

FINDING PURPOSE UNCERTAINTY

LESSON 6 | The Promise Preserved | Genesis 45-47

We now arrive at the climax of the story: Joseph reveals himself to his brothers.

How does Joseph's example help us live our lives with purpose?

“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.” GENESIS 45:5 (NIV)

Every book or movie has a climax, the moment when everything comes into focus. We see the climax of Joseph's story in chapter 45, when Joseph reveals himself to his brothers, and verbalizes that God — not his brothers — sent him to Egypt for His purposes. If Joseph hadn't recognized this, the brothers could have faced execution. Yet Joseph's obedience caused his brothers to thrive and continued to fulfill God's covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3).

It had been almost a year since the brothers had first arrived in Egypt. Joseph was 39 years old, and had been away from his family for 22 years. Jacob was an old man — Genesis 47 says he was 130. Even though he was elated to know Joseph was alive, the thought of moving to Egypt was frightening. But Jacob, wise from his many years, sought the Lord in Beersheba before making the move. Charles Swindoll writes about Jacob's vision from God:

God didn't tell Jacob how long Israel would be in Egypt. Nor did He describe how large the nation would become. We know that they would be there over 400 years. We know that Israel grew to a nation of somewhere between one and three million people during those years. But all Jacob knew was that God was going with them to Egypt and that He would make Jacob's family a great nation. That's really all the old man needed to hear for the moment. Now he could proceed in peace. But God's final promise of assurance was that He would someday bring all the Hebrews back to Canaan, appropriately called for this reason “the Promised Land.” (Joseph: A Man of Integrity and Forgiveness, Swindoll, 1998, p. 159)

- 1 | Share an insight you received from Pastor Dale's sermon on Genesis 45-47.

- 2 | **Read Genesis 45.** Why do you suppose Joseph chose this moment to reveal himself?

- 3 | Write down the phrases and verse numbers which show Joseph acknowledging the sovereignty of God in his life.

- 4 | Write how Joseph's experience illustrates:
 - Job 23:10
 - Romans 8:28

- 5 | What was Jacob's first reaction to the news his sons brought him? What eventually convinced him?

- 6 | We have the Good News to share with people! How can we help other people believe in this wonderful truth?

- 7 | **Read Genesis 46:1-27.** Why do you think Jacob went to Beersheba before going to Egypt? As you read through verses 1-4, how would you describe Jacob's frame of mind?



- 8 | What did God promise Jacob in the vision he received in Beersheba?
- 9 | Do you find anything interesting in the listing of Jacob's family in verses 8-25?
- 10 | How many direct descendants went to Egypt with Jacob?
- 11 | **Read Genesis 46:28-47:12.** What do you find meaningful in Jacob and Joseph's reunion?
- 12 | How does Joseph instruct his brothers to speak to Pharaoh?
- 13 | What did the Egyptians think about shepherds? (v. 46:34)
- 14 | With Joseph's position, he probably could have gotten his family government positions or other high-status jobs. Why, then, do you think he encouraged them to continue shepherding?



- 15 | **Read Genesis 47:13-31.** Joseph is the head of a relief program. As the famine progressed, what three steps did Joseph have the people take?
- 16 | What is your opinion of this relief program?
- 17 | What promise did Jacob have Joseph make as Jacob was nearing death?
- 18 | We'll never really know the impact of our lives until we get to heaven. Who is someone who has lived a life of faithful obedience and has impacted your life?
- 19 | Take some time this week to share your appreciation to someone who has made an impact on your life.

