



# *Finer Grounds Bible Study*

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## *Genesis (Part 2)*

### *Lesson 11: Genesis 45-46*

We left off last time with Judah pleading with Joseph to allow him to exchange places with Benjamin. It has been many years and a very long journey, but we are on the verge of a big family reunion. If you have spent time with God, let's get back into the text!

#### **Read Genesis 45:1-15**

As chapter 45 begins, Joseph is overcome by his emotions and has all his servants leave him alone with his brothers. He seems to just explode in a torrent of weeping as all that he has been holding in is released. In fact, he is so loud, the people outside can hear him. We have all probably had moments in our lives when we were holding back a ton of feelings. The pressure begins to be so great and then, at the very instant you feel you can, you unleash all that tension and emotion. The intensity can be a bit alarming. I can only imagine how much Joseph had built up inside and what shock the brothers must have felt when this great man started sobbing uncontrollably. It was probably difficult for them to understand what he was even saying. Once they understood he was telling them he was Joseph, they must have been in complete shock. Can you imagine all the thoughts and emotions they must have felt in those few short minutes?

Joseph just wants to embrace them and be reassured of Jacob's well-being, but the brothers are understandably apprehensive. When he asked them to come closer, the brothers were probably frightened and confused, yet hopeful from such a

tender gesture. Joseph clearly states the facts. He says they sold him into slavery, but it was God who sent him there for a purpose. Yet another example of how Joseph seems to be wise beyond his years. He has reconciled that his circumstances were for God's ultimate good. He forgives his brothers and understands that they all have just been a part of God's will to "preserve for [them] a remnant in the earth, and to keep [them] alive by a great deliverance". He is basically praising God for His magnificent work in bringing about something so great through such tragedy.

We, as God's people, need to be wise like Joseph and look for God's will in the tragedies of our lives. My older brother, Scott, was a young evangelist attending preaching school, when he passed away suddenly and unexpectedly at the age of twenty-seven. My family was devastated. Scott had been the first member of our family to become a Christian. I was second and my parents were still lost in sin. Scott spoke to our parents telling them that if anything happened to him, he just wanted them to obey the gospel so he could see them again. Little did they know, they would have to bury their first-born son's body just a few short weeks later.

It took about a month after his passing for my father to study and obey the Lord and another month or two for my mother to do the same. How could I possibly ask for him back when his passing had brought about the opportunity of



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salvation for their souls? We do not always get to see what God’s plan is, but we were blessed to see an obvious one. It took about another four or five years for me to get down on my knees in prayer and thank God for taking Scott home. It was so hard to utter those words, yet I knew they were true, and I wanted to finally praise God for the magnificent gift He had given us through such heartache. I encourage you to find the strength to thank God for the tragedies in your life, trusting and believing that He has a greater plan even if you are not given the privilege of understanding why.

Joseph has come to that point. He holds no animosity towards his brothers. He only has words of praise for God, forgiveness for his brothers, and a desire to share his love and wealth with his family. What beautiful healing forgiveness brings! Joseph makes it known to them that there are five more years of famine left and that they should hurry and move everyone to Egypt that he may provide for them. He desires for them to tell his father what great things God has done for him by making him so great in Egypt. I guess we never outgrow wanting our parents to be proud of us.

**What do you think went through the brothers’ minds when Joseph revealed himself to them?**

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**What do you think Benjamin thought and felt as he heard that Joseph had been sold into slavery by his own brothers?**

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**If you have had a tragedy in your life that you have seen God’s will from, and you feel you can, please share what great things God has done.**

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**What are some things you think Joseph’s conversation with his brothers was like once they had wept, embraced, and relaxed a little?**

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**Read Genesis Chapter 45:16-46:7**

Pharaoh finds out that Joseph’s brothers are there, and the text says it “pleased [him] and his servants”. Joseph is the man who has not only saved all of Egypt but will also be the one increasing Pharaoh’s wealth and power greatly over the next several years. He is overjoyed to be able to give back to him by offering the very best of Egypt to his family, even sending wagons back with the brothers to retrieve his whole family. He even suggests that they leave their belongings behind and not worry about bringing them to Egypt because he will give them the best of everything when they arrive. Joseph sends them off loaded down with the “best things of Egypt” and plenty of food for their return journey. His parting words to them are to avoid quarreling while they are traveling back to Canaan. It may be that Joseph was afraid they would fight about the past concerning their treatment of him. Surely Benjamin would want to have some words with them about their past actions and their deception with him and their father. Joseph,



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being wise again, urges them to forgive and let go as he had.

Upon the news that Joseph is still alive and “ruler over all the land of Egypt”, Jacob is in disbelief. How could his son who has supposedly been deceased for more than twenty years be alive, much less ruling over Egypt? It had to be a bracing moment for Jacob. I can just imagine each one telling Jacob something to help him digest the truth. We are not told how things went when the sons had to confess what they had done to Joseph so many years ago, but Jacob seems to forgive them. Perhaps the sheer excitement and gratitude that Joseph is still alive made his forgiveness easier or quicker.

When Jacob finally allows himself to believe Joseph is alive, the text says his spirit “revived”. The idea is that his life was restored within him. It is not hard to imagine as a parent how this news would revitalize your whole inner being. When someone we love passes from this life, we spend many days longing eagerly to just see them again, hear them again, speak to them again, touch them again. Sometimes you even dream about it because the desire is constantly plaguing your mind. Jacob has the hope of doing the very things he yearned for in the days, months, and years after he thought Joseph was no more. As Christians, we have that hope of seeing one another again. What an amazing God we serve! How gracious and compassionate are His promises!

Jacob is satisfied and ready to pack up and head to Egypt so that he can see his son once again. Along the way, he stops off in Beersheba and offers God sacrifices. Both Abraham and Isaac had also stopped here and worshiped God.

Surely Jacob was sending up praises of thanks for the life of his son and opportunity to see him again. That night God speaks to Jacob and assures him about his journey. He further confirms that Jacob will return to Canaan someday and Joseph will be there with him when he leaves this life. They will end up taking Jacob’s body back to Egypt, but the point of God’s words seems more about the promise that the nation of Israel will return to the promised land just as God has vowed to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob repeatedly.

**What all do you think the brothers may have been tempted to quarrel about on the way home?**

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**According to Gen. 45:27, what convinced Jacob that Joseph was still alive and ruling in Egypt?**

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**What does God promise to do for Jacob in Egypt according to Gen. 46:3?**

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**Do some research and list all the times this specific promise was made and to whom.**

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**Describe a time God has “stunned” you with His blessings.**

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## Read Genesis Chapter 46:8-34

Chapter 46 is mainly the genealogy of Jacob’s family. It’s important to note that some of those listed may very well not have been born yet in the time frame of the present story. Remember Benjamin is probably still quite young to have had seven sons by this time. Also, it was not uncommon for Hebrews to account for the children who were still in their father’s loins. Moses will record Genesis long after the patriarchs have left this life for the next, so he has the privilege of knowing the complete genealogy. Another thing to keep in mind is that, excluding Dinah, none of the women or young children are included in the count. This was simply how they recorded their numbers at this time – basically only accounting for adult males. The point is all of Jacob’s sons and their families travel to Egypt.

When they arrive, Jacob sends Judah ahead to help guide them to Goshen and to notify Joseph of their arrival. There can be little doubt that Jacob and Joseph were ecstatic and overjoyed at the sight of one another. The text says, “as soon as he appeared before him, he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a long time”. It is not hard to imagine that they embraced and held on to one another for a long time not wanting to let go but wanting to connect again with one another. Finally reunited after so many long, hard years!

The chapter ends with Joseph coaching his brothers how to respond to Pharaoh so they might continue in their occupation as shepherds and do so in the beautiful land of Goshen together, and somewhat set apart from the Egyptians.

**What names stuck out to you in the genealogy list?**

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**Pick one name from the list and read up on that person. What did you learn?**

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**Who in the genealogy list is in the Messianic line (line of Jesus)?**

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**What are some possible explanations for the accounting of Jacob’s family being seventy in Gen. 46:27 while it’s listed as seventy-five in Acts 7:14?**

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**What strikes you most about the reunion scene between Jacob and Joseph?**

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