

## Genesis 41-45 Chapter Study

### INTRODUCTION

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1. Joseph Is Sold Into Slavery (Ch. 37)

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3. Joseph The Slave (Chapters 39 & 40)

4. Joseph The Prime Minister (Chapters 41-45)

We ended last week with Joseph in prison in Egypt.

He'd been falsely accused of attempted rape by an Egyptian official's wife.

While in prison, having been put in charge of all the other prisoners, he made acquaintance with two high officials of the Egyptian court who were under investigation and so were being kept there. Both men had troubling dreams one night and Joseph interpreted them for them.

One of the men was convicted and executed while the other was restored to his post.

But the restored official promptly forgot all about Joseph and said nothing to Pharaoh about the terrible injustices Joseph had endured.

Actually, the reason why he forgot about Joseph and said nothing to Pharaoh was one more part of God's plan for Joseph, which was to do far more than just release him from prison.

Joseph's destiny was to rise to the very throne of Egypt, and the first step on that upward path awaited something special in the life of Pharaoh.

Ch. 41 tells us what that was . . .

### CHAPTER 41

#### 4. Joseph The Prime Minister (Chapters 41-45)

##### a. 41:1-36 • Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream

**<sup>1</sup>Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years,**

Two more years went by before that Egyptian official remembered Joseph and said anything to Pharaoh. Two *more* years while Joseph waited, thinking that that official would surely say something!

As we get older, it seems the years go by more and more swiftly; but for the young, like Joseph, time passes more slowly.

And time can seem to drag by at a *snail's pace* when you're stuck in a monotonous place like a prison!

But while he waited, Joseph seems to have never lost faith in God.

**<sup>1</sup>Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river. <sup>2</sup>Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. <sup>3</sup>Then behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ugly and gaunt, and stood by the *other* cows on the bank of the river. <sup>4</sup>And the ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke.**

Those who specialize in the science of sleep say that we only *remember* dreams if we wake up while having them.

Pharaoh had a dream, and it was so troubling, so distressing in the sense of it's importance that he woke up and was able to remember it in vivid detail.

But then he went back to sleep and had another dream . . .

**<sup>5</sup>He slept and dreamed a second time; and suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, plump and good. <sup>6</sup>Then behold, seven thin heads, blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. <sup>7</sup>And the seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads. So Pharaoh awoke, and indeed, *it was a dream.***

The dreams, while having different images, had the same theme and Pharaoh knew they were more than just regular dreams.

The Egyptians put a lot of stock in dreams.

They believed they were a walk of the person's spirit in the spiritual realm and carried tremendous portent.

The Egyptians had developed elaborate dream interpretation manuals and a whole science of dreams grew up there.

So the next day, Pharaoh called for the dream specialists.

**8**Now it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but **there was** no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh.

The king's dreams defied their interpretive schemes and they couldn't answer him.

**9**Then the chief butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying: "I remember my faults this day. **10**When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, **both** me and the chief baker, **11**we each had a dream in one night, he and I. Each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his **own** dream. **12**Now there **was** a young Hebrew man with us there, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him, and he interpreted our dreams for us; to each man he interpreted according to his **own** dream. **13**And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him."

This whole challenge of interpreting dreams jogs the chief butler's memory and he then reports to Pharaoh the skill Joseph had exhibited 2 years before.

**14**Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh.

He'd have had to have been made presentable at court before entering the king's presence.

**15**And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and **there is** no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you **that** you can understand a dream, to interpret it." **16**So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "**It is** not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

There is far more in this response of Joseph to Pharaoh than first meets the eye.

Egypt was the world's premier power and the court of Egypt was filled with earthly glory, splendor, treasure, and the emblems of power.

Everyone who came before Pharaoh was awestruck and used that moment to try to rise to his favor.

Here's young Joseph, taken out of the destitution of a prison, and ushered into the throne room of the world's premier power –

standing before the world's most powerful man, and he's being asked a favor.

If there was ever a moment to grandstand, this is it!

But Joseph points Pharaoh and the court of Egypt at the goodness and power of God instead of claiming the attention for himself.

Look at the exchange again . . .

**15And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it." 16So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace."**

The humility of Joseph demonstrated here is one of the most amazing moments in all of the Bible, preceded as it has been by years of slavery, injustice, and confusing circumstances.

**17Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: "Behold, in my dream I stood on the bank of the river. 18Suddenly seven cows came up out of the river, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. 19Then behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt. 20And the gaunt and ugly cows ate up the first seven, the fat cows. 21When they had eaten them up, no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were just as ugly as at the beginning. So I awoke. 22Also I saw in my dream, and suddenly seven heads came up on one stalk, full and good. 23Then behold, seven heads, withered, thin, *and* blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. 24And the thin heads devoured the seven good heads. So I told *this* to the magicians, but *there was no one* who could explain *it* to me."**

**25Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh *are* one; God has shown Pharaoh what He *is* about to do: 26The seven good cows *are* seven years, and the seven good heads *are* seven years; the dreams *are* one. 27And the seven thin and ugly cows which came up after them *are* seven years, and the seven empty heads blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine. 28This *is* the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He *is* about to do. 29Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; 30but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land. 31So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it *will be* very severe. 32And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing *is* established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.**

As Joseph listened to Pharaoh recount his dream, God gave him the interpretation, which Joseph faithfully repeated to the Egyptian king.

Egypt would have 7 years of great bounty, followed by another 7 years of famine.

In the first dream, Pharaoh saw the cows come out of the Nile. Egypt is largely a desert, but along the Nile lie lush and verdant farmlands that supply all of the food stocks for the kingdom. Each year, Egypt depends on the flooding of the Nile to send water into the fields and add another layer of rich soil that produces great harvest – a natural fertilizer that never wears out the land.

But if there's a drought and not enough water to flood the Nile, then the crops are weak and the only fields that can be sown are right at the river's edge.

Pharaoh's dream meant there would be a severe drought that would virtually dry up the Nile.

Along with the interpretation, Joseph was also given a word of wisdom to speak to Pharaoh and moved to share that as well . . .

**33“Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. 34Let Pharaoh do *this*, and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years. 35And let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming, and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. 36Then that food shall be as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land may not perish during the famine.”**

God handed Joseph a plan for enduring the famine that was coming.

The abundance of the coming 7 years of prosperity would be more than enough to levy a 20% tax that would be put in reserve for use during the 7 years of famine.

Joseph was suggesting a government-run welfare program that would take some of the surplus of the fat years and save it for the lean years.

It would be overseen by a chief administrator, who would work with regional officials and warehoused in various locations throughout the kingdom.

**b. 41:37-57 • Joseph Becomes Prime Minister**

**37**So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. **38**And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can **we** find **such a one** as this, a man in whom **is** the Spirit of God?”

Joseph’s plan was brilliant and the entire court recognized it as such. Pharaoh then asked those standing round – “Have we,” meaning among them there at court, “Have we someone like Joseph,” who obviously had wisdom from above? Since the plan Joseph suggested was excellent and since Joseph had proven himself so capably – Pharaoh nominates him to implement the plan.

**39**Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, **there is** no one as discerning and wise as you. **40**You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.” **41**And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.”

Pharaoh at this point delegated to Joseph all of the administrative tasks of ruling Egypt. He became the Prime minister, or Grand Vizier; and so was the second most powerful man in the world’s most powerful kingdom.

**42**Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand;

This ring was THE symbol of Pharaoh’s power.

**and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck.**

Joseph is being ensconced in his position with all of the accoutrements of power and rank.

**43**And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, “Bow the knee!” So he set him over all the land of Egypt. **44**Pharaoh also said to Joseph, “**I am** Pharaoh, and without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” **45**And Pharaoh called Joseph’s name Zaphnath-Paaneah.

Translating Joseph’s name has proven difficult as it draws on roots which are archaic & now obscure.

But the name Pharaoh gave him is a reflection of what Joseph

became for them; “Savior of the world.” [Keil & Delitzsche •  
“salvator mundi”]<sup>[1]</sup>

What’s provocative about this name is that it immediately makes us think of the Messiah.

In fact, Joseph provides us a striking parallel to Jesus, as we’ll see a bit later.

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There’s an important reason why Pharaoh *renamed* Joseph, and decked him out with all of the trappings of royal power.

One of the things that would prove a bit *embarrassing* for the Egyptian court was that their Prime Minister *wasn’t* Egyptian!

You’ll remember a couple weeks ago I mentioned that one of the reasons Joseph would be allowed to rise to a position of importance in Egypt was because Egypt was at this time ruled by the *Hyksos*, a Semitic people who’d conquered Egypt.

The Hyksos had fully adopted the Egyptian fashions and forms and tried to blend in as much as possible to the Egyptian culture.

But the ethnic Egyptians and original royal families of Egypt hated them and there were constant intrigues throughout this period in which the Egyptians were trying to regain the throne and oust the Hyksos.

Pharaoh, a Hyksosian, knew that putting a *Hebrew* like Joseph in the position of Prime Minister would be like salt in the wound to the ethnic Egyptians and would inflame another round of virulent anti-Hyksos sentiment; especially because what Joseph would implement with Pharaoh’s consent and authority, was a radical restructuring of Egyptian society and economics.

Make no mistake – Joseph was implementing a government program of taxation which would greatly expand government! The Egyptians would see this as further Hyksosian intrusion into their nation and lives.

So, it was politically expedient for Pharaoh to make Joseph look as Egyptian as possible.

**And he gave him as a wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On. So Joseph went out over *all* the land of Egypt.**

The final step in *Egyptifying* Joseph was marrying him in to the Egyptian *social network*.



Asenath was the daughter of the high priest of the main religion of Egypt, the worship of Ra, the sun god.

The city of On, or *Heliopolis*, as it was later known, was the central city of Ra worship.

The priests of On comprised the most learned men in all Egypt.

**46** Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

13 years had passed since his brothers had sold him not slavery!

13 years as a slave in Potiphar's house, and as an inmate in prison. And throughout all that time, Joseph had maintained his faith in God!

**47** Now in the seven plentiful years the ground brought forth abundantly. **48** So he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities; he laid up in every city the food of the fields which surrounded them. **49** Joseph gathered very much grain, as the sand of the sea, until he stopped counting, for *it was* immeasurable.

As per his initial recommendations to Pharaoh, Joseph implemented a taxation program over the produce of Egypt in which 20% of the harvest was taken by government officials and put into storage bins.

Meticulous records were kept. But the stocks eventually got to the point that they didn't have numbers that high anymore and stopped counting.

What this means is that the abundance of the 7 plenteous years was beyond anything Egypt had experienced before.

**50** And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. **51** Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: [Forgetfulness] "For God has made me **forget** all my toil and all my father's house." **52** And the name of the second he called Ephraim: [Fruitfulness] "For God has caused me to be **fruitful** in the land of my affliction."

While Pharaoh wanted to *Egyptianize* Joseph, Joseph maintained his legacy as a Hebrew by giving his sons through his Egyptians wife *Hebrew* names.

While he's risen to the throne of Egypt, Joseph knows his and his



descendants real destiny is in Canaan.

**53**Then the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Egypt ended, **54**and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. The famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

The famine was probably due to drought, and this drought wasn't merely regional to Egypt, it covered the entire Middle East.

**55**So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, do." **56**The famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians. And the famine became severe in the land of Egypt. **57**So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy *grain*, because the famine was severe in all lands.

In ch. 47 we'll discover that the famine lasted so long and was so severe, Joseph ended up owning or gaining control of virtually *all* of the land of Egypt for Pharaoh.

The people had to come to him so often to buy bread, that their savings were depleted and they ended up having to sell their lands and property.

It was during this phase of Egyptian history that the power of the Pharaoh spread so dramatically over the whole of Egypt.

As I mentioned a few moments ago, Joseph's story provides us a striking parallel to Jesus.

Consider what we've seen just so far – Joseph . . .

1. Was a shepherd
2. Was loved by his father
3. Was sent unto his brethren
4. Was hated by his brothers
5. Prophesied his coming glory
6. Was rejected by his brothers
7. Endured unjust punishment from his brothers
8. Was sentenced to the pit
9. Was delivered to the pit, though a leader knew he should go free
10. Was sold for pieces of silver
11. Was handed over to the Gentiles
12. Was regarded as dead, but raised out of the pit
13. Went to Egypt

14. Was made a servant

15. Was tempted severely, but did not sin

16. Was falsely accused

17. Made no defense

18. Was cast into prison, and numbered with sinners and criminals

19. Endured unjust punishment from Gentiles

20. Associated with two other criminals; one was pardoned and one was not

a. the butler, with his *wine*, and the baker, with his *bread*, speak of the elements of communion.

b. the three-day period before their case was resolved hints at the three days before the resurrection of Jesus

21. Showed compassion

22. Brought a message of deliverance in prison

23. Wanted to be remembered

24. Was shown to have divine wisdom

25. Was recognized as having the Spirit of God

26. Was betrayed by friends

27. Was glorified after his humility

28. Was honored among Gentiles while still despised or forgotten by his brethren

29. Was given a Gentile bride

30. Was 30 years old when he began his life's work

31. Blessed the world with bread

32. Was the *only source* of bread

33. The world is instructed to go to him and do whatever he says to do

34. Given the name "Savior of the World"

## GENESIS 42

### c. 42:1-28 • Joseph's Brothers Go To Egypt

**<sup>1</sup>When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?" <sup>2</sup>And he said, "Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die."**

Now the scene shifts back to Canaan and Jacob's family.

Everyone knew there was food in Egypt and the reserves in

Jacob's family were running thin, so he told the boys they ought to go get some supplies.

But when he mentioned Egypt, they all looked at each other with apprehension – why?

Because that's where they'd sold their brother into slavery to.

**3So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. 4But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, "Lest some calamity befall him." 5And the sons of Israel went to buy *grain* among those who journeyed, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.**

Joseph's 10 older brothers went on this mission to get relief supplies. They all went because they would need the freightage of their collective whole to bring back enough supplies to support the entire household.

The only brother who didn't go was Ben because he was the last surviving son of Rachel and Jacob was loath to let him out of his sight.

**6Now Joseph *was* governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with *their* faces to the earth.**

Thus fulfilling his dream from so many years before.

**7Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly to them. Then he said to them, "Where do you come from?" And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food." 8So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.**

Because over 20 years had passed and he'd adopted the fashions of Egypt.

**9Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them, and said to them, "You *are* spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land!"**

As the story goes on to show, Joseph was not just trying to squeeze them here in order to make them pay for the way he'd treated them.

Revenge is not his motive. Rather, he's applying pressure because he wants to see what kind of men they are now after 20 years.

Are they the same guys who treated him so cruelly, or have the years served to soften them and teach them about God?

**10**And they said to him, “No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. **11**We **are** all one man’s sons; we **are** honest **men**; your servants are not spies.” **12**But he said to them, “No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land.” **13**And they said, “Your servants **are** twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest **is** with our father today, and one **is** no more.” **14**But Joseph said to them, “It **is** as I spoke to you, saying, ‘You **are** spies!’ **15**In this **manner** you shall be tested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. **16**Send **one** of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether **there is** any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you **are** spies!” **17**So he put them all together in prison three days.

Joseph’s goal in all this was not to be cruel or mean but to see what the pressure would do to them.

If they were the cruel, selfish men they’d been with him 2 decades before, it wouldn’t be long until they were at each other’s throats and making deals to do each other in.

Joseph also knew that with his departure from Jacob’s house, his father would turn his affection from the lost Joseph to his younger brother Benjamin.

And if the brothers would treat him the way they had, they’d probably also scheme to get rid of Ben.

This was Joseph’s way of finding out how his elder brothers felt about his younger brother.

Indeed – maybe they’d already killed him or sold him into slavery too.

The only way to find out was to tell them to bring him when they said he was still at home.

**18**Then Joseph said to them the third day, “Do this and live, **for I fear God: 19**If you **are** honest **men**, let **one** of your brothers be confined to your prison house; but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses. **20**And bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die.” And they did so.

Joseph had originally said 9 of them would stay confined in Egypt while one went home to retrieve Ben.

Now he says one will stay and the 9 may return with grain as relief for the household.

**21**Then they said to one another, “We **are** truly guilty concerning our

**brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us.”**

Now they are feeling guilty for the way they treated Joseph so many years before.

One of them will have to stay in prison in Egypt while the rest go free and return home.

Once more they will have to go to Jacob with the news they've lost a brother.

This is just too eerily like what they did with Egypt and it spooks them.

**22And Reuben answered them, saying, “Did I not speak to you, saying, ‘Do not sin against the boy’; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us.” 23But they did not know that Joseph understood *them*, for he spoke to them through an interpreter. 24And he turned himself away from them and wept. Then he returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.**

As they spoke to one another of their guilt, they spoke in Hebrew and Joseph understood them.

He saw their remorse and was overwhelmed with emotion.

But he still did not know how they would treat Benjamin if given the chance and if pressed.

He had to play it out and carry through the trial of their character.

Were they truly repentant of their treatment of him, or just regretful that they were now having to pay their just desserts?

Joseph chose Simeon as the brother to keep in confinement in Egypt.

This is where we get the clue that it was Simeon who'd led in the original plot against Joseph.

We know Simeon was a cruel and treacherous man as the slaughter of the Shechemites proves.

Simeon may have been the bad seed that poisoned the minds of the others and by removing him, Joseph knows he's purging the brothers' counsel of treachery.

**25Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man's money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. Thus he did for them. 26So they loaded their donkeys with the grain and departed from there. 27But as one of *them* opened his sack to give his donkey feed at the**

encampment, he saw his money; and there it was, in the mouth of his sack. 28 So he said to his brothers, “My money has been restored, and there it is, in my sack!” Then their hearts failed *them* and they were afraid, saying to one another, “What *is* this *that* God has done to us?”

They were fearful because it would appear that they had bought provisions in Egypt, but then had defrauded the Egyptians of the cost of the grain.

They didn't know Joseph had given instructions that their money be returned to their sacks.

They only knew how it would appear if they were stopped and inspected.

#### **d. 42:29-38 • They Return to Jacob**

**29** Then they went to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan and told him all that had happened to them, saying: **30** “The man *who is* lord of the land spoke roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. **31** But we said to him, ‘We *are* honest *men*; we are not spies. **32** We *are* twelve brothers, sons of our father; one *is* no *more*, and the youngest *is* with our father this day in the land of Canaan.’ **33** Then the man, the lord of the country, said to us, ‘By this I will know that you *are* honest *men*: Leave one of your brothers *here* with me, take *food* for the famine of your households, and be gone. **34** And bring your youngest brother to me; so I shall know that you *are* not spies, but *that* you *are* honest *men*. I will grant your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.’” **35** Then it happened as they emptied their sacks, that surprisingly each man's bundle of money *was* in his sack; and when they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. **36** And Jacob their father said to them, “You have bereaved me: Joseph is no *more*, Simeon is no *more*, and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me.”

What a pathetic thing to say! The fact of the matter is – God was working to affect a wonderful reunion! But Jacob was looking at his circumstances instead of God!

Contrast Joseph's faith with Jacob's.

Joseph's circumstances were far worse than his dad's, yet he never lost hope in the Lord.

Jacob's view of God has been *eclipsed* by his circumstances.

The “all things” Jacob thinks are against him, are the “all things”

Joseph knows are working together for good!

What are the all things of your life doing? Are they against you or

working for you?

Joseph didn't have the promise of Romans 8:28 on paper, but he did have it in his heart.

Many of us have Romans 8:28 on paper, but *not* in our hearts.

**37** Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, "Kill my two sons if I do not bring him *back* to you; put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you."

What a foolish thing for Reuben to say. What comfort will Jacob gain by killing two of his grandsons?

But Reuben is speaking out of frustration at his father's unreasonable obstinacy here.

Simeon is in prison and will only be released when Benjamin is brought.

In fact, unless they take Ben, there'll be no more relief supplies for them from Egypt!

They all stand in danger of dying if Ben does return with them.

**38** But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave."

Jacob is just being foolish here! He's condemning his entire household to starvation.

But he says it would be better to go that way than to part with Benjamin.

## GENESIS 43

### e. 43:1-34 • They Return to Egypt with Benjamin

**1** Now the famine *was* severe in the land. **2** And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, "Go back, buy us a little food." **3** But Judah spoke to him, saying, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother *is* with you.' **4** If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. **5** But if you will not send *him*, we will not go down; for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother *is* with you.'" **6** And Israel said, "Why did you deal *so* wrongfully with me *as* to tell the man whether you had still *another* brother?" **7** But they said, "The man asked us pointedly about ourselves and our family, saying, '*Is* your father still alive? Have you *another* brother?' And we told him according to these words. Could we



possibly have known that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?"

When Joseph had interrogated them, they'd answered truthfully, not wanting to jeopardize either their lives or their mission.

They had no way of knowing how the Egyptian official would use the information they provided.

**8**Then Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you **and** also our little ones. **9**I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him **back** to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. **10**For if we had not lingered, surely by now we would have returned this second time."

Judah makes a personal guarantee of Benjamin's safety.

What Judah is saying is that if Ben falls into any kind of peril, He will take his place so that Benjamin can return safely to Jacob.

Judah spoke with urgency because their supplies had reached a critical level and their household stood on the edge of starvation.

**11**And their father Israel said to them, "If **it must be** so, then do this: Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man—a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. **12**Take double money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. **13**Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. **14**And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!"

Notice that Jacob is referred to here by his new name, *Israel*, because he's finally come to the place of resignation and faith in God.

What will be will be – he cannot fight the purposes of God and has surrendered himself and sons into the Lord's keeping.

**15**So the men took that present and Benjamin, and they took double money in their hand, and arose and went down to Egypt; and they stood before Joseph. **16**When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Take **these** men to my home, and slaughter an animal and make ready; for **these** men will dine with me at noon." **17**Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph's house. **18**Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, "**It is** because of the money, which was returned in our sacks

the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may make a case against us and seize us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys.”  
19When they drew near to the steward of Joseph’s house, they talked with him at the door of the house, 20and said, “O sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food; 21but it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there, *each* man’s money *was* in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand. 22And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks.” 23But he said, “Peace *be* with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money.” Then he brought Simeon out to them.

The brothers see this transfer to Joseph’s house as a prelude to an official inquiry so they decide to intervene by quickly going to the man who’s been given charge of them to tell what happened on their first trip.

They hadn’t stolen anything – someone put their money back in their sacks and they want to make sure they give it back to whomever it belongs.

But the steward tells them he had the purchase money they’d brought.

It they found money in their sacks – it must be the miraculous provision of God.

Of course, it was the steward who put the money back in their sacks – he’s playing with their minds and setting them up for the final test Joseph needs to put them through to determine their attitude toward Benjamin.

**24**So the man brought the men into Joseph’s house and gave *them* water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed. **25**Then they made the present ready for Joseph’s coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there. **26**And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which *was* in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth. **27**Then he asked them about *their* well-being, and said, “*Is* your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? *Is* he still alive?” **28**And they answered, “Your servant our father *is* in good health; he *is* still alive.” And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves.

This is now the second time they’ve bowed down to him, just as he’d had two dreams in which they prostrated themselves before him.

**29**Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "***Is*** this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son."

Remember, it's been 20 something years and when he last saw Benjamin, he was just a lad – now he's a young man.

**30**Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought ***somewhere*** to weep. And he went into ***his*** chamber and wept there. **31**Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, "Serve the bread." **32**So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, for that ***is*** an abomination to the Egyptians. **33**And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another. **34**Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

When the tables were set, they were arranged in three groups.

Joseph had a table to himself; his brothers had their own table, then the Egyptian attendants had another..

Even though Joseph was Prime Minister, he was still not ethnic Egyptian and according to religious rules, they could not share a common table.

When the brothers saw Joseph at his own table, it ought to have been a huge clue to them about his identity.

But then, Joseph moved to make it even more clear – HE *served* them himself!

And he had them sit at their table according to birth-order.

When he got to Ben's plate, he piled up a portion 5 times what he gave the rest!

All of this really ought to have prompted them to take a closer look at Joseph, but they were so relieved at the kind treatment they were receiving they didn't pay attention to all the little hints Joseph was leaving them.

## **GENESIS 44**

### **f. 44:1-34 • Joseph's Final test of His Brothers**

**1**And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's

money in the mouth of his sack. 2Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money.” So he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. 3As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. 4When they had gone out of the city, **and were not yet far off**, Joseph said to his steward, “Get up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good? 5Is not this **the one** from which my lord drinks, and with which he indeed practices divination? You have done evil in so doing.’”

Joseph’s test of the brothers is almost complete. There is just one last thing to determine; what will they do with Benjamin if given the chance?

So he gave instructions that a special silver cup of his be put in Benjamin’s sack of grain.

Joseph calls it his cup of divination but he’s not serious – that’s not what he used it for.

He was simply drawing on a well known practice among the Egyptian wise men to let his brothers know they could not trifle with such a powerful man.

**6So he [the steward] overtook them, and he spoke to them these same words. 7And they said to him, “Why does my lord say these words? Far be it from us that your servants should do such a thing. 8Look, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord’s house? 9With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord’s slaves.”**

The brothers had no idea that the cup was in Ben’s sack!

None of them had stolen anything and they were so certain of their innocence they make this pledge – with whomever the cup is found, he’ll die and the rest will be slaves!

**10And he said, “Now also *let it be* according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and you shall be blameless.”**

The steward said that the punishment would be simpler – the thief would be a slave and the rest could go home.

**11Then each man speedily let down his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. 12So he searched. He began with the oldest and left off with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack. 13Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his**

donkey and returned to the city. 14So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he **was** still there; and they fell before him on the ground. 15And Joseph said to them, "What deed **is** this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination?"

Now, Joseph is NOT saying he *did* practice divination; he's still playing his charade as an Egyptian.

He knew the cup was in Ben's sack because that's where he'd told his servant to put it.

**16Then Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and **he** also with whom the cup was found."**

Judah acts as the spokesman now because he intends to fulfill his pledge to Jacob to be surety for Ben.

Ben's life is forfeit and he will be sold into slavery. Judah is there to offer himself in his place.

The rest of the brothers return to make sure they escort Benjamin home.

Judah begins, by admitting their error-even though they are in fact innocent – and Joseph knows it!

This is what Joseph has been wanting to know – will they turn on Ben when they have a chance, and see him removed just as they were so eager to see Joseph out of the way?

**17But [Joseph] said, "Far be it from me that I should do so; the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father." 18Then Judah came near to him and said: "O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you **are** even like Pharaoh. 19My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?' 20And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of **his** old age, **who is** young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.' 21Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.' 22And we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for **if** he should leave his father, **his father** would die.' 23But you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.' 24" So it was, when we went up to your servant my father, that we told him the words of my lord. 25And our father said, 'Go back **and** buy us a little food.'**

26But we said, 'We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man's face unless our youngest brother *is* with us.' 27Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; 28and the one went out from me, and I said, "Surely he is torn to pieces"; and I have not seen him since. 29But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.' 30"Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad *is* not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, 31it will happen, when he sees that the lad *is* not *with us*, that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. 32For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him *back* to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.' 33Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. 34For how shall I go up to my father if the lad *is* not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?"

## GENESIS 45

### g. 45:1-20 • Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brothers

1Then 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. 2And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard *it*. 3Then 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.

The shock of the realization that Joseph was not only still alive, but that he was the Prime Minister of Egypt, and the very man with whom they'd been conversing during these two visits was too much for them!

It took them a while to process the information and grasp the reality this was Joseph!

4And 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. 5But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. 6For 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. 7And 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.

What a marvelous perspective Joseph has gained on his life and circumstances!

Most people, having risen to his position, would use it as a platform from which to exact revenge on all those they deem had slighted or hurt them over the years.

Joseph's perspective was that it had ALL been God's work to place him there so he could save lives and do good.

All that he has done in his treatment of his brothers up to this point has simply been to determine what kind of men they were and whether they were safe to reveal himself to.

When he heard Judah's appeal on behalf of Benjamin, he realized a wonderful change had been effected in them and that they were genuinely sorry for what they had done to him.

**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. **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.'"

Survival for Jacob's extensive flocks in Canaan was impossible in light of the severity of the famine.

So Joseph urged them to return, gather up their property and migrate back to Egypt where there would be sufficient supplies to wait out the drought.

**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." **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. **16**Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, "Joseph's brothers have come." So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well. **17**And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. **18**Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. **19**Now you



**are commanded—do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. 20Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt *is* yours.”**

The relationship between Pharaoh and Joseph had become tight and the king was happy when Joseph was reunited with his family. He sent “moving vans” back with the brothers to Canaan to assist in the move south.

**h. 45:21-28 • They Return to Jacob With The Good News**

**21Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them carts, according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey. 22He gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred *pieces* of silver and five changes of garments. 23And he sent to his father these *things*: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey. 24So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, “See that you do not become troubled along the way.”**

Literally – “Don’t quarrel or get angry with each other on the way home.”

Joseph knew how easy it is for family members to get into a tiff. He doesn’t want any of them suggesting that he has ulterior motives and that this is all some kind of set up to get even with them.

Joseph is anxious to see the entire family reunited and doesn’t want any quarrels to slow them down.

**25Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. 26And they told him, saying, “Joseph *is* still alive, and he *is* governor over all the land of Egypt.” And Jacob’s heart stood still, because he did not believe them.**

When Jacob was told Joseph was dead, he believed it; now that he’s told he lives, he doesn’t.

**27But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. 28Then Israel said, “*It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.*”**

Did you notice the change of terms here – “*Jacob*” only believed when he *saw*.

Then “*Israel*” said – “It’s enough – Joseph lives.”

*Jacob* was a *carnal* man who would only believe when he saw with his own eyes.

*Israel* was the *spiritual* man who knew by faith he’d see his son again.

We’ve seen how Joseph presents an amazing picture of Jesus to us.

Here at the end of ch. 45 we see how the brothers speak of us *believers*.

They came home after Joseph revealed himself to them and poured great blessing on them.

Then they told Jacob *all the words Joseph had said* and *showed him all the blessing*.

The only way people today will know Jesus is alive is when we tell them His words and show them His blessing in our lives.

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The name *Zaphnath-Paaneah* (a form adapted to the Hebrew, for  $\text{זַפְנַתְפָּאֲנֵיָא}$  LXX; according to a Greek scholium,  $\text{ὁὐδοχὴν ἑὐδοκίαν}$ , “*salvator mundi*” (Jerome), answers to the Coptic *P-sote-m-ph-eneh*,—*P* the article, *sote* salvation, *m* the sign of the genitive, *ph* the article, and *eneh* the world (lit., *aetas, seculum*); or perhaps more correctly, according to Rosellini and more recent Egyptologists, to the Coptic *P-sont-em-ph-anh*, i.e., *sustentator vitae*, support or sustainer of life, with reference to the call entrusted to him by God.