for the continuing effect of the promise of divine presence, supports the view that Jacob’s prosperity and wealth in Genesis 29-30 is the result of God’s presence in Gen 28:15.\(^{522}\) The argument for the continuing effect of the promise of the divine presence is further supported by Jacob’s confession in Gen 35:3 that God has been with him wherever he has gone, \(ויהי עמדי בדרך אשר הלכתי\); this summarizes his journey in its relation to the ongoing effect of God’s presence and protection.

What is further worth noting is that Jacob’s prosperity and wealth as the result of the ongoing effect of God’s presence in Genesis 29-30 are not hindered by the deceptions of Laban (Gen 30:43) and Rachel’s initial infertility. Genesis 29-30 indicates that Jacob’s family and livestock are fruitful, multiplying and prospering due to God’s presence and

\(^{521}\) Westermann, The Promises to the Fathers, 142. Fokkelman, Narrative Art in Genesis, 122, points out, “the Bethel-scene fits perfectly in the whole of the Story of Jacob. Its composition shows two great movements to and fro on either side of Gen 29-31, Jacob’s stay in Haran, and as a narrative about a stopping-place on the way, ‘Bethel’ is the link between what happened in the family in Canaan (25-28.9) and the period with Laban.”

\(^{522}\) This continuing effect of the promise of divine presence both with Jacob and with Joseph will further be discussed in Chapter Four, in the section 4. “D. The Chosen Jacob Becomes Prosperous Despite the Hardship, Laban’s Deception (Gen 29:1-30:43); D’. The Chosen Joseph Rises to Power Despite the Hardship in Egypt (Gen 40:1-41:57).”

Despite that, however, Westermann, The Promises to the Fathers, 140-43, fails to note the connection between God’s presence and success and wealth in the Jacob narrative. Rather, Westermann, The Promises to the Fathers, 143, argues that this occurrence of the promise of God’s presence in connection with success, wealth, or superiority happens “only in the Joseph narrative (39:2; 39:23),” thus having to be differentiated from those in the patriarchal stories. Contrary to Westermann’s argument for an exclusive connection between divine presence and success/wealth in the Joseph story, however, it is clear that the same connection is also recounted in the Jacob narrative.
help despite obstacles and hindrances. In Gen 29:31-30:24, for example, Jacob’s sons are born while Rachel is initially barren. Likewise, Gen 30:25-43 describes the increase of Jacob’s flocks despite Laban’s deceptions to cheat Jacob’s wages. As Waltke points out, “The Lord’s presence with Jacob entailed both his safe return home and his twenty years of hard labour under the harsh, wily, and unethical Laban.” In this respect, Wenham is correct to say, these chapters show that “the Lord is a God who enriches his people even in their oppression.”

A similar thematic and theological message, success/prosperity as the result of the ongoing effect of God’s presence, is conveyed in Gen 40:1-41:57. It has been shown that the divine presence is the source of Joseph’s skills and subsequent rise to power in Genesis 40-41. In fact, many scholars have pointed out the ongoing effect of God’s presence with Joseph. For example, Westermann says:

Gen 39-41 narrates the story of Joseph’s rise in Egypt and 39:2-6 (and vv. 21-23) gives the theological reason for it: God’s assistance extends to the political domain of a distant land. . . . The explanation derives from the function of 39:2-6, 21-23 as the theological introit to the Joseph story as a whole.

Likewise, D. W. Cotter regards Joseph’s success and ascendency to power in Genesis 40-41 as the continuing effect of God’s presence with Joseph which started in Genesis 39:

Genesis 40 also has theological import. God is with Joseph and saves him, although there is nothing miraculous or even supernatural in the character. God

523 Rendsburg, *The Redaction of Genesis*, 65, points out that the names of Jacob’s wives Leah (ewe) and Rachel (etymologized as wild cow) are the symbols of the female animals, thus connecting of the fertility of Jacob’s wives and the fertility of Jacob’s flock in that their fertility foreshadows the fertility of Jacob’s wives. See also Fokkelman, *Narrative Art in Genesis*, 193.

524 Waltke, *Genesis*, 422.


526 I have dealt with God as the origin of Joseph’s skills in Genesis 40-41 in Chapter Three, Section 1.2 “Joseph’s Skills: Joseph’s Dream Interpretation, Administrative Skill, and Rise to Power (Genesis 40-41).” Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 385, also says, “The narrative affirms that the Lord was with Joseph (39:21-23) and proves it when he successfully interprets the two dreams [in Gen 40],” thus connecting Joseph’s success as the result of the continuing effect of God’s presence with Joseph.

saves Joseph by helping him turn into the sort of person whose resourcefulness finds a way through difficulty. . . . In Genesis 41:46 . . . he has risen in the esteem of those in charge of the prison’s administration for the same reason that enables him to shine in Potiphar’s household: YHWH is still with him. 528

Cotter continues:

Pharaoh is pleased not only with the interpretation but with the man, for God (or “the gods,” for the same Hebrew word is used for both) is/are clearly with him. So Joseph is selected for the position, and once again his career is in the ascendancy. 529

In this way, the ongoing beneficial effects of God’s presence with Joseph are articulated even by the foreign king, Pharaoh.

What is further worth noting is that Joseph succeeds as the result of God’s presence with him despite hardship. Even though Joseph’s ability to interpret dreams is proven, the cupbearer forgets Joseph and his promise to remember Joseph (40:23, cf. 40:14). 530 As Amos puts it, Joseph “has, quite literally, reached the pits!” 531 In this respect, Cotter is correct to say, “God does speak, and God does live, even when the opposite seems to be the case and where no miracle can be seen. The proof is Joseph.” 532 Joseph’s success as the ongoing effect of God’s presence with him despite hardship is confirmed by Joseph when he names his sons in Gen 41:51-52:

כַּי־נֶשֶׂנֵי אֲלֹהִים אַתִּכָּלְצֵנִי אֲלֹהִים אֲבִי׃ וַהֲשִׂמוּ אֶשְׁנָיו אֲפִרֵימ אֲפִרֵימ אֲבִי אֲבָרָם בְּאָרִים נַעַן:

528 Cotter, Genesis, 294-95.
529 Cotter, Genesis, 302. Commenting on Genesis 41, Ross, Creation & Blessing, 636, also says, “At the center of this dramatic moment the dialogue confirms the work of God: Joseph explained that it was all for the good of Egypt, and Pharaoh acknowledged God’s power at work in Joseph.” Waltke, Genesis, 528, also points out, “The first two scenes [Gen 39-40] have been building to this climactic conclusion of the act. Joseph’s previous exaltation was assurance of God’s presence, but humiliation (i.e., being thrown into prison and being forgotten) laid the foundation for this true exaltation.”
530 Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 384, says, “there he [Joseph] stays for another two years (41:1), to all appearances forgotten by man and God.”
531 Amos, The Book of Genesis, 245.
532 Cotter, Genesis, 303. Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 385, points out that God turns Joseph’s suffering into “the source of blessing not just to Egypt but ‘to keep many people alive’ (50:20);” Westermann, Genesis 37-50, 78, “In the first episode Joseph’s rise is followed by an underserved fall; in the second a well-founded expectation of release is followed by disappointment. This prepares the turn of fortune in ch. 41.” Waltke, Genesis, 536, says, “this [Gen 41] is not so much a story about Joseph as about God’s faithfulness to his promises through providential acts and charismatic gifting.”
In these verses, Joseph explains that it is God who has made him fruitful despite his misery and suffering.\textsuperscript{533}

As shown above, the fulfillment of being a blessing to the peoples, another unifying thematic/theological feature,\textsuperscript{534} is demonstrated in these sections in that both Jacob and Joseph are depicted as being a blessing to other peoples. This continuing effect of the promise of divine presence with both Jacob and Joseph is further demonstrated in the following episodes.

5. E. Reunion of Jacob and Esau and their Settlement (Gen 31:1-33:20)\textsuperscript{535}

E’. Reunion of Joseph and His Brothers and their Settlement (Gen 42:1-47:12)

Both Gen 31:1-33:20 and Gen 42:1-47:12 deal with the preparation for the brothers’ reunion, as well as with their reconciliation and settlement. For the discussions of these parallels it is worth noting the literary structure of these sections. The following is the literary structure of Gen 31:1-33:20:

Stages of Jacob’s departure (31:1-2): פֶּן לָבָן
Jacob notes the hostility of Laban and his sons towards him (v. 2, פֶּן לָבָן)
A. God commands to leave and promise of God’s presence (31:3)
B. Jacob gains his wives’ agreement to leave (31:4-16)
C. Jacob departs (31:17-21)
D. Laban pursues Jacob and God protects Jacob (31:22-24)
E. Jacob confronts Laban and God’s protection of Jacob is confirmed (31:25-42)
F. The threat is resolved: Covenant between Jacob and Laban; Laban’s return to home (31:43-32:1)

\textsuperscript{533} Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 397, points out that God blesses Joseph, “The birth of children and good crops [which] are always seen as marks of divine blessing in the OT (e.g., Deut 28:4);” Ross, Creation & Blessing, 643, says, “The name [Manasseh] forms a description of divine activity on behalf of Joseph, explaining in general his change of fortune.”

\textsuperscript{534} I have dealt with this in Chapter Three, Section 3.5 “Articulation of Fulfillment of Being a Blessing to the Peoples (Gen 39:5; 41:56-57 and Gen 30:27, 30).”

\textsuperscript{535} In his discussion of the parallels between the Jumilhac version of the Tale of Two Brothers and the Jacob narrative, Glen Taylor, “Decoding Jacob at the Jabbok and Genesis 32: From Crude Solar Mythology to Profound Hebrew Theology,” CSBS 68 (2008/09), 1-25, esp. 18-25, argues for the coherency of 32:23-33 in itself and in relation to the context of chapter 32 and 33.
G. God’s presence is with Jacob

H. Jacob prepares to meet Esau

I. Jacob prepares to meet Esau 2: Jacob prays, sends gifts to Esau, and crosses Jabbok (32:9-24, MT)

J. Jacob prepares to meet Esau 3: Resolution of the threat from Esau foreshadowed (32:23-33, MT)

K. Resolution of the threat from Esau and reconciliation (33:1-11)

M. Jacob and Esau settle (33:12-20)

The above outline of Genesis 31-33 demonstrates that these chapters constitute a coherent unit as they are framed by the departure at the beginning and the settlement at the end. These chapters revolve around Jacob’s return to the land; God’s presence is demonstrated throughout these chapters. The coherence of these chapters is further supported by the word, פנים which echoes through these chapters (31:2; 32:17, 18, 21 [four times], 22; 32:31 [MT]; 33:10). These ten uses of the word, פנים, appear in its connection with the motif of strife/conflict and resolution. With the word, פנים, the conflict is recounted as being finally resolved in Gen 33:10 (cf. 32:31 [MT]), thus binding these chapters. As G. Taylor points out, “the words ‘face of God’ are so rare that its occurrence . . . in 33:10 seems clearly to signal something important here about the meaning of the preceding story of the wrestling match.” This clearly demonstrates that Genesis 31-33 is meant to be read as one unit. In a similar way, the literary structure of Gen 42:1-47:12 shows unity of thought:

536 The angels of God (32:2-4, MT): v. 2, God’s messengers, מלאכי אלהים; v. 3, God’s camps, מחנה אלהים; v. 4, Jacob’s messengers, מלאכים

537 Two camps for Esau (32:5-8, MT): v. 7, Jacob’s messengers, המלachen; v. 8, Jacob’s two camps, לשני מחנות

538 Twice in v. 9, Jacob’s camp, המנה; v. 11, Jacob’s two camps, המחנות

539 Jacob’s confession in v. 31, כי ראית פנים אלהים ותנצל נפשי, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.”

540 Jacob’s confession in v. 10, כי עלין רואית פנים את אלהים, “for truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God; v. 8, the camp, מחנה; v. 10, favour, חן; v. 11, blessing, ברכת, "because God treated me favourably;"

541 Taylor, “Decoding Jacob at the Jabbok and Genesis 32”, 2.
A. Stage for the encounter of the brothers: Jacob sends his sons to Egypt for food (42:1-5)
B. The first encounter between Joseph (as an Egyptian vizier) and his brothers (42:6-28)
C. The brothers’ report to Jacob and Judah convinces him to allow Judah to take Benjamin (42:29-43:14)
D. The second encounter between Joseph (as an Egyptian vizier) and his brothers (43:15-44:34)
E. The third encounter between Joseph and his brothers: Joseph reveals himself and the brothers reconciled (45:1-15)
F. Preparations for departure for Egypt: Pharaoh’s instructions (45:16-28)
G. God’s confirmation of departure for Egypt: the promise of being with the patriarch and of bringing him back and the prediction of Jacob’s death in the presence of Joseph (46:1-4)
H. Departure of Jacob’s family to Egypt and encounter with Joseph (46:5-30)
I. Jacob’s family settled in the best land of Egypt and provided with food (46:31-47:12)

As the above outline shows, Gen 42:1-47:12 constitutes a coherent unit as they are framed by the departure at the beginning and the settlement at the end. In this way, both Genesis 31-33 and Gen 42:1-47:12 concern the travel of Jacob and of Jacob and his family and their settlement.

As shown above, in these sections, the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau and Joseph and his brothers is established. In these episodes of reconciliation and subsequent settlement, the ongoing beneficial effects of God’s presence are further demonstrated.

5.1 God’s (Promise of) Presence and Its Ongoing Effect in Time of Crisis Despite Unworthiness: Successful Settlement and Gaining of the Property

The main thematic/theological motif in Genesis 31-33 is well demonstrated in the interpreters' discussions of the chiastic structure of the Jacob narrative. Commentators who propose the chiastic structure of the Jacob narrative regularly point out the common

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542 This coherence is further demonstrated as these chapters begin with the issue of food, which leads Jacob’s sons to Egypt, and end with the same motifs, as Joseph provides Jacob’s family with food.
543 I have dealt with this in Chapter Three, sections 3.2 “Reconciliation between Brothers and 1.1.2 Joseph’s Second Interaction with His Brothers (Genesis 42-44)."
feature between the Bethel scene (Gen 28:10-22) and the Mahanaim/Peniel scene (Gen 32:2-33).\textsuperscript{544} For example, Fokkelman explains that Gen 32:2 says that Jacob went on his way; "The words ‘go’ and ‘way’ are nowhere together in the story of Jacob story, except in . . . Jacob’s vow at Bethel, 28:20."\textsuperscript{545} In particular, Bethel and the Mahanaim/Peniel scenes are framed by the motif of blessing: stealing of blessing (27:36) and the returning of blessing (33:11),\textsuperscript{546} as Jacob’s leaving Canaan at the Bethel scene and his returning to Canaan at Peniel scene revolves around the motif of blessing.

In addition to these common features, in both scenes, God’s presence is reassured to Jacob (cf. 28:10-15 and 31:3) when he is in the desperate situation of seeing his life threatened (cf. 27:42-43 and 32:11). It was discussed in the previous section (Genesis 29-30) that God’s presence is recounted in its connection to Jacob’s prosperity and success despite the hardship and hindrance in Gen 28:15. In the same way, God’s assurance of being with Jacob in Gen 31:3 foreshadows Jacob's success and blessing on his way back to the land.\textsuperscript{547}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[544] See also Fishbane, Text and Texture, 42; Walters, “Jacob Narrative,” 600; Rendsburg, The Redaction of Genesis, 53-54; and Branscombe, “Narrative Structure in the Jacob Cycle,” 54.
\item[545] Fokkelman, Narrative Art in Genesis, 197-99. In the Bethel scene, the sun sets (28:11), and in the Peniel scene, the sun rises (32:31). As both Walters, “Jacob Narrative,” 600 and Fokkelman, Narrative Art in Genesis, 198-99, point out, “God’s ‘agents’ (or ‘angels’) [in Gen 28:10 and Gen 31:1] [is] an expression recurring nowhere else in the Bible.”
\item[546] The words “stealing and returning” are the same Hebrew word, לֶחֶם. See Fokkelman, Narrative Art in Genesis, 197; Walters, “Jacob Narrative,” 600.
\item[547] The promise of God’s presence with the patriarch reappears in Gen 31:3. In both cases this promise of God’s presence appears in connection with Jacob’s coming back to the land. The similarity of wordings in Gen 28:15 and 31:3 is obvious:
\end{footnotes}
This connection between God’s presence and patriarchal prosperity and success in Genesis 31-33 is further supported by Jacob’s own exposition of his prosperity despite the hindrance, Laban’s deceptions of wages in Gen 31:42: 548

לולו אלהי אבי אלהי אברהם ופחד יצחק היה לי כי עתה ריקם שלחתני את־עמי ואת־יגיע כפי ראה אלהים וויהי אמש:

Likewise, Gen 31:24, 29 describes how God protects Jacob from Laban’s possible harm. As C. Mabee points out, “[I]t is Yahweh himself who finally ensures the safety of Jacob and his household in the face of his accuser (and judicial authority) — Laban.” 549 Laban accuses Jacob of deceiving him but “God has thwarted Laban’s attempts by blessing Jacob and protecting him (31:36-42).” 550 These passages directly connect Jacob’s protection, wealth and success with God’s presence. The protection, wealth and success continues to be foreshadowed in Genesis 32-33 as God’s presence is expressed as the angels of God (v.1, מלאכי אלהים) and God’s camp (v.2, מחנים) in Gen 32:1-2 on Jacob’s way back to the land. In fact, the ongoing effects of God’s presence are demonstrated to come true as the following accounts show that Jacob is blessed (32:29, Eng) and safely settles in the land (33:18). The appearance of the motif of God’s presence and its effects, that is, Jacob’s successful settlement along with wealth and protection in Genesis 31-33 is summarized well by Waltke:

At the most dangerous moments God appears. God comes to the thief fleeing from the justified anger of his brother (Gen 28). God protects the refugee

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548 See also Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 47, who points out that the promise of God’s “‘being with’ (26:3, 28; 28:15, 20; 31:5, 35:3; 39:2, 21) . . . results in ‘blessing’ or protection.”


trapped between the angry world of the present (Laban) and the murderous hatred generated in the past (Esau) (Gen 31-33).551

Further, Jacob experiences God’s presence and its effects in times of crisis despite his unworthiness, as Jacob himself articulates in 32:10 (ET, Hebrew v. 11):

כטנתי מכל החסדים ומכל־האמת אשר עשית את־עבדך כי במקלי עברתי את־הירדן הזה ועתה הייתי לשני מחננים:

As God’s presence enables Jacob to succeed and prosper in the darkest time of his life despite his unworthiness in Genesis 31-33, so God reassures Jacob and his family of God’s presence which results in their prosperity and success despite their unworthiness in Genesis 46-47.

Genesis 46:1-47:12 shows the connection between God’s promise of presence and protection/survival and wealth when Jacob and his family are in a life-threatening crisis because of famine. In that crisis, God reassures Jacob of God’s presence along with other promises such as making him a great nation in Egypt, bringing him back, and Joseph’s burial of the patriarch in Gen 46:2-4. The promise of God’s presence with Jacob in 46:4 occurs in the same pattern with those in the Jacob narrative (cf. 28:15; 31:3) as it appears in its connection with Jacob’s journey or movement.552

551 Waltke, *Genesis*, 350. Waltke further mentions on Gen 34-35. Ross, *Creation & Blessing*, 484-85, also explains how God’s presence with Jacob is recounted whenever Jacob is in crisis with Esau, Laban, and the Philistines (Gen 28:10-22; 32:22-32; and 35:1-7, 14-15). God’s presence with Jacob and his family in crisis despite their unworthiness in Gen 34-35 will be discussed in this Chapter, in the section 6.2 “The Abrahamic Promises Partially Fulfilled or Re-Assured to the Chosen Heirs Despite their Unworthiness.”

552 Westermann, *The Promises to the Fathers*, 140, has noted that Gen 46:4 has close parallels with Gen 26:3, 24; 28:15, 20; 31:3; 32:10; 48:15, 21; 50:24.
As God’s promise of presence with the patriarch results in successful settlement with wealth in Genesis 31-33, so the promise brings about the same results to Jacob and his family in Gen 46:1-47:12. Despite the severe famine, Jacob and his family gain the property in the best land of Egypt (47:11) and are amply provided with food (47:12). As Wenham points out, the settlement of Jacob’s family in Gen 47:11 shows that they “enjoy more rights than the typical immigrant.”553 Indeed, many scholars have discussed this special treatment of Jacob’s family in this passage.

Although both the Egyptians and Jacob’s family are preserved alive, Joseph’s dealings with the Egyptians are well contrasted with his dealings with Jacob’s family in Gen 46:13-27. Genesis 47:13-26 recounts that the Egyptians have spent all they have and even sold themselves into slavery because of the severe famine.554 This episode well contrasts with settlement of Jacob’s family in Goshen with food provided freely (Gen 47:12).555 As Waltke points out, “The scene contrasts the fate of the Egyptians (47:13-26) with the Israelites in the famine (cf. 47:1-12, 27). . . . [in that] Israel acquires property and prospers”556 without any condition.557 This success and prosperity of Jacob’s family is already foreshadowed in God’s promise of being with Jacob and his family in Egypt in

553 Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 447. Von Rad, Genesis, 407, also says, “What is here surprising . . . is the unbelievable success of the audience, which goes far beyond our expectations: Joseph could settle the new arrivals ‘in the best of the land.’”
554 Nevertheless, the only exception to this terrible situation is seen in the case of the Egyptian priests (47:22, 26).
555 Brodie, Genesis as Dialogue, 403, says that “Israel, first and last, has a special position (47:12, 27-28). This special position has some kinship with the special position of the priests” of the Egyptians in that the Egyptian priests have no need to sell their land for they have received a fixed allowance that Pharaoh gives them (47:22, 26).
556 Waltke, Genesis, 589.
557 Cotter, Genesis, 322, says, “47:13-26 . . . a more lengthy description — which also serves as a contrast with the privileged position of Joseph’s family — of the measures Joseph takes with the rest of the Egyptian populace.” Steinberg, “Vayigash 44:18-47:27,” 273, also states that 47:13-26 “serves as a contrasting situation to that of Jacob’s family, which is explicitly said to be given food by Joseph (v.12).”
Gen 46:4, thus demonstrating the connection between God’s presence and successful settlement with prosperity. This connection is correlated with the successful settlement with prosperity of Jacob’s family in Genesis 31-33. What is further correlated in Genesis 31-33 and Genesis 42-47 is shown in that, as in Genesis 31-33 (32:10), such successful settlement and prosperity of Jacob because of God’s presence are achieved despite the brothers’ unworthiness, as they confess themselves of their guilt in Gen 42:21 (cf. 42:22, 44:16, 50:15, 17):

These correlations between Genesis 31-33 and Gen 42:1-47:12 bespeak of a clear intention to portray these sections as parallel.

5.2 The Rejected/Non-chosen as the Medium for Reconciliation and for the Chosen to Realize/Embrace His Identity/Destiny as a Chosen One

There is another common feature in reconciliations between the brothers, Jacob and Esau and Joseph and his brothers, in that both Esau and Judah play an important role in the reconciliation by acting commendably.

For example, Spina verifies the important role of Esau in effecting reconciliation between Jacob and Esau, by deploiring scholars’ tendency to regard negatively the biblical portrayal of Esau:

Scholars have either regarded these references (Esau is cast in a positive light) as negligible or less clearly positive than they appear on the surface. The fact remains that for most interpreters the Bible presents Esau/ Edom in consistently and unambiguously pejorative terms. Almost without exception, scholars have regarded the biblical depiction of Esau . . . as uniformly negative.  

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558 I have dealt with the continuing effect of the promise of divine presence in Chapter Three, in section 3.4 "(Promise of) God’s Being With and Its Outcome (Gen 39:2-3, 21, 23 and Gen 26:3, 24, 28; 28:15; 31:3, 5-13, 42).”

Spina continues:

Esau’s embrace of Jacob after having been so egregiously treated makes Esau that quintessential gracious brother in TANAK . . . [because] Esau not only forgave Jacob, he also attempted to establish a truly brotherly relationship with him (Gen 33) . . . Esau is ultimately commendable, exemplary, and, most importantly, utterly gracious.

In this statement, Spina corroborates that Esau plays an important role in the reconciliation by acknowledging Esau’s commendable behaviour in Genesis 33. Esau’s important and commendable actions in the reconciliation is further supported in Kaminsky’s statement: “In at least one instance, that of Esau, it is possible to read the text as indicating that the wronged sibling, while initially inflamed with intent to murder his brother, was ultimately more prepared to work for a fuller reconciliation than was the favored Jacob.”561 These scholars are surely right about the positive evaluations of Esau in the reconciliation because Jacob himself acknowledges this understanding of the depiction of Esau in the text itself.

Esau responds to Jacob, who fears for him, not only peacefully, but also fraternally: “Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him” (Gen 33:4). Esau not only forgives Jacob (cf. Gen 33:4), but also generously offers his time and resources (cf. Gen 33:12, 15). Esau’s unexpected and surprising reaction to Jacob leads Jacob to say, “for truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God—since you have received me with such favor (33:10b).” By saying that he sees the face of God, Jacob says that he expects to die as indicated in Gen 32:30 (ET, Hebrew v. 31, cf. Exod 33:20; Judg 13:22) but unexpectedly survives and even receives the blessing from God: “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.

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561 Kaminsky, Yet I Loved Jacob, 78.
In the same way, Jacob receives Esau’s unexpected favor and warm embrace when he reasonably expects nothing but hostility and even death. In other words, in their reunion Jacob endorses that Esau’s actions, comparable to divine grace, are unconditionally gracious and merciful, which enables the brothers to be reconciled.

Through this experience with Esau, Jacob finally embraces his destiny as a chosen one by willingly returning the blessing to Esau. Throughout his whole life, Jacob’s ambition or struggle for blessing and power proceeded unabated. In fact, the birthright incident and his deception with his mother for a blessing have built up the tension and struggle between the twin brothers (Gen 27:36). In other words, Jacob has neither shared nor given blessing, but rather has sought it for himself up until his encounter with Esau in Genesis 33 (e.g., the birthright in Genesis 25, blessing in Genesis 27, and Peniel in Genesis 32). But after his encounter with Esau in Genesis 33, Jacob is willing to return the blessing to Esau because he understands Esau’s grace and mercy came from God at Peniel: "ותרצני...ולקכת מנחתי מימי" (Gen 33:10). Jacob’s connection between his returning the blessing to Esau and Esau’s merciful and gracious attitude towards him in Gen 33:10 supports the argument that Esau’s attitude enables Jacob to live out his destiny as a chosen one, that is, being a blessing to others ("ונבראו בך...כל-משפחתה והזרעך"; Gen 28:14) by returning the blessing to Esau.

In this way, Esau is depicted not only as the medium for the reconciliation, but also as the one who enables

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562 This is further discussed in Chapter Five, in the sections 1.1 “Jacob’s Ongoing Struggles for Blessing and Power” and 1.2 “God’s Reminder of Spiritual Blessing at Peniel.”

563 Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue*, 333, says, “[t]he motivation now is not to placate, but something much more positive-gratitude (‘because God has been gracious to me’).” See also Dennis T. Olson, “Genesis,” in *New Interpreter’s Bible: One Volume Commentary* (eds. by Beverly Roberts Gaventa and David Petersen; Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010), 25.

564 Fretheim, “The Book of Genesis,” 572, points out that what Jacob “has received has been so bountiful that it can flow through him to Esau as well.” In my opinion, Jacob truly transforms after this experience, and it is shown that after this experience Jacob is portrayed differently in Gen 35:2-5; 49.
Jacob to embrace his destiny.\textsuperscript{565} As Esau is depicted as the medium for the reconciliation and for the chosen one Jacob to embrace his destiny,\textsuperscript{566} so Judah is described as the medium for reconciliation and for Joseph to embrace his destiny as the chosen one.

It has been argued that Joseph was tempted to enact revenge upon his brothers, as shown in his harsh treatment of his brothers.\textsuperscript{567} Despite Joseph’s temptation, however, the text shows Joseph’s troubled psychology or undecided mind in choosing how to respond to his dreams when they are fulfilled eventually by all eleven brothers’ obeisance (cf. 43:26, 28). For instance, Joseph shows his courteousness and concern for his brothers and family at the same time. Joseph also sends one of the brothers back to Canaan with food (42:19) in his first encounter with his brothers. In addition, Joseph weeps when he overhears the brothers talking about their guilt and remorse over their wrongdoing to him and when he sees his brother Benjamin (42:23-24; 43:29-30). Then, Joseph offers and enjoys a meal with his brothers when they return to Egypt with Benjamin (43:16, 31-34).

In this respect, O’Brien is likely right to observe that the text shows that “Joseph is torn

\textsuperscript{565} Many scholars regard Jacob’s blessing of Pharaoh in Gen 47:7 as the fulfillment of the promise of being a blessing to the peoples, as discussed in Chapter Two, in the section 1.3.2 “Gen 47:13-27 and Gen 47:10-12; Genesis 48; Genesis 49 within the Motif of Blessing.” Kselman, “Genesis,” 115, also regards that Jacob’s blessing of Pharaoh is another instance of the realization of the promise of mediatorship of blessing.

\textsuperscript{566} This disputes the conventional views of the characteristics of the chosen and the non-chosen. Scholars have usually interpreted biblical characters of the chosen such as Isaac and Joseph as the best examples of faithful obedience for the people of God to emulate, or Jacob as at least a transformed man, while Esau has been the non-exemplary figure. For the scholars who regard Joseph as an ideal person, see Humphreys, \textit{Joseph and His Family}; Redford, \textit{A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph}; Williams, \textit{Deception in Genesis}; Wilson, \textit{Joseph, Wise and Otherwise}; and Dahlberg, “The Unity of Genesis,” 126-33. Scholars who consider the biblical depiction of Isaac as positive typically describe Isaac as a “peace-loving man who avoids conflict with his neighbors” or the man who has “goodwill . . . toward his hostile opponents” in Genesis 26; see respectively Wenham, \textit{Genesis 16-50}, 188 and Coats, \textit{From Canaan to Egypt}, 195. For the scholarly views of the biblical depiction of Jacob as being transformed, see Chapter Five, in the section 1.2 “God’s Reminder of Spiritual Blessing at Peniel by Enabling Jacob to Trust in God.” With regard to the main scholarly negative interpretation of the biblical figure of Esau, see Spina, “The Face of God,” 3-25. Spina, “The Face of God,” 3, notes that “[a]lmost without exception, scholars have regarded the biblical depiction of Esau . . . as uniformly negative.”

\textsuperscript{567} It is the result of the discussion of Chapter Three, in the section 1.1.2 “Joseph’s Second Interaction with His Brothers (Gen 42-44).”
between past experience and the radically changed present reality, between an urge to dominate his brothers and an urge to be reunited with them. However, Judah’s speech (44:18-34) leads Joseph, with his troubled mind, to make up his mind to reveal himself to his brothers and accept them fraternally, in that right after the speech Joseph reveals himself.

Judah’s speech enables Joseph to reveal himself and finally accept his destiny as the outline of Gen 44:18-34 indicates:

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<td>v. 18</td>
<td>Judah’s request to speak with Joseph</td>
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<tr>
<td>vv. 19-23</td>
<td>Judah’s report of Jacob’s life being bound up with Benjamin’s life and Joseph’s demand for Benjamin in spite of that report</td>
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<tr>
<td>vv. 24-29</td>
<td>Judah’s report of Jacob’s response to the demand: Jacob’s life is bound up with Benjamin</td>
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<td>vv. 30-31</td>
<td>Judah’s prediction of Jacob’s death if Benjamin does not return</td>
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<tr>
<td>vv. 32-34</td>
<td>Judah’s offer of himself in place of Benjamin for Jacob’s life</td>
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This outline shows the rationale for Judah’s sacrificial offering of himself to the Egyptian vizier. Judah’s speech focuses on his concern for his father Jacob as shown in the repetition of mention on his father’s fate at the very beginning (44:19), in the middle (44:29) and at the end of the passage (44:34). The fact that the word father (אָב) appears 14 times in 44:18-34 indicates the importance of the word in Judah’s speech in terms of appealing to Joseph. Because of his concern for his father Jacob, Judah finally offers himself in place of Benjamin so that his father would live (vv. 32-34). This passage also shows Judah’s sense of responsibility. Judah explains to Joseph that he offers himself for Benjamin, not only because of his concern for his father’s well-being, but also because of

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569 Lowenthal, The Joseph Narrative in Genesis, 101, points out, “Judah uses the word most sacred to him, ‘father,’ fourteen times in his plea for his brother, and it is his final, climactic word which gathers into itself all the pathos of his appeal.”
his promise to his father (44:32). The verb ערב used in 44:32 means “to step in for,” which signifies Judah is taking on a responsibility for the situation. Thus, 44:32a can be translated as “[f]or your servant made himself responsible for the lad to my father.” As G. W. Savran points out, “[t]he true beauty of Judah’s remarks lies in his ability to affirm explicitly his own responsibility.”

Judah’s concern for his father’s well-being may have challenged and reminded Joseph of his own insensitivity or ruthlessness in disregard for his father’s fate, which is bound up with Benjamin (vv.19-23). Judah’s sacrificial offer of himself based on his concern for his father must have challenged Joseph’s own selfish desire to be in control by holding Benjamin at the expense of the danger of his own father Jacob, although “Judah, of course, could not suspect how monstrous and almost unbearable would be the effect of this speech on Joseph.” Judah’s speech in Gen 44:18-34, which revolves around his concern for his father’s life and his sense of responsibility for his family, challenges and enables Joseph, who knows what his responsibility is for his family as God’s chosen as he himself confesses in Gen 45:5-9, to embrace his destiny/responsibility to take care of his family and to remind him of his father’s love towards him. These impacts on Joseph, who is caught between the temptation to enact

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572 It explains that Jacob’s desperate response to the loss of Benjamin is due to the loss of his beloved son Joseph in past (vv. 24-29). This may challenge Joseph even more to remind himself of failing to contact his father.  
573 Von Rad, *Genesis*, 394.  
574 As discussed in Chapter Three, in the section 1.1.2 “Joseph’s Second Interaction with His Brothers (Gen 42-44),” Joseph already knew his destiny, which is revealed through his dreams: “God sent me before you to preserve life (45:5)” (45:5-7; cf. 50:20).  
575 Lowenthal, *The Joseph Narrative in Genesis*, 101. points out, “[w]ith all his ardency . . . he might change the regent’s mind, [but] Judah cannot know the almost unbearable agitation he has caused in the
revenge on his brothers and the God-given responsibility to care for his family (cf. 45:5-7; 50:20), are well demonstrated by his response in 45:1-7.

The impact of Judah’s speech on Joseph’s troubled mind is also observed by the masoretes in that Gen 44:18-34 “commence a new Parashah with v. 18, rightly perceiving that Judah’s speech is the turning-point in the relations between Joseph and his brethren,”576 as J. A. Skinner points out. This impact of Judah’s speech is further demonstrated in Joseph’s words right after the speech, in that, after revealing himself, the first question Joseph asks to his brothers is about his father’s well-being (45:3).

The fact that the two elements in Joseph’s response, that is, his concern for his father Jacob and for Joseph’s destiny/responsibility, match with Judah’s sacrificial offer of himself based on the same two elements, indicate how Judah’s speech influences Joseph finally to embrace both his own destiny/responsibility as the chosen one. This impact of Judah’s speech on Joseph is well summarized by Steinmetz:

Judah explains to Joseph . . . that father must take responsibility for his son, and brother for his brother—and Joseph, at last, sees his own life in terms of his family’s destiny. Joseph no longer torments his brothers and father. Breaking down in tears, he describes his part in God’s mission; he has been sent by God to Egypt in order to save his family (45:1-8).577

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576 Skinner, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis, 485. See also O’Brien, “The Contribution of Judah’s Speech,” 429; Steinberg, “Vayigash 44:18-47:27,” 263, says, “Judah’s speech to Joseph has brought the suspense between the brothers to a climax, and it prompts Joseph’s self-revelation to his brothers.” Davidson, Genesis 12-50, 268, also points out that “Judah’s long and masterly speech prepares the way for reconciliation.”

577 Steinmetz, From Father to Son, 48. In a similar way, Seybold, “Paradox and Symmetry in the Joseph Narrative,” 71, reaffirms the impact of Judah’s speech on Joseph in his statement, “Judah’s act is a radical and convincing one . . . he is willing to put all personal concern behind in order to preserve not only the welfare of his father and brother, but the family itself – he will become a slave to a person he believes to be a foreigner. . . . We have here both a climax and a classic case of Aristotelian reversal. . . . we see it in the change . . . As chapter 45 begins, Joseph is overcome by his brother’s speech and offer, and he makes himself known to his brothers in a very emotional scene in which Joseph himself indicates the controlling deep structure of the entire narrative [i.e. 45:5-7].”
These interpreters' discussions support the argument for the impact of Judah’s moving speech in 44:18-34 on Joseph in that it enables Joseph finally to embrace his responsibility/destiny for his family.

In sum, both Esau and Judah play a crucial role as the medium, not only for the reconciliations, but also for enabling the chosen one to embrace his destiny.

6. F. Many Lives in Danger; God Protects the Promised Line Despite Unworthiness and Reaffirms the Promises; and the Death of Rachel and Isaac in the Promised Land (Gen 34:1-35:29)

F’. Many Lives Saved; God’s Blessing/Promises are Transferred to the Promised Line Despite their Unworthiness; and Jacob’s Death in the Promised Land (Gen 47:13-50:14)

Both Gen 34:1-35:29 and Gen 47:13-50:14 deal with the interaction of the promised line with foreign people and their blessings. These two sections are parallel in many ways, but there is no need to reiterate the parallels here since these have been presented and discussed at length. The following demonstrates the other thematic parallels and the underlying theological concept in the blessings of the promised line in these two matching units.

6.1 The Destiny of the Chosen Heir: Success or Failure

As discussed above, in Gen 47:13-27 the mediatorship of blessing is demonstrated in that, through Joseph, both the Egyptians and the Israelites are preserved and blessed. The same motif of blessing in Genesis 34 is shown to fail in that Jacob’s sons fail to carry out the mission of being a blessing to the peoples. Some scholars argue that the act of Simeon and Levi is appropriate, as they stand up against intermarriage with inhabitants of foreign

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578 I have dealt with the parallels in Chapter Two, Section 2.2 “The Abrahamic Promise Theme in Gen 47:28-50:14 and Its Parallels with Gen 34-35 and Other Thematic Parallels between the Two.”

579 I have discussed this in Chapter Two, in the section 1.3 “The Interconnectedness of Gen 47:13-27 to the Original Joseph Story and to Other Redactional Materials.”
However, this interpretation of the action of Simeon and Levi in Genesis 34 contradicts the negative blessing on them in Gen 49:5-7. These same scholars dismiss it as coming from the personal grudge of an old man Jacob. This view of Jacob’s blessing in Genesis 49, however, seems unconvincing as the chapter reflects the future of the twelve tribes. The fact that “[i]n this chapter . . . we have a glimpse of the embryonic nation—with the Judah and Joseph tribes destined to have pre-eminence in the south and north respectively” supports the view that the blessing of Jacob comes from more than personal grudge.

In particular, the prediction of the tribes of Simeon and Levi in Gen 49:7 as not having permanent territorial possession in Israel, but being dispersed among other tribes, is depicted as being fulfilled in the other parts of the Old Testament, as Driver points out:

Simeon was virtually absorbed in Judah: in Jud. i. 3, 17 it is mentioned side by side with Judah; the cities in the Negeb and the ‘Shephelah’ (on xxxviii. 1) assigned to it in Jos. xix. 1-9 (cf. 1 Ch. iv. 28-33) are reckoned as belonging to Judah in Jos. xv. 26-32, 42; and in the Blessing of Moses (Dt. xxxiii.) it is omitted altogether. Levi had no tribal territory; the privileges connected with the custody of the ark were limited to particular families; . . . in the time of Judges many – for Jud. xvii.-xviii. is no doubt typical–travelled about the country finding employment and support where they could; and even in Dt. the members of the tribe (except these engaged at the principal sanctuary, Dt. xviii. 1-8) are represented as in poor circumstances.

Brett also supports the view that the action of Simeon and Levi in Genesis 34 is not commendable:

But there is at least one more clue that commentators often fail to note: according to Genesis 46.10, Simeon had a Canaanite wife. For a reader attentive to the nuances of the final editing, this introduces a fatal flaw to the

580 See also Walters, “Jacob Narrative,” 606, who argues, “To be sure, the threat was great and the accommodation proposed by Hamor (“one people,” vv 16, 22) went far beyond the treaty designed by Abimelech (Gen 26:29 [segment B]); to ‘intermarry’ was forbidden (Deut 7:2-3; Josh 23:12; Ezra 9:14); and the Shechemites were clearly seeking their own advantage at Jacob’s expense: ‘Their cattle and substance and all their beasts will be ours.’ The story is a justly sharp warning against sexual irregularity and against assimilation.” See also Aaron Wildavsky, “Survival Must not be Gained Through Sin: The Moral of the Joseph Stories Prefigured Through Judah and Tamar,” JSOT 62 (1994), 37-48.

581 Longacre, Joseph, 54.

argument that Simeon and Levi are justified in their ethnocentrism (cf. Sternberg 1992: 481). Simeon emerges as a man given to extravagant violence and, hypocritically, he is quite capable of exogamous marriage himself.583

As W. S. Towner points out, “The road from the promise of blessing to the nations through Israel to its fulfillment is made all the more perilous and rocky by an event like this (v. 30) [34:30]. An appeal to honor (v.31) [34:31] will not change that fact.”584

6.2 The Abrahamic Promises Partially Fulfilled or Re-Affirmed to the Chosen Heirs Despite their Unworthiness

As discussed above, Gen 47:13-27 mainly deal with the preservation of the lives of the Egyptians and Jacob’s family. What follows in Gen 47:28-50:14, along with its parallels with Genesis 34-35, concerns the blessing of Jacob’s family in terms of the promises of nationhood, kings, and land after their survival from the famine.585 These two matching units, Gen 34:1-35:29 and Gen 47:13-50:14, also share the same theological/ideological motifs underlying the parallels between them.

What is further worth noting in the blessing of Jacob’s sons is that the promised line is preserved alive in spite of the wrongdoings of the brothers. The brothers themselves admit in Gen 42:21-22 and Gen 50:15-18 that their survival through Joseph is a surprise. But in addition to the preservation of their lives, the brothers receive the blessing and become part of the nation Israel, the promised line. The same theological/ideological motif is demonstrated in Gen 34:1-35:29 in the Jacob narrative.

583 Brett, Genesis, 102.
585 I have discussed this in Chapter Two, in the sections 1.3 “The Interconnectedness of Gen 47:13-27 to the Original Joseph Story and to Other Redactional Materials” and 2.2 “The Abrahamic Promise Theme in Gen 47:28-50:14 and Its Parallels with Gen 34-35 and Other Thematic Parallels between the Two.” As discussed in Chapter Two, in the section 2.2.2 “Links between Gen 49:1-50:1-14 (cf. 47:28-31); and Gen 34; 35 within Abrahamic Promise of Nation, King, Land and Other Thematic Parallels,” the accounts of the burial of Rebekah and Leah (Gen 49:31), Isaac (Gen 35.29), and Jacob (Gen 47:28-31; 49:29-33; 50:1-14) in the designation burial place, Machelah, convey the motif of the Promised Land.
The similar theological/ideological motif in Gen 34:1-35:29 is well summarized in Wenham’s comment:

Both chapters [Genesis 26 and Genesis 34] involve dealings with the inhabitants of the land: the Philistines in chap. 26, the Shechemites in chap. 34. . . . In both cases the patriarch shows little courage in protecting his wife or daughter, but ultimately he escapes unharmed and not a little richer (26:31, 13; 34:28-29; 35:5). . . . By the end of chap. 33, Jacob has enjoyed divine protection in Mesopotamia, gained descendants, and bought land in Canaan, but has not quite reached his destination in Bethel. Here, on the verge of the total fulfillment of the promise [of God’s presence and protection in Gen 28:13-15] and his vow, Canaanite lust, his own cowardice, and his sons’ folly all combine to destroy the prospect of Jacob’s return to his father’s house in peace. Yet he does make it; as often in Genesis, the invincibility of the promises is once again demonstrated. Divine grace triumphs despite human sin.”

In this statement, Wenham accurately points out that the promised heirs in Genesis 34-35 are protected by divine grace and faithfulness which provides safety and material gain despite their unworthiness. This divine faithfulness and grace, despite the unworthiness of the promised heirs, is further demonstrated in Gen 35:9-15, in which God reaffirms the promises and blessing to Jacob and his descendants.

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586 Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 309. Italics mine.
587 Waltke, Genesis, 350, also points out, “God calls again to the family, even after they have returned evil for evil against their neighbors (Gen 34-35).” In their proposals of a chiastic structure of the Jacob narrative, many scholars have noted the correspondence between Genesis 26 and Genesis 34; see Fishbane, Text and Texture, 42; Rendsburg, The Reduction of Genesis, 53-54; and Walters, “Jacob Narrative,” 600. For example, Fokkelman, Narrative Art in Genesis, 241 argues for the intentional structure of Genesis 26 and Genesis 34, by pointing out the parallels between the two: “Gen 26 and 34 . . . make the contents of the “blessing of Abraham”, viz. the promised land, . . . [and] they are similar in that they both show . . . a source of problems . . . which, again, can only be overcome with the aid of God’s protection and blessing. . . . God’s intervention only can keep the relation to the country unimpaired (35.5). Opposed to the negation near Sichem God puts the positive sign of Bethel and the revelation in that place (Gen 35).”
7. G. Esau’s Genealogy and the Peaceful Separation between Esau and Jacob (Gen 36:1-43)\textsuperscript{588}

G’. Second Reconciliation of Joseph and His Brothers (Gen 50:15-21)

These sections (Gen 36:1-43 and Gen 50:15-21), which both are a concluding report on the relation of the estranged brother(s) to the favoured one, share thematic/theological motifs in that the uneasiness of the reconciliation between the brothers, Jacob and Esau and Joseph and his brothers, are resolved and the divine oracle/promise is fulfilled.

7.1 The Settlements of the Uneasiness of the First Reconciliations between the Brothers after the Death of their Father

As discussed above, despite the validity of the reconciliation between the brothers, there continues to exist uneasiness in the reconciliations between Jacob and Esau and Joseph and his brothers. This uneasiness is resolved in Gen 36:1-43 and Gen 50:15-21.

The uneasiness in the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau in Genesis 33 is articulated by the narratorial exposition of the nature of the brothers’ separation to be resolved:

כִּי־הָיוּ רְכָשָם רַבִּים וַשָּׁבַתּוֹת וַאֲךֵלָה אֶרֶץ מָגוֹרָהָם לְשַׁאֲתֵן אֵתָם מְפִּינֵהוּ (Gen 36:7)

Jacob and Esau had been separated for many years because of personal enmity. Even after reconciliation they were separated again, and the reason for the separation was left

\textsuperscript{588} As for the outer boundaries of the Jacob narrative, many hold that the Jacob narrative starts with the \textit{toledot} of Isaac (25:19) and ends right before the \textit{toledot} of Esau (36:1). Thus it ranges from Gen 25:19 (the \textit{toledot} of Isaac) to 35:29 (the death of Isaac). This is demonstrated in commentators who have recognized some chiastic structural arrangements in the Jacob narrative as a whole. For example, Fishbane, \textit{Text and Texture}, 42, sets the boundaries of the Jacob narrative from 25:19 to 35:22. Rendsburg, \textit{The Redaction of Genesis}, 53-54, follows Fishbane defining the boundaries of the Jacob narrative from 25:19-35:29. Wenham, \textit{Genesis 16-50}, 169, also defines the boundaries of the Jacob narrative from 25:19-35:29. However, it is a mistake to limit the boundary of the Jacob narrative to 35:22 or 35:29 because 36:1-37:1 continues to be closely related to the figures Jacob and Esau, who are the main characters in the Jacob narrative. In fact, throughout this passage in Gen 36:1-37:1, the figure Jacob is present and still exercises his influence on the development of the story lines (cf. 36:6-8, 37:1). Furthermore, the next \textit{toledot} division marker occurs in Gen 37:2, “These are the \textit{toledot} of Jacob,” which mainly deals with Joseph and his family. Thus, it is reasonable to include Esau’s genealogy (36:1-43) and the one verse account of Jacob’s living in the Canaan (37:1) in the Jacob narrative. Throughout Gen 25:19-37:1 Jacob always stands at the center of the stories and, thus provides a coherent theme and story development.
unexplained. Now in Gen 36:6-8, their separation is explained: they have to separate because there is simply not enough land to support them both (36:7), not because they are in enmity. It is as though it clarifies the physical separation of the brothers in their first reunion in Gen 33:16-18. The wording in Gen 36:7 is very similar to that in Gen 13:6, which explains the nature of the separation between Abram and Lot, thus proving that the physical separation between Jacob and Esau has nothing to do with enmity:

This peaceful separation and settlement in their own territories because of their great possessions (36:7) indicates the final resolution of the long brotherly strife beginning in their mother’s womb at the beginning of the Jacob narrative (Gen 25:22-26). In addition, it resolves the uneasiness caused by the physical separation in the first reconciliation (Gen 33:17). As Amos points out, “Esau’s departure from Jacob and migration to Edom is, in this chapter, portrayed in terms that are amicable. The brothers may not be able to live close together, but this is because of their mutual prosperity, and they finally part fraternally on good terms.”

What is further worth noting is that the resolution of the uneasiness of the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau occurs immediately after they bury their father Isaac (Gen 35:27-29). In the same way, the uneasiness of the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers in Genesis 45 is described as being resolved in 50:15-21 right after their burial of their father Jacob.

In Gen 50:15-21 the uneasiness of the reconciliation on the brothers’ part in Gen 45 finally comes to the surface. Now, with their father Jacob dead, Joseph’s brothers are gripped by the fear that Joseph initially offered reconciliation because of his affection for

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their father Jacob, not because of his love for them. With this fear, the brothers ask for forgiveness and Joseph reassures them with forgiveness and care for them. In this way, as the confirmation of the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau happens right after their burial of their father Isaac (Gen 35:27-29), so the confirmation of the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers occurs right after their burial of their father Jacob (Gen 50:1-14).

Parallels in Gen 36:1-43 and Gen 50:15-21 can also be seen in that both describe the fulfillment of the divine oracle/promise.

7.2 The Fulfillment of God’s Oracle/Promise: The (Supposedly) Non-chosen Prosper/Preserved Alive

The oracle given to Rebekah in Gen 25:19-34 at the beginning of the Jacob narrative concerns two nations and the division into two peoples, Jacob-Israel and Esau-Edom:

“Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples born of you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger.” In the genealogy of Esau (36:1-43), nationhood for Esau’s descendants is articulated as being fulfilled in that Esau becomes the progenitor of the nation Edom (Gen 36:31-43; cf. Gen 25:23). This has been noted by many scholars. Waltke, for example, says, “[t]he second account of Esau’s line (36:9-40) demonstrates that God fulfills his promises. Edom does become a great nation . . . (25:23; 27:39-40).”590 In this respect, as Turner points out, “Jacob might have

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590 Waltke, Genesis, 488. Spina, “The Face of God,” 20, also points out, “[t]he text even makes the point that Edom had kings before Israel did . . . Consequently, Edom’s having kings (Gen 36:31-39) prior to Israel means that Israel had to wait to enjoy some future benefits which Edom already experienced. Moreover, according to Deuteronomy Esau’s future nationhood and land holdings were an explicit function of God’s provision.” See also Arnold, Genesis, 311, who says, “The overall effect of the chapter shows the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham that great nations would come from his children (17:4);” Kline, “Genesis,” 95, says, Esau’s genealogy “displays the carrying forward of God’s revealed purpose concerning Esau (cf. 25:23) and of Isaac’s inspired blessing on him (cf. 27:39).”
been blessed but Esau [the non-chosen] has hardly been cursed.” In a similar way, Gen 50:15-21 shows how the divine promise has been fulfilled in that the supposedly non-chosen brothers and עם־רָב (50:20) are preserved alive.

Commenting on Gen 50:15-21, Brueggemann argues that the main motif of Gen 50:15-21 is theologically oriented: its message is salvation. According to him, the theological message is shown in Joseph’s response to his brothers’ fear of revenge, “Do not fear (50:19).” Brueggemann accurately states that it is a “salvation oracle” like the salvation oracles used to give hope and comfort to the exiles in Second Isaiah (Isa. 41:10, 13, 14; 43:1; 54:1). Although this motif of salvation is already stated in the first encounter of Joseph with his brothers in Gen 45, in Gen 50:15-21 there is another element which can be connected to the motif of divine faithfulness.

In the first reconciliation scene, Joseph comforts his brothers by explaining that the trials, which were caused by their selling him, are ultimately in God’s plan to send him ahead of them to save their lives:

רָוצַחְנֵי אֲדֹנָי לָמָּה לֶשֶׁם לָכֵם (45:5);
כִּי לְמָהֵם אֲדֹנָי לָמָּה לֶשֶׁם (45:7).

591 Turner, Genesis, 157, says, “the last words of the chapter list the clans of the Edomites ‘according to their settlements in the land that they held’ (36:43b). While 36:43 projects into the future, there is a telling juxtaposition with the next sentence: ‘Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien (gr)’ (37:1). So we know that Esau’s descendants will possess land, but the only property Jacob owns is a plot bought for ‘one hundred pieces of money’ (33:19).”

592 As mentioned earlier, although Joseph’s brothers are the promised heir along with Joseph, they suppose that Joseph is the chosen one as shown in their interpretation of Joseph’s dream in Genesis 37. The salvation of “many lives” (Gen 50:20) also points to the salvation of the non-elect more generally as a fulfillment of the promise in Gen 12:1-3.


594 Brueggemann, “Genesis 50:15-21,” 216-17. Similarly, vod Rad, Genesis, 432, says, “Joseph’s meaning here is that, in the remarkable conduct of this whole story, God himself has already spoken. He has included the guilt, the brothers’ evil, in his saving activity . . . and has thus justified them.” See also John H. Sailhamer, “Genesis” in The Expositor’s Bible Commentary (rev. and ed. T. Longman III & D. E. Garland; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 330; John E. Hartley, Genesis (NICOT; Peabody: Paternoster, 2000), 367.
This verse simply explains that it is God, not the brothers, who send Joseph for the preservation of their lives. But in the second reconciliation scene in Gen 50:15-21, one more element is added: God’s good intention despite the brothers’ evil intention, ואתם חשבתם עלי רעה אלהים חשבה לטבה (50:20). This added element communicates the theological message of God’s characteristics: God’s saving plan and gracious action despite unworthiness of the brothers. This theological point, discussed throughout this study, is important in that it accords with the overall theological message of the Jacob narrative and the Joseph narrative with regard to God’s characteristics in God’s fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises: God’s unwavering commitment to fulfill the promises despite the infidelity or immorality of the promised line. This theological message in Gen 50:15-21 is well summarized by J. H. Sailhamer:

It is the same plan introduced from the beginning of the book, where God looked out at what he had created and saw that ‘it is good’ (1:4-31). Through his dealings with the patriarchs and Joseph, God continued to bring about his good plan. He remained faithful to the promises, and his narrative shows that God’s people can continue to trust and believe. 595

Similarly, commenting on Gen 50:19-20, Towner says, “God kept them safe, God brought them to this day, in and through their sins, for God’s own purpose – that through them and their descendants the promise of blessing through Israel (12:3b) might move on toward fulfillment.” 596

596 Towner, Genesis, 289.
8. H. Jacob’s Settlement in the Promised Land: The Promised Land Anticipated (Gen 37:1)

H’ Joseph’s Reassurance of the Promised Land: The Promised Land Anticipated (Gen 50:22-26)

Gen 37:1 and Gen 50:22-26 close both the Jacob narrative and the Joseph narrative by referring to the Promised Land. Many commentators have observed that Gen 37:1 is to contrast Jacob’s status with Esau’s, highlighting the physical separation of Esau and Israel (cf. Gen 36:6-8). As Longacre, along with other commentators point out, this observation is based on the clear grammatical parallelism between Gen 37:1 and 36:8 in terms of geographical settlement, “Jacob settled . . . in the land of Canaan” (37:1, ושה ישב יושב ישב אביו בארץ מגורי אביו בארץ כנען) and “So Esau settled in the hill country of Seir; Esau is Edom” (36:8, ושה ישב בער עשו שעיר עשו הוא אדום). This physical separation between Jacob and Esau is indeed the fulfillment of the birth oracle in Gen 25:23. But in particular, as Arnold points out, this contrast between Jacob and Esau in terms of their geographical settlement obviously points to the motif of the Promised Land:

The proximity of the verses emphasized the contrast between the brothers, especially the important notion that Esau moved far away from Jacob and his family, who remained in the Promised Land. That Jacob “settled” in the land where his fathers had only “sojourned” marks another progression in the ancestral narrative, so that Jacob/Israel came to occupy the Promised Land, just as Esau came to occupy Edom (Gen 36).

597 Longacre, Joseph, 20. He also says that 37:1 is a summary of Gen 36, contrasting Jacob with Esau. Arnold, Genesis, 317, also says, “the conclusion to Esau’s first genealogical notation, begun at 36:1, ended in a contrast between Esau and Jacob: ‘So Esau settled in the hill country of Seir, . . . but Jacob settled in . . . the land of Canaan.’” Arnold, Genesis, 317, also points out, “The Contrast between Esau and Jacob is undeniable, and because of the two genealogical lists of Gen 36, one added secondarily, the waw-consecutive beginning of v. 1 [Gen 37:1] should now be taken as narratival, “Now let’s get back to the story . . .” Kline, Genesis," 107, also says, “The inclusion of the transitional 37:1 . . . underscores the rejected and separated character of this Esau history.” Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 335, also contends that at an earlier stage, 37:1 must have followed immediately after 36:8 and only been separated by the secondary insertion of 36:9-43 because Gen 37:1 matches and echoes 36:7-8 clearly. Longacre, Joseph, 20, also says that 37:1 is a summary of Gen 36, contrasting Jacob with Esau.

598 Arnold, Genesis, 317.
The view that Gen 37:1 anticipates the Promised Land by contrasting Jacob and Esau is further articulated by von Rad: “Jacob’s stay in the Land of Canaan (ch. 37.1) is best understood as the conclusion to Esau’s toledot. It corresponds to the statement in ch. 36.8 and leads back again to the genealogy of the chosen ones, who, in contrast to Esau’s descendants living on the southern steppe, were claimants to the Promised Land.”

Similarly, in her Septuagint commentary on Genesis, S. A. Brayford argues for the anticipation of the Promised Land in Gen 37:1 by commenting on the Greek word, κατῴκει: “God’s fulfillment of his promise of land to his chosen people [is demonstrated in that] Jacob is now a permanent resident (κατῴκει) in the land of Canaan, where his father Isaac and his father before him had only sojourned (παρῴκησεν) as resident aliens.”

In a similar way, Gen 50:22-26 anticipates the Promised Land.

Genesis 50:22-26 recounts Joseph’s death and his last words. On his deathbed, where Joseph has the Israelites swear to carry up his bones from Egypt to the Promised Land, Joseph reassures his brothers of the Promised Land (50:24-26). As von Rad points out, Joseph’s last words recounts the Promised Land. Thus, Westermann correctly points out, Gen 50:24 “is a direct statement that the promise of the land to the patriarchs has as its actual goal the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and the entrance of Israel into Canaan.”

This direct statement of the Promised Land is further implied in Gen 50:26, as Wilson observes: “the promise of the land is also behind . . . the placing of Joseph’s body in a coffin (50:26) . . . [which] is, in the light of 50:24-25, a powerful symbol that

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599 Von Rad, Genesis, 346-47.
600 Susan A. Brayford, Genesis (SCS; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 389.
601 Von Rad, Genesis, 433; Sarna, Genesis, 351.
602 Westermann, The Promises to the Fathers, 143.
Egypt is not to be the permanent home for Jacob’s offspring, since God will ultimately bring them back to the promised land.” In this respect, Gen 50:22-26 revolves around the Promised Land.

The argument that Gen 50:22-26 revolves around the motif of the Promised Land is further well demonstrated in Brueggemann’s chiastic structure of this passage:

a) full years in Egypt (v. 22)
b) a claiming of heirs for the land (v. 23)
c) the land promise (v. 24)
b’) an oath to the land (v. 25)
a’) embalming in Egypt (v. 26)

In this way, as the Jacob narrative ends with the anticipation of the Promised Land, so the Joseph narrative ends with the foreshadowing of the Promised Land.

Having discussed seemingly intentional use of the parallel literary features in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives, we must turn to a discussion of the intended theological function of the parallel structure of the stories.

603 Wilson, Joseph, Wise and Otherwise, 226.
604 Brueggemann, Genesis, 378. Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 491, points out that Gen 50:24 shows that “Like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when they died, Joseph’s last concern was the fulfillment of the promise (cf. 24:1-7; 28:1-4; 47:29-31).” Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 491, continues to say that in order to emphasize the importance of the motif of the promise of land, “like Abraham and Jacob, he [Joseph] makes his successors swear an oath to carry out his wishes (cf. Exod 13:19),” by comparing Gen 48:21 and Gen 50:24:

ויאמר ישראל אל־יוסף הנה אנכי מת והיה אלהים עםכם והשיב אתכם אל־ארץ אביכם והשיב אתכם אל־ארץ אביכם והשיב אתכם אל־ארץ אביכם (Gen 48:21)

ויאמר יוסף אל־אחיו אנכי מת ואלהים פקד יפקד אתכם והעלו אתכם מן־הארץ הזאת אל־הארץ אשר נשבע לאברהם ליצחק (Gen 50:24).
Chapter Five  
The Theological Function/Dimension of a Parallel Structure between the Jacob Narrative and the Joseph Narrative in relation to God’s Election: The Purpose of God’s Election of the Patriarchs

God’s election is one of the prominent motifs in Gen 12-50, as it recurs in stories such as Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, and Joseph and his brothers. As Kaminsky points out, “the idea that God favors certain individuals or groups over others is theologically and morally troublesome to modern Western thinkers.” However, the biblical concept of God’s election in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives challenges such an understanding of divine election as unfair and exclusive to the chosen people.

In fact, the concept of divine election in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives articulates the strong connection between God’s election and the elect’s service of others. God prepares Jacob and Joseph to live out their destiny by allowing them to experience God’s unconditional faithfulness and grace. As Jacob and Joseph embrace their destiny as the elect by serving others and becoming a blessing to others instead of seeking power and blessing for themselves, the chosen nation, Israel, is to remember that she is elected to mediate God’s salvation and blessing to the nations.

1. Jacob and Esau: Being God’s Chosen is Not about Gaining Blessing and Power, but about Servanthood and Being a Blessing to Others

In his proposal of chiastic structure of the Jacob narrative, M. Fishbane aptly demonstrates how the Jacob narrative revolves around the theme of blessing: A bekorah-birthright (25:19-34); B berakah-blessing (26); C berakah-stolen (27:1-28:9); D encounter (verb: paga’) with the divine; berakah (28:10-22); D’ encounter (verb: paga’) with divine beings; berakah (32); C’ berakah-gift returned (33); A’

605 Kaminsky, Yet I Loved Jacob, 1.
berakhah (35:1-22). Fishbane says, “The movement of the [Jacob] Cycle is thus interwoven with the dialect of curse and blessing.” Indeed, the Jacob narrative revolves around Jacob’s struggle for blessing and power.

1.1 Jacob’s Ongoing Struggle for Blessing and Power

Biblical scholarship usually refers to the patriarch Jacob as a deceiver, or trickster. As Fishbane points out, “the theme of deception comes to the fore in [the Jacob narrative] texts, thereby affording some insight into a traditional reading of Jacob’s wily character.” Actually, almost every episode of the Jacob narrative is marked by deceit or quarreling: Jacob’s blessing, marriage, children, gaining of property, Jacob’s return to Bethel, and the event of Dinah and the Shechemites. Biblical scholars have argued that it is Jacob as deceiver who is responsible for the deceit and quarreling in these stories. Furthermore, they have argued that this explanation is in keeping with the biblical material. For example, Fishbane declares that “a moral critique of Jacob’s actions is textured into the story itself.” Many scholars have called Jacob a reformed trickster; explaining “Jacob’s development from callous opportunist, tricked trickster, and crippled wrestler to religious reformer.” However, I argue that in the Jacob narrative the writer is not so much concerned with Jacob’s immorality as with a resolute, determined disposition that is neutral in terms of value judgment. Jacob struggles for power and

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607 Fishbane, “Composition and Structure,” 36.

608 See also McKeown, *Genesis*, 238, who points out, “In the Jacob cycle, the theme of blessing develops in a very different manner from that witnessed in chs. 1-25. Blessing in the Jacob stories becomes a kind of competition to see who can achieve it.”

609 Fishbane, “Composition and Structure,” 16. For example, Claus Westermann, *Genesis: A Practical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 179, points out, “[t]he conception behind the chapters as a whole is . . . the conflict between Jacob and Esau (chapters 26-33).” Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 204, also says that “the narrative is not edifying in any conventional religious or moral sense . . . present[ing] Jacob in his crude mixture of motives.”

610 Fishbane, “Composition and Structure,” 16.

blessing. To develop this contention, I will examine some pertinent episodes in the Jacob narrative.

The name Jacob (יַעֲקֹב) (Gen 25:26) is usually considered to convey a negative meaning such as deceiver or supplanter. But a negative rendering of the name Jacob as deceiver seems to be unconvincing when examining the birth episode. The fact that Jacob (יַעֲקֹב) grabbed Esau’s heel (בַּעֲשָׁן) may demonstrate Jacob’s quest and ambition for power rather than a deceptive nature. Smith, for example, points out that “Jacob’s physical act of gripping Esau’s heel is the intention to take possession of the latter’s position of power and dominance.”612 Some scholars suggest that the name even has a positive meaning. Von Rad, for example, explains, “Jacob [derives] from the word heel in an audacious etymology and . . . it is not to be supposed that the real meaning of the originally theophoric name was forgotten at that time (יַעֲקֹב probably means “may God protect”).”613 Likewise, Freedman suggests that the original, unabbreviated name of Jacob “was יַעֲקֹב אֶל, ‘May (the god) El protect,’” which is preserved in Deut. 33:28, “Israel dwells in safety; by himself Jacob-el settles.”614 Although a rendering that involves God’s protection may be debated, the above interpreters’ discussions indicate that the birth episode in itself does not necessarily support the negative connotation of deceiver.

Indeed, the only place in the Pentateuch that may support a negative understanding of the name Jacob is Gen 27:36 that reflects Esau’s point of view.615 Based

615 Holmgren, “Holding Your Own Against God!”, 11.
on this verse, many scholars adopt a negative understanding of the name Jacob, but this evaluation is not trustworthy because on this matter, at least, the writer evaluates Esau’s behavior negatively (Gen 25:34) and Esau is using the name of Jacob in anger (27:36). As Wenham points out, Esau’s understanding of Jacob (יַעֲקֹב) as a cheater “is a bitter pun on Jacob’s name.” Likewise, von Rad points out, “Esau in his anger misunderstands his brother’s name etymologically by finding in the name, Jacob, the root שָׁעֵב,” interpreting the work as deception. Holmgren goes so far as to say, “it is worth observing that the name “Jacob” continues to be used of the patriarch and for the nation Israel that stems from him (see e.g., Gen 35:15, 20; 37:1; Isa. 48:12; 49:5-6). Apparently, “Jacob” is not such a bad name!” Based on these interpreters’ discussions and the text recounting the origin of the name Jacob, I argue that the name Jacob demonstrates that Jacob is a resolute, proactive, and determined character struggling for power rather than an immoral person. Furthermore, if the word Jacob (יַעֲקֹב) (25:26) in itself, conveys a negative moral connotation, why does the writer call him as אִישׁ תָּם (“perfect man”) (25:27) in the birth and naming pericopae (25:26)? אִישׁ תָּם (Gen 25:27) in the Old Testament suggests innocence or moral integrity (i.e., “blameless” as in Job 1:1, 8; 2:3; 9:20-22). So the positive reference to Jacob in Gen 25:27 would seem contradictory to

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616 Although the name, Jacob (יַעֲקֹב), is related to the Hebrew word for heel (שָׁעֵב), Jacob’s grabbing Esau’s heel (Gen 25:26), the text or the narrator does not suggest that it connotes deception. Nowhere else in the Jacob Cycle, is the name Jacob used as a meaning of “deception”: a different word for deception is used in other places: מת ת (Gen 27:12), מיחל (Gen 27:35), and בְּרֶס (29:25).
617 Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 211.
618 Von Rad, Genesis, 278.
619 Holmgren, “Holding Your Own Against God!,” 11.
620 The Hebrew word שָׁם is also used in Job 1:1, 8; 2:3; 8:20; 9:20, 21, 22, Psalm 37:37; 64: 4(5), and Proverb 29:10. In these passages it means “perfect”, “blameless,” “undefiled,” or “upright.” In any case, it is a term used to describe the character of a man of moral integrity. The phrase אִישׁ תָּם will be discussed further in the next section.
some scholars who argue that “Jacob is anything but blameless.”\footnote{Hamilton, The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50, 181.} Some scholars such as Walters justify the contradiction between the characterization of Jacob as אִישׁ תָּם and their understandings of Jacob’s character as negative by emphasizing that only later Jacob is to be an אֶשֶּׁר or a moral person.\footnote{Walters, “Travels of a Trickster,” 2.} Walters continues to explain as follows:

Jacob’s behaviour was hardly exemplary . . . [in that] Jacob’s character is grasping and manipulative from the beginning. This falls short of expectations . . . , both compared with Abraham and Isaac, and in view of Jacob’s subsequent roles as the father of the Israelite people . . . “Jacob was a blameless man” (אֵֽתֶּה יָשָׂר, exactly as Job 1:8; 2:3). To be sure, translators have used attenuated words (“plain” KJV, “quiet” RSV, “mild” JPS), but tam clearly implies moral excellence. This, then-moral excellence-is to be Israel’s vocation; and the same story which asserts it so boldly goes on to show Jacob as something other than blameless.\footnote{Walters, “Travels of a Trickster,” 4.}

In Walters’ and others’ reading of the text, the narrator’s characterization of Jacob as שָׂר אֶשֶּׁר is prescriptive. But in the text itself אֶשֶּׁר is clearly descriptive. This reference to Jacob as שָׂר אֶשֶּׁר is particularly important because it is the only place where the narrator directly evaluates or describes Jacob’s character. Hamilton explains how שָׂר אֶשֶּׁר is to be translated as “blameless” in the following quotation:

But one may argue that this [blameless] would be a poor translation here for . . . Jacob is anything but blameless . . . . It may be . . . “to be kept in subjection, enslaved (by love)” . . . . I am persuaded, however, that we should give the same meaning to שָׂר אֶשֶּׁר in Gen 25:27 as we do to שָׂר אֶשֶּׁר in Job 1:8.\footnote{Hamilton, The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50, 181-82.}

Some scholars consider the usual usage of שָׂר אֶשֶּׁר in the Bible to be a moral judgment. For example, von Rad expounds on the phrases, שָׂר אֶשֶּׁר and דָּרַשׁ אֶשֶּׁר as follows:

Jacob is “orderly,” “respectable.” The adjective (שָׂר) means actually belonging to the solidarity of community life with its moral regulations, a solidarity that the hunter does not know because he is much more dependent on himself.\footnote{Von Rad, Genesis, 261.}
Normally throughout the biblical text the Hebrew words, אִישׁ תָּם, indicate moral integrity and אִישׁ יֹדֵעַ צַיִד is without a moral judgment. Some scholars have argued that saying that Esau is a “skillful hunter or outdoorsman” (יֹדֵעַ צַיִד) compromises the meaning of תָּם as indicating moral integrity. Therefore, in order to resolve this conflict between the two descriptions, some scholars suggest אִישׁ יֹדֵעַ צַיִד is making a negative moral judgment. Thus, it contrasts with the moral judgment of תָּם. For Spina, for example, Esau’s negative character is revealed in the phrase, אִישׁ יֹדֵעַ צַיִד:

The text describes Esau as “a man who knows hunting - a man of the field” (Gen 25:27). . . . this description is subtly unflattering, hinting that Esau is crude, uncultured, and instinctual. The plausibility of this reading is supported by the statement that Isaac loved Esau because “game was in his [i.e. Isaac’s] mouth” – possibly an inelegant way of indicating Isaac’s fondness for the food that Esau caught and prepared (Gen 25:28).

Evan’s study of Rashi, a Jewish commentator, is in line with Spina’s view on אִישׁ יֹדֵعַ צַיִד:

Traditional Jewish exegetes have interpreted Jacob’s character quite differently from their modern counterparts. Rashi, the great Jewish commentator of the 11th century, for example, saw Jacob and Esau as contrasting religious types. Jacob as the תָּם was a man of integrity; his heart and his lips spoke the same language. By contrast, when the Bible in the same verse calls Esau an יֹדֵעַ צַיִד (literally, “a man who knows hunting” (!) it means that Esau knew how to deceive with his mouth.

Although this reading of יֹדֵעַ צַיִד as a negative moral judgment is moot, their attempts to read תָּם as a positive moral judgment by regarding יֹדֵעַ צַיִד as a negative moral judgment are worth noting.

In order to resolve this conflict between the two descriptions, other scholars regard תָּם as an expression of disposition and not of morality. Skinner, for example, explains, “Jacob . . . [as] תָּם, elsewhere [as] ‘an ethically blameless man’, here [is] describe[d] [as] the orderly, well-disposed man (Scotice, ‘douce’), as contrasted with the

undisciplined and irregular huntsman.”\footnote{Skinner, \textit{A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis}, 361.} With Jacob characterized as אִישׁ תָם at the very beginning of the Jacob narrative, Evans goes as far to argue that “Jacob’s innocence will somehow be demonstrated in the stories that follow.”\footnote{Evans, “The Patriarch Jacob,” 33.} In any event, whether taking the expression אִישׁ תָם as a dispositional rendering or as a moral judgment, the expression אִישׁ תָם indicates that the writer of the Jacob narrative does not describe Jacob negatively. Although the reading that Jacob as אִישׁ תָם means he is morally perfect may be debatable, the view of אִישׁ תָם as a dispositional description of Jacob is worth noting. In fact, it is my contention that Jacob is depicted as person having a resolute, determined disposition which is neutral in terms of value judgment in the following episodes in that Jacob is described as struggling for power and blessing.

The story that immediately follows the narrator’s characterization of Jacob as אִישׁ תָם is a birthright bargain (Gen 25:29-34). Much later (Gen 27:36) Esau claims that Jacob has supplanted him in the birthright bargain. Esau’s criticism of Jacob as a “deceiver” is in contrast with the narrator’s evaluation of the birthright incident. In that judgment, Esau loses his birthright because he despises it (Gen 25:34). Because the narrator does not find Jacob morally at fault, I agree with Hamilton who declares, “the author or narrator of 25:27-34 never condemns Jacob for his \textit{modus operandi} [but] he indicts Esau for spurning his birthright.”\footnote{Hamilton, \textit{The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50}, 186.} Hamilton continues, commenting on the narrator’s use of בָּזָא in Esau’s bargain of his birthright, saying, “[the] basic meaning of בָּזָא is ‘to despise, regard with contempt’ . . . describ[ing] how one person views another person (with disdain)”\footnote{Hamilton, \textit{The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50}, 186.}—1 Sam. 10:27; 17:42; 2 Sam. 6:6).
Going further, Spina regards the birthright account as showing not only Esau’s lack of social graces and his immoral character, but also Jacob’s virtue:

A fifth consecutive verb answers that [Esau’s immorality] query: ‘. . . so Esau despised the birthright’ (Gen 25:34). Surely this is moral failure. Though the narration confirms that he was truly hungry (Gen 25:29), Esau . . . was . . . making the birthright worthless in his eyes. In short, Esau lacked not only etiquette but virtue. Nothing but food had any value . . . [Esau was] treating that precious item [the birthright] as dispensable. . . . [In contrast,] Jacob had an eye for the future . . . [and] was more resolute than Esau, smarter, more determined to secure the future.

This reading of the birthright bargain episode as reflecting a negative judgment of Esau contrasts with the positive judgment of Jacob. Likewise, Herbert regards Jacob’s action in the bargain incident as not only legitimate but even as commendable:

. . . that Jacob took advantage of his brother must not be judged by later standards. The skill to turn a situation immediately to one’s own advantage is, in many societies, regarded as commendable. It should be noted that the transaction, whatever be our estimate of it on ethical grounds, was entirely legal. A similar transaction has appeared in a tablet from Nuzi, a Hurrian (Biblical Horite) town south-east of Nineveh (c. 1500 BC). No doubt, as the story was popularly told, it appealed to the sense of humour of the hearers as they heard the way in which the ancestor of Israel ‘got the better of’ the ancestor of the Edomites.

These scholars consider Jacob’s action in the birthright episode as fair and perhaps even commendable. This is consistent with the view of the writer of the text that Esau despises his birthright. Therefore, Esau’s claim in the text that Jacob is a deceiver in the birthright incident is not trustworthy. Rather, the birthright bargain episode depicts Jacob as a resolute, determined man who struggles for power and blessing, taking advantage of the fact that Esau has despised the birthright. A similar biblical depiction of Jacob’s struggling for power and blessing recurs in the story of his stay with his uncle Laban (Genesis 29-30).

633 Herbert, Genesis 12-50, 72.
634 A similar biblical depiction of Jacob’s struggle for power and blessing recurs in the story of his stay with his uncle Laban in Gen 29-30. This will be discussed shortly.
Furthermore, it is necessary to examine Genesis 27 where Esau accuses Jacob of being a “deceiver” who steals his blessing. We need to examine carefully whether the writer really invites us to agree with Esau’s claim that Jacob is a cheater (cf. 27:36). When it comes to this question, the simple answer is “no.” Although what Jacob does to his brother Esau and his father Isaac is not honorable behaviour, the text does not pinpoint Jacob as the one who is responsible for the blessing (berakhah) incident. Indeed, the structure of chapter 27 indicates that Rebekah is the one who is responsible for the deception and stealing of Esau’s blessing. In his structural study of the Jacob narrative, Fishbane illustrates the skillful composition of Genesis 27, arguing that it “gives insight into the nature of biblical composition in general, as well as the specific dynamics of the Jacob narrative.”

Fishbane’s analysis of this chapter is as follows:

A     Isaac and Esau; Scenario opens
B     Rebekka and Jacob; Advice: “Listen to me…”
C     Jacob and Isaac; Deception and Blessing
C’    Esau and Isaac; Torment and Blessing
B’    Rebekka and Jacob; Advice: “Listen to me…”
A’    Rebekka and Isaac; Scenario closes

Through this structural analysis of Genesis 27, Fishbane gives us two insights into this chapter. First, the focus of this chapter is on the theme of “blessing.” Second, with respect to the deceptions and schemes in the blessing account, the narrator accuses Rebekah of these deceptions and schemes, not Jacob. Indeed, it is Rebekah who tells Jacob of her plan and insists on Jacob’s obedience (27:6-10). Walters also correctly

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637 Although scholars usually consider Rebekah’s action as immoral behaviour, Spina, “The Face of God,” 9, explores a different view; “Rebekah should be viewed positively in this story in that she made it possible for God’s will to be accomplished [and]…that Jewish exegetical sources are generally more positive about Rebekah than Christian ones.”
points out that “the verbs in vs 14-17 have Rebekah, not Jacob, as their subject,” thus suggesting that Rebekah is the leading figure in the deception of the blessing account. These interpreters’ discussions support my view that the writer in Gen 27 depicts Jacob not as a deceiver, but rather as a man who struggles for power and blessing. Thus, Jacob compromises his sense of morality by following his mother’s plot to deceive.

The next episode in which Jacob is accused of being a “thief” or “robber” (gnb) or “deceiver” concerns Jacob’s stay at Laban’s house (Genesis 29-30). It is Laban who accuses Jacob of two things. First, Laban accuses Jacob by claiming that Jacob has “stolen” away his daughters “like captives taken with the sword” (31:26). Secondly, Laban accuses Jacob by claiming that Jacob has stolen his “gods” (31:30). But the question of whether the narrator invites us to agree with Laban’s accusation of Jacob as a “robber” or “cheater” still remains. Laban’s first claim is proven to be false by his own daughters’ response to his father’s claim: “Are we not considered strangers by him? For he has sold us, and also completely consumed our money (31:15).” Besides, we know that Laban’s daughters have not been carried away as captives, but have come of their own decision. Furthermore, to Laban’s claim that Jacob stole from him (31:26, 27), Jacob counters that Laban is the one who “deceived” him (31:7), which is true. When Jacob found that it was not Rachel but Leah who lay with him, he cried out to Laban, “‘Why then have you deceived me? (29:25)” Actually, the validity of Jacob’s counter-accusation of Laban seems to be proven in that “[I]t is Yahweh himself who finally ensures the safety of Jacob and his household in the face of his accuser (and judicial authority)-Laban” (cf. 31:24, 29, 43). Laban accuses Jacob of deceiving him but rather, “God has

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thwarted Laban’s attempts by blessing Jacob and protecting him (31:36-42). In this way, the text also clearly shows us that Laban is not able to defend himself from Jacob’s counter accusation. The fact that Laban is not able to argue against Jacob who argues that Laban has cheated him justifies Jacob’s argument. Therefore, these chapters do not depict Jacob as a deceiver. Rather, Jacob is depicted as a resolute man who struggles to obtain what he wants. After seven years of work to marry Rachel, Jacob is deceived by Laban and is married to Leah instead of Rachel. This shows that Laban himself is a trickster and therefore his judgment cannot be trusted. Rather, the fact that Jacob does not give up and works for another seven years to get married to Rachel and finally obtain her demonstrates his resolute nature.

In sum, the episodes in the Jacob narrative such as the birth and naming of Jacob, the reference to Jacob as בְּעֵית יָרָם, the birthright bargain, and Jacob–Laban episodes, discussed above, do not describe Jacob’s immorality, but rather his resolute and determined disposition, which is neutral in terms of value judgment, in that Jacob is depicted as struggling for power and blessing.

Now that we have discussed the episodes where Jacob is depicted as struggling for power and blessing, we must turn to an examination of the next pertinent episode: Jacob’s preparation to meet Esau. This may be the most crucial in the Jacob narrative.

It was Esau who had threatened and made Jacob run away from home in the first place. Now, Jacob has to meet him (cf. Gen 31:3). Jacob is afraid of meeting his brother

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641 McKenzie, “You Have Prevailed,” 225. Laban’s silence on Jacob’s counter-claim rebuking him suggests that he himself is rightly accused of being a “deceiver” (31:43).
642 In fact, Jacob is implicitly commended for having striven with God and man in ch. 32:23-33. Instead of criticizing Jacob for his striving for power and blessing, it seems that the writer criticizes Jacob because he depends more on his own scheme than on God although God continually invites him to trust God by foretelling/reassuring God’s presence and protection.
Esau, expecting him to be furious and vengeful, and the fear culminates when he learns that his brother is marching toward him with four hundred men (Gen 32:6-10). Jacob’s supposition seems to be reasonable, as the text indicates that Esau and his men are actually prepared for military attack or confrontation, using “לִקְרָאתְ” [32:6], [which is] sometimes used to indicate military confrontation (e.g., Judg 7:24; 20:25, 31; 1 Sam 4:1; 1 Kgs 20:27, etc.)."⁶⁴³ Taylor also says that “from the reference to Esau marching from Seir with an army, the narrator sets the reader up to understand the potential wrath of Esau . . . (32:4; cf. v. 7; Deut. 33:2).”⁶⁴⁴ This suggests that Jacob might correctly suppose that a furious Esau is coming to attack him.

With this justifiable fear, however, Jacob, as usual, begins to make his own efforts instead of remembering and relying on God’s promises to be with him and protect him, and to bring him back to the land of promise (28:15; 31:3). As Jacob himself confesses (32:10), by keeping the promises at Bethel—giving him offspring (29:31-30:25) and making him exceedingly prosperous with livestock (30:25-43)—God has been faithful to him despite his unworthiness. God has proven once again to be faithful by protecting Jacob from danger and removing obstacles which could prevent him from going back to the land of promise. Jacob has experienced God’s protection from Laban on his journey back to the land of promise (31:24, 29). However, when he is about to meet Esau, Jacob is still wavering in his faith in God’s promise to bring him back to the land of promise. Instead, Jacob assumes that he is in control and does everything in his power to handle the situation, hoping thereby to earn Esau’s favor. This is demonstrated in the cross-references to “the angels or messengers” and “camps” of Jacob and God in Gen 32-33.

As discussed above, there are wordplays and recurrence of the key phrases through Genesis 31-33 which play a role in uniting this passage. But these wordplays and the recurring phraseology play an important role, not only in uniting this passage, but also in conveying the crucial theological message of the Jacob narrative. Through the wordplays, Jacob’s lack of faith in God’s promise and his ongoing struggle for blessing and power in contrast with God’s faithful protection and help are demonstrated. It is worth noting Taylor’s comments on this matter:

the two camps highlight two different options Jacob has for being reconciled to his brother (and at the same time to God). . . . The point of the wordplay is that Jacob, by means of offering from within his own “camp,” wants it to serve as a “gift” in order to win the “favor” (ḥēn) of Esau. In other words: will deliverance come to Jacob from his own “camp” that constitutes a self-made “gift”? Or will it come from within the “camp” of his God who bestows sheer “favor” or “grace” (ḥēn)?

On his way back to the land of promise following God’s command in 31:3 “the angels of God,” מַלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹהִים meet Jacob and Jacob sees them (32:1-2, Eng.). This reminds the reader of the angel of God who appeared to Jacob to command him to go back to the land of promise in 31:11-13. What is interesting is that the angel of God identifies himself with God, in particular the God of Bethel, in Gen 28:12-15. When God first appears to the patriarch at Bethel in 28:15, God promises Jacob to be with him, protect him, and bring him back to the land:

והנה אנכי עמך ושמרתיך בכל אשר־תלך והשבתיך אל־האדמה הזאת כי לא אעזבך עד אשר אם־עשיתי את אשר־דברתי לך׃

A noticeable feature of this promise among many other promises in Gen 28:12-15 is the appearance of “the angels of God,” מַלְאֲכֵי אלהים (28:12). This phrase, מַלְאֲכֵי אלהים, only

645 I have dealt with this in Chapter Three, in the section 2.2 “The Promise Theme in Gen 46:1-47:12 and Its Parallels with Gen 31-33: Promise of ‘God’s Being with’ the Patriarch and Its Outcome.”

occurs twice in the Old Testament: once in Gen 28:12 and again in Gen 32:1. Thus, it is obvious that there is a connection between the Bethel episode and the Peniel episode.\(^{647}\)

Furthermore, although it is in a singular form, “the angel of God” (31:11, מלאך האלהים), who is identified with the God of Bethel, reappears to Jacob once again to command him to go back to the land of promise after God has made the same command to him in 31:3. This indicates that, encountering the angel(s) of God, Jacob is expected to trust in God by recalling God’s promise to bring him back to the land of promise and God’s faithfulness to him up until then. Thus, Arnold points out, “Having now arrived safely at the portal to the Promised Land, the sudden appearance of these ‘angels of God’ must surely be intended to bring to the foreground the promises and commitments of their former appearance at Bethel (28:10-22).”\(^{648}\) This is further supported by the message of the angel of God to Jacob in 31:11-13.

In fact, the angel of God (31:11, מלאך האלהים) not only commands Jacob to go back to the land of promise, but also reminds him of how God has watched over him and helped him during his stay at Laban’s house (31:11-12). Thus, meeting the angel(s) of God twice on his way back to the land of promise (31:11-13; 32:1-2), the patriarch Jacob is expected to trust God who has been faithful to him and is about to fulfill His promises to be with him and protect him on his way back to the land (cf. Gen 28:12-15; 31:3). But facing the potentially life-threatening encounter with Esau, Jacob fails to put his faith in God. Instead, he takes things into his own hands, attempting to resolve the problem on his own. Thus, right after his encounter with “the angels/messengers of God,” מלאכי אלהים (32:1), Jacob sends his own “messengers,” מלאכים (32:3, 6) in an attempt to

\(^{647}\) The connection between the Bethel scene and the Peniel scene will be discussed in the next section.

\(^{648}\) Arnold, *Genesis*, 280.
appease his brother Esau and to protect himself. In this way, Jacob ignores “God’s messengers/angels,” מלאכי אלוהים (32:1), depending instead on his own “messengers,” מלאכים.

The self-reliance of Jacob’s scheme is further demonstrated by the reference to “two camps.” Jacob identifies the angels of God in 32:1 מですかל אלהים, who meet him on his way, as “the camp of God” מחנה אלהים naming the place ממחנה in 32:2. However, instead of relying upon “God’s camps,” מחנה, Jacob divides his belongings into “his camps (מחנה, 32:7; המחנה, 32:8)” to solve the crisis on his own. By doing so, Jacob intends not only to save as much of his property as possible (32:8), but also to appease Esau’s anger. Thus, Jacob answers Esau, who asks about Jacob’s camp כָל־הַמַחֲנֶּה הַזֶּה, that it is to find a favour from Esau לִמְׂצֹא־חֵן בְּעֵינֵי אֲדֹנִי. There is a tension between Jacob’s “camps” מחנה, 32:7; המחנה, 32:8 and God’s “camps” מですかל אלהים, 32:1. As Taylor points out, “[t]he narrator sets up the two alternatives early on and then skillfully alternates between Jacob’s relying on one “camp” at one time and praying to the other “camp” at another time right up to the climactic encounter with Esau the next day (v. 23).”

Although Jacob offers a prayer for God’s protection appealing to God’s promise to him at Bethel (32:9-12), Jacob does not put his faith in God’s being with him (32:1-2) as God has repeatedly promised him in 31:3 (cf. 31:10-13). Thus, after the prayer, Jacob continues to contrive with his own schemes to protect himself by sending numerous gifts to Esau hoping to quiet Esau’s anger (32:15-21). This is demonstrated in

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650 Before praying Jacob has already started to do things in his power to handle the crisis. In fact, Jacob prays only after the fear culminates when he learns that his brother is marching toward him with four hundred men (Gen 32:6-10).
the triadic wordplay of “gift,” מִנְחָה (32:13, 18, 20, 21; cf. 33:10), “camp,” מחנה and “favor,” חֵן (33:8) in Jacob’s instruction to his servants after his prayer: “They belong to your servant Jacob; they are a present (הֵנָּה) sent to my lord Esau. (32:18)”; “For he thought, ‘I may appease him with the present (מִנְחָה) that goes ahead of me, and afterwards I shall see his face; perhaps he will accept me (32:20).’” This wordplay demonstrates Jacob is relying on his own “gift,” which comes from his own “camp,” to find “favor” of Esau, although he has already asked God for favor. In other words, Jacob shows his lack of faith by relying upon his own “camp” instead of God’s “camp” even after confessing in his prayer that he has experienced God’s faithful promise keeping (32:9-12). As Brett points out, “the word-play [between God’s camp in 32:2 and Jacob’s camps in 32:7, 10] was intended to invoke the memory of divine presence – the ‘messengers of Elohim’ who appeared both at the beginning and at the end of Jacob’s journey to Mesopotamia.” What is noteworthy in Jacob’s prayer is that, recalling God’s command to go back to the land in Gen 31:3, Jacob misses the promise of God’s presence:

שוב אל ארץ אבותיך ולמולדתך ואהיה עמך׃ (31:3)
יהוה האמר אלי שוב לארצך ולמולדתך ואיטיבה עמך׃ (32:10, MT)

This suggests that out of extreme fear and anxiety Jacob ignores the fact that the presence of God has been with him until then (cf. Gen 28:12-15; 31:3, 5, 11, 42; 32:1). As Brett points out, “[i]n spite of all the evidence of divine providence in his experience, he [Jacob] continues to struggle and to bargain his way through every significant interaction,

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651 Brett, Genesis, 98.
whether with human beings or with the divine." Thus, to fearing and untrusting Jacob, God has to remind him that he will receive spiritual blessing as an heir of God’s promises.

1.2 God’s Reminder of the Spiritual Blessing at Peniel by Enabling Jacob to Trust in God

Many commentators read the Peniel episode as revealing a character transformation in Jacob either during or after the wrestling. These scholars usually regard this divine encounter as “the signpost of the change in Jacob’s character, or the cause.” Coogan, for example, says, “The change in the name of the patriarch from Jacob to Israel marks a change in his character. Up to this point, Jacob has been a cheater . . . Yet . . . from now on Jacob, renamed Israel, becomes a model character.” Although this view of the wrestling experience as the beginning of a new life is a very attractive one for many Christian and some Jewish interpreters, there are some difficulties with this understanding of the Peniel episode. First, the view of the wrestling episode as the experience which brings about Jacob’s character transformation is based on the conventional views that the biblical depiction of Jacob is negative in the preceding episodes. As argued above, however, nowhere in the Jacob narrative is Jacob portrayed by the narrator as a negative figure such as a “deceiver” or a “cheater.” Secondly, as

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652 Brett, *Genesis*, 97. Brett, *Genesis*, 97-98, summarizes this well, “Genesis 32 shows Jacob to be full of restless anxiety, first, in the planning of his meeting with Esau, and second, in the encounter with the unnamed figure at the Jabbok. Before the meeting with Esau, for example, he divides his family and flocks into two ‘camps’ (32.7, 10), and the choice of words here echoes the ‘camp of Elohim’ in 32.2. . . . Yet the reason for the division of Jacob’s group into two camps is actually fear: if Esau should attack the first camp, the second would have a chance to flee (32.8). Jacob, it seems, is never satisfied with the evidence of divine providence.”

653 God’s initiative in the Peniel episode is demonstrated as the text says, “a man wrestles with him” (32:24). It is not Jacob that initiates the wrestling, but a man as a divine figure. This God-initiative action is also seen in the angels of God who met Jacob in 32:1.


655 Coogan, *The Old Testament*, 76.

656 See Holmgren, “Holding Your Own Against God!,” 10.
“many scholars find little evidence of Jacob’s inner conversion,” it is hard to see that Jacob has changed. Cotter, for example, says, “But the Jacob who remains a character in the following chapters does not seem notably transformed; he is still contentious.”

Likewise, Taylor points out that Jacob’s character appears to be unchanged after the wrestling episode: “A problem with this ‘total conversion’ theory is that Jacob’s character remains shifty in spots such as in 33:15, 18 where Jacob goes to Succoth instead of Seir.”

In the wrestling episode, God gives Jacob three things: injury, blessing, and a new name. The mysterious divine figure meets Jacob and wrestles with him. The man is anxious to leave before daybreak but Jacob refuses to let him go unless the man blesses him (32:26). Jacob’s persistence in wrestling for blessing from the man demonstrates that Jacob is unchanged. He is still struggling for a blessing and power. The mysterious divine figure responds to Jacob’s persistence: “You have striven with God and with men (Gen 32:28b).” As von Rad has noted, relating “the addition ‘and with men’ . . . to the disputes with Laban or Esau seems to be the only possibility.” The plural “men” “is not just Esau, or he would have been named, but symbolizes every person with whom Jacob struggled . . . Esau, Isaac, Laban.” In this way, the mysterious divine figure’s words confirm that it is Jacob's character to struggle for blessing. Jacob’s character has not changed, as he continues to struggle for a blessing in the Peniel episode. Jacob also struggles for power in the episode in that he asks the mysterious divine figure’s name. As

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657 William T. Miller, Mysterious Encounters at Mamre and Jabbok (BJS 50; Chico: Scholars Press, 1984), 98.
658 Cotter, Genesis, 48.
660 Von Rad, Genesis, 317. Italics mine.
661 Walters, “Travels of a Trickster,” 11.
Smith says, Jacob’s request for name of the mysterious divine figure is “a sure sign that he wants to exert power and influence even over the divine visitor.” But Jacob fails to get the name of the mysterious divine figure. Instead, the man learns Jacob’s name and changes it (32:27-29). Changing a person’s name is “a way to exercise authority over an individual:” “when a suzerain put a vassal on the throne, he sometimes gave him a new name, demonstrating his power over that vassal.” This indicates that the mysterious divine figure is not someone whom Jacob can control and that he is superior to Jacob and has authority over Jacob.

What is noteworthy is the fact that the mysterious divine figure still blesses Jacob (32:26), although he is superior to Jacob and has authority over Jacob. This is God’s message/reminder to Jacob that God blesses him, not because of Jacob’s own power and


663 Amos, The Book of Genesis, 205, points out the superiority of the man to Jacob based on Jacob’s failure to learn the name of the man, “Ultimately the relationship between Jacob and the divine wrestler is not and cannot be a completely equal one . . . Jacob does not learn the name of his opponent in spite of being forced to reveal his own.”

664 John H. Walton et al., The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 65. Ross, “Jacob at the Jabbok, Israel at Peniel,” 345, also points out that the “renaming of Jacob is an assertion of the assailant’s authority to impart a new life and new status (2 Kings 23:24; 24:17).”

665 This is further supported by the fact that Jacob is commended for struggling with men (and God) and that he continues to be called Jacob after Gen 32:32. This argument directly opposes the scholarly view that the Peniel episode confirms Jacob as a hero character who wins against a divine figure. Von Rad, Genesis, 316, says, “the man extorts something of their strength and their secret”; Gunkel, Genesis, 352, states that the Peniel episode is “closely related to those legends and fairy tales that tell of a god compelled by a human through deceit or force to leave behind his secret knowledge or something else divine”; and Westermann, Genesis: A Practical Commentary, 230, says, “This is the point of verse 28b, which exalts Jacob: he has fought ‘with gods and mortals’ (a pair of opposites designating a whole) . . . to exaggerate the virtues of the patriarchs.” Likewise, as Miller, Mysterious Encounters at Mamre and Jabbok, 116, 143, points out, the early Jewish interpretation of the wrestling encounter sees Jacob as being portrayed as “the moral example . . . who is self-reliant, solicitous for all his possessions, protective of his children, eager to receive a blessing . . . , brave, courageous, and physically strong . . . . indicat[ing] a high degree of devotion to God’s word.” In fact, Amos, The Book of Genesis, 203, points out the different features of the wrestling episode from the heroic stories of the traditional folk tales.
ability to control the situation, but because of God’s promise to bless him. This demonstrates God’s faithfulness and grace and is the crucial reminder of the spiritual blessing that Jacob, who has been struggling to seize a blessing and power, must keep in mind as he is about to enter the land of promise.

The injury further emphasizes the reminder that Jacob has been blessed and allowed to enter the land of promise, not because of his power or transformed character, but because of God’s faithfulness to the promise to bring him back to the land safely and to bless him. The injury is intended, not only to demonstrate God’s superiority and authority, but also God’s protection and faithfulness. The injury is also intended to force Jacob to place his trust in God’s promise to be with him and protect him. God injures him so that he is forced to realize once more that it is God’s promise and faithfulness that protect him and bring him back safely to the land of promise. Jacob seems especially helpless when none of his schemes to appease Esau and to protect himself seem to be working: nothing has stopped Esau from coming with his four hundred men (cf. 32:6; 33:1). Jacob, who is physically injured and cannot even control his own body to protect himself, is forced to remember and rely on God’s promise to be with him and protect him in his encounter with Esau. After his encounter with God, Jacob joyfully exclaims, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved (כִי־רָאִית אֱלֹהֵינוּ פָּנֵינוּ וַתְנַצֵּל נַפְשִׁי, Gen 32:31 [MT]).” Jacob expected to be killed by seeing God’s face but has

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666 Holmgren, “Holding Your Own Against God!,” 11, points out that “it is Jacob who leaves the scene limping (32:31-32).”

667 Mann’s comments on the wrestling episode, “All the Families of the Earth,” 349, seems to be correct: “the tension that pervades the entire story is that between human rule and the rule of God.” As discussed above, Jacob has experienced God’s protective power as God thwarted Laban’s attempt to harm Jacob on his journey back to the land of promise (31:24, 29). But instead of trusting God, who has been with him and protected him (cf. 28:15, 31:3, 11ff; 32:1-2), Jacob is busy preparing to protect himself using every possible scheme. Thus, God has to give Jacob an injury.
survived and even received God’s blessing. In other words, in his encounter with God at Peniel, Jacob experiences God’s mercy and grace.

Jacob experiences a similar surprising mercy and grace in his encounter with Esau. Jacob has been extremely afraid of Esau, expecting to be attacked and possibly killed by him. But although Jacob is limping helplessly, he surprisingly experiences a merciful and gracious reception when he finally meets with Esau. “Jacob attributed the change to the work of God:”  

As Jacob's statement in 33:10 ties Jacob’s encounter with God at Peniel with the subsequent account of Jacob’s meeting with Esau, Jacob’s experience with a merciful and gracious God in his encounter with God at Peniel plays the role of a prolepsis with that in his encounter with Esau. God’s mercy and grace towards Jacob is fully realized and confirmed as Esau mercifully and graciously accepts Jacob. In this sense, the attack of God and the injury are the grace of God.  

That Jacob is blessed and enters the land of promise, not because of his own power or efforts, but because of God’s grace and faithfulness to the promise to Jacob to

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669 Many commentators have noted the connection between Jacob’s encounter with God at Peniel and his encounter with Esau based on this wordplay: Davidson, *Genesis*, 190, says that “The phrase ‘seeing the face of God’ seems to be a deliberate echo of Jacob’s encounter at Penuel;” Ross, “Jacob at the Jabbok, Israel at Peniel,” 349, also says that “Meeting God ‘face to face’ meant that he could now look Esau directly in the eye;” Arnold, *Genesis*, 287, says that “Jacob forded the Jabbok expecting to see Esau’s face and fearing death as a result. Instead, he saw God’s face, and lived! It seems only right to commemorate the event and the spot as Peniel, before moving on to face his brother;” Taylor, “Decoding Jacob at the Jabbok and Genesis 32,” 2, points out that “the words ‘face of God’ are so rare that its reoccurrence already in 33:10 seems clearly to signal something important here about the meaning of the preceding story of the wrestling match;” and Spina, “The Face of God,” 17, says, “It was completely appropriate that Jacob should view this gracious display as comparable to divine grace.” See also Curtis, “Structure, Style and Context,” 136, who says that Gen 33:10 “seems to tie chaps. 32 and 33 together and provides a significant clue for the interpretation of the incident at the Jabbok.”

bring him back to the land safely and to bless him, is further demonstrated in the new
name, Israel. The mysterious divine wrestler asks Jacob, “what is your name?” (32:27)
when Jacob demands blessing from him as he is about to leave. Jacob answers, ‘Jacob.’
The name Jacob reflects the character/nature, of one who has struggled for blessing and
power his whole life. Although the man blesses Jacob in response to Jacob’s demand
for blessing, he does so only after he changes Jacob’s name. It is worth noting that a
name change is given when blessing is asked. As Taylor puts it, “in the present context
the giving of a name is a tantamount to receiving a blessing.” This characteristics of a
name change is further demonstrated in some commentators’ discussion on the meaning
of the name Israel.

Some commentators have suggested other options: “May El preserve,” “El will
rule (or strive)” or “Let El rule.” Commentators usually accept either the meaning of
“rule” or “contend/fight,” and the meaning of the name Israel has usually been taken as
“God rules or fights.” In my view, the story of the name change is not only to be intended
to be understood in relation to Jacob’s innate struggle for blessing, but also to remind
Jacob of the spiritual blessing in relation to his corrective identity or destiny as God’s
chosen. Through the new name, Israel, God reminds Jacob, who has been seeking
blessing, that the new name, Israel, is his destiny: God contends/fights for Jacob, not vice

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671 This is demonstrated in the wordplay among “Jabbok (יַבֹ) in 32:23,” “to wrestle (גֶּבֶץ) in 32:25,” and
“Jacob (יַעֲקֹב) in 32:25.” See Stanley Gevirtz, “Of Patriarchs and Puns: Joseph at the Fountain, Jacob at the
673 Speiser, *Genesis*, 255.
674 Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50*, 334. Linguistically the name Israel may mean either
‘God strove’ or ‘May God strive’ or “God fights with you” See Davidson, *Genesis*, 187; Fokkelman,
*Narrative Art in Genesis*, 217. For the scholarly debates of the original meaning of Israel, see Ross, “Jacob
at the Jabbok, Israel at Peniel,” 345-48 and Robert Coote, “The Meaning of the Name Israel,” *HTR* 65:1
(1972): 137-46.
versa. Jacob is blessed not because he has sought blessing for himself, but because he is God’s chosen. In other words, the object of the name change is to contrast Jacob’s innate character of fighting for blessing, reflected in his old name, with his corrective destiny in the new name Israel, whom God protects and blesses. Anderson points out, “Jacob typifies the existence of a people who, like a self-willed son, insists upon making his own way and shaping of the future according to his desire. [But] Israel represents the possibility of a new people who know out of the chastening struggle their dependence upon God’s grace and their reliance upon His rule.” As Taylor puts it, “given that the name is not just any name, but Israel, the new name perhaps signals... a ‘turning point’ in the unfolding of (the) God’s plan for him.”

Within the immediate context, the new name, Israel, given in the wrestling episode, is to remind Jacob that he receives a blessing and enters the land of promise, not because of his own power or transformed character, but because of God’s grace and faithfulness in keeping the promises made to Jacob as God’s chosen. This clearly reveals who Jacob and the nation Israel are, and what roles he and the nation Israel must play in the world as God’s chosen. God’s chosen do not seek power and blessing for themselves, but serve others and are to become a blessing to others. These reminders of the blessing of God’s grace/faithfulness, the blessing given in the wrestling episode and Esau’s gracious reception, enable Jacob to live out his destiny as God’s chosen. This is demonstrated in Jacob’s reaction to Esau when they finally meet.

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675 As discussed above, God has fought for Jacob to protect him and bless him despite the hindrances such as Laban’s deception of wages and threat and Esau’s possible attack.
1.3 Jacob’s Living Out His Destiny as the Chosen: Jacob’s Servanthood towards Esau and Returning the Stolen Blessing

As discussed above, throughout his whole life, Jacob’s ambition or struggle for blessing and power proceeded unabated until the Peniel episode. As discussed earlier, Jacob finally embraces his destiny as the chosen one by returning the blessing to his brother Esau in Gen 33:10, instead of seeking blessing for himself.\(^{678}\) It is not necessary to reiterate, but suffice it to say that this act of returning can only be possible when Jacob is reminded that God blesses him and protects him because of God’s “favour” and the subsequent confirmation of that reminder during his encounter with Esau. After this experience of God’s favour in relation to the encounter with Esau, Jacob shows the changed attitude in his conversation with Esau.

Jacob, the chosen heir of God’s promises, also willingly falls at the feet of his unchosen brother, Esau. Jacob’s calling himself Esau’s servant twice (ךֶָּעַבְד in 33:5; וֹעַבְד in 33:14) while calling Esau his master or lord five times (אֲדֹנִי in 33:8, 13, 14 [twice], 15) is a corrective to the notion of the elect that Jacob, God’s chosen, will practice power over the non-elect/non-chosen Esau, וֹרָב יִעֲבֹד צָעִיר (25:23).\(^{679}\) In my view, this is the way the Jacob narrative conveys the theological message of the biblical concept of being God’s chosen people in relation to power. Contrary to what Jacob is promised by Isaac (Gen 27:29), in the event it is actually Jacob who bows down to Esau at their reunion (Gen 33:3):

\(^{678}\)This is to be compared to Jacob in Genesis 31. As Jacob’s prayer demonstrates in Gen 31:9-12, he believes God’s blessing concerns only material prosperity. He totally leaves out the other elements of God’s promise initially mentioned in Gen 28:13-15: God’s presence with him and subsequent protection, bringing him back to the land of promise, and being a blessing to all the peoples. This demonstrates a change in Jacob because he decides to return the blessing to its original owner when it is not necessary to do so in order to reconcile with Esau.

\(^{679}\)Walters, “Jacob Narrative,” 605, says that this Jacob’s “elaborate obeisance before Esau (33: 3) is without parallel in the Bible.” But there is a parallel in the Joseph story: the brothers elaborate obeisance before Joseph in Gen 50:18. As Esau turns down Jacob’s obeisance by showing his brotherly treatment of Jacob embracing, kissing and weeping, Joseph rejects his brothers’ offer of themselves as his slaves.
This challenges an assumption in terms of the relationship between being God’s chosen and power. Jacob who has struggled/wrestled for power humbles himself before the non-chosen Esau. As Olson comments, Jacob’s “bowing down to the ground seven times . . . is a sign of humility as he approaches Esau”\(^\text{680}\) in 33:1-3.

In sum, Jacob as God’s chosen, being reminded of the blessing in his encounter with God at Peniel (Genesis 32) and in his subsequent encounter with Esau (Genesis 33), realizes that the special status as God’s chosen line of the promise before God is not for the individual advancement of power and material prosperity. Rather, to be chosen means to be the medium for God’s blessings to other people as the elect. Thus, Jacob is able to return the blessing to Esau and humble himself before Esau. Through Jacob’s changed actions the Jacob narrative demonstrates that being God’s chosen is not mainly about being powerful or overpowering others or seeking blessing for themselves, but serving others and becoming a blessing to them.

In my view, through the encounter with God at Peniel and the subsequent encounter with Esau, Jacob realizes that he as the chosen heir is not called to live for striving for the blessing, but being a blessing to others. The realization is demonstrated in Jacob’s changed actions to his brother Esau. This argument is further supported in the portrayal of Esau in Genesis 36.

1.4 **Esau, The Non-Chosen/Rejected, Becoming Prosperous and Advancing Politically**

Commentators have tended to neglect the theological implication of Esau’s genealogy in Genesis 36. For example, R. Syrén goes so far as to argue that Esau has “no apparent

\(^{680}\) Olson, “Genesis,” 25.
theological role to play.”\(^{681}\) However, I contend that the picture of Esau in Genesis 36 has an important theological implication; in particular what it means to be God’s chosen people in relation to visible or material blessing and power.

As discussed above, Genesis 36 demonstrates Esau’s political power and wealth.\(^{682}\) By the time of the reunion in Genesis 33, Esau has already become wealthy. This is confirmed in Gen 36:6-8 which explains why Esau moves to Seir: the land of Canaan was not able to accommodate his vast wealth and that of his brother (Gen 36:6-8). Although, “for most of the interpreters the Bible presents Esau/Edom in consistently and unambiguously pejorative terms,”\(^{683}\) from a social and political point of view, Genesis 36 depicts Esau’s future as blessed or successful as Jacob’s when it comes to material or visible blessing and power.

Furthermore, this chapter shows that Esau’s future includes more than just wealth. Esau also becomes a nation, Edom, with kings (36:31-39) long before Jacob/Israel. It is obvious that kingship is regarded in a positive way in the book of Genesis, as it is part of God’s promise (Gen 17:6, 16; 35:11; cf. 49:10). As Spina points out, “Esau was blessed with an excellent future consisting of progeny, prosperity, land, statehood, and kings . . . [and] Esau took ownership of his divinely promised national territory almost immediately whereas Jacob’s descendants had to undergo a long period of foreign subjugation first (cf. Gen 15:13; 37-50; Ex. 1-12; Josh 24:4).”\(^{684}\) Likewise, Waltke says, “These segmented genealogies of the twelve tribes of Esau and their conquest of the Horites at Mount Seir


\(^{682}\) I have discussed this in Chapter Four, in the section 7.2 “The Fulfillment of God’s Oracle/Promise and the (Supposedly) Non-chosen Prosper/Preserved Alive Despite their Unworthiness.” Look at especially footnote # 1 under that section.


suggest the greatness of Edom. The inference is strengthened by the king list that precedes any king in Israel."\(^{685}\) In this sense, Esau is shown to become successful or blessed even before Jacob the chosen heir. This is well expressed by Kline, "[r]emarkably, while the explicit promise of king and kingdom made to favored Jacob (35:11; cf. 17:6; Nu. 24:7; Dt. 17:14ff) was still unfulfilled, kingship emerged in Edom, the land of scarcely-blessed Esau (36:31)."\(^{686}\) Commenting on Gen 36:31 Ross goes so far as to say, "[t]he point of this section is comparative: there were kings in Edom ‘before any king reigned over the Israelites’ (v. 31)."\(^{687}\)

In my view, through this thriving portrayal of Esau in Genesis 36 compared with the situation of the chosen, Jacob, in Gen 37:1, in which Jacob’s situation is described as at this time relatively inferior to Esau’s, the Jacob narrative conveys the theological message that being God’s chosen is not mainly about having power and material or visible blessing. The primary blessing given to God’s chosen concerns a spiritual blessing, although it also includes a material blessing.\(^{688}\) This is well summarized by Ross:

The most important thing for the exegete to note is that 37:1 is part of this section [Gen 36:1-43], . . . In contrast to the expanding, powerful Esau, Jacob was dwelling in the land of the sojournings of his father . . . He had no kings, no full tribes, and no lands to govern. He too was a sojourner. Delitzsch notes poignantly that “secular greatness in general grows up far more rapidly than spiritual greatness” . . . The promised spiritual blessing demands patience in faith, and emphasizes that waiting while others prosper is a test of faithfulness and perseverance. . . . God will give the promised blessings to Jacob’s seed, but only after long refining and proving of the faith.\(^{689}\)

\(^{685}\) Waltke, *Genesis*, 488.

\(^{686}\) Kline “Genesis,” 107. Waltke, *Genesis*, 488, says, “These segmented genealogies of the twelve tribes of Esau and their conquest of the Horites at Mount Seir suggest the greatness of Edom. The inference is strengthened by the king list that precedes any king in Israel.”

\(^{687}\) Ross, *Creation & Blessing*, 587.

\(^{688}\) It is obvious that Jacob also received material blessing as it is demonstrated in Gen 30:43; 32:10; 33:11; and 36:7.

\(^{689}\) Ross, *Creation & Blessing*, 588.
In this statement, Ross points out that Gen 36:1-37:1 demonstrates the blessing of the chosen heir, which is beyond the material blessing and power.\(^690\)

This view of the concept of being God’s chosen in its relation to the priority of the spiritual blessing in Gen 36:1-37:1 can be correlated with Jacob’s changed actions when Jacob bows down to Esau, calling himself Esau’s servant (33:3, 5, 14, 15) and returning the unjust blessing (33:11; cf. Genesis 27).\(^691\) Therefore, Genesis 36 seems to be integrally linked to a theological reflection on the biblical concept of being God’s chosen. What is the destiny of God’s chosen and what does it mean to be God’s chosen people? Whatever the historical realities behind Genesis 36, through the chapter demonstrating Esau’s political power and material prosperity, the Jacob narrative seems to be suggesting that being God’s chosen is not mainly about having power and material or visible blessing. As Cotter points out, “Contrast that with Esau and his family . . . who has become a nation. Of the two sons he is the more attractive, the one to whom we as readers are more drawn. All of this serves as a reminder that Jacob and his family were

\(^{690}\) Similarly, Waltke, *Genesis*, 488, comments on Gen 36:1-37-1, “On its part, Israel commits itself to a life of faith in God and his promises. . . . The first account of Esau’s line (36:1-8), similar to the account of Ishmael (25:12-18), functions to show that Esau, like Ishmael, cuts himself off from the covenant line of blessing . . . and, like Lot, by leaving the Promised Land in search of greater prosperity (Gen 36:7-8). To be sure, their possessions are too abundant for Jacob and Esau to remain together (36:7), but Esau could have migrated north to Shechem where there was room within the Promised Land (cf. 34:21). In contrast, Jacob visibly shows his faith by marrying from Terah’s family, not the Canaanites, and by remaining committed to the land of the patriarchs,” Terence E. Fretheim, “Which Blessing Does Isaac Give Jacob?” in *Jews, Christians, and the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures* (SBLSymS 8; ed. A. O. Bellis and J. S. Kaminsky; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 279-91, also says that Gen 36:1-37:1 describes Esau as having a blood relationship with the chosen line of Jacob, but being excluded from the promises and blessings which constitute the identity of God’s chosen people. Likewise, Turner, *Genesis*, 156, comments, “[t]he very fact that Esau’s genealogy is being listed now is evidence that no matter how much wealth he displays, how many sterling qualities he might have, and no matter where the reader’s sympathies lie, he is not the chosen one. The patriarchal line, and the fulfillment of the promises, should they ever come, are invested not in his children but in Jacob’s.”

\(^{691}\) I have argued in this chapter, section 1.3 “Jacob’s Changed Attitude: Servanthood towards Esau and Returning the Stolen Blessing” that this Jacob’s actions are enabled by the reminder of the blessing at Peniel, which is fully realized in Esau’s gracious reception at their reunion.
chosen to be the source of blessing in the world . . . [as the one who] stood in need of . . . God’s steadfast love and faithfulness.”

A similar view of being chosen recurs in the episodes showing the brotherly relationship between Joseph and his brothers in the Joseph narrative. The special status as God’s chosen is related, not so much to individual advancement, power and material prosperity, as to the means of becoming the medium for God’s blessing to other people.

2. Joseph and His Brothers: Being God’s Chosen is Not about Overpowering Others, but about Serving and Being a Blessing to Them

2.1 Initial Misunderstanding of Joseph and his Brothers about Being God’s Chosen as Having Privilege and Overpowering Others

Many scholars have also noted that the theme of the struggle for power plays a key role in the development of the Joseph narrative. Blum, for example, says, “erscheint es mir wesentlich, die Herrschaftsproblematik da zu belassen, wo sie in der Erzählung verankert ist: zum einen in dem für das Ganze schlechthin zentralen Verhältnis zwischen Joseph und den Brüdern, zum anderen in Josephs Herrschaft über Ägypten.”

The struggle for power as a crucial thematic concern is further demonstrated in its link to the motif of God’s election in the beginning of the Joseph narrative as God’s election or seeming favouritism towards Joseph over his brothers is recounted through the prophetic dreams in Gen 37:7, 10. The brothers respond to Joseph with an interrogative sentence when they hear the first dream: “Will you be a king for us? Will you rule over us? (37:8).” In other words, Joseph’s brothers interpret Joseph’s first dream as a

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692 Cotter, Genesis, 262.
693 Blum, Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte, 240; Westermann, Genesis 37-50, 34-35, comments on Gen 37 that the Joseph story as a whole concerns the questions of power and authority between family and state.
694 This parallels the birth oracle in the Jacob narrative (Gen 25:23).
prediction of his overpowering them and their being in a position of subordination. However, the brothers’ understanding that Joseph has been chosen to rule over them is proven to be incorrect as the Joseph narrative unfolds.

“The verb form appears 170 times in the Old Testament with the following meaning”: “bow (politely or respectfully),” “prostrate oneself,” “make obeisance,” “bend low (in worship or as a sign of respect).” Therefore, the verb does not exclusively imply a sign of submission to someone. In fact, as Gen 33:6 indicates the verb is used to show respect to Esau as Jacob’s family greet Esau. However, as Gen 37:8 describes, Joseph’s brothers misunderstand the verb חוה in relation to its connection with מלך (‘be king’) and משלי (‘rule’).

In fact, such misunderstanding is corrected in Genesis 45 and 50, which demonstrate the destiny of the chosen.

2.2 Joseph on the Destiny of the Chosen (including Himself) and the Preservation of the Non-Chosen and Unworthy (Joseph’s Brothers) through Joseph

As discussed above, Joseph knew that God had given him the gift of interpreting dreams and that it subsequently led him to success (Genesis 39-41). With the privilege of foreseeing God’s merciful and gracious plan, Joseph also knew that divine favor had been given to him, not for personal privilege, but for the saving of his family and others. But when Joseph encounters his brothers he is caught between the desire for revenge and the acceptance of his destiny. Knowing God’s merciful and gracious dealings with him and

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695 Joseph’s silence to their interpretation suggests that he agrees with them.
697 Pirson, The Lord of the Dreams, 48-50, also maintains that in the Old Testament the Hebrew word חוה does not have a connotation of submission or subordination to someone. The verb form חותהון occurs twice in Gen 33:6 and 37:7.
698 Kaminsky, Yet I Loved Jacob, 61, says, “while he ends up in slavery in Potiphar’s house (Gen 37:36; 39:1), his elect status propels him into the highest possible position he could occupy there (Gen 39:4).”
699 With regard to Joseph’s foreknowledge about his destiny as the chosen one, I have discussed this in Chapter One, section 2.1.2 “Joseph’s Second Interaction with His Brothers (Gen 42-44).”
God’s plan for his family and others, Joseph finally embraces his destiny as the chosen and further corrects the misunderstanding of being God’s chosen in relation to power and privilege. For Joseph that special status as the chosen, far from being unfair, entails servanthood, leadership and stewardship for his family and all the peoples (Gen 45:4-9; 50:15-21).

In particular, through Joseph, the story articulates an insight into the concept of God’s election when, out of fear for their lives, Joseph’s brothers offer themselves to be subordinate to Joseph (Gen 50:18; cf. Gen 45:4-9). At this point, Joseph comforts his brothers and explains God’s purpose for his special status. As Carr points out, “Joseph’s reply to his brothers at this point is a crucial indicator of the type of authority being advocated here. He reassures them and explicitly distinguishes himself from God (Gen 50:19). . . . Joseph simply provides for them” (45:11; 47:12; 50:21) because that is why God placed him in his position of authority (45:5-8; 50:20). These passages depict

700 Carr, Reading the Fractures of Genesis, 276. E. M. McGuire, “The Joseph Story: A Tale of Son and Father.” In Images of Man and God: Old Testament Short Stories in Literary Focus (BLS 1; ed. B. O. Long; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1981), 19, also summarizes the kind of leadership in the Joseph story, “As the narrator has shown throughout, the essence of Joseph’s heroic conduct is that he consistently and graciously defers to both father and God in questions of authority, precedence, and definitive interpretations. All that has transpired, insists Joseph, has been designed and carried out by God to save multitudes of people from harm. Joseph’s heroism has, from first to last, been that which is granted to him by God, not that which, like some Prometheus, Antigone, or (to some extent) Odysseus, he has sought to acquire by virtue of his own strength or nobility.” See also Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 364. Indeed, many scholars have noted the character development in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives. For instance, Cohn, “Narrative Structure and Canonical Perspective in Genesis,” 15, compares the growth of human characters to biological development, saying, “At first like infants, the primeval figures need to be watched closely, slapped down immediately. Then, like a growing child, Abraham is led and guided with the vision of the future always before him. Jacob, like a man who has reached majority, takes charge of his life and responsibility for his actions. Finally Joseph, like a person wise in years, acts determinedly, with faith in God, and thereby preserves his family.” Likewise, Ross, Creation and Blessing, 690, points out how Gen 47:28-48:22 depict Jacob’s growth in his faith, saying, “Various aspects of faith form the background of the words of Jacob in this passage. Most notable is his discernment of the will of God in blessing the younger over the elder . . . Also notable is the sense of certainty that the promise will find its fulfillment in the land of Canaan. In harmony with this confidence Jacob obtained the promise from Joseph to bury him there . . . The passage is fully about the faith of the patriarch who was about to die without receiving the promises but who had learned in his lifetime about the ways of God.”
Joseph as a humble person who realizes the source of the power or leadership he is given and the reason why he is given that power.

This actualization of the realization of the corrective meaning of power and blessing is consistent with Jacob’s changed attitude towards power and blessing as discussed above. The changed attitude of Jacob and Joseph towards their brothers supports the argument that the chosen finally embrace their destiny which is to transfer God’s faithful and gracious treatment/plan for them and others. This embrace enables them to live out their destiny by serving others and being a blessing to them. This is well articulated by Jacob and Joseph themselves (Gen 32:11; 33:10; 45:5-8; 50:20). With regard to the connection between the awareness of undeserved grace of God and chosenness of the people of God, Kaminsky writes:

The ability to sense one’s chosenness and also to see one’s character flaws is perhaps one of the greatest achievements of the Israelite religious mind. It creates a sense of ultimate meaning for one’s nation, but it does so in ways that mitigate movement toward an unfettered imperialism and triumphalism.701

In other words, the sense of undeserved grace of God and chosenness of the people of God in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives enables Jacob and Joseph to live out their destiny by serving others and being a blessing to them. Thus, the Jacob and Joseph stories demonstrate how the divine election of Jacob and Joseph “reaches its fruition in a humble yet exalted divine service which benefits the elect and the non-elect alike.”702 The understanding of the biblical concept of election in relation to underserved grace and chosenness and the blessing of the unchosen is a theological corrective to the initial misunderstanding of the biblical characters. It is also a challenge to some commentators’

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701 Kaminsky, Yet I Loved Jacob, 77.
critique of God’s election as theologically and morally troublesome or unfair.\textsuperscript{703} As J. N. Lohr puts it, “[t]o be unchosen is to be on one side of the equation in relation to God. To be chosen is to be on the other side, but both sides entail a relationship to God and a responsibility to ‘the other.’”\textsuperscript{704}

3. Human Favouritism vs. Divine Election

Kaminsky asks why “few commentators have bothered to articulate why such unfair favouritism should be unacceptable when humans engage in it, while the same unwarranted partiality is acceptable when it comes from God.”\textsuperscript{705} This argument that the biblical concept of divine election is unfair is based on Kaminsky’s view of divine election as being the same as human favouritism:

The fact that God favors Joseph as Jacob does indicates that God loves in a way that humans do and points toward a theological explanation of the concept of Israel’s election. If God’s love is like human love in any way whatsoever, then it is unlikely that God has an identical love for all nations and all individuals. . . . In some sense God’s special love for Israel reveals God’s ability to connect to humans in a much more profound and intimate way than the assertion that God has a generic and equal love for all humans.\textsuperscript{706}

Thus, to Kaminsky, when it comes to the subject of God’s election in relation to the non-elect such as Esau and Joseph’s brothers, the non-elect must “fully . . . accept that the gifts people receive in life are never fairly distributed, especially the love and favor received from parents or from God.”\textsuperscript{707} However, Kaminsky’s view of divine election as unfair is problematic because a careful examination of the biblical writers does not support such an equation. In fact, the Jacob and the Joseph narratives seem to contrast the

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\textsuperscript{703} Fung, \textit{Victim and Victimizer}; Kaminsky, \textit{Yet I Loved Jacob}.
\textsuperscript{704} Lohr, \textit{Chosen and Unchosen}, 200.
\textsuperscript{705} Kaminsky, “Reclaiming of a Theology of Election,” 136.
\textsuperscript{706} Kaminsky, \textit{Yet I Loved Jacob}, 67.
\textsuperscript{707} Kaminsky, \textit{Yet I Loved Jacob}, 67.
\end{flushright}
destructive consequences of human favouritism with the merciful and gracious outcomes of God’s election.

Rebekah’s favouritism toward Jacob brings about family separation and brotherly strife which results in a threat to the life of Jacob, the chosen (cf. Gen 27:41-45). However, it is God who resolves the problems caused by human favouritism by working through the reconciliation between the brothers, Jacob and Esau. Likewise and more clearly, the Joseph narrative demonstrates how human favouritism (cf. Gen 37:3-36) brings about the destructive consequences of family separation and brotherly strife which threatens the life of Joseph. In comparison with these destructive consequences, God extends salvation and blessings to the non-elect, the brothers and the whole world, despite their unworthiness (Gen 50:15-21). Therefore, Kaminsky’s view that God’s election is unfair based on the equation of God’s election with human favouritism is not convincing, as it overrides the clear textual explanation of the corrective purpose of Joseph’s election. It is unreasonable and arbitrary to regard God’s election of Joseph over his brothers as unfair. P. D. Miller is apt in his criticisms of Kaminsky when he notes, “he shies away from the instrumental notion, even though there are texts that point

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709 I have shown that Jacob’s attributing Esau’s mercy and grace to God’s intercession (Gen 33:10) indicates God’s work in the reunion between the brothers in Chapter Five, section 1.3 “Jacob’s Changed Attitude: Servanthood towards Esau and Returning the Stolen Blessing.”

710 Arnold, Genesis, 388, points out how this kind of comparison between God’s salvation and humans’ failure recurs in the book of Genesis by saying that “Joseph’s theological insight of v. 20 [Gen 50:20] summarizes the themes not only of Joseph Novel, but also of the book of Genesis overall, since the ‘good-and-evil’ dyad is so central to the Eden narrative as well (2:9). The persistent drumbeat of the Primeval History is that humans choose evil, but throughout the book we learn that God can turn it to good.”

711 Indeed Kaminsky, Yet I Loved Jacob, 69, acknowledges the true meaning of Joseph’s election: “the purpose of his election was not so that he could lord it over his brothers, but so that he could be in a position to save their lives [which] both Joseph and his brothers initially misunderstood.”
just as clearly in that direction.” Indeed, even Kaminsky acknowledges at some point that God’s election is related to the responsibility of the elect towards the non-elect: “Gen 12:2-3 makes clear, Abraham’s and thus Israel’s election is closely bound up with God’s larger plan to bring blessing to the whole world.”

Furthermore, through Joseph, the elect, the brothers, the non-elect are not only preserved alive, but also blessed, despite their unworthiness. They themselves acknowledge this by feeling guilty and even thinking they deserve to be punished for their wrongdoings to Joseph (cf. Gen 42:21, 22) and to become his slaves (cf. Gen 50:17-18). But despite their unworthiness, what the brothers experience is nothing but grace and mercy through forgiveness, acceptance, and preservation from the severe famine, and they eventually are blessed and inherit the Land of Promise, becoming the nation Israel (cf. Genesis 49). In fact, throughout the Jacob and the Joseph narratives, it is demonstrated that the unworthy people of God are saved and blessed by God’s unconditional mercy and grace despite their unworthiness or faults. It is true that the

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712 Patrick D. Miller’s review of Kaminsky’s book, Yet I loved Jacob, accessed 18 November, 2010. Online at: http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/6201_6898.pdf. This review was published by RBL 2008 by the Society of Biblical Literature. This avoidance of the presence of the instrumental notion of God’s election in the Joseph story leads Kaminsky to argue for the unfairness of God’s election. But as Miller argues, it seems to be arbitrary and unfair, especially for the Joseph story, when such an instrumental concept of God’s election is most clearly presented in the story (e.g., Gen 45 and 50:15-21). Miller uses the expression, “instrumental notion,” to refer to the understanding of election as a call to serve and being a medium of blessing to the others, “contrasting with the notion of election as resting only in God’s choice and favor (e.g., Deut. 7 and 9).”

713 Kaminsky, Yet I Loved Jacob, 82. Responding to Patrick’s criticism on his denial of the existence of the instrumental notion of election, Kaminsky, says that he is “indeed worried about reducing the purpose of Israel’s election down to service. I recognize that God’s choice of Israel remains mysterious even if Israel’s election serves a purpose. I also acknowledge that Israel does in fact serve God’s greater purposes for the world. However, Israel’s election is not reducible to her service.” In this way, Kaminsky admits that there is the instrumental notion in the divine election. Agreeing with Patrick, in my view, the instrumental notion is most strongly demonstrated in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives. Kaminsky’s response is available online at: http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/6201_6898.pdf.

714 As mentioned in Chapter Four, Section 7.2 “The Fulfillment of God’s Oracle/Promise: The (Supposedly) Non-chosen Prosper/Preserved Alive,” Joseph’s brothers suppose that Joseph is the chosen one as shown in their interpretation of Joseph’s dream in Gen 37, although they are the promised heir along with Joseph.
Abraham story conveys a similar theological concept in a way that Abraham receives God’s promise and blessing despite his occasional disobedience and unbelief (cf. Gen 12:10-20; 16; and 20). However, the Abraham story is very distinct from the Jacob and the Joseph narratives when it comes to the issue of the relationship between God’s promise/blessing and human obedience/worthiness.

For instance, Dorsey argues that the implied message in Gen 1:1–Exod 19:2 is that "it is Yahweh, not the ancestors of Israel, who deserves Israel’s admiration and gratitude as the hero of its history." To support his argument, Dorsey demonstrates how Abraham is portrayed as vulnerable and weak, suggesting that human unworthiness is a precondition for God’s abundant grace, and the patriarchal stories are just part of the historical prologue to Yahweh’s great treaty with Israel. However, Dorsey’s view is less than fully convincing. For instance, Dorsey delimits the Abraham story as Gen 12:1–21:7, excluding the story of Abraham’s absolute obedience at Moriah (Gen 22:1-13). Dorsey’s boundary on the Abraham story is thus unconvincing, as commentators have noted the connections between Gen 12:1-9 and Gen 22:1-19, suggesting the inclusion of the latter in the Abraham story. In fact, Abraham’s obedience in Genesis 22 is very important in terms of God’s promise as it is the basis for the reaffirmation of the initial promises in Gen 12:1-3. God proclaims to Abraham that all the blessings and promises made in 12:1-3 are surely to be fulfilled “because you have obeyed my voice (22:18,

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717 Sarna, Understanding Genesis, 160-61, notes eight parallels and theme-words, connecting the two sections and uses the term “spiritual odyssey”; Wenham, Genesis 16-50, 98, says that the “overall structure reinforces the sense of parallel between Gen 12.1-9, Abraham’s call and 22.1-19, his testing. The first tells of Abraham’s first encounter with God, the second of his final encounter;” Garrett, Rethinking Genesis, 161, compares Gen 12:1-9, “Initiation of the Promise,” to Gen 22:1-19, “Vindication of the Promise”; and Jacob, The First Book of the Bible, 143, points out, “The ascending line of demands reminds of 12:1; the reference to that passage becomes incontestable by the use of the same Hebrew word for go.”
Even God’s promise and blessing in Gen 12:1-3 are not purely unconditional because the promises are contingent on Abraham’s compliance with the divine command to go (v. 1b). As Williamson says, as God’s promise and blessing in “both passages [i.e. Gen 12:1-3 and Gen 22:1-19] . . . are consequent on Abraham's compliance;” thus, “[they are] not a purely gracious pronouncement.” In fact, without the story of Abraham’s unswerving obedience in Gen 22:1-13, the reassurance of the promises to his descendants based on that in Gen 22:15-18 is not explicable (cf. Gen 26:5, 24; 28:13-15; 35:12; 50:24). Thus, Dorsey’s argument based on God’s abundant grace despite human unworthiness that it is God, not the patriarchs, who deserves Israel’s recognition and worship, seems not to be applicable to the Abraham story.

However, the view of God as the hero, not the ancestors, is clearly demonstrated in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives as God’s promises, such as progeny, land and blessings, are no longer contingent on the recipient’s obedience or exemplary acts. That is why, as discussed in the previous chapter, the reiteration of the Abrahamic promises in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives appears when least expected in terms of the chosen people’s merits (Gen 26:5, 24; 28:13-15; 35:12; 50:24).

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Conclusion

A Parallel Structure between the Jacob Narrative (Gen 25:19-37:1) and the Joseph Narrative (Gen 37:2-50:26): The Purpose of God’s Election of the Patriarchs

As discussed above, the redactional materials are carefully redacted and added to the Joseph story so as to complete the parallel between the Jacob narrative and the Joseph narrative. It is clear that the particular stories and events of the Jacob and the Joseph narratives have been selected and rearranged in order to convey the message clearly and persuasively. This recognition of the parallel features in the Jacob and the Joseph narratives certainly helps the reader to understand well the theological/ideological message.\(^{720}\) The Jacob and the Joseph narratives demonstrate how God brings God's unconditional faithfulness, grace and blessing to fruition even when the people and all situations are against success in that all the characters, Jacob, Isaac, Joseph and his brothers, very often fall far short in their actions but are still blessed despite their unworthiness because of God’s unconditional grace and faithfulness. These things are clearly discernable in the matching pattern of the set of units in the two stories.

In the first matching set of units of the Jacob narrative and the Joseph narrative (Gen 25:19-34 and Gen 37:2-36), a stage for the rest of the stories is set by introducing a divine communication with the chosen people concerning divine election. The second matching set of units (Gen 26:1-35 and Gen 38:1-30) recount how, respectively, Isaac is preserved and blessed, and Judah’s descendants are preserved and become the royal line, despite their unworthiness. The third set of units (Gen 27:1-28:22 and Gen 39:1-23) show how God’s presence with the chosen people, Jacob and Joseph, enable them to

\(^{720}\) See Waltke, *Genesis*, 34.
experience God’s unconditional grace and to prosper in times of trial. The fourth pair of units (Gen 29:1-30:43 and Gen 40:1-41:57) demonstrate how God continues to make the chosen heirs become prosperous despite the difficult situations; further God enables other peoples, Laban, the Egyptians, and the whole world, to enjoy blessing through the chosen. In the fifth pair of units (Gen 31:1-33:20 and Gen 42:1-47:12), reconciliation between the brothers, Jacob and Esau and Joseph and his brothers respectively, are established. The chosen, Jacob and Joseph, confess God’s unconditional faithfulness and grace despite their unworthiness (Gen 32:11; 33:10; 45:5-8; 50:20) and finally embrace and live out their destiny as the chosen. The sixth pair of units (Gen 34:1-35:29 and Gen 47:13-50:14) further demonstrate how God’s promises are reaffirmed to the chosen people despite their unworthiness. The seventh pair of units (Gen 36:1-43 and Gen 50:15-21) demonstrate how the non-chosen/rejected become prosperous and are preserved despite their unworthiness due to God’s faithfulness. The last pair of units (Gen 37:1 and Gen 50:22-26) end with the anticipation of God’s promise of land.

The parallel pair of units of the Jacob and the Joseph narratives demonstrate how God’s unconditional faithfulness and grace work through the sinful history of the chosen people and finally enable them to live out their destiny by serving others and being a blessing to them. As von Rad puts it, “[i]n the story of Jacob and Joseph we are brought close to the thought that God works even in and through man’s sin!” 721 God’s grace and faithfulness are also extended to the (supposedly) non-chosen. This invites the nation Israel (and others) to continue to have hope and trust in God and also to live out their destiny by serving others and being a blessing, as the nation/people of God.

721 Von Rad, Genesis, 29-30.
There are times when trusting God’s promise seems unrealistic or even impossible, and when the heir of the promise seems unworthy to receive the promises. But the people of God can continue to trust in God’s grace and faithfulness because God fulfills the promises in spite of the unworthiness of the people and impossible situations. In so doing, the people of God are also invited and encouraged to be hopeful and remain faithful to remind themselves of the ancestors whom God blessed and enabled them to live out their destiny by serving others and being a blessing to them.
Bibliography


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