

## **Genesis 45: Forgiving Like Joseph**

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The story of Joseph is important to the believer in Christ because it is the story of the virtues of Christ manifested. But the best part of the story of Joseph is the story of forgiveness, which is the heart of the Gospel.

Genesis 42 begins with a worldwide famine. Joseph is the prime minister of Egypt, and his brothers come to Egypt to obtain food. When they arrive, they do not know Joseph, but he knows them. It is clear that Joseph WANTED to forgive his brothers, but his testing in 42-44 is because he needed to test them to TRUST them. Chapters 43-44 describe these tests; first, the imprisonment of Simeon as a hostage to compel them to return with Benjamin. Then when they do so, the test is to accuse Benjamin of stealing. Judah (the man who came up with the plan to enslave Joseph) offers himself as a slave to Pharaoh in his place. This last act of sacrifice convinces Joseph the time to reveal himself has come.

Genesis 45:1-15 is the story of Joseph forgiving his brothers. There are three things to consider in how Joseph was able to forgive them. First, he saw the bigger picture. Second, he (still) loved his brothers. Finally, he loved his father, and wanted to see his face.

Forgiving like Joseph means learning about forgiveness. Trust is NOT forgiveness; sometimes people misunderstand and believe they are the same. Joseph's brothers had to earn his trust, NOT his forgiveness. Forgiveness is not earned; they did not repay their deeds. That is the meaning of forgiveness. Forgiveness requires understanding; getting a sense of a purpose for what happened and a mind in sympathy with those who sinned.

The conclusion of Joseph's work created a place for the children of Israel. It also resulted in the restoration of a son to his father. These things help again for us to see the parallel in the lives of Joseph and Jesus: Two men beloved of Their Father, Divinely ordained/prophesied to rule; the jealousy and hatred of Their brethren; the decision to be rid of him for pieces of silver; and finally, an absolute forgiveness for what they had done to him based on a similar theme: "You did not know what you were doing".

Ultimately, the theme of Joseph and Jesus is identical.

1. The Rejected One is exalted - He was dead, but he lives again
2. The Exalted One saves his people - He was raised up ruler of all
3. His offer: "Come to me and I'll give you all your needs"