

Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2026.04.19

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Sermon recordings

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Speaker-AM: Robbie Moreland

Title: Philosophies: Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Cynicism

Recording:



Meaning Of Life - Bible

Speaker-PM: Kraig Benney

Title: The Simple Gospel

Recording:



Col 2:8

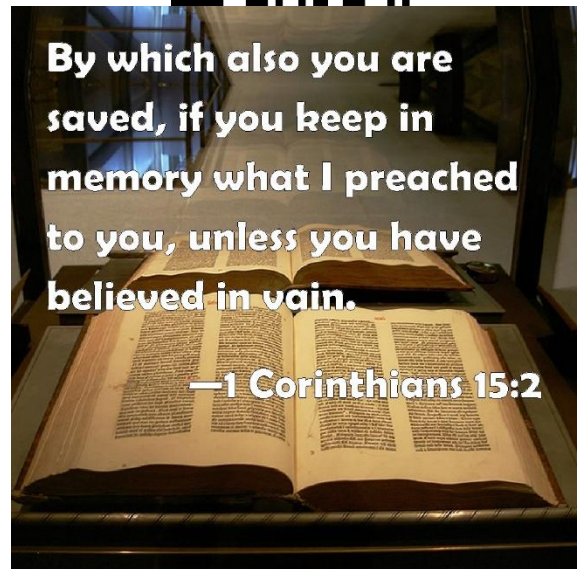
See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

1Cor 2:13

And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

Ecc 12:13-14

The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.



News and Prayer Requests

- Oak Grove Gospel Meeting June 21-26.

Article

Judah: Most Improved, by Eric Reynolds via Biblical Insights, Vol. 14 No. 8, August 2014

“Most Improved” awards are often the most special. While some have the talents or disposition to excel from the start, others stand out by improving. We celebrate these dramatic developments because they are rare, whether in sports, the classroom, or in life. When a sinner repents, the angels in Heaven rejoice (Luke 15:10).

One of the earliest examples in Scripture of someone whose character demonstrably changes for the better is Judah, the fourth son of Jacob. Judah will be the son of promise, the progenitor of the Davidic dynasty and our Lord, but there is no hint of this future glory when we first meet him.

Jacob was the father of twelve sons, but he loved Judah's younger brother Joseph the most. His favoritism was hardly a secret; in fact, Jacob gave Joseph a special coat that practically declared the fact. Judah and his brothers resented Joseph, and their hatred was further intensified by his dreams of rising above them.

One day, the brothers see Joseph approaching and conspire to kill him. Then a passing caravan gives Judah an idea: “Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh” (Genesis 37:26-27). It is a merciful suggestion, though only by comparison to cold-blooded fratricide. The brothers hide their crime by spoiling Joseph's special robe in animal blood and presenting it to their father as evidence of a violent end to his favorite son.

Twenty years pass. Joseph rises to power in Egypt and is put in charge of food reserves for the coming famine. When it arrives, Judah and his brothers travel to Egypt to buy food and come face-to-face with their long-lost brother, Joseph, though they do not recognize him. Joseph accuses them of being spies and releases them on the condition that they return with their youngest brother, Benjamin.

They know this will upset their father, who has shifted his favoritism to Benjamin. Not surprisingly, Jacob initially balks at any talk of his beloved son going to Egypt. He only relents after an impassioned plea by Judah in which he offers himself as a pledge for Benjamin's safety.

When they arrive in Egypt, Joseph is overjoyed to see Benjamin, but he has one final test before revealing his true identity. His royal cup is placed in Benjamin's sack, leading to Benjamin's arrest. Joseph tells the brothers they are free to go, but Benjamin must stay.

Judah speaks up and explains why he cannot agree to leave Benjamin in Egypt- "His brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mothers children, and his father loves him" (Genesis 44:20). "Now therefore, as soon as I come to your servant my father, and the boy is not with us, he will die" (44:30). Judah suggests an alternative: “Please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a servant to my lord, and let the boy go back with his brothers. For how can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me?” (Genesis 44:33-34).

This demonstrates several important changes in Judah's character. First, he has come to accept the flawed nature of his father's affections. Originally, Jacob's preference for Joseph caused Judah to hate his brother. Jacob now appears just as biased toward Benjamin as he had been toward Joseph. Judah knows this. “His father loves him,” he says. Judah further understands that Benjamin is the only son whose loss would destroy his father. That must have been difficult to accept, but some things are beyond one's control. Jacob's failings do not justify ill will toward his brother.

Judah knows this now. Love “does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful. ... Love bears all things” (1 Corinthians 13:5-7).

Secondly, Judah has learned to think of others before himself. Previously, he had no concern for his father's feelings when he suggested selling Joseph. He had no compassion when he joined in fabricating Joseph's death. But now he thinks of the pain Benjamin's loss would cause his father, and he puts that ahead of any concern for himself. Love teaches us: “let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Philippians 2:4).

Finally, by freely offering to become a servant in Benjamin's place— effectively giving up his life, never to return home— Judah demonstrates what our Lord refers to as the greatest love (John 15:13). From murderous hatred to selfless concern for others, this dramatic change in Judah leads to reconciliation and a happy ending. For our own stories to end well, we too must put away jealousy, bitterness, and anger, and put on instead: “compassionate hearts, kindness, humility... and above all these put on love” (Colossians 3:12-14).