

Genesis
Chapter Forty-Five

- Joseph Deals Kindly with His Brothers

Joseph Deals Kindly with His Brothers Verses 1-28

Verses 1-3

“Then Joseph could not control himself in front of everyone standing before him, and he shouted, “Have everyone leave me!” So there was no one with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ² Then he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard about it. ³ And Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, for they were terrified in his presence.”

Joseph ordered all the Egyptians out of the room so he could be alone with his brothers. Great emotion filled the soul of Joseph and the brothers. How can one explain the shock of learning Joseph was not only alive, but right in front of them. We’re told the “*brothers were dismayed*”, which means they were frightened or even terrified. They were clueless, helpless, and trembling. Joseph saw their fear. This had to be a moment Joseph played over and over again in his head for two decades.

This scene is a foreshadow of the day when the Jewish people will again see Jesus, this time their eyes and hearts will see Him for who He truly is:

Zechariah 12:10

“And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem [a]the Spirit of grace and of pleading, so that they will look at Me whom they pierced; and they will mourn for Him, like one mourning for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.”

Verses 4-8

“⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Please come closer to me.” And they came closer. And he said, “I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold to Egypt. ⁵ Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me ahead of you to save lives. ⁶ For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. ⁷ So God sent me ahead of you to ensure for you a remnant on the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. ⁸ Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household, and ruler over all the land of Egypt.”

Joseph explains to his brothers the events that have transpired, not from a human vengeful perspective, but from a theological viewpoint. He understood that it was God’s purpose in all that had transpired over the last twenty-two years; each event was commissioned by the hand of God. It was divine providence. Four times Joseph gives God the credit for everything. As for the brother’s part, Joseph says the good God will do is greater than the evil of the brothers. One may ask, “*Why was Joseph in Egypt? Was it because of the sin of his brothers or because of the good plan of God?*” The answer is yes, for both statements are true. Joseph first comforted his brothers, then he commissioned them.

God sent me before you to save your lives by a great deliverance. All Joseph's sorrows were for a purpose. God used them to preserve his family and provide the conditions for Israel to become a nation. Joseph was a victim of men, but God turned it around for His glory. None of it was for a loss. If this family did not go into Egypt to survive, they would have assimilated among the pagan tribes of Canaan and ceased to become a distinctive people. God had to put them in a place where they could grow yet remain a distinctive nation. God was in control, not evil men, not circumstances.

Verses 9-15

“⁹ Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, ‘This is what your son Joseph says: “God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. ¹⁰ For you shall live in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your grandchildren, and your flocks and your herds and all that you have. ¹¹ There I will also provide for you, for there are still five years of famine to come, and you and your household and all that you have would be impoverished.”’ ¹² Behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth which is speaking to you. ¹³ Now you must tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt, and all that you have seen; and you must hurry and bring my father down here.” ¹⁴ Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. ¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and afterward his brothers talked with him.”

As the shock of Joseph's reveal settles in, the brothers, Jacob's sons from Rachel, embrace and weep. The emotional reconciliation began with Joseph and Benjamin. Joseph calls for his father to join the family in Egypt. He had just explained the famine is going to last another five years. Joseph saw to it that they had a place to live, Goshen.



Goshen is the land in Egypt the Pharaoh gave to the Hebrews. It was in Goshen that the Hebrews were enslaved by the Egyptians and forced to make bricks and build cities (Exodus 1:8-

11). This is the same place, centuries later, where Moses will lead them out of Egypt at the time of the Exodus. The land of Goshen was in the eastern part of the Nile Delta. It was far enough from the center of Egyptian life that the influx of Hebrews would not affect daily affairs or Egyptian culture, yet it was still under Egypt's control. During the time of the plagues against Egypt, God protected His people in Goshen:

Exodus 8:22

*“But on that day **I will set apart the land of Goshen**, where My people are ^[s]living, so that no swarms of flies will be there, in order that you may know that I, the LORD, am in the midst of the land.”*

Exodus 9:26

*“**Only in the land of Goshen**, where the sons of Israel were, was there no hail.”*

Verses 16-24

“¹⁶ Now when the news was heard in Pharaoh's house that Joseph's brothers had come, it pleased Pharaoh and his servants. ¹⁷ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: load your livestock and go to the land of Canaan, ¹⁸ and take your father and your households and come to me; and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land.’ ¹⁹ Now you are ordered, ‘Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father and come. ²⁰ And do not concern yourselves with your property, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.” ²¹ Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them wagons according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the journey. ²² To each of them he gave changes of garments, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments. ²³ And to his father he sent the following: ten male donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and sustenance for his father on the journey. ²⁴ So he sent his brothers away, and as they departed, he said to them, “Do not quarrel on the journey.””

For Joseph's sake Pharaoh blessed the sons of Jacob with royal generosity. He was pleased that he was able to honor Joseph's family. He promised them the best of the land and he sent them home with carts to help them make the return journey. As ‘proof’ that Joseph was alive and held the position the brothers were going to announce to their father, twenty donkeys were loaded with provisions and gifts for Jacob.

As the brothers were leaving, Joseph wisely warned them not to let their greedy, selfish hearts get the best of them. He tells them not to quarrel and fight over, all that they were about to receive. He knew the possibility of their jealousy overflowing because of the extra blessings Benjamin received and all that was designated for Jacob, was a real threat to their journey to Canaan and back to Egypt. It's been over twenty years, but Joseph still knew his brothers. All of the brothers received festive garments, symbols of reconciliation.

Verses 25-28

“²⁵ Then they went up from Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan, to their father Jacob. ²⁶ And they told him, saying, “Joseph is still alive, and indeed he is ruler over all the land of Egypt.” But he was stunned, for he did not believe them. ²⁷ When they told him all

the words of Joseph that he had spoken to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, then the spirit of their father Jacob revived. 28 Then Israel said, “It is enough; my son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”

Years before when Jacob was told his son Joseph was dead, he believed it. Now two decades later when he is told his son Joseph is alive and well, he does not believe it. The evidence of Joseph’s position and generosity helps *Israel* to comprehend the news that his favorite son was back from the dead. This parallels the news we need to share of Jesus. He is not dead; Jesus is alive and well and He often send blessings to his children as He so faithfully provides for them.

Genesis
Chapter Forty-Six

- Jacob Moves to Egypt

Jacob Moves to Egypt Verses 1-7

Verses 1-4

“So Israel set out with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. ² And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, “Jacob, Jacob.” And he said, “Here I am.” ³ Then He said, “I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. ⁴ I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also assuredly bring you up again; and Joseph will close your eyes.”

Knowing he was not to return, Jacob left nothing behind in Canaan. From Hebron, on his way to Egypt, he traveled twenty-five miles west, when he came to Beersheba, the southernmost part of Canaan. There God spoke to him confirming his decision to go to Egypt. He told Jacob “*not to fear.*”

- Do not fear because I will make you into a great nation
- Do not fear because I will go down to Egypt with you
- Do not fear because I will bring you back

In response, Israel honored God with sacrifices. The significance of this traces back to Abraham and Isaac, where both lived for a time at Beersheba. Many years before, Israel’s grandfather, Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and had called on the name of the LORD there (21:33). Isaac received a special promise from God and also built an altar for sacrifice there, and also called on the name of the LORD.

More than 40 years before, when Jacob was about to leave the Promised Land, God spoke to him in a dream (28:12-17). Now, when he was about to leave the land again, God again brought assurance through a dream. Jacob may have had concerns because he may have remembered that Abraham had gone to Egypt also during a time of famine, and it was an expression of his unbelief. Jacob may have remembered much evil eventually came from that decision.

I can’t help but wonder if Jacob remembered the prophecy God gave Abraham:

Genesis 15:12-14

*“Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him. ¹³ Then God said to Abram, “**Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years.** ¹⁴ But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions.”*

As God spoke to Israel, He told him he did not need to fear the journey to Egypt because God promised to bring him back to the Promised Land. This would be fulfilled after Jacob’s death, but it would be fulfilled. Egypt would not be the permanent home for Israel and his children. God also told Israel what His purpose was in bringing this family down to Egypt.

Prophesying how Israel's descendants would grow as a large, distinct nation there. Egypt would become like a mother's womb to Israel.

Israel needed this reassurance because once God gave Israel the Promised Land, Egypt would become a forbidden place and the provisions of Egypt would be seen as a substitute for the Lord's providing. Eight hundred years in the future Egypt would become an image of bondage and defiance against God (Jeremiah 42, Ezekiel 29).

Jeremiah 42:13-22

"But if you are going to say, 'We will not stay in this land,' so as not to listen to the voice of the LORD your God,¹⁴ saying, 'No, but we will go to the land of Egypt, where we will not see war, or hear the sound of a trumpet, or hunger for bread, and we will stay there';¹⁵ then in that case listen to the word of the LORD, you remnant of Judah. This is what the LORD of armies, the God of Israel says: 'If you really set your minds to enter Egypt and go in to reside there,¹⁶ then the sword, of which you are afraid, will overtake you there in the land of Egypt; and the famine, about which you are anxious, will follow closely after you there in Egypt, and you will die there.¹⁷ So all the people who set their minds to go to Egypt to reside there will die by the sword, by famine, or by plague; and they will have no refugees or survivors from the disaster that I am going to bring on them.'¹⁸ For this is what the LORD of armies, the God of Israel says: 'As My anger and wrath have gushed out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so My wrath will gush out on you when you enter Egypt. And you will become a curse, an object of horror, an imprecation, and a disgrace; and you will not see this place again.'¹⁹ The LORD has spoken to you, you remnant of Judah, 'Do not go to Egypt!' You know for certain that I have admonished you today.²⁰ For you have only deceived yourselves; for it is you who sent me to the LORD your God, saying, 'Pray for us to the LORD our God; and whatever the LORD our God says, tell us so, and we will do it.'²¹ So I have told you today, but you have not obeyed the LORD your God in whatever He has sent me to tell you.²² And now you shall know for certain that you will die by the sword, by famine, or by plague in the place where you desire to go to reside."

Ezekiel 29:1-7

"In the tenth year, in the tenth month, on the twelfth of the month, the word of the LORD came to me, saying,² 'Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him and against all Egypt.³ Speak and say, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: 'Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, The great monster that lies in the midst of his canals, That has said, 'My Nile is mine, and I myself have made it.'⁴ I will put hooks in your jaws And make the fish of your canals cling to your scales. And I will bring you up out of the midst of your canals, And all the fish of your canals will cling to your scales.⁵ I will abandon you to the wilderness, you and all the fish of your canals; You will fall on the open field; you will not be brought together or gathered. I have given you for food to the animals of the earth and to the birds of the sky.⁶ Then all the inhabitants of Egypt will know that I am the LORD, Because they have been only a staff made of reed to the house of Israel.⁷ When they took hold of you with the hand, You broke and tore all their hands; And when they leaned on you, You broke and made all their hips shake."

Verses 5-7

“⁵ Then Jacob left Beersheba, and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob and their little ones and their wives in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. ⁶ They also took their livestock and their possessions, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and came to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him: ⁷ his sons and his grandsons with him, his daughters and his granddaughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.”

Bringing ALL of his descendants with him to Egypt showed that Israel did have faith and trust in God. No one was left behind to continue a presence in Canaan.

Those Who Came to Egypt Verses 8-34

Verses 8-27

“⁸ Now these are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt, Jacob and his sons: Reuben, Jacob’s firstborn. ⁹ And the sons of Reuben: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. ¹⁰ And the sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. ¹¹ And the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. ¹² And the sons of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan). And the sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul. ¹³ And the sons of Issachar: Tola, Puvvah, Iob, and Shimron. ¹⁴ And the sons of Zebulun: Sered, Elon, and Jahleel. ¹⁵ These are the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan-aram, with his daughter Dinah; all his sons and his daughters numbered thirty-three. ¹⁶ And the sons of Gad: Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli. ¹⁷ And the sons of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serah. And the sons of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel. ¹⁸ These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Leah; and she bore to Jacob these sixteen persons. ¹⁹ The sons of Jacob’s wife Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. ²⁰ Now to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, bore to him. ²¹ And the sons of Benjamin: Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard. ²² These are the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob; there were fourteen persons in all. ²³ And the sons of Dan: Hushim. ²⁴ And the sons of Naphtali: Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem. ²⁵ These are the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Rachel, and she bore these to Jacob; there were seven persons in all. ²⁶ All the people belonging to Jacob, who came to Egypt, his direct descendants, not including the wives of Jacob’s sons, were sixty-six persons in all, ²⁷ and the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two; all the people of the house of Jacob, who came to Egypt, were seventy.”

Israel’s entire family is accounted for. They are listed in chronological order and also by their birth mother, (Leah and then Leah’s hand maiden Zilpah, Rachel, then Rachel’s handmaiden, Bilhah). The sons of Judah are special because this is the Messianic lineage (Luke 3:33-34.) There were 70 males on this first journey but over the next 400 years this large family would become a nation of more than two million people.

Footnote:

In Acts 7:14, it reads, “*Then Joseph sent word and invited his father Jacob and all his relatives to come to him, seventy-five people in all.*”

Why does Genesis 46 say 70 men went from Canaan to Egypt, but the book of Acts says there were 75? This is because the Greek Septuagint adds a son (Machir) and a grandson (Galaad) of Manasseh and two sons (Sultalaam and Taam) and a grandson (Edom) of Ephraim. The Septuagint adds these five males as being part of the “family”.

Verses 28-30

“²⁸ Now Jacob sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph, to guide him to Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen. ²⁹ And Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; as soon as he appeared to him, Joseph threw himself on his neck and wept on his neck a long time. ³⁰ Then Israel said to Joseph, “Now let me die, since I have seen your face, that you are still alive.”

Once again Judah becomes the family spokesman as he is the first to be sent to reach Joseph. Knowing his father is close, Joseph takes his chariot to Goshen to greet his father. Jacob’s prior attitude of “*all things being against me*” (42:36), was completely flipped as this reunion of Israel with Joseph was as dramatic as one would think. His sons had brought back the news that Jacob’s favored son was alive; now he is able to experience embracing the son he thought was killed twenty-two years earlier.

Verses 31-34

“³¹ But Joseph said to his brothers and to his father’s household, “I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and will say to him, ‘My brothers and my father’s household, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me; ³² and the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock; and they have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have.’ ³³ When Pharaoh calls for you and says, ‘What is your occupation?’ ³⁴ you shall say, ‘Your servants have been keepers of livestock since our youth even until now, both we and our fathers,’ so that you may live in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians.”

The family successfully arrived in Egypt however they needed Joseph to go to the Pharaoh and advocate for them. Even though they had sheep, having their own livestock would keep them from becoming an economic burden. However, the Egyptians considered sheep unclean, and therefore detested shepherds. As they were in Canaan, shepherds were at the bottom of the social ladder. Agriculture and growing crops were the foundation of the Egyptian economy.

Joseph advocating for his family is another parallel between Joseph and Jesus. Believers need Jesus to advocate on our behalf. After Joseph’s death, the new pharaohs (kings) forgot about Joseph and made the people of Israel slaves. The Israelites lost their standing and their freedom. This shows what would happen if believers had no one advocating for them before God.

Exodus 1:8-11

*“Now **a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.** 9 And he said to his people, “Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. 10 Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, otherwise they will multiply, and in the event of war, they will also join those who hate us, and fight against us and depart from the land.” 11 So they appointed taskmasters over them to oppress them with hard labor. And they built for Pharaoh storage cities, Pithom and Raamses.”.*