

# THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

## GENESIS 42-45

I purchased some Christian videos the other day, and they came with a bumper sticker inside the package. I'm not sure you can see it, but it reads, "Love Wins".

I'll bet you Joseph had a similar sticker on the bumper of his chariot...

For 13 years Joseph had been *used* and *abused* and *refused* - first by his brothers, then by the Egyptians. Nothing in his life went right... Every promotion was followed by a setback. Every *appointment* ended in a *disappointment*.

Joseph could've become angry. He might've grown bitter. He would've given up – *but love wins!* Joseph loved God. Joseph loved the people around him. He certainly loved his father back home – and he even loved his evil brothers.

And in tonight's chapters when those brothers wind up on Joseph's doorstep, though you might think he should've sought revenge and gotten even - instead Joseph shows love. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "(Love) bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails."

Distill Joseph's life to a bumper sticker, and here it is... "Love Wins".

The rest of Joseph's story dwells on how he treats his brothers when they're reunited... And it forms a picture of how Jesus will treat Israel in the last days.

Chapter 42 begins with one of the 13 famines mentioned in the Bible.

Few of us have experienced a true famine. The crops wither in the soaring heat. Winds howl and blow. They lift off the topsoil, and swirl it around. The dust settles back to earth like a powder that covers fences and houses. Empty rain clouds hover, and release a drop or two, only to *tease*... not ease the problem.

Once fertile fields, turn into a dust bowl. Nothing grows. There's nothing to eat.

This was the situation in which Jacob found himself. Famine had hit Canaan.

Verse 1, "When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?" *This is a comical line.* The family is on the verge of starvation when they hear there's grain in Egypt. Jacob says at his sons, "Why are you standing around looking at each other. Go buy some food!"

"And he said, "Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die." So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, "Lest some calamity befall him."

Jacob is still mourning the loss of his son, Joseph. And he probably held the older boys responsible. He's not going to trust them with Rachel's other son.

Verse 5, “And the sons of Israel went to buy grain among those who journeyed, for the famine was in the land of Canaan. Now Joseph was governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with their faces to the earth.” What a moment!

*And who would've thunk it...* When Judah handed their bratty little brother over to the slave traders, and pocketed the 20 shekels, he could've never imagined that one day he and his brothers would be bowing before Joseph in desperate need.

But God had foreseen this moment all along... Remember Joseph's dream - the one that enraged his brothers! Their bundles would bow to his bundle. Now the dream they'd all scoffed at and resented is being fulfilled by God's providence.

Verse 7 “Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly to them.” I picture Joseph sitting on a throne in this long, ornate Egyptian hall. He's interviewing entouragees from all over the world, when he notices in the line some familiar faces... Then it hits him!

*“Those are my brothers! There's Rueben... and Isaachar... and Judah...”*

Imagine Joseph's emotions. It amazes me that he can hold himself back. But he makes a split-second decision to play this out before he reveals his identity. He gulps hard, musters a grim look, and speaks in a way that disguises his voice.

“Then he said to them, "Where do you come from?" And

they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food." So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him."

Remember by now Joseph is nearly 40 years old. He's sporting an Egyptian haircut, wearing Egyptian clothes, and speaks the Egyptian language.

Besides, the last time the brothers saw him his coat of many colors actually fit. Joe probably grew a buldge... And besides they all thought Joseph was dead.

Never in their wildest dreams did they expect to see Joseph again.

Verse 9 "Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them, and said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land!" And they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. We are all one man's sons; we are honest men; your servants are not spies." But he said to them, "No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land."

And they said, "Your servants are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest is with our father today, and one is no more." How Joseph was able to not stop them, and probe into what happened to that other brother, I don't know. But he is going to put his brothers through a few tests to determine if they're sorry and repentant over the way they treated him.

But Joseph said to them, "It is as I spoke to you, saying, 'You are spies!'

Remember there is a species of prophecy known as typology. Often God uses Old Testament people and stories to cast light on New Testament truths.

And the life of Joseph is a vivid example.... Joseph's life is a type of the life of Jesus... And how Joseph treats his brothers after their rejection of him forms a pattern for how Jesus will treat the Jews in the last days when He returns.

There're three phases in Joseph's dealings with his brothers... Here He relies on **mystery**. Later, he'll reveal His **majesty**. Finally He'll provide them **ministry**. At this point Joseph relies on *mystery*. He knows them, but they don't know Him.

And there are also 3 phases in how Christ will deal with Israel in the last days.

When Jesus returns at the Second Coming He will come in all His *majesty*. Afterwards He will *minister* to the Jews throughout the Kingdom age. But at the moment, He's relying on *mystery*. The Jews don't recognize their brother.

Paul Harvey says, "Providence is God acting anonymously." And this is how Jesus is working with Israel today... *but the day of revelation is about to come.*

Verse 15 "In this manner you shall be tested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether there is any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies! So he put them all together in prison three days."

Of the twelve brothers, Joseph and Benjamin were the only sons of Rachel. They were full brothers, whereas the others were half-brothers. When Joseph was shipped off, Benjamin was a toddler. He wants to make sure he gets to see him.

“Then Joseph said to them the third day, "Do this and live, for I fear God: If you are honest men, let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house; but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses. And bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die." And they did so.”

Joseph is going to teach them a lesson on substitution. One brother remains until the younger is retrieved. And this is what the Jews failed to understand about Jesus. He came as their substitute - to die in their place - to suffer their penalty.

Verse 21, “Then they said to one another, "We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not speak to you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us.”

Their consciences were still guilty. They remembered what they did to Joseph. His squeals for help had fallen on deaf ears. Reuben tells them this is payback.

“But they did not know that Joseph understood them, for he spoke to them through an interpreter. And he turned himself away from them and wept.”

Their interpretation of the situation moved Joseph's heart. Even after 20 years his brother's still carried the guilt and regret over how they had treated him.

"Then he returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes."

Why Simeon we're not sure!

From the incident at Shechem in chapter 34 we learn he was a violent man. Its possible Simeon was the ringleader in the plot to get rid of Joseph.

"Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man's money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. Thus he did for them. So they loaded their donkeys with the grain and departed from there."

I love Joseph's generosity. He's telling his brothers they can't buy his blessing. His favor is not for sale. It's a free gift. And so it is with God's favor. You can't buy God's blessing! Grace fills your sack and gives you back what you paid. It's a gift.

But notice the brother's reaction to grace, "As one of them opened his sack to give his donkey feed at the encampment, he saw his money; and there it was, in the mouth of his sack. So he said to his brothers, "My money has been restored, and there it is, in my sack!" Then their hearts failed them and they were afraid, saying to one another, "What is this that God has done to us?"

This was the same reaction the Jewish people had to grace. They didn't understand. It scared them. They thought God's blessing had to be earned.

Verse 29 “Then (the brothers) went to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan and told him all that had happened to them, saying: "The man who is lord of the land spoke roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. But we said to him, 'We are honest men; we are not spies. We are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no more, and the youngest is with our father this day in the land of Canaan.'

"Then the man, the lord of the country, said to us, 'By this I will know that you are honest men: Leave one of your brothers here with me, take food for the famine of your households, and be gone. And bring your youngest brother to me; so I shall know that you are not spies, but that you are honest men. I will grant your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.'" As they talk they start to unpack.

“Then it happened as they emptied their sacks, that surprisingly each man's bundle of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.” They suspected a set-up. They’d be accused of theft.

Apparently the idea that the Egyptian just wanted to love them never crossed the mind. That would be too good to be true. Which is the problem many people have with God’s grace – *what’s the catch? Can God really be that generous?*

Verse 36 "And Jacob their father said to them, ‘You have bereaved me: Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me.' Jacob didn’t share Joseph’s faith in God’s providence.



Here's what Jacob sung, "No one loves me, this I know, for my misfortunes tell me so." But with a little faith – with a little confidence in God's promises – he could change the words, "Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so."

He bemoans all that's happened, "All these things are against me."

But these things weren't against him. God was working for him to reunite him with Joseph, and preserve him through the famine. *Guys, when trouble strikes or circumstances unravel trust in God's providence.* He's at work behind the scenes.

Verse 37 "Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, "Kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you; put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you."

But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave." It'll take a hungry stomach to change Jacob's mind. And that's what God arranges in chapter 43.

"Now the famine was severe in the land. And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, "Go back, buy us a little food." But Judah spoke to him, saying, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.' "If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. But if you will not send him, we will not go down; for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.'" This is

reading between the lines a bit, but you get the impression no one is spending sleepless nights worrying about Simeon. He was pretty ruthless friends, who had few friends in his own family.

Verse 6 “And Israel said, "Why did you deal so wrongfully with me as to tell the man whether you had still another brother?" You should've never mentioned Ben.

“But they said, "The man asked us pointedly about ourselves and our family, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?' And we told him according to these words.” He asked us pointed questions. We couldn't lie.

“Could we possibly have known that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?"

“Then Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones.”

In other words, if you don't send Ben he'll starve to death with the rest of us.

“I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. For if we had not lingered, surely by now we would have returned this 2<sup>nd</sup> time.”

And their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man - a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds.”

“Take double money in your hand,” If each of the ten

brothers who were returning, took two shekels instead of one, that would be 20 shekels. How ironic... Remember that Joseph was sold into slavery for 20 shekels.

“And take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!”

In total helplessness Jacob casts himself on the mercies of God. I'm sure he didn't realize it at the time, but in reality that's always the safest place to be.

“So the men took that present and Benjamin, and they took double money in their hand, and arose and went down to Egypt; and they stood before Joseph.”

“When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, ‘Take these men to my home, and slaughter an animal and make ready; for these men will dine with me at noon.’ Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.” Which was a palace... This was like a visit to the White House. They wondered why they were getting the royal treatment.

“Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, “It is because of the money, which was returned in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may seek an occasion against us and fall upon us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys.” The trap is about to swing shut.

Verse 19 “When they drew near to the steward of Joseph's house, they talked with him at the door of the house, and said, "O sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food; but it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there, each man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand. And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks." They're pleading innocent before they're even accused.

But he said, "Peace be with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money."

And who is it that brings peace to their hearts, and assures them of the king's favor? It's an unnamed servant... And throughout the Old Testament numerous unnamed servants appear as types of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the servant who speaks not of Himself, but Jesus. He comforts, and assures us, and brings peace.

“Then he brought Simeon out to them. So the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed. Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there.” He's planned a feast.

“And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth.”

“Then he asked them about their well-being, and said, "Is

your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" And they answered, "Your servant our father is in good health; he is still alive." And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves. Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?"

And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son." Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought somewhere to weep." When Joseph saw little Benny he couldn't hold back his emotions. He lost it... Tears started to well up in his eyes... he barked out some excuse, and raced out of the room.

Joseph longs to be reconciled with his brothers, but it's not quite time. And this is the situation Jesus is in today. He loves the Jewish people, and wants to return to fulfill His promises to them, but the repentance of Israel is not quite ripe.

Verse 30 "And he went into his chamber and wept there. Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, "Serve the bread."

So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians." This is why God kept the Israel in Egypt for 400 years – there would be no danger of them marrying unbelievers. *How can you ate an Egyptian is she won't even eat with you.*

Verse 33, "And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and

the men looked in astonishment at one another.” The brothers sit down at the table, and realize they’re seated according to birth order. *How could this be?* Statistically, the odds of this happening by chance would be 1 in 36 million. I’m sure the brothers start to get suspicious...

“Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.”

Chapter 44, “And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, “Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack. Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money.” So he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.” Joseph is about to reveal himself, but he has one more test for them.

“As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. And when they had gone out of the city, and were not yet far off, Joseph said to his steward, “Get up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good? Is not this the one from which my lord drinks, and with which he indeed practices divination? You have done evil in so doing.’” The occultists in Egypt would try to predict the future by floating slivers of gold and silver in a cup, and try to read their shadows -like tea leaves.

I’m sure Joseph didn’t participate in this pagan practice. It was part of the ruse he was trying to create. *He would accuse Benjamin of stealing a special cup?*

And then Joseph would see if the brothers would treat

Benjamin the same way they'd treated him. Would they sacrifice Ben to save their own skin, or give their lives to protect their brother? Joseph is about to see if his brothers have truly repented of their sin... He's about to see if they've learned their lesson.

“So he overtook them, and he spoke to them these same words. And they said to him, "Why does my lord say these words? Far be it from us that your servants should do such a thing. Look, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves." If they only knew what was next.

“And he said, "Now also let it be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and you shall be blameless." Joseph agrees...

“Then each man speedily let down his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. So he searched. He began with the oldest and left off with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they tore their clothes (they were devastated), and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.”

Verse 14 “So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he was still there; and they fell before him on the ground. And Joseph said to them, "What deed is this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination?" Again this is just part of

Joseph's scheme. He's acting like an Egyptian... He claims to have used supernatural powers to know you had the cup.

**"Then Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; (we've been caught red-handed) here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup was found."** Judah is the spokesman. He takes the blame. He took the cup. It just ended up in Ben's bag. He's trying to save his kid brother.

Remember, Joseph was sold into slavery at Judah's suggestion. Now it's Judah that spearheads the attempt to save Benjamin. Judah has changed.

Verse 17 **"But (Joseph) said, "Far be it from me that I should do so; the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father."**

Joseph knows that 20 years earlier, these selfish brothers would've left him behind in a heartbeat. *Would they do the same to Benjamin?*

Guys, there are two prerequisites for the blessings of God – *repentance and faith*. Sometimes God waits to bestow His blessing until He tests our repentance.

Are we sorry for what we've done, and the damage it's caused - or are we just sorry we got caught? Do we simply want to shake the consequences of sin or do we want to shake up our lives and really change? Are we willing to surrender our will, and do whatever it takes to avoid repeating the same mistakes again?

Verse 18 **"Then Judah came near to him and said: "O my**



lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you are even like Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?' "And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, who is young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.'

"Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.' "And we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' "But you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.'

"So it was, when we went up to your servant my father, that we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, 'Go back and buy us a little food.'

"But we said, 'We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' "Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; and the one went out from me, and I said, "Surely he is torn to pieces"; and I have not seen him since. But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.'

"Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, it will happen, when he sees that the lad is not with us, that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For your servant

became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.' Judah is taking his promise seriously.

Verse 33 "Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?" This is amazing love for Jacob and his brother. Judah will swap places with Benjamin. He is willing to give up his life to save the life of his brother.

Donald Grey Barnhouse calls Judah's speech "the most moving address in all the Word of God." Another commentary states, "This is one of the manliest, most straightforward speeches ever delivered by any man. For depth of feeling and sincerity of purpose it stands unexcelled." And it sounds so much like Jesus...

Just as Judah gave himself up for Benjamin... For the Father's sake - and for the love of His brothers, Jesus was also willing to swap places. He was willing to die so that we could go free. *Perhaps this is why Jesus was of the tribe of Judah.*

Chapter 45, "Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it. Then Joseph said to his brothers..." *He's about to drop the bomb...* "I am Joseph; does my father still live? But his

brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence” The Hebrew word translated “dismayed” means “*tremble inwardly, to palpitate*”.

When these guys realize they’ve been doing business with their long, lost brother, Joseph, they literally shake in their boots. They’re physically moved.

This is also how the Jews in the last days will react when they realize the One they rejected, Jesus of Nazareth, is indeed the Savior of the world. Their wheaties will bow to His wheaties! Zechariah 12:10 says they’ll grieve as the brothers here.

Verse 4 “And Joseph said to his brothers, “Please come near to me.” So they came near. Then he said: “I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.”

At this point anything can happen... The hammer can fall. Joseph can snap his fingers and the torturers can bring out the balls and chains, and take prisoners. All of sudden, Little Joe, the brother they sold into slavery has the upper hand...

How what would you do if suddenly you had the upper hand on your enemies and their destiny rested in your hands? Thankfully with Joseph, “Love wins.”

Verse 5, “But now, do not therefore be grieved nor angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you

who sent me here, but God...” What a statement! The pit, Potiphar’s, the prison, now the palace... was *all God*.

God was at work... And Joseph continues, “and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

Several years ago, a Jewish rabbi, Harold Kushner, wrote a book, “*When Bad Things Happen to Good People*.” It was on the NY Times bestseller list for a year.

Here’s the thesis of the book - though God loves He’s not all powerful. He’s good, but not sovereign. Thus, when bad stuff happens it’s because events are outside God’s control.

Kushner suggests we “learn to love God and forgive him despite his limitations.” Hey, Rabbi Kushner’s god is not the true God. He bears no resemblance whatsoever to the God of the Bible. He’s not Joseph’s God.

Joseph’s God is sovereign over all circumstances. He arranges and orders our lives through His overarching will, and according to His predetermined plans.

Little Joe served a big God – a God with no limitations – a God who does what He pleases without getting our approval, or making sure His methods make sense to us... Joseph’s God is big enough to take the sick stuff that sin has released into the world, and the evil that man musters – and use it to accomplish His purposes.

Joseph’s God specializes in turning bad into good.

Guys, Joseph’s life teaches us that God is always in control - whether it appears that way or not. In the rough times and in

the dark places, Joseph remained confident that God loved him and had a purpose for him.

I think it would please God if you left tonight believing this same truth! The situations you face are not the result of happenstance. There is a big God, a sovereign God, and a loving God who is always in control. Let's trust Him.

Joseph assures his brothers that God was behind what had happened, and then he tells them in verse 9, "Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph: "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry. You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have.'" Goshen was east of the Nile Delta, northeast of the Egyptian capital of Memphis. It was the most fertile region in Egypt. A land perfect for raising cattle.

"There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for there are still five years of famine. And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you.

"So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here." Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck."

"Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him." I wish I had a tape recording of that conversation.

Verse 16, “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.' "

This is also what God says to us when we come to Jesus. Don't worry about what you're giving up or leaving behind – the blessings you'll find in Jesus Christ are “**the best**”. When you come to Jesus you leave behind poverty for plenty.

Verse 21 “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 300 pieces of silver and 5 changes of garments.

“And he sent to his father these things: 10 donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and 10 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.” This is the challenge of the Christian life. We're headed for a land of plenty. Heaven will be heavenly, so don't get distracted in the journey. Stay out of trouble. Stay focused on the goal.

Verse 25 “Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father.” Look at how they break the news. They almost kill the old man.

“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... He nearly had a heart attack. Jacob nearly had the big one. When he heard Joseph was alive his heart skipped a beat.

“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." At his low points of doubt and fear he’s called *Jacob*. But when he rises up in faith, he’s *Israel*, “*prince of God, or governed by God*”

It’s sad that for 20 years Israel thought his son was dead, but Joseph was alive and well. And it’s sadder still that the nation Israel has been in the similar situation for even longer. For 1972 years, the Jews have assumed that Jesus is dead - when in reality He’s alive and well, and wants to be reunited with them.

And that’s probably not just true of Israel, but there are people in your life who think that Jesus is dead - while He’s alive and wants a relationship with them.

Tonight, let’s close by praying for those people...  
Remember, **Love wins!**