



The Book of Genesis

Joseph

Interpreting the Text:

1. If Joseph (and the narrator) understand everything in his story to be pre-ordained by God for the purpose of saving the Israelites, can we talk about there being any villains in the narrative? How does this author understand forces that may work against God (or do they exist at all)?
2. If the Joseph story leads to the enslavement in Egypt, then should we think of it positively or negatively? How do we fit individual episodes into the overall national trajectory?
3. How do the literary qualities of the Joseph story affect our sense of its historical accuracy? What makes this more like a 'novella' than the other stories in Genesis?

Applying the Text:

1. Exceptionally, Joseph forgives his brothers despite their utter betrayal. Should forgiveness have limitations? What does this story tell us about forgiving our own betrayers?
2. The story of Judah and Tamar, though somewhat woven in as an interlude, features a patriarch owning up to a mistake they made. How can we as readers learn to take ownership of our actions and errors, especially when we are in positions of power over the person wronged?
3. Dr. Baden points out that God works "behind the scenes" throughout the Joseph story. Joseph trusts that God will take care of everything, and ultimately he's right. How does this influence the way we think about God's influence over our lives?