GENESIS

Chapter 45

*Joseph Makes Himself Known*

**Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, “Have everyone leave my presence!” So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. 2 And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh’s household heard about it. 3 Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still living?” But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence. 4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come close to me.” When they had done so, he said, “I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! 5 And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. 6 For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be plowing and reaping. 7 But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.8 “So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. 9 Now hurry back to my father and say to him, ‘This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don’t delay. 10 You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me—you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. 11 I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.’ 12 “You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you. 13 Tell my father about all the honor accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly.” 14 Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. 15 And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him. 16 When the news reached Pharaoh’s palace that Joseph’s brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased. 17 Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Tell your brothers, ‘Do this: Load your animals and return to the land of Canaan, 18 and bring your father and your families back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you can enjoy the fat of the land.’ 19 “You are also directed to tell them, ‘Do this: Take some carts from Egypt for your children and your wives, and get your father and come. 20 Never mind about your belongings, because the best of all Egypt will be yours.’ ” 21 So the sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them carts, as Pharaoh had commanded, and he also gave them provisions for their journey. 22 To each of them he gave new clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five sets of clothes. 23 And this is what he sent to his father: ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and other provisions for his journey. 24 Then he sent his brothers away, and as they were leaving he said to them, “Don’t quarrel on the way!” 25 So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. 26 They told him, “Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of all Egypt.” Jacob was stunned; he did not believe them. 27 But when they told him everything Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. 28 And Israel said, “I’m convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”**

**45:1** *no one stayed*. So that Joseph could protect his own reputation with the Egyptians, speak candidly with his brothers, and protect his brothers’ reputation regarding their sale of Joseph into slavery. (TLSB)

**45:2** *wept.* See vv. 14–15; see also 43:30 and note. (CSB)

**45:3** *brothers … were terrified.* Either because they thought they were seeing a ghost or because they were afraid of what Joseph would do to them. (CSB)

The brothers feared vengeance. (TLSB)

**45:4** *I am your brother Joseph.* See v. 3; Ac 7:13. This time Joseph emphasized his relationship to them.

 *you sold.* See note on 37:28. (CSB)

**45:5** *God sent me.* See vv. 7–9; Ac 7:9. God had a purpose to work through the brothers’ thoughtless and cruel act (see Ac 2:23; 4:28). (CSB)

 *to preserve life*. Joseph’s Egyptian journey was a purposeful act of God, who sent him to Egypt to save thousands. God used the brothers’ sin to do His saving work (Rm 8:28; cf Jn 17:12). (TLSB)

**45:6** Joseph was now 39 years old (see 41:46, 53). (CSB)

**45:7** *a remnant.* Although none had been lost, they had escaped a great threat to them all; so Joseph called them a remnant in the confidence that they would live to produce a great people. (CSB)

**45:8** *not you* … *but God*. The brothers were not the chief actors in Joseph’s coming to Egypt. (TLSB)

 *father.* A title of honor given to viziers (see note on 41:43) and other high officials (in the Apocrypha see 1 Maccabees 11:32). All three titles of Joseph in this verse were originally Egyptian. (CSB)

Intimate adviser to Pharaoh. (TLSB)

 *lord*. Chief servant within Pharaoh’s immediate circle of family and leaders (42:6; 44:18). (TLSB)

 *ruler*. Having authority over the country (41:40). (TLSB)

**45:9** *hurry back … don’t delay.* Joseph is anxious to see Jacob as soon as possible (see v. 13). (CSB)

**45:10** *Goshen.* A region in the eastern part of the Nile delta, it was very fertile (see v. 18) and remains so today. (CSB)

Perhaps the primary Egyptian region for livestock. (TLSB)

**45:12** *I … am speaking.* Not through an interpreter as before (see 42:23). (CSB)

**45:14** *fell upon his* … *neck*. The brothers embraced, with the head pressed against the other’s neck. (TLSB)

 *wept.* See 43:30 and note. (CSB)

**45:15** *his brothers talked with him.* In intimate fellowship and friendship, rather than hostility or fear, for the first time in over 20 years (see 37:2 and note on 45:6). (CSB)

After they had recovered from their fear and were assured of his brotherly love. (TLSB)

**45:18** *you can enjoy the fat of the land.* An echo of Isaac’s blessing on Jacob (see 27:28). (CSB)

Some food was available, despite the famine. (TLSB)

**45:19** *are commanded*. Pharaoh’s authority ensured the family’s welfare. (TLSB)

 *wagons*. Most people traveled by walking or by riding animals. The wagons would spare Jacob and the little children much difficulty. (TLSB)

**45:20** *Have no concern*. Luther: “Do not let your possessions hinder you. Whatever you cannot sell because of this famine, leave it behind” (WA DB 8:183). (TLSB)

**45:22** *to Benjamin he gave … five sets of clothes.* See note on 43:34. (CSB)

Joseph expressed special love for Benjamin, without any fear of brotherly resentment. (TLSB)

 *shekels.* See note on 20:16. (CSB)

**45:24** *Don’t quarrel.* Joseph wanted nothing to delay their return (see note on v. 9), and he wanted them to avoid mutual accusation and recrimination concerning the past.

Although forgiven, the brothers had to take care not to fall into such sins once again.

**45:26** *heart became numb*. Disbelief and shock deny him joy. (TLSB)

**45:27** *spirit* … *revived*. Jacob’s sorrow over the loss of his sons brought him to the point of death. Cf 42:38. But when he saw that his 11 sons had come back, and learned that Joseph was alive, it was as though he had come back to life. (TLSB)

**Ch 45** Joseph reveals himself, reassuring his brothers. With Pharaoh’s full support, he sends for his father and family. Jacob is finally convinced that his son is alive. God rules the world and brings evil to a good end for the sake of His people, as He did with Joseph’s slavery. Let us pursue Joseph’s virtues—humility, wisdom, forgiveness, care for parents and family. And let us not quarrel in our Christian journey, but hold fast to the mercy and doctrine that God has revealed. In Christ, our sin is forgiven, and God gives us the joy of reconciliation and new life. • Lord Jesus, the evil that happened to You on the cross was for our good. Give us the benefits of Your death, and form our lives to Your cross. Amen. (TLSB)