



Genesis – 45:1-28
Joseph Makes Himself Known to His Brothers
(Lesson #56)

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Joseph's Timeline

Event	Joseph's Age	Genesis
Joseph's father moves family from Haran	6	31:17-21
Joseph is sold into slavery	17 / Jac 108	37:12-36
Joseph interprets the dreams of cupbearer and baker while in prison	28	41:1
Joseph's grandfather Isaac dies	29 / Jac 120	35:28-29
Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams and is released from prison	30	41:46
Seven years of plenty, Manasseh and Ephraim born during this time	30-37	41:47-52
Seven years of famine	37-44	41:47-52
Joseph and Jacob reunite (2 years into famine), and family moves family to Egypt	39 / Jac 130	45:6, 47:9, 28
Jacob dies	56 / Jac 147	47:28
Joseph dies	110	50:22-26

Outline of chapter 45:

1. Joseph reveals himself to his brothers (45:1-3).
2. Joseph shares with his brothers that although they sold him into slavery God is the one who sent him into Egypt (45:4-5).
3. Joseph shares that five more years of famine lie ahead (45:6).
4. Joseph once again shares that God is the one who sent him into Egypt and God is the one who has elevated him to a place of prominence in Egypt (45:7-8).
5. Joseph directs his brothers to go home and gather Jacob (Israel), share with him what God is doing through Joseph, and bring the family of Israel to Egypt (45:9-15).
6. Pharaoh learns that Joseph's brothers have arrived in Egypt, and he directs Joseph to direct his brothers to come to Egypt and he (Pharaoh) will give them the best land (45:16-20).
7. Joseph provides wagons (as directed by Pharaoh) and provisions for the brothers for the trip back to Caanan (45:21-24).
8. The eleven sons of Israel (less Joseph) leave Egypt and go to Caanan (45:25).
9. Upon their arrival in Cannan, they share with Jacob (Israel) that Joseph is still alive and that he is over the land of Egypt (45:26).
10. At first Jacob (Israel) does not believe the report of his eleven sons (45:26).
11. Ultimately, upon hearing what Joseph said and seeing the Egyptian wagons, Jacob (Israel) believes, and his spirit was revived (45:27).
12. Jacob (Israel) determines to move to Egypt (45:28).

45:1 *Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him. He cried, "Make everyone go out from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 2 And he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard 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 dismayed at his presence.*

Vs 1 - Hearing the plan of Judah and his willingness to serve as a substitute for Benjamin (the innocent one for the one who appeared guilty), hearing the earnest pleas of Judah related to Jacob (Israel), Joseph wrapped up the final question on the final exam, for he could no longer “control himself.”

He broke down and began to weep before them all.

Once again we see that Joseph cried. In the case of the other times, he slipped away from his brothers. Here he begins to weep right in front of them.

Joseph could no longer control himself, nor could he continue to stay in role, after hearing Judah’s impassioned plea and intercession, he cried out, *“Make everyone go out from me.”*

This is the second most powerful man in Egypt, the Prime Minister of Egypt, the Vizier of Egypt, there are likely always multiple servants around and he directs them all out of the room.

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum points out that here the Hebrew literally reads: *“He gave forth his voice in weeping.”*

Likely, for the first time since he was thrown in the pit 22 years ago he is alone with his brothers!

All of the servants left the room and then we are told *Joseph made himself known to his brothers.*

Vs 2 - There in whatever room in Joseph’s mansion, **he wept aloud** and so much so that the Egyptians servants heard it, and we are told that the household of the Pharaoh heard it. We would **assume** it means that word even made it back to the Pharaoh’s household.

It is also possible that Joseph’s dwelling was very close to the Pharaoh’s dwelling, we simply cannot be sure. But Moses wrote that the Pharaoh, “heard it.” **Joseph, overcome with emotions is weeping tears of joy.**

Vs 3a - Then, likely among his sobs and intermingled with his tears, he said to his brothers: *I am Joseph!* Here he uses the **first-person personal pronoun** to stress his identity!

Now it seems before they can even process what he just said, he follows it up with a question: *Is my father still alive?* We can imagine that this is not so much a question of doubt, but of reaffirmation of the status of (Jacob/Israel), his dad.

Put yourself in the shoes of the brothers. This is the mysterious Vizier of Egypt, he now begins to weep in front of you, he directs his servants out of the room, and in the midst of his tears he says: *“I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?”*

In that moment, we cannot even imagine what must be going through their minds, questions like: How can this be, how is this possible, what is he talking about, etc.!

Vs 3b - We are told that they could not answer him for they were dismayed at his presence. **They were put into a state of shock!** The Hebrew word translated “dismayed” is the word **בהל (bahal)**, it means they were **disturbed, alarmed, amazed, or dismayed.**

4 So Joseph said to his brothers, “Come near to me, please.” And they came near. And he said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. 6 For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest.

Vs 4 - Then Joseph says to his brothers, **come near to me.**

Keep in mind, there has likely always been distance between the Vizier of Egypt and these Hebrew men. We saw that Judah closed that distance when he made his pleas to Joseph:

“Then Judah went up to him and said, “Oh, my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord’s ears, and let not your anger burn against your servant, for you are like Pharaoh himself.” (Ge 44:18 ESV)

You can imagine the men encircled Joseph and **Joseph drops the bombshell again**. With a little more detail: **“I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.”**

Once again, he uses the **first-person personal pronoun, I am Joseph**. Put yourself in the shoes of these men. What would be going through your mind?

Here Joseph states their sin. A sin against him and a sin against God. Joseph does not skip over their sin, he does not pretend it did not happen, he does not say well it is OK. He says, I am your brother Joseph, the one that you ten (less Benjamin) sold into Egypt.

Vs 5 - He continues in his dialogue with his brothers and adds: Do not be **distressed (grieved, hurt, or vexed) or angry (furious with yourselves)** because of what you did, because you sold me here.

For you **sold me (that was sinful by the way)**, but God **“sent me” before you to preserve life**.

Here we see the **heart of Joseph**, but we also see the **Theology of Joseph**.

Let’s look at his heart first. It is a **heart of forgiveness**:

It is clear Joseph holds no grudges against his brothers, if we had any doubt as to his motives involving all of the testing it seems like it is getting verified and validated now.

In spite of **all the wrong done to him, Joseph loves his brothers, Joseph has forgiven his brothers**.

Here he tells them not to be distressed or angry over what they have done. In essence he tells them to forgive themselves for what they have done as he has forgiven them!

APPLICATION: If God has forgiven us, we should forgive ourselves.

Now I need to tease this out so that we do not come to an incorrect conclusion. **First forgiveness** (Mat 6:14-15, Mar 11:24-26, Eph 4:31-32, Mat 18:21-22).

Because you and I have been forgiven of so much, we must endeavor to forgive those who sin against us.

REMINDER: We are most like Jesus when we forgive.

Second justice, and we should not ignore justice (Rom 13:1-4, Pro 21:15; Isa 1:17).

Here we see **Joseph’s heart of forgiveness** and he leaves **justice with the Lord**. In this **case** and in this **setting**, we would likely agree that is the best place to leave it. Remember (Rom 12:17-19).

Joseph has watched his brothers openly wrestle with the guilt of their sin against him that happened 22 years ago, in essence he says I have forgiven you, you should forgive yourselves.

OK, so a whole lot there on the heart of Joseph. Now let’s begin to introduce the **Theology of Joseph** as it relates to **human agency** and **God’s sovereignty**.

Human Agency – We see it in verse 4 – ***You sold me into slavery***

God’s Sovereignty – we see in verse 5 - ***God sent me before you (into Egypt) to preserve life***

So Joseph’s sees both at work, with God’s sovereignty working to override the planned outcomes of the brothers sins.

Stated differently the Divine purpose was accomplished in spite of and through human agency.

If we did not know better, we would conclude that Joseph is the one who penned (Rom 8:28).

Joseph's THEOLOGY: On the face, what you did was wrong when you sold me into Egypt. But what was actually happening is God was working behind scene, in spite of your sins, for God "sent me" before you to preserve life.

You see, Joseph recognized the Sovereign of the Universe, behind the scenes working out his perfect will in spite of men's sins.

Joseph has more to say, if we can hold here?

Vs 6 - Here Joseph tells his brother what Yahweh revealed to him. In the context he does not tell him how he knows these things, but he speaks with great clarity and with great certainty.

He says simply and plainly that we (Egypt and the surrounding nations) are two years into the seven-year famine. We are two years into a famine which will stretch five more years.

In this horrible time of famine in which there will be no plowing or harvest. The only way to survive this time of famine is to have stored up reserves for little if any food will be produced from the land.

What is interesting is Joseph does not explain how he knows, nor do the brothers question how he can speak with such certainty about an event that is yet in their future.

7 And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. 8 So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. 9 Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not tarry.

Vs 7 - The ongoing famine is now connected to "God sent me." You sold me, but God sent me at the precise time and he sent me with a mission.

Notice, he steps right over their sins, he steps right over their anger and he steps right over all the wrong that they had done. For he sees, as we should see, a sovereign God at work in his life, who is working a grand plan, for the good of his people and for his own (God's glory)!

God sent me, before you, into Egypt with an unthinkable mission, to **preserve for a remnant on earth** and to keep alive for you many survivors! **God was executing a rescue mission** and he was doing it **through Joseph**.

Vs 8 - Now here is what I believe Joseph is showing us. First, God had a plan for Joseph. But the brothers were planning to kill him, God worked in Reuben and Jacob's heart and rather they sold him to the next group of traders that happened along. But, it so happened that the next group of traders that happened along were going to Egypt, thus Joseph would be sold into Egypt, which is exactly where God needed him. God would continue to work in the background, until the point that Joseph is elevated to the second highest position in the land to fulfill his mission. But what a ride to get there, and God continue to work.

APPLICATION: Do we believe God still works like this? If so, then you and I should not be surprised when our road takes surprising and even treacherous turns, rather those are times to trust God, to believe in God and to walk with God (Jam 1:12).

Now, I do not believe we should see Joseph as condoning what they had done, quite the opposite, what they had done was evil and they meant it for evil. This will come up again in Genesis 50.

They were exercising their fallen nature and were it not for God, Joseph would already likely be dead by now. But our takeaway should be that God can work through the bad things that may happen to us and **bring out grand and glorious things**.

God is not hindered by the activities of other people. God's **hand is not shortened** regardless of what other people may be up to. So you (brothers) sold me into slavery, but God is the one who: *sent me here*.

Further, Joseph goes on to say, the Lord made him (Joseph) *a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt*.

Let's just quickly walk through the three things that Joseph says.

FIRST: God made Joseph like a **father to Pharaoh**. It appears that Pharaoh listened to Joseph. Pharaoh followed Joseph's recommendations. Pharaoh (the most powerful man in the land) was like a **son to Joseph**.

The one-time slave, is like a father to the Pharaoh!

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum wrote: *"In the Hebrew text, the word is av, a Hebrew word meaning "father." In this case it may not be a Hebrew word, but a Hebrew transliteration of the Egyptian word for vizier, which has the same sound av. Therefore, it might mean father to Pharaoh, but it may also mean "he made me a vizier to Pharaoh."*

SECOND: Joseph says that God made Joseph **ruler over Pharaoh's house**. I will be honest with you, this declaration of Joseph's power in Egypt is a little surprising! But then again maybe not! We saw this with Potiphar (Gen 39:3-5), with the prison keeper (Gen 39:21-23), and remember (Pro 21:1).

The whole time God was in the background working.

THIRD: Joseph is the ruler over all the land. Joseph may be the second in command, but it seems he is running the entire show!

Vs 9 - Then Joseph gives yet **one more command** to his brothers. This command is accompanied with urgency, **"hurry."** Take the 250-mile trip and say to my father Jacob (Israel).

FIRST, we see the **source of the message**, they were to deliver.

Thus says your son Joseph,

SECOND, we see the amazing **central truth** of the message:

God has made me lord of all Egypt.

The message is not simply Joseph is alive, but Joseph has been made the Lord of Egypt and is lifted up to a place of glory.

THIRD, Joseph's **call to action** of the message for his dad and family:

Come down to me; do not tarry.

Leave Canaan, and come down to Egypt, that is the message that they brothers are to deliver to Jacob (Israel). **Come to Egypt, to me, do not tarry!** Further...

10 You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. 11 There I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come, so that you and your household, and all that you have, do not come to poverty.'

Vs 10 - **Come to Egypt** and you will dwell in the **land of Goshen**. Notice, in Goshen, you will be "near" me, near Joseph.

But it is not just you, it is your families, it is your children and your grandchildren, and your flocks and herds that are to come to Egypt.

Vs 11 - Further Jacob says, in Goshen, I will provide for you. The famine will ravish the land and bring you to poverty. Here in Goshen, I will protect and provide for you.

Then he tells them again: *for there are yet five years of famine to come, so that you and your household, and all that you have, do not come to poverty.*'

To delay is to **flirt with poverty and ruin!**

12 And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. 13 You must tell my father of all my honor in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here." 14 Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. 15 And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. After that his brothers talked with him.

Vs 12 - It seems what he is saying, is **by now you see that it is me**. By now all of you, including Benjamin see that it is by my mouth that I am speaking to you.

Did he remove some of his Egyptian garb, or has he said enough that his identity is certain, we cannot be sure. But he is saying, I am sure, that you are sure, that I am Joseph, and that Joseph is speaking these things to you!

Vs 13 - When you get back to Canaan, you must share with dad, **all my honor in Egypt**. You must tell him all that you have seen. You must tell him of the abundance and of the plenty.

You must tell him, in spite of this horrible famine, what you are seeing here in Egypt. Then he says it again: *Hurry and bring my father down here.*

Vs 14 - Then he grabbed his little brother embraced him and began to weep on his neck! Benjamin began to weep on his neck. Once again, we see Joseph cry.

Vs 15 - He **then kissed** all his brothers and **wept upon all his brothers**. You can imagine this was an amazing family reunion. This is true reconciliation!

Then after all that, the brothers talked with him. We can imagine they had so much to discuss.

What has up until now been servants relating to this mysterious Egyptian master, now turns into a brother relating to his brothers.

16 ¶ When the report was heard in Pharaoh's house, "Joseph's brothers have come," it pleased Pharaoh and his servants. 17 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: load your beasts and go back 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 shall eat the fat of the land.'

Vs 16 - Now as we might imagine, word got back to Pharaoh's house. It spread through Pharaoh's servants ultimately making it way all the way up to the Pharaoh himself that Joseph's brothers had come.

It pleased the Pharaoh and all his servants. We can imagine, based on everything that we have heard, that they had a deep respect and admiration for Joseph.

Let's be honest, Joseph's famine plan saved the nation, and as we have briefly discussed, enriched Pharaoh.

Vs 17-18 - We can imagine that Pharaoh and Joseph spent time together discussing how things were going, discussing any challenges that Joseph might be facing. We can imagine, as Joseph said, he was like a father to Pharaoh.

The Pharaoh says to Joseph, say to your brothers. Load up your donkeys, go back to Canaan. Once you are there grab your father and all your households and come back to Egypt.

Here Pharaoh is inviting semitic people to move to Egypt, to live in the best land of Egypt, and to eat the fat of the land. **Here the Pharaoh is promising the clan of Israel protection and the best land.**

We can see a prior prophecy taking shape (Gen 15:12-16).

19 And you, Joseph, are commanded to say, 'Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. 20 Have no concern for your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.'"

Vs 19 - Here Pharaoh makes a rare command, as it seems he left most of those to Joseph, but here he commands Joseph.

Joseph you are commanded to say to your brothers - Do this: Take wagons from Egypt to be used to transport your families, your little ones, your wives, and bring your father.

I will provide the transportation, send it to Canaan to pick up your relatives and your father and bring them here to Egypt.

Vs 20 - Further Pharaoh goes on, do not be worried about your goods, this would be your stuff, your tents, your furniture, your various household belongings. Do not be worried if it is too much to bring all your stuff.

For... The best of all the land of Egypt is yours.

APPLICATIONS: God fulfilling his word. God caring for his people. The wisdom of God in this plan.

21 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 and all of them he gave a change of clothes, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five changes of clothes. 23 To his father he sent as follows: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and provision for his father on the journey. 24 Then he sent his brothers away, and as they departed, he said to them, "Do not quarrel on the way."

Vs 21 - The sons of Israel (the eleven) did as Pharaoh commanded. They took wagons from Egypt along with provisions for the trip back from Egypt to Canaan.

Vs 22 - To each brother Joseph gave a change of clothes, but to Benjamin, Joseph gave three hundred shekels of silver and five changes of clothes.

Vs 23 - Then Joseph sent specific things to Israel (Jacob). Joseph sent to his father ten donkeys loaded with the "good things" of Egypt. Joseph also sent ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread and provisions for Israel for the journey back to Egypt.

Can we even imagine what this wagon and donkey train looked like as it approached Canaan?

Vs 24 - Then Joseph sent his brothers away, no doubt with his blessings, they are loaded with food, goods, and many wagons to bring the tribe of Israel back to Egypt. Then he tells them: **"Do not quarrel on the way."**

25 ¶ So they went up out of Egypt and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob. 26 And they told him, "Joseph is still alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt." And his heart became numb, for he did not believe them. 27 But when they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said to them, and when he saw

the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. 28 And Israel said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

Vs 25 - So the wagon train goes up out of Egypt and they make the 250-mile journey without incident.

Vs 26a - Then brothers tell dad two main things upon their arrival home:

- 1) Joseph is still alive... This would be a shocker!
- 2) Joseph is ruler over the land of Egypt! WHAT?

Can you imagine how they said these two things? Can you imagine what must have initially gone through Jacob's mind?

The brothers deliver a message. Simply put it is this. The favored son of the Father is alive, although you thought he was dead, and he is the ruler over Egypt.

A PICTURE OF JESUS: Does their message sound slightly familiar? The favored Son of the Father, the Chosen One is alive, maybe you heard that he was dead, but he is alive and God has made him ruler over everything!

Vs 26b - Jacob's heart became numb. Other translations, his **heart stopped**, his **heart fainted**, he was **stunned**, he went **numb**.

Then we are told plainly he did not believe them. **Why would he?**

Joseph was killed by wild animals 22 years ago. How can he **still be alive** and how can he be the **"ruler over all the land of Egypt?"** This makes no sense; this is a bridge too far.

Vs 27 - Then the brothers began to recite all the words of Joseph, that he had told them. Then as they are talking he sees all the Egyptian wagons pulling up in the front yard.

The wagons are arriving as Jacob is listening to his sons, they were sent by Pharaoh and Joseph to bring the entire tribe of Israel to Egypt.

Meanwhile the wagons and the donkeys are still coming!

Then we are told his spirit revived! He was shocked in a good way, surprised in a positive way, and started to believe that what his sons were telling him was true!

So, when he heard the words of Joseph and saw the blessings of Joseph, Jacob believed.

APPLICATION: What will cause people to believe that Jesus is alive, that he is the one true God? When we present his Word and his promised blessings.

Vs 28 - Then Israel, who was an older man at this point said: **It is enough, I have seen enough, I have heard enough.**

Joseph, my son is still alive! I will go to see him while I have the opportunity!

What a joyous day this must have been for **Israel**.

Since losing Rachel, and then losing Joseph, and now the concern that he might lose Benjamin. To have that all turned around and to learn that Benjamin is fine and the unthinkable, Joseph is still alive.

I will go Jacob says. **Let's load up the trucks (wagons) and move to Goshen! What a day...**

Lord willing, we will pick up our next lesson up here as the family/tribe of Israel journeys to Egypt.