

GENESIS

Lesson 62

Genesis 45:1-28 Joseph Makes Himself Known

¹ Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. ² And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it.

³ Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! ⁵ And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. ⁶ For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. ⁷ But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

⁸ "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. ⁹ Now hurry back 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; don't delay. ¹⁰ You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me—you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. ¹¹ I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.' ¹² "You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you. ¹³ Tell my father about all the honor accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly."

¹⁴ Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. ¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

¹⁶ When the news reached Pharaoh's palace that Joseph's brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased. ¹⁷ Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and return to the land of Canaan, ¹⁸ and bring your father and your families back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you can enjoy the fat of the land.'

¹⁹ "You are also directed to tell them, 'Do this: Take some carts from Egypt for your children and your wives, and get your father and come. ²⁰ Never mind about your belongings, because the best of all Egypt will be yours.'"

²¹ So the sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them carts, as Pharaoh had commanded, and he also gave them provisions for their journey. ²² To each of them he gave new clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five sets of clothes. ²³ And this is what he sent to his father: ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and other provisions for his journey. ²⁴ Then he sent his brothers away, and as they were leaving he said to them, "Don't quarrel on the way!"

²⁵ So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. ²⁶ They told him, "Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of all Egypt." Jacob was stunned; he did not believe them. ²⁷ But when they told him everything Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. ²⁸ And Israel said, "I'm convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

Genesis 45:1-28 [NIV]

We ended the previous lesson's study with Judah's heartfelt plea to Joseph to allow Benjamin to return to his father Jacob, and for Joseph to hold Judah as his slave. Realizing that his brothers had truly repented of their actions and feeling nothing but love and compassion for his father Jacob and his brothers, in the opening verse in this lesson, Joseph breaks down. He "could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out."

Joseph sent all of his attendants out of the room so he that could tell his brothers who he really was, and, as we saw earlier, he could not control his weeping. In fact, the scriptural text tells us, "he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it.

In contrast, when Joseph told his brothers who he was and asked about his father Jacob, his brothers were "terrified at his presence." Can you imagine? Here they are, standing in front of perhaps the most powerful man in all of Egypt, and he turns out to be the brother that they plotted to murder and eventually sold into slavery. That would terrify anyone.

Joseph can see the terror in their faces, so he calls them close to him. To their astonishment, he is not angry nor threatening. Instead, he is compassionate to them and wise. He tells them in Genesis 45:5 that he knows that everything that happened to him was for good, that God sent him ahead of them to Egypt in order "to save lives."

Joseph continues, he tells them about the current famine and that it will continue another five years, "but God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance." (Genesis 45:6-7) Can we see God's great wisdom and sovereign power through Joseph's revelation? God could have used anyone he chose in Egypt to manage through the years of plenty and years of famine, but to honor his promise that goes all the way back to Abraham, God chose Joseph to save his people; and he used Joseph's brothers as a mechanism for having Joseph rule Egypt's food supplies. God always knows best, and once again we see God's words in action:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:8-9

God doesn't think or act the way we do, which makes it difficult at times to understand what God is doing or allowing to happen. But Joseph was given the wisdom to understand God's plan and now he was revealing it to his brothers. What an amazing moment that must have been!

The ensuing verses show us a celebration of life like we can't imagine. Joseph and his brothers reunited, kissing, hugging, and lots of tears of joy in perhaps one of the greatest family reunions recorded in the Bible. Scripture tells us that "afterward his brothers talked with him." You can imagine the fellowship and the talk, catching up on twenty-plus years of separation; Joseph telling them about his experiences in Egypt, and the brothers telling him about his father and their lives in Canaan.

The Pharaoh of course knew that Joseph was from Canaan, a Hebrew, and that his family remained in Canaan; so it speaks well of the Pharaoh when we read that the "Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased." (Genesis 45:16) He then gives great gifts to Joseph's family to take back to Canaan: "Load your animals and return to the land of Canaan, and bring your father and your families back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you can enjoy the fat of the land." (Genesis 45:17-18)

He also gives them carts for their wives and children to ride in during the journey back to Egypt, and then tells them not to pack anything. He says, "never mind about your belongings, because the best of all Egypt will be yours." Can you

imagine? Now Jacob and his brothers are not only going to be reunited with Joseph, they are going to inherit the "best of all Egypt." God is so great and sovereign. While we can read that Pharaoh said and did all of these things, the reality is that all of this is actually from God, as He continues accomplishing His eternal plan, His way, and in His time.

In Genesis 45:21-24, the great gifts that Pharaoh provided are listed, and the brothers return to Jacob, Israel, their father. We can only imagine the emotions that played out during the conversation with their father and the revelation that his son Joseph is not only alive and well, but is now the Lord of Egypt, calling all of them to come and live in Egypt and to enjoy the best of everything Egypt has to offer. Even more remarkable is that this is happening in the middle of a severe famine in the land.

All of this encourages Israel, and he is "revived." This lesson's scripture ends with some great words from Israel: "I'm convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

So let's rejoice in God's sovereignty, His great love and compassion, and His faithfulness. At times, our lives may be hard or things happen in them that we cannot understand, but we know that God is on His throne. He is very much in control, and His eternal plan—our salvation and eternity with Him—are certain through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

"And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:7

In the next lesson, Jacob goes to Egypt.

In Christ,

Wes