

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

“God’s Advance Man”

Genesis 45:1-28

2003

Introduction

An advance man is someone who prepares the way for another person. We have many examples of this in life as well as in scripture. The most famous advance man of all time, of course, was John the Baptist who prepared the way for Jesus.

In Gen 45, we read of Joseph who was another of God’s famous “Advance Men”:

1. He went on ahead of his family to prepare the way for their deliverance.
2. He modeled biblical reconciliation in advance of the New Testament teachings.
3. He was a foreshadowing or type of Jesus Christ.

I Joseph Revealed Himself

A. He could no longer control himself [Verse 1-2]

1. He sent everyone out and **wept** loudly

- a. The Egyptians heard him
- b. Pharaoh’s household heard about it

Gen 43:30 “Deeply moved at the sight of his brother, Joseph hurried out and looked for a place to weep. He went into his private room and wept there.”

Joseph’s great emotion shows that he was not cruelly toying with his brothers by the various tests he put them through. To the contrary, he was being directed by God to bring them to repentance for their own good. But it clearly pained him to do so.

B. He revealed himself to his brothers [Verse 3]

They knew him only by his Egyptian name, Zaphnath-paaneah. But now he tells them his true name: “I am Joseph!”

Foreshadowing of Christ: The revelation of God

Isa 65:1 “I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me.”

1. They were **speechless** and terrified

Terrified = Bahal = “Dismayed or frightened”

Disbelief, fear and guilt were written on their shocked faces.

This was the worst news they could have ever heard. It was bad enough to stand before a powerful Egyptian governor who was angered at the theft of

his silver cup, but to realize that this man was their brother whom they had sold into slavery 20 years earlier – it was simply overwhelming!

Their sin had been exposed. Their greatest fears had come to pass. Their minds were reeling with the ugly reality – they were doomed!

Foreshadowing of Christ:

Rev 6:15-17 “Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

II Joseph Reassured His Brothers

A. He invited them to come close to him [Verse 4]

Foreshadowing of Christ:

John 20:27 “Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

B. He encouraged them not to be **distressed** or angry [Verse 5a]

Distressed = `atsab = “To worry, be grieved or vexed”

Angry = Charah = “To blaze up in anger”

Joseph does not diminish what the brothers did (“**you sold me into Egypt**”), but he puts it into the right perspective: “**God sent me ahead you to saves lives.**”

Nowhere in this chapter was the sin of his brothers minimized;

1. Joseph identified their treatment of him as sinful.
2. The brothers recognized and confessed their actions as sinful (Gen 42:21).
3. The brothers repent of their sinful actions in Gen 44.
4. And then finally, in Gen 45, we witness a beautiful reconciliation.

How was Joseph able to forgive his brothers?

1. Because he saw his situation from an eternal perspective. He realized that even though his brothers intended to harm him . . . God was working through even those sinful intentions.
2. Because Joseph was prepared long in advance to forgive his brothers. And from the first moment he saw his brothers he was working to restore their relationship -- not to avenge the wrong done to him.
3. Because his brothers confessed and repented of their sins.

C. He acknowledged God’s sovereignty [Verse 5b-8a]

1. God sent him ahead to **save** lives
 - a. “To preserve you for a remnant”
 - b. “To save our lives by a great deliverance”

Gen 50:20-21 “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”

c. “It was not you who sent me here, but God”

“*You sold me,*” Joseph said, “*but God sent me!*” - Ps 105:16-17

What Joseph is describing here is the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. The sovereignty of God tells us that while people and circumstances may bring evil into our lives (using their free will), God can cause that “evil” to accomplish His good and perfect purposes.

Illustration:

The only survivor of a shipwreck washed up on a small uninhabited island. He cried out to God to save him, and every day he scanned the horizon for help, but none seemed forthcoming.

Exhausted, he eventually managed to build a rough hut and put his few possessions in it. But then one day, after hunting for food, he arrived home to find his little hut in flames, the smoke rolling up to the sky. The worst had happened; he was stung with grief.

Early the next day, though, a ship drew near the island and rescued him.

“How did you know I was here?” he asked the crew.

“We saw your smoke signal,” they replied.

Though it may not seem so now, your present difficulty may be instrumental to your future happiness.

Question:

So why did Joseph suffer injustice for 20 years in Egypt?

Was it the consequence of his youthful arrogance?

Was it because of the jealousy of his brothers?

Was it the diabolical plan of the enemy?

Or was it part of the eternal plan of the Father?

The truth is it was all of the above!

Quote: C. H. Spurgeon

“There is no attribute more comforting to His children than that of God’s sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe trials, we believe that sovereignty has ordained their afflictions, that sovereignty overrules them, and that sovereignty will sanctify them all.”

Or as Paul so powerfully states in Romans 8:28:

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

Foreshadowing of Christ:

Acts 2:22-24 “This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.”

2. God made him father to Pharaoh [Verse 8b]

A father to Pharaoh = “The king’s advisor”

Ps 105:21-22 “He made him master of his household, ruler over all he possessed, to instruct his princes as he pleased and teach his elders wisdom.”

3. God had made him ruler over all Egypt [Verse 8c]

Acts 7:9-10 “Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave Joseph wisdom and enabled him to gain the goodwill of Pharaoh king of Egypt; so he made him ruler over Egypt and all his palace.”

III Joseph Instructed His Brothers

- A. He told them to go back to Canaan and tell Jacob: [Verse 9-13a]

1. That God had made him lord of all Egypt

Foreshadowing of Christ:

Phil 2:9-11 “Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

2. To come down to Egypt and live in Goshen
The city in which Joseph himself lived.

Foreshadowing of Christ:

John 17:24 “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”

3. That they would be provided for

Foreshadowing of Christ:

Phil 4:19 “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”

4. About all the honor accorded to him

Honor = “Kabowd = “Weight of glory”

Foreshadowing of Christ

John 17:24 “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”

- B. He told them to bring Jacob quickly [Verse 13b]
- C. He reached out to Benjamin and his brothers: [Verse 14-15]
1. He embraced, kissed and **wept** over them
 2. He **talked** with them - Lk 24:27
 - What did they talk about?
 1. They brought each other up to speed on the last 20 years.
 2. They reconciled their relationship by confessing, repenting and forgiving each other of sin.
 3. They made plans for the future.
 4. They marveled at the sovereignty and power of God.

IV The Palace's Response

- A. Pharaoh and his officials were pleased [Verse 16]
- Why was Pharaoh pleased?
1. He had a great respect for Joseph who had single-handedly saved Egypt.
 2. He was never informed by Joseph of the injustices done to him by his brothers. As a result, Pharaoh did not have to overcome any feelings of anger toward Joseph's brothers. Silence about the sins of others makes their restoration a much easier process.

Foreshadowing of Christ:

Luke 15:10 “In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

- B. Pharaoh instructed Joseph's brothers: [Verse 17-20]
1. To load up and return to Canaan
 2. To bring their father and families
 3. To **enjoy** the best of the land of Egypt
 - Mark 10:29-30 “I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields-and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life.”
- C. Joseph provided them with: [Verse 21-22a]
1. Transportation
 2. Provisions
 3. **New** clothing
 - Remember that the brothers had previously torn their garments as a sign of mourning when Benjamin was found to have the silver cup (Gen 44:13).

Why were these sinful, lying, despicable brothers treated with such love and generosity by Pharaoh? Because of who their brother was. Pharaoh blessed the brothers for Joseph's sake.

Foreshadowing of Christ:

We are blessed because of Jesus' relationship to the Father.

Eph 1:3-4 "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."

D. Joseph gave Benjamin: [Verse 22b]

1. 300 shekels of silver
2. 5 sets of clothing

Gen 43:34 "When portions were served to them from Joseph's table, Benjamin's portion was five times as much as anyone else's."

E. Joseph sent his father: [Verse 23]

1. The best things of Egypt, grain and provisions

F. Joseph instructed his brothers not to quarrel [Verse 24]

Quarrel = Ragaz = "To quiver with violent fear or anger"

The brothers had already quarreled over their sin against Joseph in Gen 42:21-22. Joseph knew that as soon as these men left his presence that they would be tempted to assign blame to one another. Accusations would fly and a heated argument would follow. But it would be pointless since all had been forgiven. Their trip would be a happier one if they focused upon God's grace rather than their own guilt.

Application:

1 John 1:9-10 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

V Jacob's Response

A. Jacob's sons told him: [Verse 25-26a]

1. That Joseph was alive!

Foreshadowing of Christ:

Luke 24:6 "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!"

2. That Joseph was ruler of all Egypt

Foreshadowing of Christ:

Eph 1:20-23 "[God] raised [Christ] from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things

under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.”

B. Jacob’s response: [Verse 26b-28]

1. He was **stunned** and didn’t believe them

Stunned = Puwg = “To be faint”

Jacob was told Joseph was dead and believed it. Now he is told Joseph is alive, and he doesn’t believe it.

Foreshadowing of Christ: Thomas

Mark 16:11 “When [the disciples] heard that Jesus was alive and that [Mary Magdalene] had seen him, they did not believe it.”

2. He was convinced and spiritually **revived**

What convinced him?

1. The testimony of his sons (especially Benjamin)
2. The physical evidence of the carts, food, clothing and silver.
3. The heart-wrenching confession of his sons.

The brothers, in order to convince their father that Joseph was indeed alive, had to confess the dark ugly secret they had held in their hearts for over 20 years!

Then Jacob believed Joseph was alive, though he had not yet seen him.

Foreshadowing of Christ:

1 Peter 1:8-9 “Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

3. He was eager to see Joseph before he died

Foreshadowing of Christ:

Luke 15:24 “For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”

Conclusion

1. The sovereignty of God

Rom 8:28-29 “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

2. A heart of reconciliation

Col 3:13-14 “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

3. The Gospel of Jesus Christ

a. Be reconciled to God

Isa 1:18-20 "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

b. Be God's advance man – an agent of reconciliation

2 Cor 5:18-21 "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God."