

JOSEPH SENDS FOR HIS FATHER JACOB **(Genesis 45:16-28)**

Reconciliation leads to restoration and reunion. Joseph and his brothers were reconciled following Joseph's three tests of his brothers' honesty, jealousy, and loyalty. Having extended forgiveness for the crime of selling him into slavery, Joseph pointed out to his brothers that God was active in all of these dramatic circumstances. Now God would reunite the family. Joseph was eager to see his father, Jacob, once again. He was eager to protect his family from the ravages of famine. In sending for his father to move to Egypt, Joseph helped restore his father's faith in God. God wants our faith to be vibrant and life changing. Through Joseph, God brought Jacob to a place of spiritual revival.

Reputation—as God's people, our lives should favorably impress even unbelievers around us (45:16-20).

When Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers, Pharaoh quickly learned about the situation and stepped in to affirm Joseph's desire to help his family. He did so because Joseph had built a favorable reputation.

When Pharaoh learned about Joseph's brothers he instructed Joseph to settle his family in the best region of Egypt (45:16-18).

Because Joseph cried out so loudly upon revealing his identity to his brothers, his servants immediately took the news to Pharaoh (Genesis 45:2). Pharaoh and his servants were delighted—the news was “good” in their eyes. Joseph had already invited his brothers to relocate to the land of Goshen. Now Pharaoh affirmed Joseph's plan. He instructed Joseph to tell his brothers that they, their father, their families, and their cattle were welcome in Egypt. Pharaoh promised to give them the best land (literally “the good of the land”), and they would then eat of the fat of the land. In Egypt they would prosper. Some commentators see in the word “good” in this context a reminder of the “good” nature of God's original creation as recorded in Genesis 1. God was blessing His people.

Pharaoh insisted on sending carts to transport Joseph's family to Egypt, again promising them the best region of Egypt (45:19-20).

In order to expedite his orders, Pharaoh authorized Joseph to secure a number of Egyptian carts to help transport Jacob and his family. The people of Israel would not need to bring all their possessions because the best of Egypt (literally, “the good of all the land”) would be theirs. Joseph had built such a reputation with Pharaoh that, when Joseph's brothers arrived, Pharaoh was eager to bless them and extend that blessing to Joseph's whole family. Pharaoh may have recognized that God was at work within this family (compare Genesis 41:16). Joseph had a reputation for being a man of God. Like Joseph, our lives should win a favorable reputation among our neighbors and friends.

**Provision—as God’s people, we can trust God
to provide for our journey through life (45:21-24).**

Both Joseph and Pharaoh provided the resources necessary for Joseph’s family to relocate in Egypt and survive the famine. Ultimately, however, it was God who took care of their needs.

Joseph provided his brothers with carts and provisions for their journey (45:21).

Here Joseph’s brothers are called “the sons of Israel,” identifying them as God’s chosen people. They did as Pharaoh ordered. Joseph provided them with carts and provisions for their journey. These supplies were no small matter—without them it would have been impossible for Jacob and his family to relocate from Canaan to Egypt.

Joseph gave his brothers new clothes and Benjamin additional gifts (45:22).

Joseph also provided his brothers with new clothing. No doubt their clothes were well worn after their journey from Canaan, and these new clothes would both protect them from the harsh desert environment but would also mark them as people who had received the favor of Egypt’s ruler. Joseph gave his full brother, Benjamin, the added provision of three hundred shekels of silver and five sets of clothes, indicating Joseph’s special love for Benjamin. Such gifts would not cause jealousy among his brothers—they’d already proven that they were no longer driven by such petty motives.

Joseph sent gifts and travel provisions for his father Jacob (45:23).

Joseph also sent ample supplies for his father Jacob, knowing that a journey to Egypt would require such provisions. Joseph sent his father ten donkeys loaded with “the good things of Egypt,” as well as ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and other food to sustain Jacob’s family. These supplies would convince Jacob of Joseph’s role in Egypt and would make it possible for Jacob to transport his whole family to Egypt.

Joseph encouraged his brothers to maintain unity along their journey (45:24).

Having amply provided for his brothers Joseph sent them on their way. As they were going, Joseph reminded them about the importance of family harmony. He warned them not to “tremble” or “be agitated,” presumably at each other—a warning not to quarrel. It would be too easy for these brothers to reflect on all that had transpired and begin to point fingers at one another. Joseph wanted them to know that there was no need for such concerns. All was forgiven. All was now in the past. It may be that these brothers were agitated at the prospect of explaining to their father how Joseph had ended up in Egypt. There was enough to unsettle their minds along the journey, so Joseph’s advice was well spoken. Joseph’s brothers were to dwell on the fact that God had provided for their needs, just as God continues to provide for the needs of His people today.

**Revival—as God’s people, we must relearn
the lessons of faith throughout our lifetime (45:25-28).**

News traveled slowly in ancient times. Jacob must have been waiting anxiously for word about his sons. Would Benjamin return home safely? Would Simeon be released from custody? Would the family survive the famine? Jacob was experiencing his own crisis of faith, but had entrusted his sons to God’s care (Genesis 43:14). Sometimes we have to relearn the lessons of faith.

Joseph’s brothers returned to Canaan and informed Jacob that Joseph was alive and had become the ruler of Egypt (45:25-26a).

Joseph’s brothers left Egypt and arrived safely in Canaan where their father was waiting. It’s hard to imagine the excitement their arrival must have produced in Jacob’s heart, only to be surpassed by the news that his son Joseph was still alive. “Joseph is still alive,” they told their father, “and he is ruler of all Egypt!” What good news. What unbelievable news. Joseph was alive.

Jacob was stunned by the news about Joseph and did not believe it (45:26b).

Understandably, Jacob was stunned. Literally, his “heart froze.” This news would have been difficult to comprehend even by a man filled with faith. But at this point in his life, Jacob was struggling with faith. He “did not believe” them. His faith had been stretched beyond measure so many years ago when he saw the blood-spattered coat and concluded that Joseph was dead. Now, over twenty years later, Jacob hears that Joseph is still alive. More than that, Joseph is the ruler of Egypt. Preposterous!

When Jacob saw the carts and provisions his spirit was revived and he determined to be reunited with Joseph in Egypt (45:27-28).

Jacob’s sons then related everything Joseph had said to them—probably including his words of confidence in God’s sovereign control over the events of his life. We may safely assume that at this point these brothers confessed their crime against Joseph to their father Jacob. Hearing this bizarre story of Joseph elevation to power, a story that could have only come about by God’s hand, and seeing the carts Joseph had sent to transport Jacob, this aging father began again to believe. “Jacob’s spirit revived.” Where there had been a comatose faith there was now renewed life. Jacob, again called Israel, had all the proof he needed. He determined to go to Egypt and see his son Joseph. Before death could close his eyes, Jacob would once again look on his lost son. Jacob experienced a revival in his heart that day. He believed. He believed the report, and he believed in the God who had guided him all his life. God brought Jacob to a place of spiritual revival, and He wants to revive our hearts as well, to make our faith vibrant and life changing. Like Jacob, we must from time to time relearn the lessons of faith.