

STUDY NUMBER EIGHT - Genesis 45:1-28

INTRODUCTION:

1 Cor. 13:12

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.

Face to face with Christ my Saviour,
Face to face--what will it be?
When with rapture I behold Him,
Jesus Christ who died for me.

Only faintly now I see Him
With the dark'ning veil between.
But a blessed day is coming
When His glory shall be seen.

What rejoicing in His presence
When our banished grief and pain
When the crooked ways are straightened
And the dark things shall be plain.

Face to face, O blissful moment,
Face to face to see and know,
Face to face with my redeemer,
Jesus Christ who loves me so.

Face to face I shall behold Him,
Far beyond the starry sky,
Face to face in all His glory
I shall see Him by and by.

We have come to that time in our biography when the brothers are going to have a revelation. They are going to be made aware of the fact that Joseph is the Egyptian ruler of the land.

In tracing the life of Joseph, we have been following him from a time that he was the much-loved teenage son of his father and yet greatly hated by his eleven other brothers. The hatred was so intense that he was sold into slavery in Egypt, and then their father Jacob was deceived by his coat being dipped in blood and returned to their father. The circumstances surrounding the life of Joseph in Egypt have been very interesting because we have watched God providentially order these circumstances to the ultimate accomplishment of His purpose. Joseph was sold into the house of Potiphar, who is the captain of the guard, or the head of the CIA or FBI. Then he was unjustly condemned to prison because of rejecting passes from Potiphar's wife.

During his time in prison, the cupbearer and the baker from Pharaoh's court were put in prison, and Joseph interpreted the dreams that they had; and with a plea to the cupbearer that he remember him, the cupbearer forgot him, and for two long years Joseph continued in prison.

His time in prison extended over a period of better than two years, and then through the interpretation of the dream of the Pharaoh, he was able to be released and elevated to second in command in the country.

The dreams had foretold the fact that there would be seven good years and seven bad years economically, and Joseph had ordered the affairs of the land in such a way that Egypt was able to continue somewhat a normal lifestyle during the seven bad years.

The famine, however, hurt Jacob and his family in Canaan, and so it was necessary for them to come to Egypt to buy grain.

It was during the first trip to Egypt that Joseph recognized his ten brothers who came. Benjamin remained behind with his father Jacob on the first expedition.

Joseph accused them of being spies and kept Simeon in prison while he sent the nine home to bring back Benjamin to him.

Jacob resisted the thought of Benjamin's returning but through providential circumstances becoming more and more severe and the need for grain growing more

and more acute, Jacob finally places Benjamin in the care of Judah who takes the responsibility for him; and the ten brothers now set out on a second expedition to Egypt. Upon their arrival in Egypt, Joseph is very receptive to them and provides a feast for them at his house. The twelve brothers are together for the first time in 22 years.

Joseph commands that Benjamin receive five times the amount of the other brothers because he is wanting to inquire about their attitude toward Benjamin, whether or not it was similar to the attitude that they had toward him.

In our last study Joseph commands his house steward to fill the men's sacks with as much food as they can possibly carry and to put their money back in the sack again. Then he asks the house steward to place his silver cup in the sack of Benjamin. They spend the night and leave early the next morning.

After they have been gone a short time, Joseph commands his house steward to pursue the men and make the accusation about the missing cup. When they are apprehended, they are not aware of this, and so they say, "If any of your servants is found to have it, he will die, and the rest of us will become my lord's slaves."

The search begins: They started with Reuben and then just followed through the line of the eleven men and finally came to Benjamin's sack last and they found the cup with him.

These circumstances were designed to see whether or not there was going to be a forsaking of Benjamin for selfish advantage because now they have the choice of self-preservation versus Benjamin's welfare. They could justify themselves with no thought for their father.

They could say: Take Benjamin; we're leaving. He stole the cup; he pays the price. Judah, the one who sold Joseph earlier, is the one who becomes the great intercessor before Joseph. "What can we say to my lord?" Judah replied. "What can we say? How can we prove our innocence? God has uncovered your servant's guilt. We are now my lord's slaves--we ourselves and the one who was found to have the cup."

Joseph replies, "Far be it from me to do such a thing. Only the man who was found to have the cup will become my slave. The rest of you go back to your father in peace."

Now Joseph is putting them in the position of being able to be far more concerned about themselves than they are about Benjamin or their father by being allowed to go free if they would like and leave Benjamin in slavery.

Judah makes then the impassioned plea for his father by recounting the circumstances involved in the fact that their old father would die if they returned without Benjamin.

Judah says, "So now, if the boy is not with us when I go back to your servant my father and if my father, whose life is closely bound up with the boy's life, sees that the boy isn't there, he will die. Your servants will bring the gray head of our father down to the grave in sorrow. Your servant guaranteed the boy's safety to my father. I said, 'If I do not bring him back to you, I will bear the blame before you, my father, all my life!' Now then, please let your servant remain here as my lord's slave in place of the boy, and let the boy return with his brothers. How can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? No! Do not let me see the misery that would come upon my father." The big question has now been answered: They would not act to save their own necks at the expense of Benjamin and the sorrow of Jacob. Judah wants to intercede. There are now evidences of love, unity, and solidarity among the brothers.

Joseph recognizes this conversion or change, and so he is now ready to reveal himself to his brothers.

The Lord is waiting for us to change before he reveals himself to us. It is probably one of the three C's that are involved:

1. Perhaps for some, it is the C of CONVERSION.

The Lord is waiting to reveal himself unto you as you would come and open the door of your heart and allow Jesus Christ to become your Savior.

2. Perhaps it's the C of CONFESSION.

You are a Christian and you're out of fellowship with Him and sin has separated the two of you.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

3. Or perhaps it's the C of COMMITMENT.

God has placed His hand upon your life, and you are unwilling to say, "Here am I, Lord, send me. I'll go where you want me to go; I'll be what you want me to be."

As a result of this change in the brothers, Joseph is now ready for the revelation:

v. 1 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.

Joseph has been deeply touched by the change he sees in his brothers.

Joseph had been deeply moved by the words of Judah as he manifests a spirit of contrition and brokenness before Joseph, and thus Joseph is prepared to reveal himself to his brothers.

Joseph is going to make this manifestation of himself to his brothers a private affair, and so he asks all of the Egyptians who are standing with him to leave. "And there was no one with him when he made himself known to his brothers."

This could have also been done so that there would be no embarrassment for the brothers when they realized that they were the ones who sold Joseph into Egypt originally.

This episode reminds me so much of John 4 and the encounter of the Lord Jesus with the Samaritan woman at the well. She and Jesus are talking along and finally, in verse 25, the woman said to him,

"I know that Messiah is coming, He who is called Christ. When that one comes, He will declare all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

v. 2 And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him and Pharaoh's household heard about it.

All the wells of Joseph's emotions broke up, and he could hold back his tears no longer as Judah makes his plea for substitution, that he take Benjamin's place as a slave in Egypt so Benjamin could go home to his old father and have him remain alive.

Keith J. Leenhouts has written a book called *A Father, A Son, and a Three-Mile Run*.

Judge Leenhouts makes the following statement:
"Think of it--85% of our worst criminals appeared before courts as young minor offenders years before they committed their serious acts of crime, and we treated them without pity. They learned well their later acts of serious crime were often without pity."

Leenhouts goes on to point out that after he had given his speech:

Then I noticed that many, indeed most of my people, were crying. So was I. But I wasn't ashamed of my tears, for I remembered what Carl Sandburg once wrote of Lincoln. He was seen to weep in a way that made weeping appropriate, decent, majestic. The city official who was supposed to acknowledge my address tried to do so but he too was weeping. The words would not leave his mouth.

It is difficult for us to enter into the feelings of Joseph and his pent-up emotions. It has been 22 years that he has been living a solitary life in a strange country away from his father and family and now he is coming to that moment of REVELATION and RECONCILIATION, and the tears flow freely.

v. 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.

Joseph finds that his weeping and inner feelings make it impossible for him to articulate to his brothers. And finally he blurts out the words, "I am Joseph!" and then asks the question "Is my father still living?"

"His brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence."

The brothers are scared to death. They are frightened in his presence and really don't know the implications in this revelation at this point. It is one thing to make an impassioned plea before an Egyptian ruler and another thing to deal with a brother in leadership whom you have wronged years earlier and expect him to do anything for you in return.

Zechariah 12:10

And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.

John 6:19, 20

When therefore they had rowed about three or four miles, they beheld Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened, but He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid."

v. 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!"

Joseph first invites them to come closer because they have probably been frozen in their tracks; and when they kind of crept fearfully forward, Joseph said again not only "I am Joseph," but now he says, "I am your brother Joseph," and he identifies himself as "the one you sold into Egypt."

Since the brothers cannot speak, he issues another command, and his command is for them to come closer. Evidently, they were so frightened they drew away backward from Joseph at this manifestation of emotion and also the revelation of who he really is. And then in a somewhat comforting voice, he says, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt!"

Now the boys can begin to put the pieces together and to truly recognize Joseph in this Egyptian ruler.

v. 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.

1. Don't be distressed
2. Don't be angry with yourselves.

The reason is I understand God's purpose in it all. He sent me here ahead of you to save lives.

Joseph wants them to recognize the fact that they are not to be grieved or angry with themselves over what they have done. And then there is the great providential statement that helps every man rise above the problems and resentments of personal relationships and also have the ability to pray with the Lord Jesus even when they are nailing him to the cross, "Father forgive them, for they are not knowing what they are doing." Joseph says, "Do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here," and then in the next phrase says, "God sent me ahead of you. His purpose is that "I might save lives."

Romans 8:28

God is working all things together for good

It is when we can see that those things which man does unto us have been permitted by a loving Father for the ultimate accomplishment of his purpose that we are ready to forgive the offenses of others because it is part of the providential plan and purpose of our heavenly Father.

"You sold me"--"God sent me" is a classic statement of providential control.

Ephesians 1:11

Also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to his purpose, who works all things after the counsel of his will.

Romans 12:19

Never take your own revenge beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay says the Lord.

The discipline of Egypt which was part of the divine plan for the perfecting of his character was Joseph's redemption of his brethren. There can be no doubt that if Joseph had remained at home in such an atmosphere of mutual distrust, his character would have deteriorated. So lest he should lower himself to their level God sent him into Egypt that he might save himself and his house. Thus it came to pass that in subsequent years with the wisdom that came after the event, he was able to say to his grief-stricken brothers, "Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that you sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life, so it was not you that sent me hither but God." This is the true reading of all of life's disciplines, and it at once redeems it from its apparent wantonness and aimlessness. Once we gain this viewpoint, we become reconciled to the impact of sorrow and pain, and through such reconciliation we win out of every earthly loss a richer moral gain.

v. 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.

Joseph is 39 years of age on this occasion. He began to rule when he was 30 and there have been seven good years since that time, and now the collapse has lasted for two years, giving us a total of nine. And for the next five years there will not be plowing and reaping. This is in fulfillment of the dreams that were given to Pharaoh. Joseph now makes clear to the brothers the amount of time remaining in the period of economic crisis and how necessary it is for them to submit to his proposals.

Joseph has been parted from his brothers for approximately 22 years and Joseph is now 39 years of age. He has been in a place of strategic leadership for a total of nine years at this point. This has been long enough for the people to really love and

respect him as an administrator and leader. Their respect certainly is rising on a daily basis in this time of economic crisis to realize that he has prepared ahead of time for these circumstances, and as a result the people are flourishing in a time of great famine.

v. 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.

James 1:5

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Joseph returns to the thought of verse 5 that God sent him ahead of them with the express purpose that he might preserve a remnant of the family in the earth.

In other words, that there might be the twelve tribes and the eventual nation of Israel, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance.

The deliverance that he is referring to is the deliverance of these next five years when a famine could have taken all of their lives, but now through his intervention they will be delivered from this possibility.

v. 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.

Joseph reiterates to his brothers that it was not them who sent him to Egypt but God. God was the one who ordered the Ishmaelite caravan to come beside them in Dothan. And it was God who allowed him to be sold into Potiphar's house.

There is a great sense of **FREEDOM** and **FORGIVENESS** that can come into our lives when we are truly receptive to the fact that all things are permitted by a loving Father for our good.

In the book by C. C. Carlson called *Corrie ten Boom: Her Life, Her Faith* we read:

A few weeks after the victory celebration Corrie was told the name of the man who turned her family over to the Gestapo. How should she react? The copy of a letter she wrote on June 19, 1945 conveys the attitude she had which God used to share His love and forgiveness around the world.

She wrote,

Dear Sir,

Today I heard that most probably you were the one who betrayed me. I went through ten months of concentration camp. My father died after ten days, my sister after ten months of imprisonment. What you meant to be harmful God used for my good. I have become closer to Him. A severe punishment is awaiting you. I have prayed for you that the Lord will accept you if you will turn to Him. Think about the fact that the Lord Jesus also carried your sins on the cross. If you accept that and will be His child, you'll be saved forever.

I have forgiven you everything. God will forgive you everything also if you ask Him. He loves you, and He himself has sent His Son to earth to forgive you your sins, that is, to bear punishment for you and me. From your side an answer must be given. When He says, "Come to me; give your heart" then your answer must be "Yes, Lord, I will. Make me your child."

If you have difficulty praying, ask then if God will give you His spirit. He works the faith in your heart. Never doubt the love of the Lord Jesus. He stands with His arms wide open to receive you. I hope that the hard road that you now have to go will bring you to your eternal Savior.

Joyce Landorf in her book *Irregular People* says,

Those who have your forgiveness up to date and have felt the healing that thankfulness to God brings are probably shouting the old line, "Preach it, lady! I'll turn the pages."

You have seen first hand the enormous value of Ephesians 5:20 and have identified with every line you've just read. But there are others reading this right now who play ball in a different league, to be told that Joyce said, Thank you, Lord, for her irregular person, and to read that she described it as a delicious experience is about as comforting as backing into a running buzz saw.

As a result of this message on forgiveness, Joyce receives the following letter:

I do not know what special, exciting plan He has for me. But I need to tell you,

Joyce, thank you for being there when I needed you and for being the special woman of God that you are. Through you, God has released me from myself, taught me how to serve, to seek, to love, to know peace, and to wait.

(The Family Album edited by Arthur and Nancy DeMoss)

When Leonardo da Vinci was working on his painting "The Last Supper," he became angry with a certain man. Losing his temper he lashed the other fellow with bitter words and threats. Returning to his canvas he attempted to work on the face of Jesus, but was unable to do so. He was so upset he could not compose himself for the painstaking work. Finally he put down his tools and sought out the man and asked his forgiveness. The man accepted his apology and Leonardo was able to return to his workshop and finish painting the face of Jesus.

(Joseph: God's Man in Egypt by Leslie Flynn)

Joseph's forgiveness was full and free. That same spirit of willingness to forgive those, who have wronged us deeply, should be present in every believer. Newspapers around the country took note in January 1978, when Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bristol of Dearborn, Michigan, used part of their vacation to visit an inmate at the California Men's Penal Colony near San Luis Obispo. This prisoner had been found guilty of raping and murdering their 21-year-old daughter, Diane, in 1970 when she was selling encyclopedias door-to-door in San Diego. The Bristols felt the normal human reactions of anguish and grief, but they also knew that somebody had done something terribly wrong and needed the Lord. When the murderer was sentenced, they wanted him to know they had no hatred in their hearts for him, so they arranged to meet him. The Bristols spent over three hours with him. At the end they embraced each other. The prisoner commented, "I'm not a born-again Christian, and I do not want to make that commitment until I can really mean it from the bottom of my heart--like you." To those who don't understand their actions, the Bristols reply, "If God can forgive acts like King David's sins of adultery and murder, I guess we can too. We don't condone the prisoner's actions, and realize he has a debt to pay to society, but we personally have forgiven him completely."

It is not only God who sent him to Egypt, but it is God whomade him a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Joseph recognizes the fact that all of these things are a part of God's great plan. Joseph is just an instrument for God to use.

Ephesians 3:20

Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.

v. 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."

Joseph now brings his father into the picture, and he commands the men to hurry back to Hebron and tell their dad, "This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don't delay."

It is so interesting to see how many times God is mentioned in these verses. The only reason Joseph has been freed from bitterness and resentment and hatred is because through all of this he believes in the fact that God has an eternal purpose for each of our lives, and as we are available and open with Him, He is working out that purpose for our blessing and for His glory.

Now that he has revealed himself to his brothers, he issues a command. That command is for them to hurry and to bring the father down to him and not to delay.

Once again he says, "God has made me lord of all Egypt."

Joseph also says, "Don't delay" because he realizes that on the prior occasion Jacob waited until the last minute when the families were destitute and starving to send the brothers back for more grain.

v. 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.

Goshen is about 75 miles north of Memphis in the Nile Delta region. It is a rich, fertile land. It is about 40 miles south of the Mediterranean Sea.

Tell him you shall live in the region of Goshen and you will be near me--you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. Joseph continues with his instructions and orders to the eleven brothers by telling them that they are going to be living in the region of Goshen near to Joseph, and that all of them are going to be there together with their flocks and herds.

v. 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.'

I will provide for you there.

1 Kings 17:4

You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there.

Joseph is saying to them that he will be sending provisions to Goshen, not to Hebron.

The Lord, in speaking to Elijah, told him that He was going to provide for him at the brook Cherith. He also told him that he was going to provide for him through the widow in Zarephath. The secret to contentment and provision from the Lord is to be in that place of His choosing, and thus in the center of His will He will make provision for us.

Jacob, you can stay in Hebron and become destitute, or you can come to Goshen and find that God will supply all your needs because you're in the place of His choosing.

Elijah, you can go back home on the east side of Jordan or you can go to Cherith. I am sending my ravens to Cherith.

So Joseph tells his father and the family to come without delay, and it is going to be in the land of Goshen that He is going to provide for them. It is not in Canaan. There will be no more trips to Egypt.

The reason for the need of provision is there are still five years of famine to come, and he does not want Jacob's household to suffer during this time.

v. 12 You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you.

You can look and see, and Benjamin my brother can look and see that it is really I who am speaking to you.

Only Joseph would have known the structure of the family and the fact that his one true brother standing before him is Benjamin, last born to Rachel.

v. 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."

They must hurry back and tell Jacob of the honor that Joseph has been accorded in Egypt and all that they have seen.

"And bring my father down here quickly."

Back in verse 9 he says, "Come down to me; don't delay."
And now, time is of an essence. "Bring my father down here quickly." The famine is severe and the need for action is immediate.

v. 14 Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping.

What a fantastic reunion of brothers! And Benjamin probably more than the others cannot believe what he is seeing and hearing. Just a few moments ago he was expecting to die because the silver cup of the Egyptian ruler had been found in his provision of grain. Now in the midst of all of these circumstances, he finds out that the Egyptian ruler is really his only brother.

Benjamin is the only other son of Rachel, his mother, and so he is the closest to Benjamin, more so than all of the other ten brothers. He is no longer restrained but in his love falls upon Benjamin's neck and begins to cry, and Benjamin weeps on his neck as well.

Reconciliation has been made. Joseph first expressed his love to Benjamin and then to all the other brothers. He kissed all of his brothers, those who had tied his hands and had mocked at his cries. After this expression of his love, his brethren talked with him and the tears flowed freely, and there was joy of communion. I think this is much the way it will be when we meet the Lord face to face. When we see him and his nail-pierced hands and truly realize all he has given for us, I think we shall shed tears when we fully realize that He in patience and longsuffering and compassion made possible our salvation and that we are going to be in his presence forever, our joy will be inexpressible.

When we fully realize our sinful condition apart from Jesus Christ, we will shed tears of appreciation for His grace. Although I think there will be tears when we see Him face to face, there will not be tears for long because the Bible assures us that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." What a wonderful God we have.

v. 15 And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

Earlier they could not speak with him because of their fear of what he might do to them in retaliation for what they had done to him before he was sold into Egypt. Now they realize that Joseph is coming with a compassionate heart, a forgiving spirit and a deep desire for reconciliation with his brothers. There is no bitterness or feeling of hatred toward them and so they are free to talk with him.

It would be interesting to note what they talked about:

1. Probably the experiences of the past 22 years since Joseph was sold into Egypt.
2. He probably traced for them his experiences and elevation to power and authority.

3. The men probably talked with Joseph about the experiences on the home front and what had happened and the children who had been born to them.
4. I am sure they spent some time talking about why Joseph had tried them.
5. Joseph convinced them that he had long since learned to trust God in all things and to forgive them for what had happened earlier.
6. I am sure there was much conversation about their father and how he handled the situation with Joseph's absence and how he was doing physically.

v. 16 When the news reached Pharaoh's palace that Joseph's brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased.

There was pleasure in the land of Egypt over the presence of Joseph's brothers.

v. 17 Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and return to the land of Canaan,

v. 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.'

Pharaoh just reinforces the word spoken by Joseph that the brothers are to go with the command to bring their household and to come down into Egypt. In response to their obedience, Pharaoh will give them the best of the land, and they can enjoy the fat of the land.

Ephesians 3:20

Now unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think

--that's always the way God does it. "I will give you the best of the land of Egypt."

Pharaoh realizes that he owes Joseph a great debt of gratitude for the past nine

years. His economic policies and plans for grain conservation have made it possible for them to be the only country in the world existing somewhat comfortably under the circumstances of famine.

v. 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.

This is executive action from the Oval Office. This is an order from the president. This is what you are to do: "Take some carts from Egypt for your children and your wives, and get your father and come."

v. 20 Never mind about your belongings, because the best of all Egypt will be yours."

As far as your present life and possessions, leave them all behind, the reason being because the best of all Egypt will be yours.

Philippians 3:12

Forgetting those things which are behind, I press toward those things which are in front.

Pharaoh says to forget about your goods. Don't be cumbered down with bringing all your personal possessions, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.

1 Cor. 2:9

Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things which the Lord has prepared for them that love him.

John 14:1, 2

Stop being troubled in your hearts; you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many dwelling places, and if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I am going to come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

Isaiah 1:18

Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

When the past quarrels with the present, there can be no future.

If you don't live for it, you don't mind leaving it.

You don't lose it when you go to glory, you are going to it.

v. 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.

I am sure the brothers cannot comprehend all that's going on. Why, just this morning they were so excited to be going back to the land with some grain for their families when all of a sudden the traumatic circumstances of being apprehended and accused occurred, and now what glorious things are in store for them as they leave not only with their donkeys but now they have carts from Pharaoh for their families and provisions for their journey. How good and gracious is the Lord and how perfect is his timing.

The eleven men are ready to go back. Before they leave, Joseph gives them carts to bring everybody and also provisions for the journey.

If they had been in existence at this time, Joseph would have given each of them a truck from Ryder Truck to facilitate their move.

v. 22 To each of them he gave new clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five sets of clothes.

Now Joseph is treating his brothers like Pharaoh treated him back there when he elevated him to a place of authority. He gave him changes of clothes.

To each of them he gave changes of garments but to Benjamin he gave 300 shekels of silver and five sets of clothes.

As an endorsement of what is coming ahead, he gave them some clothes to wear and food to eat and for Benjamin 300 pieces of silver in addition.

v. 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.

Jacob had sent a special gift down to the ruler of the land when the boys left, and now the ruler of the land, Joseph his son has prepared a substantial gift for his father. There were 20 donkeys in all, ten of them loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten of them loaded with grain and bread and other provisions for his journey.

Joseph sends this very special gift to his father, and the gifts are to be used in anticipation of the journey into the land of Egypt.

v. 24 Then he sent his brothers away, and as they were leaving he said to them, "Don't quarrel on the way!"

Joseph's parting shot was pretty realistic for the ancient crime was bound to come to light before their father and mutual accusations were likely to result.

They are just new in this way of life where one discovers that God is providentially in control of all of the circumstances and that love for one another is the most important thing. And so he is challenging them with this fact as they make the arduous trip homeward and as they report to their father what they have discovered in the land of Egypt. The thing they should do above all else is not to quarrel.

Philippians 2:14,15

Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may prove yourselves blameless and innocent children of God, above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation among whom you appear as lights in the world.

You can just imagine what could have gone on as soon as they got out of the city limits. Rather than rejoicing over all the wonderful provisions that have been made, they start to thinking about what to tell their old father in explaining the fact that Joseph is still alive. They also must explain to him how he has gotten into Egypt.

You know Reuben is going to wash his hands of the whole affair because he tried to deliver Joseph 22 years ago, and about that time all the other brothers are going to jump on him like a duck on a June bug.

v. 25 So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan.

It probably took them about 10-12 days to make the trip, and finally they arrive in Hebron of the land of Canaan to their father Jacob.

With all the carts and the livestock and the provisions, the eleven men now take the journey from Egypt back up to the land of Canaan to the residence of their father Jacob.

v. 26 They told him, "Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of all Egypt." Jacob was stunned; he did not believe them.

The first thing they say when they come in is "Joseph is still alive! Indeed, he is ruler over all the land of Egypt."

Here is old Jacob. He's busy counting the boys to see if there are any of them are missing: Benjamin, Simeon, Reuben, Levi, Judah, Gad, Issachar, Dan, Naphtali, Asher, Zebulun--all 11 of them are alive. Oh how I rejoice in this!

As a result of their announcement that Joseph is still alive and a ruler in all of Egypt, Jacob was stunned. He did not believe them.

This is such a foreign thought to Jacob. He is stunned by it. He has lived the past 22 years believing that his son Joseph was dead.

You can imagine how he feels when he sees Simeon and Benjamin safely home and that all 11 of the boys are there together. Then they come across with this great statement that Joseph is still alive.

Jacob is saying, "Thank God! All eleven are safe!" And the boys are saying, "Dad, the number's 12. After all, isn't everything cheaper by the dozen. Number 12 is alive, Dad."

The boys have decided to come right up front and tell their dad that Joseph is still alive and do it without any explanation of why he ended up in the land of Egypt.

v. 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.

Dad, Air Force One is out in front. It's time to go.

Come out here and look at the gift that Joseph has sent to you: twenty donkeys loaded not only with food but also the best things from the land of Egypt and here are all the carts for transportation for you and the family to get to Egypt as quickly as possible.

Dad, we don't need to pack. Just leave it all behind. We are supposed to travel light.

There are two things that revive Jacob as the boys continue:

1. The words that Joseph had spoken to them
2. And when he saw the carts.

This would be like sending Air Force One to pick someone up to take them to visit the President. Here you have the carts of Pharaoh sent from Egypt to bring Jacob unto them.

(*Genesis* by Donald Grey Barnhouse)

It is a sad testimony to life in that home that Jacob had to see the evidence before he believed his sons. Their word was nothing; but Egyptian wagons could not be bought with the money they had taken to Egypt, so the old man believed, and his heart was revived. God is very patient with His children, and does not reward us according to our iniquities (Psalm 103:10). "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself" (2 Timothy 2:13). Just as Pharaoh's wagons were a stimulus to faith, so the Lord told His terrified disciples to behold His hands and His feet, "Handle me and see" (Luke 24:39). Lord, we thank Thee for Thy condescending grace.

v. 28 And Israel said, "I'm convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

How differently the study today concludes from those studies that we have looked at on prior occasions.

Genesis 42:36

Their father Jacob said to them, "You have deprived me of my children. Joseph is no more and Simeon is no more, and now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is against me."

Genesis 43:14

And may God Almighty grant you mercy before the man so that he will let your other brother and Benjamin come back with you. As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved.

Genesis 45:28

And Israel said, "I am convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

How good and gracious God is. Jacob realizes this. "I am convinced!" This was the declaration of his joy and blessing. He just couldn't take any more excitement. All of this blessing powerfully overshadowed his past trials. "My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

Jacob is convinced that God has kept his much-loved son Joseph alive, and now it is his deep desire to go and see him before he dies.

2 Cor. 2:14

But thanks be to God who always leads us in His triumph in Christ and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

Philippians 1:6

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

CONCLUSION:

What are the lessons we can gain from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Joseph waits to reveal himself to his brothers after their repentance and acknowledgment of guilt.

LESSON #2: When we see God in the control of people and circumstances, we are freed to forgive the instruments He uses to the accomplishment of His purpose.

LESSON #3: When we see God as the author of our circumstances, we then have wisdom to properly relate to them.

LESSON #4: Joseph manifests a compassion and concern for his family.

LESSON #5: Jacob is beginning to see the big picture. The whole dozen have been providentially kept.

LESSON #6: "I'm convinced" is the expression of a joyful heart having recognized the Lord's doing.

LESSON #7: Joseph is deeply touched by the change he sees in his brothers.

What change do you need to make in order to experience a fresh revelation of the presence of God in your life?

1. CONVERSION
2. CONFESSION
3. COMMITMENT

There are four things that are vitally important in our relationship with God:

1. to be FAITHFUL

Lamentations 3:22, 23

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are consumed, His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness.

Life by the inch is a cinch; by the yard it is hard.

2. to be FRUITFUL

John 15:16

You have not chosen me but I have chosen you, and ordained you that you should go, and that you should bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you.

3. to be a FIGHTER

Ephesians 6:10, 11

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

4. to be a FINISHER

Hebrews 12:1, 2

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

One is reminded of the new hymn "*We Shall Behold Him*"

The sky shall unfold, preparing His entrance,
The stars shall applaud Him with thunders of praise.
The sweet light in His eyes shall enhance those awaiting,
And we shall behold Him then face to face.
We shall behold Him, We shall behold Him,
Face to face in all His glory.
We shall behold Him, We shall behold Him,
Face to face our Savior and Lord.
The angels shall sound the shout of His coming.
The sleeping shall rise from their slumbering graves,
And those who remain shall be changed in a moment,
And then we shall behold Him face to face.