

The Book of Genesis

Chapter 45

45:1-2 Joseph was no longer able to control his feelings in front of all his attendants, and he called, 'Let everyone leave my presence!' There was nobody present when Joseph made himself known to his brothers, but he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and news of it got to Pharaoh's household. (REB)

Joseph's Admission

No matter what further steps Joseph had calculated for bringing a confession of guilt from his brothers, at this point he dropped them. Judah's appeal brought out of Joseph the same character trait that identifies the Savior of the world—mercy. "God ...will not let you be tested beyond your powers..." (1CO 10:13).

45:3 Joseph said to his brothers [without an interpreter], 'I am Joseph! Can my father be still alive?' They were so dumbfounded at finding themselves face to face with Joseph that they could not answer. (REB)

45:4 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!" (NIV)

Since the topic of selling their missing brother had never been discussed, Joseph now proves beyond a doubt, with this one phrase, who he really was.

45:5 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. (NIV)

Sent Ahead

Christ died for all humanity while it was still in sin (ROM 5:8), essentially going ahead of all mankind in order to save all mankind.

Forgiveness

Joseph once again displays the trait of the Savior of mankind by telling them that what they did was done in ignorance, yet it was necessary to fulfill a greater plan that God had in mind. This was somewhat similar to Jesus' prayer in LUK 23:34: "Then said Jesus, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they do.' And they divided His garments and cast lots."

45:6 It is now two years that there has been famine in the land, and there are still five years to come in which there shall be no yield from tilling. (TAN)

45:7 But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great [TAN: "extraordinary"] deliverance. (NIV)

The Exodus

Joseph would preserve them as a remnant at that time. The great deliverance would come during the time of their descendants at the time of the exodus.

45:8 *It is clear that it was not you who sent me here, but God, and he has made me Pharaoh's chief counsellor* [MOF: "Pharaoh's prime minister"; NKJ, NIV, TAN, NRS: "father to Pharaoh," Joseph's title as seen in 41:43], *lord over his whole household and ruler of all Egypt.* (REB)

45:9-12 *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. 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. 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.' "You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am* [REB: "Joseph himself who is"] *speaking to you.* (NIV)

Joseph was not using an interpreter any longer. He spoke with his brothers in their native tongue.

45:13 *Tell my father about all the honor accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly.*" (NIV)

Joseph knew it would be difficult to convince Jacob to come into Egypt

45:14-15 *With that he embraced his brother Benjamin around the neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. He kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; only then were his brothers able to talk to him.* (TAN)

Dumbfounded

It had taken them some time to assimilate all that Joseph had said, and at the same time to comprehend he was not seeking revenge.

45:16-20 *When the news reached Pharaoh's palace that Joseph's brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased. Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers, 'Do this: 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.' "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. Never mind about your belongings, because the best of all Egypt will be yours.'"* (NIV)

Make Haste

The Pharaoh's command was to be urgent, not wasting time hauling material goods that could be easily replaced.

45:21-24 *So the sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them carts, as Pharaoh had commanded, and he also gave them provisions for their journey. To each of them he gave new clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five sets of clothes. 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. Then he sent his brothers away, and as they were leaving he said to them, "Don't quarrel on the way!"* (NIV)

New Clothing

Joseph again takes on the role of Savior by giving his brothers new clothing, just as the repentant and overcomers are given new clothing by Christ. [REV 3:5: "*He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment.*"]

Assigning Blame

He instructed them to resist debating which brother was the most to blame for selling him into slavery because he had forgiven them and his mercy had removed all of their guiltiness.

45:25-28 So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. They told him, "Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of all Egypt." Jacob was stunned; he did not believe them. 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. And Israel said, "I'm convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die." (NIV)

Recalling the Dream

The appearance of the official carts of Egypt were enough to jolt Jacob's memory so that he recalled Joseph's dream of being exalted 22 years earlier (37:11). It seems that Jacob's original intent was only to visit Joseph in Egypt, not to remain.

Jacob's Visit

The appearance of the official carts of Egypt were enough to jolt Jacob's memory of the dream of Joseph 22 years prior (GEN 37:11). Jacob's original intent was only to visit Joseph in Egypt, not to remain there.