

# Revealed Love

Genesis 45:1-8, 10-15  
SS Lesson for 09/27/2020

**Devotional Scripture:** 1 John 4:9-19

## OUTLINE

### LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

*Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*

*Key Verse: Gen 45:5*

*Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary*

### MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

#### REVEALED IDENTITY (GEN 45:1-8)

##### *Identity of love (1-2)*

- Love through the gift of love (1 Cor 13:2-3)
- Love through asking God to increase love for others (1 Thess 3:12)
- Love through loving as God taught us (1 Thess 4:9)
- Love through loving as a brother (Heb 13:1-3)
- Love with a sincere love (1 Peter 1:22-23)
- Love through turning a sinner from the error of their way (James 5:20)

##### *Identity of truth (3)*

- Truth because we cannot do anything against the truth (2 Cor 13:6-8)
- Truth because it protects like a belt around our waist (Eph 6:14)
- Truth because it bears fruit and grows (Col 1:4-6)
- Truth because if we obey it, God purifies us (1 Peter 1:22-23)
- Truth because through God, we are firmly established in it (2 Peter 1:12)
- Truth because of the anointing of the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:20-21)
- Truth because we belong to it (1 John 3:18-19)

##### *Identity assurance (4-8)*

- Assurance through being a loving servant of others (Gal 5:13)
- Assurance by serving wholeheartedly (Eph 6:7)
- Assurance through using the gifts that God has given (1 Peter 4:10)
- Assurance through considering others better than ourselves (Phil 2:3)
- Assurance through being a person of God clothed with humility (Col 3:12)
- Assurance through being a person who is considerate and peaceable (Titus 3:1-2)
- Assurance through being full of godly wisdom and understanding (James 3:13)

#### REVEALED INSTRUCTIONS (GEN 45:10-13)

##### *Instructions about provisions (10-11)*

- Provisions for both physical and spiritual needs (Psalm 104:15)
- Provisions when we are weak (1 Kings 19:5-8)
- Provisions when we are needy (2 Kings 4:2-6)
- Provisions that are supernatural (Matthew 14:17-21)
- Provisions for good works (2 Cor. 9:8)
- Provisions through God using others (2 Cor 8:14)

##### *Instructions witnessed (12-13)*

- Witness to what has been seen (Acts 4:20)
- Witness to what has been heard (Acts 22:15)
- Witness through teaching (2 Tim 2:2)
- Witness starts at home (Luke 8:39)
- Witness about the grace of God seen (Acts 11:23)

#### REVEALED LOVE (GEN 45:14-15)

##### *Love sincerely expressed (14)*

- Expressed through obedience to God (2 John 6)
- Expressed because love never fails (1 Cor 13:4-8)
- Expressed through providing the physical needs of others (Prov 25:21)
- Expressed through action not just words (1 John 3:18)
- Expressed through doing no harm to others (Rom 13:10)
- Expressed through meeting the needs of others (Luke 6:35)

##### *Love that leads to reconciliation (15)*

- A reconciliation that brings peace (Eph 2:14-16)

- A reconciliation that requires humility (2 Chron 7:14)
- A reconciliation of the mind and body (Col 1:21-22)
- A reconciliation where sins are not regarded (2 Cor 5:17-19)
- A reconciliation that brings unity (Matt 5:23-25)

## CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM BOB DEFFINBAUGH

*A Speech to the Speechless (45:1-15)*

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE ECHOES COMMENTARY

## Lesson Background and Key Verse

### Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

How does that sentence end? In the Western world, even people who haven't seen any of the Star Wars movies probably know to fill in "father." Yet Darth Vader shows Luke Skywalker no love; he shows his son no mercy. They are mortal enemies, and it becomes clear that one of them must die. This fact becomes all the more tragic because Luke didn't know the truth about his parentage until Episode V (the second movie of the original trilogy). Darth Vader's also being Dad did nothing to weaken the enmity with Luke. It only complicated it, made it all the sadder because of the truth it reveals: our families are sometimes the origin of our greatest enemies. Joseph had experienced just that. At the root of all his struggles in Egypt were those who had sent him to that place to begin with: his brothers. So like Darth Vader (in this one respect), Joseph hid his identity. Yet the revelation of Joseph's true identity had quite a different outcome from that of Darth Vader's revelation.

Though Joseph's brothers returned with food, it inevitably ran out, and the brothers were faced with traveling to Egypt again. But they knew they could not return without Benjamin. Jacob, however, was still very reluctant to allow Benjamin to go. Finally, after Judah guaranteed Benjamin's safety and offered to bear the blame should Benjamin not return, Jacob relented (43:1-14). When the brothers arrived in Egypt, they first spoke to Joseph's steward about the silver they had found in their sacks. He assured them all was well (Genesis 43:19-23a). Later, after Joseph released Simeon (43:23b) and fed the brothers a meal (43:31-34), he sent them back to Canaan with more supplies. But he also instructed his steward to place each man's silver in his sack and, in addition, to put Joseph's special silver cup in Benjamin's sack (44:1-2). Following the brothers' departure, Joseph sent his steward to catch up with the men and accuse them of taking Joseph's cup. When the cup was discovered in Benjamin's sack of grain, the brothers tore their clothing in despair and returned to Egypt to face Joseph (Genesis 44:3-13). After Joseph told his brothers that Benjamin would have to remain in Egypt, Judah stepped forward and voiced an impassioned plea not to keep Benjamin in Egypt. Such an action would break his father Jacob's heart to the point of hastening his death. Judah offered himself in place of Benjamin (Genesis 44:17-34). This act represented a drastic departure from the way Judah had treated Joseph those many years before (37:26-27).

### Key Verse: Gen 45:5

*But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.*

### Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

**45:1-8.** With a burst of emotion **Joseph** revealed himself **to his brothers**. This (v. 2) was the third of five times **he wept** over his brothers (42:24; 43:30; 45:14; 50:17; cf. 50:1). They were stunned by the news, unable to speak for fear that **Joseph** might kill them. In this passage strong feelings and sound spiritual judgment and argument complete the work of reconciliation which till now had called for severe testing. It had been the task for a wise man, and over an extended period of time Joseph accomplished the task marvelously. Joseph explained that **God** had sovereignly brought him to **Egypt** to prepare for their deliverance from **famine**. His words form a classic statement on providential control. **God sent me ahead of you** (45:5). **It was not you who sent me here, but God** (v. 8; cf. v. 9). The certainty that God's will, not man's, is the controlling reality in every event shined through as the basis for reconciliation. No doubt Joseph had consoled himself many times with this principle of faith. He who is spiritual can perceive the hand of God in every event, and therefore is able to forgive those who wrong him.

**45:9-13.** Joseph then instructed his brothers to **hurry back** without **delay** (cf. **quickly** in v. 13 and cf. 43:15) to Jacob and inform him of Joseph's power (as "ruler of all Egypt," 45:8, and **lord of all Egypt**, v. 9) and **honor** in all the land of **Egypt** (vv. 9, 13). The whole family must move to Egypt and **live in the region of Goshen**, a fertile area in the Nile Delta (cf. 47:1-12), to dwell under Joseph's rule, because God had prepared the way through all the circumstances.

**45:14-15.** Finally the **brothers** were reunited, first Joseph and **Benjamin**, then **all** of them. Those were emotion-filled moments, filled with **weeping** (cf. 42:24; 43:30; 45:2) and then conversation. Their previous hatred and jealousy of Joseph (37:4, 8, 11) was now gone.

## Major Theme Analysis

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

### **Revealed Identity (Gen 45:1-8)**

- 1 Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers.
- 2 And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it.
- 3 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence.
- 4 And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.
- 5 But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.
- 6 For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting.
- 7 And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.
- 8 So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

### **Identity of love (1-2)**

*Love through the gift of love (1 Cor 13:2-3)*

- 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

*Love through asking God to increase love for others (1 Thess 3:12)*

- 12 May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.

*Love through loving as God taught us (1 Thess 4:9)*

- 9 Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.

*Love through loving as a brother (Heb 13:1-3)*

- 1 Keep on loving each other as brothers. 2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. 3 Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

*Love with a sincere love (1 Peter 1:22-23)*

- 22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. 23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

*Love through turning a sinner from the error of their way (James 5:20)*

20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

### **Identity of truth (3)**

*Truth because we cannot do anything against the truth (2 Cor 13:6-8)*

6 And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test. 7 Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong. Not that people will see that we have stood the test but that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. 8 For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.

*Truth because it protects like a belt around our waist (Eph 6:14)*

14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,

*Truth because it bears fruit and grows (Col 1:4-6)*

4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints— 5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel 6 that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth.

*Truth because if we obey it, God purifies us (1 Peter 1:22-23)*

22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. 23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

*Truth because through God, we are firmly established in it (2 Peter 1:12)*

12 So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have.

*Truth because of the anointing of the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:20-21)*

20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. 21 I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth.

*Truth because we belong to it (1 John 3:18-19)*

18 Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. 19 This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence

### **Identity assurance (4-8)**

*Assurance through being a loving servant of others (Gal 5:13)*

13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

*Assurance by serving wholeheartedly (Eph 6:7)*

7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men,

*Assurance through using the gifts that God has given (1 Peter 4:10)*

10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

*Assurance through considering others better than ourselves (Phil 2:3)*

3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

*Assurance through being a person of God clothed with humility (Col 3:12)*

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

*Assurance through being a person who is considerate and peaceable (Titus 3:1-2)*

1 Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, 2 to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.

*Assurance through being full of godly wisdom and understanding (James 3:13)*

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

### **Revealed Instructions (Gen 45:10-13)**

10 You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have.

11 There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for there are still five years of famine."

12 "And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you.

13 So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here."

### **Instructions about provisions (10-11)**

*Provisions for both physical and spiritual needs (Psalm 104:15)*

15 wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart.

*Provisions when we are weak (1 Kings 19:5-8)*

5 Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." 6 He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. 7 The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." 8 So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

*Provisions when we are needy (2 Kings 4:2-6)*

2 Elisha replied to her, "How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?" "Your servant has nothing there at all," she said, "except a little oil." 3 Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. 4 Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side." 5 She left him and afterward shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. 6 When all the jars were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another one." But he replied, "There is not a jar left." Then the oil stopped flowing.

*Provisions that are supernatural (Matthew 14:17-21)*

17 "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. 18 "Bring them here to me," he said. 19 And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. 20 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. 21 The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

*Provisions for good works (2 Cor. 9:8)*

8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

*Provisions through God using others (2 Cor 8:14)*

14 At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality,

### **Instructions witnessed (12-13)**

*Witness to what has been seen (Acts 4:20)*

20 For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

*Witness to what has been heard (Acts 22:15)*

15 You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.

*Witness through teaching (2 Tim 2:2)*

2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

*Witness starts at home (Luke 8:39)*

39 "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.

*Witness about the grace of God seen (Acts 11:23)*

23 When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.

### **Revealed Love (Gen 45:14-15)**

14 Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck.

15 Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

### **Love sincerely expressed (14)**

*Expressed through obedience to God (2 John 6)*

6 And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

*Expressed because love never fails (1 Cor 13:4-8)*

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

*Expressed through providing the physical needs of others (Prov 25:21)*

21 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.

*Expressed through action not just words (1 John 3:18)*

18 Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

*Expressed through doing no harm to others (Rom 13:10)*

10 Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

*Expressed through meeting the needs of others (Luke 6:35)*

35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

### **Love that leads to reconciliation (15)**

*A reconciliation that brings peace (Eph 2:14-16)*

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

*A reconciliation that requires humility (2 Chron 7:14)*

14 if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

*A reconciliation of the mind and body (Col 1:21-22)*

21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—

*A reconciliation where sins are not regarded (2 Cor 5:17-19)*

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

*A reconciliation that brings unity (Matt 5:23-25)*

23 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. 25 "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison.

## **Conclusion and Other Thoughts**

### **Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh**

#### **A Speech to the Speechless (45:1-15)**

Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried, "Have everyone go out from me." So there was no man with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard of it (Genesis 45:1-2).

It may appear at first glance that Joseph simply was overcome by his emotions so that he was compelled to disclose his identity. I have already suggested that this was not the case. Even when his emotions did involuntarily emerge, Joseph simply left the presence of his brothers, wept, and returned (cf. 43:30-31). Joseph revealed himself to his brothers because they had evidenced real repentance, which made reconciliation possible.

Now that it was time to reveal himself, Joseph wished this to be done alone. I find several possible reasons for Joseph expelling the Egyptians from his presence before he made himself known to his brothers. First, this was a family matter. It was to be an intimate time, and outsiders would not add anything to that moment. Perhaps also Joseph felt that the full release of his emotions, held in check for years, would cost him the esteem of his servants. Mainly, however, I believe that it was for another reason that Joseph commanded everyone to leave except his brothers: it was in order to deal with the matter of the sin of his brothers in strictest privacy. If Joseph

intended for no one but his brothers to observe the outpouring of his emotions, it didn't work, for "the Egyptians heard it" (verse 2), and this report even reached Pharaoh's ears (verses 2, 16).

Previously, I have tended to read verses 3-15 from Joseph's perspective without much attention to how his brothers must have responded, but Moses carefully describes the emotional trauma they underwent:

Then 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. Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come closer to me." And they come closer. And he said, "I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. 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. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. 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. 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 delay. And you shall live in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children and your flocks and your herds and all that you have. There I will also provide for you, for there are still five years of famine to come, lest you and your household and all that you have be impoverished.'" And behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth which is speaking to you. 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." Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept; and Benjamin wept on his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and afterward his brothers talked with him (Genesis 45:3-15).

Put yourselves in the sandals of these brothers for a moment. They had been treated graciously by Joseph, given the hospitality of his home and his table and bountiful provisions for their families back in Canaan (cf. 43:32-44:1). Then they were stopped and searched, each of them being found with their money in their sack and Benjamin with Joseph's cup in his possession (44:6-13). Their guilt was acknowledged and all were willing to remain as Joseph's slaves, but Joseph refused to detain any except Benjamin, the "guilty" party (44:14-17). Judah then made an impassioned appeal for mercy on his aged father, offering himself in place of Benjamin (44:18-34).

It is at this point that chapter 45 begins. Judah and his brothers anxiously await a verdict from Joseph, one that will affect the course of their lives. Without knowing who Joseph is or what he intended to do, the brothers saw this potentate send everyone out of the room. They could perhaps see the tears flowing down his cheeks and his chest heaving with emotion. But what was the source of this great emotion? Was it anger, which would lead to further trouble? How could it be otherwise?

If they thought the worst had come, it had not, at least in their minds, for now this Egyptian blurted out in their own tongue, "I am Joseph!" That was the worst news they could ever have hoped to hear. It brought them no relief, but only new avenues of anxiety. It was bad enough to stand before a powerful Egyptian governor who was angered at the theft of a cup, but to realize that he was their brother whom they had sold into slavery—that was too much! Before, they at least had a hope that this judge would be impartial and that mercy might motivate him to accept their appeal. But now their judge must surely be their enemy, whom they had unjustly condemned. How could they hope for better treatment from him? No wonder they were petrified (cf. verses 3ff.).

Fear and guilt were written on their ashen faces, and their silence confirmed this to Joseph. They had nothing more to say, no more appeals left, no hope for mercy. Every word recorded in the first 15 verses of chapter 45 is spoken by Joseph because his brothers were speechless (verse 3). Not until Joseph had demonstrated that he had forgiven them and loved them did they speak (verse 15).

Joseph's first words declared his identity, followed quickly by an indication of concern about his father (verse 3). He, like Judah and the others, cared greatly for his elderly father. The thought of Jacob's grief was unbearable to Joseph as well as to the rest. But he also cared for his brothers. They must have shrunk back from him in horror, but Joseph asked them to draw near (verse 4).

Nowhere in this chapter is the sin of his brothers minimized. At the very outset Joseph identified the treatment they had given him as sinful. Forgiveness, you see, does not seek to minimize sin, but to neutralize it. We must remember, though, that they have already come to the point of recognizing their actions as sin (cf. 42:21) and of repenting of it (chapter 44). Since they have come to recognize the magnitude of their sin, Joseph need not



belabor that point. The stress, instead, falls upon the totality of the forgiveness he has given them or, as the song writer has described it, “grace greater than all my sins.”

Joseph’s words are filled with hope and encouragement. Verses 5-8 assure these men that their sin had not thwarted the purposes of God. “You sold me,” Joseph said, “but God sent me” (verse 5). Their purpose was to destroy, but God’s was to save. Men may sin by attempting to do what is unacceptable to God, while at the same time they are accomplishing what God has purposed.

... this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death (Acts 2:23).

The doctrine of the sovereignty of God assures us that while men may do the wrong thing for the wrong reasons, God can cause that “evil” to accomplish His good and perfect purposes.

We know that the righteous God hates all sin with a perfect and irreconcilable hatred; but it is his prerogative to bring good out of evil, and no sin can be committed without his knowledge, or in opposition to his holy counsels. Sinners are as really the ministers of his providence as saints, and he glorifies himself by the wickedness which he hates and punishes, as well as by that holiness which he loves and rewards.

In the words of sacred Scripture, “For the wrath of man shall praise Thee; ...” (Psalm 76:10).

Salvation, not destruction, was the purpose of God in what had happened. How, then, could Joseph even consider doing to his brothers what they feared? The famine, now two years long, had five years remaining before it had run its appointed course. Jacob and his sons must come to Egypt where Joseph could provide for them, thus sparing the nation. While God did not sanction their means or their motives, Joseph was destined to go to Egypt where he would be the instrument by which Israel would be spared as a remnant and which would later be kept alive by a “great deliverance” (literally, an “escaped company,” verse 7, margin, NASV).

This prophecy goes beyond the previous revelation given to Abram concerning Israel’s sojourn in Egypt:

And 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 four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions” (Genesis 15:13-14).

Abram was not told that the “land that is not theirs” would be Egypt, nor was he told how Israel would come to live there. Neither is it mentioned that their “exodus” would be some kind of escape. The point of all this is that even if Joseph was aware of God’s words to Abram, he could not have known all that he spoke here to his brothers. There may well be, then, an element of prophecy here. God may have revealed to Joseph at some time (such as when he was in prison?) His purposes in allowing him to suffer rejection and persecution.

In the final analysis, it was not his brothers who were responsible for sending Joseph to Egypt, but God, for the purpose of bringing about their salvation. And in the process Joseph was elevated to his position of power and prominence, advisor to Pharaoh and ruler over all of Egypt. We have a saying, “All’s well that ends well,” which finds a measure of truth in these words of Joseph. Joseph’s explanation of all that had happened and God’s reason for it is followed by an exhortation to return quickly to the land of Canaan, get their father, their families, and their flocks and return to Egypt (verses 9-13).

Approximately a year had passed since Joseph’s brothers had first arrived in Egypt, but this delay was not due to any apathy or aloofness on Joseph’s part—he simply had to wait patiently until his brothers had evidenced a change of heart and mind (repentance). Now Joseph urges his brothers to quickly bring their father down to Egypt (verse 9) where they would live near him in the land of Goshen. Here, it would seem, his family would be able to pasture their flocks, be relatively close to him, and yet remain somewhat distant from the urban populace of Egypt, who disliked Hebrews (cf. 46:34).

In these verses there is a noticeable emphasis upon the glory and splendor which Joseph has attained in Egypt. For some this appears to be out of character for Joseph, who has previously been marked by modesty and humility. Why would he now flaunt his position before his brothers? There are several explanations, one or more of which may satisfy our concerns.

First, the glory which Joseph now possesses would serve to encourage his brothers, who are guilt-ridden for the wicked deed they committed against him by selling him as a slave. Joseph would thus be reminding them that his humiliation and suffering were the means to his promotion and exaltation. Look what their sin had brought about in Joseph’s life! Second, it would comfort Jacob and assure him of Joseph’s ability to provide for the

entire family during the famine. Finally, it was a glory which Joseph desired to share unselfishly with his brothers. His motive would thus be Christ-like:

These things Jesus spoke; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee, even as Thou gavest Him authority over all mankind, that to all whom Thou hast given Him, He may give eternal life. And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do. And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I ever had with Thee before the world was, ... And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one; ..." (John 17:1-5, 22).

With this, Joseph fell upon the neck of his closest brother, Benjamin, and wept. Benjamin likewise wept on his neck. Finally, Joseph wept on the rest of his brothers, who, in the end, were relieved sufficiently to begin conversing with him. It would be a long time before these men could fully grasp the grace of forgiveness which was granted by Joseph.

*(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/fundamentals-forgiveness-genesis-451-28>)*

### **Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

Imagine yourself standing before Jesus, who has asked you to draw near, as Joseph told his brothers to draw near to him (Genesis 45:4). Jesus speaks and says, "I am Jesus, whom you crucified. Your sins are the reason I gave my life as a sacrifice on the cross. But don't be angry with yourself. I want to forgive you, not condemn you." Jesus does indeed say this, and he means it. Joseph's words about God's higher purpose being carried out can also be applied to Jesus. Men killed him because they wanted to reverse his influence, dishearten his followers, and destroy the movement he had begun. But God accomplished a great deliverance through the cross and the empty tomb. As Peter told the crowd gathered on the Day of Pentecost, "[Jesus] was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead" (Acts 2:23-24). Salvation is truly a gift of God's grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). It must be received as such, without our placing conditions on it that God himself has never placed. Don't be angry with yourself. Like Joseph's brothers, you need to accept forgiveness.

### **Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary**

God's plan - Joseph, now second in command to Pharaoh in Egypt, revealed himself to his stepbrothers. They had no idea the royal leader they bowed before asking for help was their own flesh and blood. "I am Joseph!" he finally announced to his brothers. They stood speechless, in shock. Joseph? Alive? A ruler in Egypt? The men fully expected Joseph to use his authority to retaliate for treating him horribly and selling him into slavery. They anticipated instant death. Instead, Joseph had mercy. He saw the love of God, His redemptive plan, which healed his wounds and enabled him to forgive. He consoled them to not be upset with themselves or fear him. He made clear that this was God's doing: He sent Joseph to Egypt to make sure his family, God's chosen people, survived the famine. Joseph moved on from the cruelty they did to him.

God's Purposes - Joseph sent his brothers home to get the rest of the family. He moved them to Goshen, in the Nile River delta, to provide for them throughout the remaining time of the famine. Joseph demonstrated his love and forgiveness by weeping over all his brothers.

God's Redemption - God is in the redemption business. He can take tragic past events and actions and turn them completely around. This gives individuals who have endured any adversity— abuse, abandonment, injustice— hope for God's restoration. We all can trust and rely on God's overwhelming love. He will demonstrate His compassion even in the worst situations.

God's Beauty from Ashes - Our world is fallen, tragedies happen, poor decisions are made, and consequences result. However, that does not mean that God doesn't care or is unaware. The Father does not always explain all the "why's" concerning His actions or lack of action. His ways are higher, and we may not always understand (Isa. 55:9). However, He uses every adverse situation for His glory and for an ultimate good.