

Joseph Told His Brothers to Bring His Father to Egypt

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what the life of Joseph teaches us through his example of forgiveness and reconciliation with his brothers. The news about the brothers of Joseph also had a great impact on the household of Pharaoh. That will be the focus of this topic.

Genesis 45:16-20 says, “Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh’s house, saying, ‘Joseph’s brothers have come.’ So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Say to your brothers, Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. Now you are commanded—do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.’” Here, we see that Pharaoh and his household were also happy when they heard the news that the brothers of Joseph had come to the land of Egypt for food and that Joseph had welcomed them.

Pharaoh also wanted the family of Joseph to come to Egypt. Pharaoh had known Joseph for nine years. Pharaoh had seen the wisdom of Joseph many times during those years. He had seen how Joseph prepared the land for the coming famine. Now that two years of the famine had passed, he realized even more how Joseph had protected the people of Egypt by his plan. He had seen how Joseph had organized the entire land of Egypt so there was food stored and ready in every city. As a result, Pharaoh knew Joseph would be concerned for the protection of his family during the remaining five years of the famine. That is why Pharaoh was eager to have the family of Joseph come to Egypt.

Pharaoh told Joseph to have the brothers load their sacks of grain on their donkeys and return to the land of Canaan. However, they were not to stay in Canaan. Pharaoh told Joseph to have his brothers get their father, and all of their families, and return to the land of Egypt. In fact, Pharaoh promised them they would be given the best the land of Egypt had to provide for them and their families. Pharaoh said they would be able to enjoy the best foods in the land. Then, we see that Pharaoh told Joseph to give a command to his brothers. They were to take carts from the land of Egypt with them as they went to Canaan. The carts would make it possible for their little ones, and their wives, to ride to Egypt as easily as possible. They were also to have their father ride in a cart so it would be possible for him to travel to Egypt. Pharaoh then told Joseph that his family did not need to bring all of their household goods to Egypt because the best household goods in Egypt would be given to them. Pharaoh wanted to make it as easy as possible for the entire family of Joseph to come to Egypt. That is why he even said that the best of all of the land of Egypt would be given to them.

Genesis 45:21-24 says, “Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them carts, according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey. He gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred *pieces* of silver and five changes of garments. And he sent to his father these *things*: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey. So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, ‘See that you do not become troubled along the way.’” In these verses, we see that the brothers of Joseph followed the instructions that had been given to them by Pharaoh through Joseph. They were given enough carts for their father and all of their families to be able to ride during the trip to Egypt from Canaan. Genesis 46:27b says, “All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy.” That number of people meant they had to take quite a number of carts so everyone could ride.

Joseph also gave his brothers some other things. He gave them all of the food they would need for the time they would be traveling. In addition, he gave each of his brothers a complete change of clothing. However, he had a much greater gift for Benjamin. Joseph also prepared a special gift for his father that included ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt and ten donkeys loaded with grain and other food for his father’s trip to Egypt. This was a large gift for his father as well.

Joseph then gave his brothers one final instruction as he sent them away to get their families and their father. He said, “See that you do not become troubled along the way.” The word translated “become troubled” means to *become angry or to quarrel*. Joseph realized that there was a real danger of conflict among his brothers as they traveled back to the land of Canaan. When they told their father that Joseph was the governor of Egypt, they would also probably have to admit to their father that they had sold Joseph as a slave and that was the way he had gone to Egypt. That was a secret they had kept from their father for twenty-two years. Joseph realized it would be very easy for them to begin blaming one another since the ten brothers had been experiencing guilt for twenty-two years about what they had done to Joseph.

The fact that they had this guilt in their hearts was shown by what they said and did seventeen years later after their father died. Genesis 50:16-18 says, “So they sent *messengers* to Joseph, saying, ‘Before your father died he commanded, saying, “Thus you shall say to Joseph: I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you.” Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father.’ And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, ‘Behold, we *are* your servants.’” This meant the brothers lived with their guilt for more than thirty-nine years. Joseph showed his total forgiveness when he said, in Genesis 50:19-20, “Joseph said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for *am* I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive.’” These

verses show the powerful impact of guilt in the life of any person.

Genesis 45:25-28 says, “Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. And they told him, saying, ‘Joseph *is* still alive, and he *is* governor over all the land of Egypt.’ And Jacob’s heart stood still, because he did not believe them. But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. Then Israel said, ‘*It is* enough. Joseph my son *is* still alive. I will go and see him before I die.’” Here, we read what happened when the brothers reached Canaan and came to their father. The first thing they said to their father was, “Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt.” Those words came as a shock to Jacob because for twenty-two years he thought Joseph was dead. In fact, he did not even believe his sons at first.

However, there were two things that finally convinced Jacob their words were true. First, the brothers told their father everything Joseph had spoken to them. It probably took them a period of time to tell their father everything Joseph had told them. In addition, Jacob probably had several questions as they talked. Second, Jacob saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry their families down to the land of Egypt. As mentioned earlier, it took quite a number of carts in order to carry seventy people. After Jacob heard the words his sons told him about Joseph and saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry them down to Egypt, we read, “...the spirit of Jacob their father revived.” The word translated “revived” means to *live or to be alive*. For twenty-two years, Jacob had grieved the loss of his son. Now, he suddenly knew his son was living, instead of dead, and that he was also the governor of the entire land of Egypt. The grief was immediately gone and replaced by great joy. That was the greatest news he had heard in that entire twenty-two years. Jacob (Israel) was now eager to go see his son.

That caused Israel to say, “It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.” The word translated “enough” means *it is great or enough*. This was really great news for Jacob. Since Jacob had felt for so long that Joseph was dead, this was a miracle so great it was hard for him to believe he could be alive. He probably felt, almost like the disciples felt, when they heard Jesus had risen from the dead. Mark 16:13-14 says, “And they went and told *it* to the rest, *but* they did not believe them either. Later, He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.” The disciples only believed when they saw Jesus. In a similar way, Jacob only believed when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry the family down to Egypt.

Many times, when people receive very special news, it causes them to have a completely different attitude. That was what happened to Jacob that day. He was now ready and eager to travel to Egypt so he could see Joseph. That trip probably seemed like just a short trip because he was so eager to see his son again. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain how the Lord changed the attitude of Jacob by the good

news he received about his son, Joseph. The same thing will happen as they share the good news about the resurrection of Christ as the Lord draws people to Himself. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to explain the good news of the Gospel.