

Sept 2, 2007 (LS)

**REDEMPTION OF THE FIRSTBORN SONS: THE REVELATION OF JOSEPH  
GENESIS 45.1-28**

*After a time of testing, Joseph reveals himself to his brothers in order for them to participate in his glory.*

**A JOSEPH CAUSES HIMSELF TO BE SEEN BY HIS BROTHERS (1-15)**

***The unmediated presence of Joseph (1-3):*** Joseph could no longer restrain himself. In 43.31 Joseph was equally overwhelmed with emotion but had to restrain himself so that he could serve the bread and wine to his brothers.

The fact that he no longer restrains himself tells us that the time of testing is now over.

Servants “who stood by him” are sent out. This is a drastic change. Up to this time Joseph has used servants to be intermediaries between him and his brothers. Cp. 42.23; 43; 44.

Servants have veiled Joseph’s identity. Now they will see Joseph as he is.

Joseph makes himself known to his brothers. *Revelation* is key in this scene. Cp. 44.1 “the morning became light.” Now that the sun has risen, everything will be exposed and everything—and everyone—will be revealed.

Weeping is prominent in this scene as well. Some things are just too deep for words.

Brothers are “terrified before his face.” We see these types of reactions throughout Scripture when God reveals himself. The initial reaction is always fear. So it is here with God’s glorious vice-regent, Joseph. Terror is a proper first response.

***Drawing near to Joseph in peace (4-8):*** Joseph bids them to draw near.

Note how he identifies himself: He is Joseph, the one whom they sold into Egypt. He is not minimizing their sin.

“... do not be grieved or angry before your eyes” (v. 5). Eyes are instruments of judgment. Cp. Gen 1. Joseph tells them that they are to accept his judgment concerning their sin and not judge themselves with a different (i.e., their own) judgment. They are to see with Joseph’s eyes.

Why they are not to be grieved or angry: vv. 5, 7, & 8; Joseph mentions 3x that God sent him down to Egypt, not them.

Already mentioned that they sold him into slavery (v. 4) What Joseph sees is the fact that God has orchestrated the whole thing. He has used even the sinful deeds of these men to accomplish his grand plan for their salvation. Joseph believed in God’s sovereignty; i.e., his control over the smallest details of history.

Purpose is three fold: (1) to preserve life (v. 5), (2) to preserve a remnant (v. 7), and (3) to keep them alive by a great deliverance (v. 7).

God sent Joseph through his sufferings *and* his exaltation for the purpose of life for others, not merely his own survival. He is the seed of the woman who had to be crushed in order for life to come to the world. Joseph is the “seed” (cf. Gen 12.2-3)

Joseph’s exaltation: God has made him (1) father to Pharaoh, (2) lord of all his house, and (3) ruler throughout all of Egypt. In this position he is able to accomplish his mission: life for the world.

A “father to Pharaoh:” Pharaoh is the king. Kings are sons of prophets in Scripture. E.g., 2 Kgs 13.14. Pharaoh, having been converted, is now listening to God’s prophet, Joseph. Joseph is the real power behind the throne.

Joseph reveals to his brothers the plan of God: there will be five years more of famine. This revelation, along with everything else, will demand a proper response from Joseph’s brother and his father later on.

***Instructions for Joseph’s father (9-13):*** Joseph’s father: Joseph is a father to Pharaoh, but Joseph has a father as well. This would seem logically to put Jacob/Israel in a greater position than Pharaoh. And, we will see later that Israel does bless Pharaoh which means (according to Heb 7) that Israel is greater than Pharaoh.

It may be difficult to leave the Promised Land, the land of Canaan, to go down into Egypt. But the present situation demands that if they will live, they must go into exile from the land of Canaan. They cannot tenaciously cling the land, refusing to hear God's word in their present situation, and still be provided for.

Joseph tells us what they are being called into: *his glory* (v. 13). His glory is his dominion, his lordship and all that goes with it in the land of Egypt. The firstborn family is being called to participate in this glory with him. They are to go down to Egypt in order to live in that which has been secured by Joseph.

***Peace between the brothers (14-15):*** weeping with, kissing, and speaking with shows peace between them.

#### **B PHARAOH HEARS AND COMMANDS (16-20)**

***A good word to Pharaoh (16):*** Literally "it was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and his servants." I believe that this statement along with the actions of Pharaoh reveal the fact that he loved Abraham's seed. Therefore, I believe that this Pharaoh was converted.

***A gracious command from Pharaoh (17-20):*** Jordan: command accomplishes two things:: (1) Joseph is protected against resentment. (2) Pharaoh is showing loyalty to the seed of Abraham, wanting to be in alliance with the covenant people.

#### **B' THE SONS OF ISRAEL HEAR AND OBEY (21-24)**

***A grateful obedience (21):*** The brothers are now obedient sons.

***The "vesting" of the brothers (22):*** They tore their garments in 44.13. Joseph gives them new garments. Through this story of Joseph he has gone through various garments which have all revealed his position or vocation.

Joseph is bestowing upon his brothers their new garments for them to participate in his glory with him. Remember, they are entering into that which Joseph has secured before them. Benjamin is exalted above the others.

***Provisions for his father's house (23):*** This is but a foretaste of what will be when Jacob arrives in Egypt.

***The command of Joseph (24):*** "See that you do not become troubled along the way." Possibilities: First, it could possibly be referring to their being angry with themselves again.

Second, and possibly related, he might be telling them not to quarrel among themselves on the way home.

#### **A' ISRAEL WILL GO TO EGYPT TO SEE JOSEPH (25-28)**

***Ascending to Canaan (25):*** While it is true that Canaan is North in relation to Egypt, the Hebrew section of the Bible is quite clear always that to go to the land of Canaan and eventually Jerusalem is a journey "up."

Though at this present time they must go into Egypt, Canaan is still the promised land. Joseph will tell them at the end of his life that God will take them up out of the land of Egypt one day. These are only temporary arrangements.

***The "death" of Jacob (26):*** Jacob's heart grew numb (trans. "stood still" in NKJ).

***The "resurrection" of Jacob (27-28):*** "the spirit/breath of Jacob revived." That is Jacob died (in a sense) and now, after hearing the word, he is brought back to life. The fact that this is what is going on in the text is further solidified by the fact that his name changes again.

In v. 28 he is Israel. Israel is Jacob dead and reborn. And the "new Israel," the transformed, resurrected Israel, is ready to go down to Egypt and see Joseph for himself.

- (1) God's revelation demands a response from us.
- (2) Our emotions are an aspect of our humanness.
- (3) Judge yourself according to God's judgment.
- (4) One day our hope will be seen.