

# Pentwater Bible Church

*Joseph Reveals Himself*  
*Genesis Message Eighty - One*  
*Genesis 44: 18- 45: 15*



Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brother by Jean Charles Tadiou 1788

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## Genesis Message Eighty-One

### JOSEPH REVEALS HIMSELF

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#### Review:

#### JOSEPH PREPARES FOR THE SECOND RECEPTION OF HIS BROTHERS

Genesis 43: 16-25

Without his brother's knowledge, one morning Joseph saw them returning with Benjamin, as he had demanded. Joseph then instructed his staff administrator to bring them into *his* house, prepare fresh meat for the main meal of the day, which the Egyptians enjoyed at noon. He then left the house so the servant could greet them alone. Being a loyal and dutiful servant the man did exactly as Joseph had directed, he brought the brothers into Joseph's home and initiated the meal preparations. This must have seemed strange to them. Here they were coming back to Egypt for additional food and the second highest-ranking person in the kingdom was bringing them into his royal house. The Egyptian retinue of Joseph's household would be there as well. They were afraid for themselves since they might be accused of thievery for the money which they found in their sacks of grain when they last left Egypt. Further, their fear caused them to begin to think of some undesirable outcomes such as a possible accusation and conviction. They could even be made slaves and forfeit their pack animals. In their attempt to avoid this, they immediately confronted the household administrator at the front door of the house to explain this issue. Addressing him as lord, *adonee* אֲדֹנָי they begin to explain saying, "we came indeed down at the first time to buy food and it came to pass, when we came to the lodging-place, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand." They then continued the pleading by saying they have additional money to pay for the grain they came this time to purchase. They didn't immediately return the money when they discovered it on their last trip. They were afraid of the possibility of being called thieves in addition to being accused as spies. They honestly did not realize how the money got into their grain sacks. Even more startling to them must have been when the steward admitted to being the person who had their money and returned it. The steward, who was initiated into Joseph's plans, replied in a comforting manner, "Peace be to you *shalom lahchem* (שָׁלוֹם לָכֶם) is not a common form of salutation here, but of encouragement). As he says this he assures them that it is entirely their God and the God of their father's doing. He may not have realized what he was saying but this is a partial fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. God is moving the family down to Egypt and this is another stage in the process. Then the man brought Simeon out to join them. Finally in a most hospitable act reserved for honored guests he gave them water to wash their feet and food for their animals. Seeing that they were being treated as honored guests they got the gifts ready for the Egyptian ruler that had sold them grain and was now treating them so well.

## JOSEPH MEETS HIS BROTHERS AGAIN

Genesis 43: 26-30

Just at the proper time Joseph came into the house and the brothers presented him with the presents they brought him from Canaan. In the greeting and presenting of the gifts they bow down low to the ground in obeisance to him. Again Joseph must have recalled the dreams he had when he was just seventeen before they attempted to murder him and sold him into slavery. He must have been emotionally kindled almost beyond control. God's dreams are coming to fulfillment. Because he was faithful to God he was being used mightily as an agent of God's plan. Still acting that he has no intimate knowledge of them or their family he asks about the welfare of their father *the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?* Interestingly they respond in additional obeisance by bowing their heads in submission and saying that he is indeed alive and they call him "*Thy servant our father.*" Joseph then asked about the young man they brought with them saying, "*Is this your youngest brother, of whom ye spake unto me?*" Still holding his emotions in check he says, as if signifying his rank in the Egyptian hierarchy, "*God be gracious unto thee, my son.*" This was his first direct speech to Benjamin since he had been sold into slavery at age seventeen, more than twenty years ago. Seeing Benjamin who was now grown up was too much for him to contain. He left the room and wept hard.

## JOSEPH COMMENCES THE MEAL

Genesis 43: 31-34

After he had cried hard he washed his face to relieve himself, so it would not be obvious that he was overcome with emotion, he directed the staff to start the meal. The Egyptian staff being xenophobic about eating with any other people groups, prepared individual tables for the brothers, themselves and one for Joseph due to his exalted position over them. Joseph was also not going to eat with the Egyptians, as he did not fully integrate into their culture or pagan worship. He was very loyal to Pharaoh but knew God and would not capitulate to the paganism of the Egyptians. He would also continue to separate himself from his brothers for a time yet. What Joseph did next must have caused additional anxiety within his brothers. He arranged them in order from the *first-born according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth.* There are 39,917,000 (11 factorial or  $11 \times 1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5 \times 6 \times 7 \times 8 \times 9 \times 10 \times 11$ ) possible orders one can arrange eleven individuals into. This could not be chance that the servants placed the brothers in the birth order seating. The odds are 40 million to one that it could be achieved. They marvelled at this. The Hebrew word translated as marvelled is

*vehyeetmehoo* וַיִּתְמַהוּ and it means to be dumbfounded. They literally were bewildered and astonished. Finally Joseph conducts a test on the brothers to see if their hearts were still filled with envy as when they tried to kill him many years ago. Joseph has Benjamin given five times as much food as the other siblings. They don't seem to mind as *they drank, and were merry with him.* There was no obvious suggestion of jealousy or resentment toward Benjamin as there had been with Joseph. Joseph was now nearly satisfied with their change of heart. There would be one more test for them to overcome before Joseph would reveal himself to them.

## JOSEPH SETS UP THE FINAL TEST

### Genesis 44: 1-2

Again without their knowledge Joseph has the brother's money returned to them in the full grain sacks as they begin their journey back home to Canaan. However, this time he has the steward place his personal silver cup, which he uses, as a sacred vessel in Benjamin's grain sack. Since Joseph was acquainted with the most secret things of God he somehow might have used this silver cup in his devotions. He did not practice divination in the sense that the Egyptians did, but because of his dreams they probably thought he somehow did connect to God through this cup. In any event the *staged* crime would be considered worse with the theft of the sacred cup. Joseph's final test would be to determine if the brothers would allow Benjamin to be arrested and leave him behind or not. So the steward ever dutiful and loyal to Joseph does as he is asked. It is not clear from the text if he was aware of Joseph's testing of his brothers or even if he knew their relationship to Joseph.

## THE PLANNED ACCUSATION

### Genesis 44: 3-6

The next morning the brothers departed for their journey back to Canaan not aware of the money and cup that had been planted in their grain sacks. Joseph gave them some lead-time to get to the outskirts of Memphis and he commanded his steward to chase after them and overtake them. When he got to them he was to accuse them of responding to Joseph's hospitality with evil. They would have no idea what the steward was talking about. He met them and accused them of stealing Joseph's silver cup calling it the cup "*in which my lord drinketh, and whereby he indeed divineth?*"

## THE ACCUSATION REALIZED

### Genesis 44: 7-13

The servant's accusation elicits a strong denial as a response from the brothers. They answer with a rhetorical question, "*Wherefore speaketh my lord such words as these?*" Then they again refer to themselves as the crown's servants who would never do such as thing. They even go on to say that they have already shown their honesty by bringing back the money that was placed in their sacks from the last trip to Egypt. They reason that they would then certainly not take a mere cup of silver or even gold! They were so sure that none of them had stolen anything that they make a bold offer, "*With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.*" In other words the thief will be executed and the rest will become slaves to you. The servant agrees and restates their offer just to clearly affirm it. So the search began. The steward began the search by having every one of them take his sack down from the pack animal for inspection. He searched Reuben first as the eldest and worked his way to Benjamin as the last. Of course he found the cup in Benjamin's sack. The brothers were so distraught they tore their clothes in despair, repacked their animals and returned to Memphis.

## JUDAH INTERVENES FOR THE BROTHERS

Genesis 44: 14-17

They came directly to Joseph's house and fell on the ground before him in the lowest and most degrading bow in obeisance that they had done to date. This groveling was by far the most dramatic prostration before their brother Joseph. Joseph begins the discussion by saying, "What deed is this that ye have done? know ye not that such a man as I can indeed divine?" In other words "did you not realize that I have divination power and would know that you stole my cup?" He was putting them very strongly to the test. Judah responds as the family spokesman by saying that they are bewildered and do not know what to do or say! By saying that Elohim has found us out and we are all going to be your slaves he is referring to the time he and the others sold Joseph into slavery. He knew that Benjamin did not steal the cup. Joseph very shrewdly responds and says only the one who stole the cup will be a slave. The rest of you will go back to your father in peace. There will hardly be peace when they return to Jacob without Benjamin. This was Jacob's greatest fear that he would lose his youngest and beloved son.

### **Today's Message:**

JUDAH'S MAGNIFICENT PLEA

Genesis 44: 18-34

*<sup>18</sup>Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh, my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant; for thou art even as Pharaoh. <sup>19</sup>My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? <sup>20</sup>And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother; and his father loveth him. <sup>21</sup>And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. <sup>22</sup>And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. <sup>23</sup>And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. <sup>24</sup>And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. <sup>25</sup>And our father said, Go again, buy us a little food. <sup>26</sup>And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. <sup>27</sup>And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: <sup>28</sup>and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I have not seen him since: <sup>29</sup>and if ye take this one also from me, and harm befall him, ye will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol. <sup>30</sup>Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad is not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; <sup>31</sup>it will come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants will bring down the gray hairs*

*of thy servant our father with sorrow to Sheol. <sup>32</sup>For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then shall I bear the blame to my father for ever. <sup>33</sup>Now therefore, let thy servant, I pray thee, abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. <sup>34</sup>For how shall I go up to my father, if the lad be not with me? lest I see the evil that shall come on my father (ASV 1901).*

Judah, realizing the terrible situation that was unfolding, started to plead with the Egyptian governor. He had made a pledge to Jacob offering himself as surety if he did not bring back Benjamin. He was now making good on that promise. He was keeping his word to his father. He approached the prime minister of the greatest nation on earth at that time without being asked to come near. This could have easily been a capital offense. One does not approach a sovereign without being recognized to do so. Judah recognized that this man's power and authority was equal to that of Pharaoh. But the motivation to keep his word to his father and preserve his brother Benjamin far superseded his fear of the governor and his position. Judah told Joseph that he would become surety for Benjamin if it came to that and now he was prepared to do that. Joseph was seeing the outcome of his testing of the brothers. Judah was speaking for his brethren and trying to make good for their sin, which brought grief upon their father.

Judah then began to relate his previous conversations with the governor starting with his questions regarding his family back in Canaan. He reminded the governor that he asked about their father and brother. Judah affirmed that again and reiterated the issue of one brother being dead as well as that brother's mother being gone too. He affirmed his father's love for Benjamin. Judah did not seem to exhibit any jealousy toward Benjamin as he had toward Joseph twenty-two years ago. It is not clear if Judah realized that Benjamin was innocent of the theft of the silver cup but he was going to make an impassioned plea to avoid Benjamin's incarceration in an Egyptian prison. Joseph was seeing an entirely different Judah than he knew back in Canaan. This person in front of him seemed to have had a genuine transformation.

Judah continuing his plea to the governor stated the governor's need to see Benjamin in order to grant them food, which was a major concern to his father. But Judah continued to reconstruct the entire discourse he had with Jacob regarding his fear of losing Benjamin as he had lost Joseph. Still not realizing that he was in front of Joseph he said that Jacob thought that Joseph had been killed by an animal for "*I have not seen him since: and if ye take this one also from me, and harm befall him, ye will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol.*" Judah not realizing this was a test just told Joseph that his father had not abandoned him because he thought he was dead. Joseph must have wondered why his father never looked for him, now he knew.

Judah continuing his plea to this powerful man he tells Joseph that if he does not bring Benjamin back to Canaan, Jacob will die as "*his life is bound up in the lad's life;*" meaning Benjamin is his favorite son as if to say, "he clings to him with all his soul." Judah continues this magnificent plea by stating that he does not want to be responsible for that and therefore placed himself in the role of a pledge for Benjamin should anything happen to him. He continues by saying that he will bear the blame for causing his father's death if he does not cause Benjamin to return to Canaan. Finally he begs Joseph to

exchange him for Benjamin so Judah will not have to witness the evil that will come upon Jacob when he sees that Benjamin is lost as Joseph was.

## THE GRAND REUNION

### Genesis 45: 1-15

*<sup>1</sup>Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood before him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. <sup>2</sup>And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians heard, and the house of Pharaoh heard. <sup>3</sup>And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. <sup>4</sup>And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. <sup>5</sup>And now be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. <sup>6</sup>For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and there are yet five years, in which there shall be neither plowing nor harvest. <sup>7</sup>And God sent me before you to preserve you a remnant in the earth, and to save you alive by a great deliverance. <sup>8</sup>So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and ruler over all the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup>Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not; <sup>10</sup>and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: <sup>11</sup>and there will I nourish thee; for there are yet five years of famine; lest thou come to poverty, thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast. <sup>12</sup>And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. <sup>13</sup>And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen: and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. <sup>14</sup>And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. <sup>15</sup>And he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him (ASV 1901).*

As in the past Joseph could no longer contain his emotions, he burst out in a loud cry “Cause every man to go out from me.” And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. It was simply not appropriate that the government officials see him in such an emotional state. He had to maintain a strong image in their presence as a high government leader. He could no longer continue his testing of the brothers. It was time to reveal himself to them. But his emotions could no longer be constrained as he wept loudly and openly with just his brothers in the room with him. His weeping was so loud that all the servants as well as the members of Pharaoh's household heard too, i.e. the royal family. The first question he had for them as he let them know that he was their brother was whether his father was still alive or not.

He did not have an interpreter in the room. He was speaking with them in their native language which he had not used daily for twenty-two years. His brother's reaction was one of sheer terror.

They realized what they had done to him, and the compromising situation they were in with no food and bowing down to him in obeisance. Surely they remembered the dreams when he was just a seventeen-year-old innocent boy. He saw them bowing down to him that fueled their envy and incited them to attempt to murder him but ended selling him into slavery. They could only imagine what retaliation he might enact. No wonder they were terrified. Then as if to say I am not going to seek any vengeance he says, *"Come near to me, I pray you."* As they approached him *"he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt."* In other words I am the person you sold into slavery. They were still sensing a stunning revelation and continued to be terrified until he soothed them. He said, *"<sup>5</sup>And now be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life."* Joseph announced here as a prophet, that Elohim had brought him into Egypt to preserve through him the family which He had chosen for His own nation, and to deliver them out of the danger of starvation which threatened them now, as a very great nation. The brothers were unwitting instruments in God's divine plan for the nation Israel and all humankind.

It is a mystery to us as to us (Isaiah 55: 8; Ezekiel 18: 25 etc.) how God works. He accomplishes His perfect will through sinful mankind. He uses absolutely despicable events to further His plans for us. All the actions of the people on this earth are as a giant mosaic or puzzle that only God controls and knows the outcome. We as Bible believing Christians see the prophetic portions of Scripture being fulfilled. This gives us some insight into His plans and ways. By Joseph being sold into slavery he was set up for becoming the second in command of the greatest nation on earth at that time to enable the nation of Israel to survive and thrive. There were seventy in Jacob's family that were living in Egypt (Genesis 46: 26) right after they came from Canaan. When they left Egypt some four hundred years later in the Exodus at 1444 B.C., they numbered more than two million. They went to Egypt as a large family but came out a nation.

After Joseph let them know who he was he instructed them to quickly go back to Canaan and let Jacob know what had happened and relocate him to the Goshen region of Egypt. This was near the Nile Delta region and had a lower population than the main cities such as Memphis. There would be little or no relocation of Egyptian citizens if they settled there. That area offered safety and security in Egypt with family, food and a favorable government with Joseph in a controlling position. Joseph had proven himself to be a superb planner and this was an example of it. He further told them to bring all their livestock too for the famine was going to last for another five years. In a final emotional measure he wept and kissed Benjamin first then the rest of his brothers. This was followed by a reunion after twenty-two years apart. Joseph was now thirty-nine.

NEXT WEEK: PHARAOH'S INVITATION

**Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments**

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