

**Joseph reveals himself**

1. *Joseph's great forgiving spirit is so great he does not want anyone to know of their sin*

Joseph is now satisfied that the time has come for him to reveal himself. He is sure that the brothers are truly repentant over what they did many years ago.

1. **Joseph's forgiving spirit is so great he does not want anyone to know of their sin.** The story of what they had done is likely to come out if anyone is there at the time when Joseph reveals himself. So he sends the Egyptians away<sup>□1</sup>. His emotion is great<sup>□2</sup>. A godly man is likely to be warm-hearted and tender. When we forgive we do not even want anyone to know about how we have been hurt or injured.

□1 45:1  
□2 45:2

2. *The brothers at first are terrified of Joseph*

2. **The brothers at first are terrified of Joseph.** They are speechless with fear<sup>□1</sup>. We can understand why. What awful crimes they had committed against Joseph! Now he is the most powerful person they know and they are at his mercy. When we feel the guilt of sinning – it is terrible.

□1 45:3

3. *Joseph wants them to feel forgiven*

3. **Joseph wants them to feel forgiven.** He has no wish to terrify them. 'Come close to me,' he says. And then he reassures them. 'Do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves.' God is like this. He does not want us to be heavily laden with guilt. The brothers have repented deeply. Joseph does not want them still to be burdened with guilt. God wants us to feel forgiven and Joseph is like God in this desire for his brothers to feel the burden of guilt lifted<sup>□1</sup>.

□1 45:4-5a

4. *Joseph can see a purpose even in their sin*

4. **Joseph can see a purpose even in their sin<sup>□1</sup>.** God does not create sin, but He does control it and He does guide the way sin shows itself. God had steered the very jealousy of Joseph's brothers so that it achieved His will. It is easier to forgive if you can see a purpose behind what has happened. Joseph wants to make it easy for them to forgive themselves. God was behind what had happened. 'God sent me ... God sent me ... It was not you who sent me here but God...' <sup>□2</sup>. Joseph says it three times. He wants them to forgive themselves.

□1 45:5b-8a

□2 45:5,7,8

• *God uses human sin*

God uses human sin. The cross of Jesus was a wicked act but God was controlling sinners so that they achieved His will not their will.

5. *He wants them to feel reconciled to him*

5. **He wants them to feel reconciled to him.** He is an important person<sup>□1</sup>. They must take the news back to Jacob and bring him to Egypt<sup>□2</sup>. He wants them to feel that he has nothing in his heart except loving concern for them. Despite the twenty years of suffering that they have caused him, Joseph wants them to feel so reconciled to him that it is as if it had never happened.

□1 45:8b  
□2 45:9-13

• *Tears and kisses*

Many who 'forgive' others say 'I forgive you' but secretly hope the other person will feel burdened by what they have done. Joseph is not like that. He throws his arms round them. He weeps over them. He kisses them. Finally he convinces them that they truly are forgiven and that he has nothing against them at all. Then and only then do they feel free to talk with him<sup>□1</sup>.

□1 45:14-15

6. *The family reunion has an affect on others*

6. **The family reunion has an affect on others.** The Egyptians get to hear about this loving family reunion<sup>□1</sup>. They know nothing about the betrayal and hatred of previous years. That has all been

□1 45:16

about the betrayal and hatred of previous years. That has all been covered. Love covers a multitude of sins. But the loving harmony of Joseph and his brothers attracts the favour of Pharaoh who is extremely generous to Jacob and the whole family<sup>□2</sup>. Joseph sends gifts for them to take to Canaan to Jacob<sup>□3</sup>. Where there is loving unity among the people of God it attracts a lot of interest from others. People are looking for love and if they find it among the people of God they are interested and warm toward us.

□2 45:17-20  
□3 45:21-24

*7. Joseph wants to protect the loving harmony of his family*

**7. Joseph wants to protect the loving harmony of his family.** As they go he warns them: 'Don't quarrel on the way.' He knows how feelings of guilt create quarrels. On the way back they are likely to be reviewing the past and this is likely to lead to blaming each other. They will start remembering whose idea it was to kill Joseph and then they will start remembering things that each one has done to the other or to Benjamin.

- *A major leadership task is to protect the harmony and peace of his people*

It is a major task of any kind of leader to protect the harmony and peace of his people. Joseph gives this word to them as they go because he knows he has to protect love. Love needs protecting. It requires thought and attention. It does not look after itself or take care of itself. Particular words of warning have to be given to protect love and peacefulness among the people of God.

*8. There is good news for Jacob*

**8. There is good news for Jacob.** Jacob could never have imagined that he would ever see Joseph again, but he will! They go back and tell him the good news<sup>□1</sup> and he is amazed. It gives him new life<sup>□2</sup> and he resolves to set out to see Joseph<sup>□3</sup>. The amazing grace and forgiveness of God spreads out further afield and influences one person after another. Something that Jacob wanted more than anything else in the world now is actually going to happen. He had loved Rachel passionately from the day he first set eyes on her. Then he had been devotedly attached to his and Rachel's two sons. He had lost Joseph for over twenty years but now he was about to see him again. The grace of God revives our hopes and brings about our greatest ambitions. Jacob wanted the kingdom of God to go forward and he wanted it to go forward through Rachel's oldest son. Now God was giving him the desire of his heart.

□1 45:25-26  
□2 45:27  
□3 45:28

- *Now God was giving him the desire of his heart*

	<p><b>Dr Michael Eaton</b> is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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