

# **Genesis**

## **Joseph, Prince of Egypt**

Lesson #12 for June 18, 2022

Scriptures: Genesis 41:37-45:28; 1 Kings 3:12; Romans 5:7-11.

1. In this lesson, we will come to the end of the story of Joseph. Joseph was the powerful vizier of Egypt, and the country was only two years into the seven-year famine.
2. When Joseph's brothers appeared before him for the first time, he did not know their makeup or character. So, Joseph set about to implement a number of tests to see if their characters had changed.

His own brothers will bow before him without knowing who he is (*Genesis 42*). Joseph's brothers will humble themselves when Joseph forces them to return with Benjamin (*Genesis 43*), and—when Benjamin's safety is, they fear, threatened (*Genesis 44*)—they will plead for grace before this powerful man, whom they see as “like Pharaoh.” **In the end, when Joseph reveals his identity, they will understand that, despite what they have done, God has brought good out of it all.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sabbath afternoon, June 11.<sup>†§</sup>

**Romans 8:28:** We know that **in all things God works for good** with those who love him, those whom he has called according to his purpose.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation\** (2nd ed., Romans 8:28). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].<sup>††</sup>

Their back-and-forth journeys from Joseph to their father, and the obstacles they encounter, make them remember their wicked acts toward Joseph and their father, and they realize their iniquity toward God. Joseph's brothers live that whole experience as a divine judgment. And yet, the moving emotional conclusion, which brings everyone to tears and joy, also contains a message of forgiveness for them, despite their unjustifiable acts of evil.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sabbath afternoon, June 11.

3. After that introduction and moving back in the story, it is interesting to notice Pharaoh's response to Joseph's interpretation of his dreams. He did not seem to care about the God who revealed the truth to Joseph; but, he was excited about the economic plan that Joseph suggested. Then, of course, Joseph was appointed as the second in command, a new vizier of Egypt.
4. Do you think God had anything to do with Pharaoh's decision to appoint Joseph to that position? Absolutely!
5. Some critics have claimed that there is no evidence that any Israelites were ever in Egypt. However, that is proving not to be true. More and more evidence—subtle, but convincing—is being found in excavations in Egypt. See the DVD, “Patterns of Evidence.”

All the details reported in the biblical text fit the historical situation of Egypt at that time. Politically, the fact that Pharaoh appoints Joseph as vizier is

not unusual in ancient Egypt, where cases of foreign viziers have been attested.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sunday, June 12.

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] Cases of foreign and even Hebrew viziers are attested throughout Egyptian history. The vizier's responsibilities were considerable; he was administrator in charge of legal justice and the manager of the land. The fact that Joseph is placed over the entire land confirms that this vizier belongs to the Middle Kingdom or the Second Intermediate Period, when this official could be selected based on his qualities of wisdom (*Gen. 41:39*). In contrast to other periods, during the Second Intermediate Period under the rule of the Hyksos, the viziers were most powerful and provided the most stability despite short reigns.

The description of Pharaoh's investiture of Joseph fits the Egyptian context. The "signet ring" (*Gen. 41:42, NKJV*), which is called in the Hebrew text *tabba'at*, designates the Egyptian signet or seal, *djeba'ot*, a word derived from the word *djeba'*, meaning "finger," referring to its position around the finger. **This signet ring extends full authority to Joseph to sign all official documents in the name of the king.** The Hebrew term *shes*, designating the "vestures of fine linen" (*Gen. 41:42*), is an Egyptian word referring to linen cloth, which was the primary fabric used for clothing in ancient Egypt. The chain around Joseph's neck (*Gen. 41:42*) refers to the collar on which hung the symbol of the Maat, symbol of equity, which characterized the function of the "**vizier,**" **a Turkish word (derived from the Arabic) for the chief minister of state.** The rank of "second" (*Gen. 41:43*) is attested in ancient Egypt as the title of the vizier, who was called "the second of the king." The vizier ceremony, involving someone riding on a chariot, preceded by people calling out to invite attention to his passing (*Gen. 41:43*), also is an Egyptian custom. The word *'abrek* (generally translated "bow the knee") that is used in our text is not Hebrew—but Egyptian. In Egyptian, the word *'abrek* means "attention," "make way" (*NJV*). Furthermore, Pharaoh gives Joseph an honorific name to mark the special distinction that is attached to his new function. The Egyptian name that Joseph receives, Zaphnath-Paaneah (*Gen. 41:45*), corresponds to the following Egyptian transliteration: *djfn t'pw 'nkh*, meaning "food of the land, this is life."—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 158-159.†§

6. In addition to receiving this high position of responsibility, Joseph was given an Egyptian wife who bore him two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. God had proven, once again, that He could turn an evil into good. (See Romans 8:28.)
7. Is it sometimes possible for us in our very evil world to turn evil into good?
8. When the brothers arrived in Egypt for the first time, Joseph recognized them; but, they did not recognize him or his voice. He spoke through an interpreter and pretended like he did not understand them, while, in actual fact, he understood everything they said to each other.
9. Read **Genesis 42**. Joseph accused his brothers of being spies, and they explained their situation to him through an interpreter. Joseph explained that he would not believe what

they were saying to him until their younger brother was brought so he could see him. After putting them in prison for three days, Joseph released them and informed them that they would not be given any further food unless Benjamin came with them.

[From the writings of Ellen White=EGW:] **The three days of confinement were days of bitter sorrow with Jacob's sons.** They reflected upon their past wrong course, especially their cruelty to Joseph. They knew if they were convicted of being spies, and they could not bring evidence to clear themselves, they would all have to die, or become slaves. They doubted whether any effort any one of them might make would cause their father to consent to have Benjamin go from him, after the cruel death, as he thought, Joseph had suffered. They sold Joseph as a slave, and they were fearful that God designed to punish them by suffering them to become slaves. **Joseph considers that his father and the families of his brethren, may be suffering for food, and he is convinced that his brethren have repented of their cruel treatment of him, and that they would in no case treat Benjamin as they had treated him.**—Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*,\* vol. 3, 155.2-156.0.†‡ [Imagine the struggles in their minds at that point!]<sup>‡</sup>

10. Joseph's next test of his brothers came when he **placed their money back in their sacks** along with the grain that they needed to support and feed their families.
11. We do not know exactly how long the grain which they carried back to Canaan provided for their families. But, the time came when they were out of grain again. It was very difficult for Jacob to agree to allow Benjamin to go to Egypt. He felt certain that he would never see his son again if Benjamin went to Egypt.
12. Finally, Judah pleaded with him and said that he would offer his own life in the place of Benjamin's life, and Jacob agreed. We need to remember that at that point in time, Judah was the father of two sons who had died or been killed; a third son was raising his own children. Judah was also the father of his daughter-in-law's, Tamar's, two sons. Judah's first wife was dead.
13. So, the 10 sons of Jacob returned to Egypt with their brother Benjamin to get more grain. This visit to Egypt seemed to be entirely oriented around the presence of Benjamin.

**Genesis 43:1-34:** The famine in Canaan got worse, <sup>2</sup>and when the family of Jacob had eaten all the corn which had been brought from Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, **“Go back and buy a little food for us.”**

<sup>3</sup> Judah said to him, “The man sternly warned us that we would not be admitted to his presence unless we had our brother with us. <sup>4</sup>If you are willing to send our brother with us, we will go and buy food for you. <sup>5</sup>If you are not willing, we will not go, because the man told us we would not be admitted to his presence unless our brother was with us.”

<sup>6</sup> Jacob said, “Why did you cause me so much trouble by telling the man that you had another brother?”

<sup>7</sup> They answered, “The man kept asking about us and our family, ‘Is your father still living? Have you got another brother?’ We had to answer his questions. How could we know that he would tell us to bring our brother with us?” [Joseph was testing them thoroughly!]

<sup>8</sup> **Judah said to his father**, “Send the boy with me, and we will leave at once. Then none of us will starve to death. <sup>9</sup>**I will pledge my own life, and you can hold me responsible for him.** If I do not bring him back to you safe and sound, I will always bear the blame. <sup>10</sup>If we had not waited so long, we could have been there and back twice by now.” [It was a journey of one week each way.]

<sup>11</sup> Their father said to them, “If that is how it has to be, then take the best products of the land in your packs as a present for the governor: a little resin, a little honey, spices, pistachio nuts, and almonds. <sup>12</sup>Take with you also twice as much money, because **you must take back the money that was returned in the top of your sacks. Maybe it was a mistake.** <sup>13</sup>**Take your brother and return at once.** <sup>14</sup>**May Almighty God cause the man to have pity on you, so that he will give Benjamin and your other brother [Simeon who had been kept in prison in Egypt] back to you.** As for me, if I must lose my children, I must lose them.”

<sup>15</sup> So the brothers took the gifts and twice as much money, and set out for Egypt with Benjamin....

<sup>18</sup> As they were being brought to ... [Joseph’s] house, they were afraid and thought, “We are being brought here because of the money that was returned in our sacks the first time. They will suddenly attack us, take our donkeys, and make us his slaves.” <sup>19</sup>So at the door of the house, they said to the servant in charge, <sup>20</sup>“If you please, sir, we came here once before to buy food. <sup>21</sup>When we set up camp on the way home, we opened our sacks, and each man found his money in the top of his sack — every bit of it. We have brought it back to you. <sup>22</sup>We have also brought some more money with us to buy more food. We do not know who put our money back in our sacks.”

<sup>23</sup> The servant said, “Don’t worry. Don’t be afraid. Your God, the God of your father, must have put the money in your sacks for you. I received your payment.” **Then he brought Simeon to them.**

<sup>24</sup> The servant took the brothers into the house. He gave them water so that they could wash their feet, and he fed their donkeys. <sup>25</sup>They got their gifts ready to present to Joseph when he arrived at noon, because they had been told that they were to eat with him. <sup>26</sup>When Joseph got home, they took the gifts into the house to him and bowed down to the ground before him. <sup>27</sup>He asked about their health and then said, “You told me about your old father — how is he? Is he still alive and well?”

<sup>28</sup> They answered, “Your humble servant, our father, is still alive and well.” And they knelt and bowed down before him.

<sup>29</sup> When Joseph saw his brother Benjamin, he said, “So this is your youngest brother, the one you told me about. God bless you, my son.”

<sup>30</sup>Then Joseph left suddenly, because his heart was full of tender feelings for his brother. He was about to break down, so he went to his room and cried. <sup>31</sup>After he had washed his face, he came out, and controlling himself, he ordered the meal to be served. <sup>32</sup>**Joseph was served at one table and his brothers at another. The Egyptians who were eating there were**

**served separately, because they considered it beneath their dignity to eat with Hebrews.** <sup>33</sup>The brothers had been seated at table, facing Joseph, in the order of their age from the eldest to the youngest. When they saw how they had been seated, they looked at one another in amazement. <sup>34</sup>Food was served to them from Joseph's table, and **Benjamin was served five times as much as the rest of them.** So they ate and drank with Joseph until they were drunk.—*Good News Bible*.\*†‡ [How did Joseph direct that?]<sup>‡</sup>

14. When they arrived back in Egypt instead of being accused of stealing back their money, they are reassured and invited to a banquet at Joseph's special residence. Fortunately, none of the brothers complained about Benjamin being favored on that occasion. Why do you think Joseph arranged for Benjamin to be given five times as much food as the other brothers?

By this token of favor to Benjamin [extra large portions of food] he [Joseph] hoped to ascertain if the youngest brother was regarded with the envy and hatred that had been manifested toward himself. Still supposing that Joseph did not understand their language, the brothers freely conversed with one another; thus he had a good opportunity to learn their real feelings. Still he desired to test them further, and before their departure he ordered that his own drinking cup of silver should be concealed in the sack of the youngest.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*\* 228.2-229.0.<sup>‡</sup>

15. Joseph had that one further test for his brothers, the silver cup hidden in Benjamin's sack.

**Genesis 44:1-34:** Joseph commanded the servant in charge of his house, "Fill the men's sacks with as much food as they can carry, and put each man's money in the top of his sack. <sup>2</sup>Put my silver cup in the top of the youngest brother's sack, together with the money for his corn." He did as he was told. <sup>3</sup>Early in the morning the brothers were sent on their way with their donkeys. <sup>4</sup>When they had gone only a short distance from the city, Joseph said to the servant in charge of his house, "Hurry after those men. When you catch up with them, ask them, 'Why have you paid back evil for good? <sup>5</sup>Why did you steal my master's silver cup? It is the one he drinks from, the one he uses for divination. You have committed a serious crime!' "

<sup>6</sup> When the servant caught up with them, he repeated these words. <sup>7</sup>They answered him, "What do you mean, sir, by talking like this? We swear that we have done no such thing. <sup>8</sup>You know that we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money we found in the top of our sacks. Why then should we steal silver or gold from your master's house? <sup>9</sup>Sir, if any one of us is found to have it, he will be put to death, and the rest of us will become your slaves."

<sup>10</sup> He said, "I agree; but only the one who has taken the cup will become my slave, and the rest of you can go free." <sup>11</sup>So they quickly lowered their sacks to the ground, and each man opened his sack. <sup>12</sup>Joseph's servant searched carefully, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest, and **the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.** <sup>13</sup>The brothers tore their clothes in sorrow, loaded their donkeys, and returned to the city.

<sup>14</sup> When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still there. They bowed down before him, <sup>15</sup>and Joseph said, "What have you done? Didn't you know that a man in my position could find you out by practising divination?"

<sup>16</sup> "What can we say to you, sir?" Judah answered. "How can we argue? How can we clear ourselves? God has uncovered our guilt. All of us are now your slaves and not just the one with whom the cup was found."

<sup>17</sup> Joseph said, "Oh, no! I would never do that! Only the one who had the cup will be my slave. The rest of you may go back safe and sound to your father."

<sup>18</sup> **Judah went up to Joseph and said**, "Please, sir, allow me to speak with you freely. Don't be angry with me; you are like the king himself. <sup>19</sup>Sir, you asked us, 'Have you got a father or another brother?' <sup>20</sup>We answered, 'We have a father who is old and a younger brother, born to him in his old age. The boy's brother is dead, and he is the only one of his mother's children still alive; his father loves him very much.' <sup>21</sup>Sir, you told us to bring him here, so that you could see him, <sup>22</sup>and we answered that the boy could not leave his father; if he did, his father would die. <sup>23</sup>Then you said, 'You will not be admitted to my presence again unless your youngest brother comes with you.'

<sup>24</sup> "When we went back to our father, we told him what you had said. <sup>25</sup>Then he told us to return and buy a little food. <sup>26</sup>We answered, 'We cannot go; we will not be admitted to the man's presence unless our youngest brother is with us. We can go only if our youngest brother goes also.' <sup>27</sup>Our father said to us, 'You know that my wife Rachel bore me only two sons. <sup>28</sup>One of them has already left me. He must have been torn to pieces by wild animals, because I have not seen him since he left. <sup>29</sup>If you take this one from me now and something happens to him, the sorrow you would cause me would kill me, old as I am.'

<sup>30-31</sup> "And now, sir," Judah continued, "if I go back to my father without the boy, as soon as he sees that the boy is not with me, he will die. His life is wrapped up with the life of the boy, and he is so old that the sorrow we would cause him would kill him. <sup>32</sup>What is more, I pledged my life to my father for the boy. I told him that if I did not bring the boy back to him, I would bear the blame all my life. <sup>33</sup>And now, sir, I will stay here as your slave in place of the boy; let him go back with his brothers. <sup>34</sup>How can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? I cannot bear to see this disaster come upon my father."—*Good News Bible*.\*† [Think about how all that talk of his father affected Joseph!]<sup>‡</sup>

16. That Joseph was using a **divination cup** did not mean that he believed in its power.

"What deed is this that ye have done?" he said. "Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?" Joseph designed to draw from them an acknowledgment of their sin. **He had never claimed the power of divination, but was willing to have them believe that he could read the secrets of their lives.**—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*\* 229.5.†

**Joseph was satisfied. He had proved his brethren, and had seen in them the fruits of true repentance for their sins.**—Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*,\* vol. 3, 165.1.†

17. Probably the ultimate evidence that the brothers had changed was Judah's fervent plea that he be taken as a slave and allow Benjamin to return to his father instead of Benjamin being kept in prison. This might remind us of the fact that a ram was caught in the thicket as a substitute for Isaac. (Genesis 22:13)

18. The culminating event of this whole story, the focal point, is found in Genesis 45.

**Genesis 45:1-28:** Joseph was no longer able to control his feelings in front of his servants, so he ordered them all to leave the room. No one else was with him when Joseph told his brothers who he was. <sup>2</sup>He cried with such loud sobs that the Egyptians heard it, and the news was taken to the king's palace. <sup>3</sup>**Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But when his brothers heard this, they were so terrified that they could not answer.** <sup>4</sup>**Then Joseph said to them, "Please come closer."** They did, and he said, **"I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.** <sup>5</sup>**Now do not be upset or blame yourselves because you sold me here. It was really God who sent me ahead of you to save people's lives.** <sup>6</sup>**This is only the second year of famine in the land; there will be five more years in which there will be neither ploughing nor reaping.** <sup>7</sup>**God sent me ahead of you to rescue you in this amazing way and to make sure that you and your descendants survive.** <sup>8</sup>**So it was not really you who sent me here, but God. He has made me the king's highest official. I am in charge of his whole country; I am the ruler of all Egypt. [Try to image the reaction of his brothers then!]** [Was this the first Benjamin knew about what really happened to Joseph and the deception by his brothers?]

<sup>9</sup> "Now hurry back to my father and tell him that this is what his son Joseph says: 'God has made me ruler of all Egypt; come to me without delay. <sup>10</sup>You can live in the region of Goshen, where you can be near me—you, your children, your grandchildren, your sheep, your goats, your cattle, and everything else that you have. <sup>11</sup>If you are in Goshen, I can take care of you. There will still be five years of famine; and I do not want you, your family, and your livestock to starve.' "

<sup>12</sup> Joseph continued, "Now all of you, and you too, Benjamin, can see that I am really Joseph. <sup>13</sup>Tell my father how powerful I am here in Egypt and tell him about everything that you have seen. Then hurry and bring him here."

<sup>14</sup> He threw his arms round his brother Benjamin and began to cry; Benjamin also cried as he hugged him. <sup>15</sup>Then, still weeping, he embraced each of his brothers and kissed them. After that, his brothers began to talk with him.

<sup>16</sup> When the news reached the palace that Joseph's brothers had come, the king and his officials were pleased. <sup>17</sup>He said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers to load their animals and to return to the land of Canaan. <sup>18</sup>Let them get their father and their families and come back here. **I will give them the best land in Egypt,** and they will have more than enough to live on. <sup>19</sup>Tell them

also to take wagons with them from Egypt for their wives and small children and to bring their father with them. <sup>20</sup>They are not to worry about leaving their possessions behind; the best in the whole land of Egypt will be theirs.”

<sup>21</sup> Jacob’s sons did as they were told. Joseph gave them wagons, as the king had ordered, and food for the journey. <sup>22</sup>He also gave each of them a change of clothes, but he gave Benjamin 300 pieces of silver and five changes of clothes. <sup>23</sup>He sent his father ten donkeys loaded with the best Egyptian goods and ten donkeys loaded with corn, bread, and other food for the journey. <sup>24</sup>He sent his brothers off and as they left, he said to them, “Don’t quarrel on the way.” [What could they have quarreled about?]

<sup>25</sup> They left Egypt and went back home to their father Jacob in Canaan.

<sup>26</sup>“Joseph is still alive!” they told him. “He is the ruler of all Egypt!” Jacob was stunned and could not believe them.

<sup>27</sup> But when they told him all that Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to take him to Egypt, he recovered from the shock. <sup>28</sup> **“My son Joseph is still alive!”** he said. “This is all I could ask for! I must go and see him before I die.”—*Good News Bible*. \*†‡

19. What was it that changed those brothers? Was it just a matter of time? Was it the suffering that they had gone through? Was it their own internal recriminations? Was it their father’s example? Was it the suffering that they had heard that Jacob and Isaac had gone through? Which of these factors do you think would have had the biggest impact on you?

During the years since Joseph had been separated from his brothers, **these sons of Jacob had changed in character**. Envious, turbulent, deceptive, cruel, and revengeful they had been; but now, when tested by adversity, they were shown to be unselfish, true to one another, devoted to their father, and, themselves middle-aged men, subject to his authority.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*\* 225.3.†

20. What do you think convinced Joseph that his brothers really had changed? Was it the speech by Judah?
21. Try to imagine the ten brothers at that moment at which Joseph said: “I am Joseph, your brother!” They were stunned, and he had to repeat it.

[BSG:] Joseph then declares: “ ‘God sent me’ ” (*Gen. 45:5, NKJV*). This reference to God has a double purpose. It serves not only to reassure his brothers that Joseph does not have hard feelings toward them; but it also is a profound confession of faith, and an expression of hope, because what they did was necessary for the “ ‘great deliverance’ ” and the survival of a “ ‘posterity’ ” (*Gen. 45:7, NKJV*).

Joseph then urges his brothers to go to his father in order to prepare him to come to Egypt. He accompanies his call with specific words concerning the place where they will “ ‘dwell,’ ” that is, Goshen, famous for its rich pasture, “ ‘the best of the land’ ” (*Gen. 45:10, 18, NKJV*). He also takes care of the transportation: carts are provided, which will ultimately convince Jacob that his sons were not lying to him about what they had just experienced (*Gen. 45:27*). Jacob takes this visible demonstration as evidence that Joseph is



alive, and this is enough for him to come alive again (*compare with Gen. 37:35, Gen. 44:29*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Thursday, June 16.<sup>§</sup>

Jacob was 120 at the death of his father (Genesis 25:26). Ten years later, at the age of 130 years, he stood before Pharaoh (Genesis 47:9). At that time Joseph had been governor of Egypt for nine years (Genesis 45:11). Jacob was therefore 121 years old when Joseph was promoted at the age of 30 (Genesis 41:46), and 108 when Joseph was sold at the age of 17 (Genesis 37:2). Consequently, Isaac was 168 years of age when Joseph was sold into slavery. Since this tragic event occurred while Jacob was living at Hebron with his aged father (Genesis 37:14), **Isaac witnessed the grief of Jacob and survived that event for a period of 12 years.**—Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1978). Article on Genesis 35:28. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,\** vol. 1, 421. Review and Herald Publishing Association.<sup>†</sup>

22. **When Jacob saw the many gifts and the carts that were sent to carry him to Egypt, he recognized that Joseph must still be alive.** So, Jacob agreed to go to Egypt.
23. Was it easy for Joseph to be so gracious to his brethren since things had worked out so well for him? If Joseph had still been in charge of the prison and the brothers had been sent to that prison, how do you think he would have dealt with them?

[BSG:] Joseph must have noticed their dismay at his revelation that he is their brother, because he repeats a second time: “I am Joseph” (*Gen. 45:3, 4*). The brothers are worried. They may even have doubts about Joseph’s claim, because he does not provide any more information than the information that they imparted to him. All of this appears suspicious, particularly considering the more recent experiences they have had with this man. They are concerned for their lives. This is why Joseph repeats a second time, “I am Joseph,” but this time he is more precise and adds a piece of information no one knows, except his brothers: “ ‘Your brother whom you sold into Egypt’ ” (*Gen. 45:4, NKJV*). Then he adds that it was God who “sent” him. God sent him before his brothers for a specific purpose: “to preserve life” (*Gen. 45:5*). Joseph suggests that it was necessary that they sell him to ensure their survival. Thus, the brothers thought they had sold their brother, whereas, in fact, it was God who was leading in that operation.

The formula “father to Pharaoh” (*Gen. 45:8*) reflects the Egyptian title *itf-ntr*, meaning literally “father of God,” which refers to Pharaoh as a god. Joseph does not use the expression as it was in the Egyptian language for fear of sounding blasphemous to his brothers. This was a priestly title, which was borne by the highest officers, including viziers, such as Ptahhotep, vizier of Iseki (2675 B.C.). The other title of Joseph, “ruler throughout all the land of Egypt” (*Gen. 45:8*), refers to his rule over the entire country of the two lands (Upper and Lower Egypt) and reflects another Egyptian title, *nb t3 wy*, “lord of the two lands,” which was an official permanent title borne by the deputy of Pharaoh. Note that the dual form of the Hebrew word *mitsrayim*, for

“Egypt,” reflects the two divisions of Egypt. Joseph’s emphasis on his status in Egypt is intentional: it emphasizes his extraordinary position, thereby reminding his brothers of the dream, which had portrayed him as a ruler to whom all (including his father) would bow (*Gen. 37:9*). **Alluding to the dream, Joseph is using the fulfillment of that dream as an implicit argument for God’s providence.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* 160-161.<sup>†‡§</sup>

24. Last week we talked about Gary A. Rendsburg, then of Rutgers University and his book, *The Redaction of Genesis*, Eisenbrauns, 1986<sup>†</sup>:

The Joseph story builds to a focal point, or pivot point, at Genesis 45:1-3 after which the themes and stories are repeated in reverse order, thus creating the chiasmic structure.

In Genesis 45:1-3, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers.

There are six episodes (A, B, C, D, E, F) followed by six parallel episodes (F', E', D', C', B', A') in reverse order...

### **The Joseph Story**

**A Joseph and his brothers; Jacob and Joseph part (Genesis 37:1-36)**

**B Interlude: Joseph not present (Genesis 38:1-30)**

**C Reversal: Joseph “guilty”; Potiphar’s wife “innocent” (Genesis 39:1-23)**

**D Joseph: Hero of Egypt (Genesis 40:1-41:57)**

**E Two trips to Egypt (Genesis 42:1-43:34)**

**F Final test (Genesis 44:1-34)**

**Focal point: Joseph revealed himself to his brothers**

**F' Conclusion of test (Genesis 45:1-28)**

**E' Two tellings of migration to Egypt (Genesis 46:1-47:12)**

**D' Joseph: Hero of Egypt (Genesis 47:13-27)**

**C' Reversal: Ephraim firstborn, Manasseh second-born (Genesis 47:28-48:22)**

**B' Interlude: Joseph nominally present (Genesis 49:1-28)**

**A' Joseph and his brothers, Jacob and Joseph part (Genesis 49:29-50:26)**

25. Do you think Joseph ever reminded his brothers of those dreams that he had as a youth? Did they ever say anything to him about those dreams?
26. This lesson covers the time when the brothers first appeared in Egypt to purchase food until the time when Jacob decided that he needed to go to Egypt to see his son. The ten brothers survived Joseph’s multiple tests, proving that they had, in fact, changed. What should we learn from this entire story?

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