

# The Book of Genesis

## Lesson 35

### Chapter 42

#### Son's Trip to Egypt

Genesis 42:1 Now Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, and Jacob said to his sons, "Why are you staring at one another?" <sup>2</sup> And he said, "Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down there and buy *some* for us from that place, so that we may live and not die." <sup>3</sup> Then ten brothers of Joseph went down to buy grain from Egypt. <sup>4</sup> But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, "I am afraid that harm may befall him." <sup>5</sup> So the sons of Israel came to buy grain among those who were coming, for the famine was in the land of Canaan also.

Back in Hebron, Israel and his family were in trouble when the great famine arrived. Wealth in livestock is tremendous, but when the famine starves the crops and pastures, the livestock starve too. Humans can survive on protein derived from the livestock, but cattle need grass or grain to survive. Israel's sons had no answers for their dilemma, but Israel did. Grain could be purchased in Egypt; therefore, he sent his 10 oldest sons to buy all the grain they could to meet their need.

#### Joseph Recognized Brothers

Genesis 42:6 Now Joseph was the ruler over the land; he was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down to him with *their* faces to the ground. <sup>7a</sup> When Joseph saw his brothers he recognized them, but he disguised himself to them and spoke to them harshly.

In Egypt, the sons prostrated themselves before the ruler. Joseph's dream was fulfilled and his brothers bowed before him. It was the dream that caused these same brothers to sell him into slavery 22 years before. He knew them, but they did not know him. Joseph changed his normal diplomatic tone with his brothers for personal reasons.

#### Joseph's Interaction with Brothers

Genesis 42:7b And he said to them, "Where have you come from?" And they said, "From the land of Canaan, to buy food." <sup>8</sup> But Joseph had recognized his brothers, although they did not recognize him. <sup>9</sup> And Joseph remembered the dreams which he had about them, and said to them, "You are spies; you have come to look at the undefended parts of our land." <sup>10</sup> Then they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food." <sup>11</sup> "We are all sons of one man; we are honest men, your servants are not spies." <sup>12</sup> Yet he said to them, "No, but you have come to look at the undefended parts of our land!" <sup>13</sup> But they said, "Your servants are twelve brothers *in all*, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold, the youngest is with our father today, and one is no more." <sup>14</sup> And Joseph said to them, "It is as I said to you, you are spies; <sup>15</sup> by this you will be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother comes here!" <sup>16</sup> "Send one of you that he may get your brother, while you remain confined, that your words

**may be tested, whether there is truth in you. But if not, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies."** <sup>17</sup> So he put them all together in prison for three days.

Joseph's words were calculated to illicit specific information from his brothers. He wanted to know if his father was still alive. The brothers played directly into Joseph's trap. His father was alive and his little brother was fine. What threat did Joseph mean in his words "your words may be tested ... by the life of Pharaoh." It was the Egyptian way of saying, as sure as the King of Egypt lives, you will be tested. Joseph had every intention of drawing out of his brothers everything he wanted to know. Joseph wanted to see Benjamin; he asked them to send one brother back to get him; clearly, the brothers knew Jacob would not consent. To put pressure on the brothers, Joseph did to them what they did to him. He put them in jail.

### **Three Days Later**

**Genesis 42:18** Now Joseph said to them on the third day, "Do this and live, for I fear God: <sup>19</sup> if you are honest men, let one of your brothers be confined in your prison; but as for *the rest of you*, go, carry grain for the famine of your households, <sup>20</sup> and bring your youngest brother to me, so your words may be verified, and you will not die." And they did so. <sup>21</sup> Then they said to one another, " Truly we are guilty concerning our brother, because we saw the distress of his soul when he pleaded with us, yet we would not listen; therefore this distress has come upon us."

Joseph's handling of his brothers had stirred all sorts of guilty memories of what they had done to him 22 years before. Here we learn that Joseph had pleaded with them when they threw him in the pit and most likely, as he was being hauled away by the Israelites/Mideanites caravan. Now, those pleas of young Joseph had returned to cause immense guilt upon these fully grown men with families of their own in Hebron. Joseph's soul was distressed at the age of 17 and their souls were distressed now.

### **Reuben's Complaint**

**Genesis 42:22** And Reuben answered them, saying, " Did I not tell you, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen? Now comes the reckoning for his blood."

Twenty-two years earlier, Reuben had pleaded with his nine brothers not to harm Joseph. Although they initially agreed with his alternative plan, they took the opportunity to sell him to their cousin while he was away. Joseph knew Reuben was not intentionally part of the plan to send him from the family. It was his intention to use the rescue of Joseph to renew his favor with his father. Now, 22 years later, Reuben was basically saying "I told you so" and "this is our punishment."

### **Joseph Wept**

**Genesis 42:23** They did not know, however, that Joseph understood, for there was an interpreter between them. <sup>24</sup> And he turned away from them and wept. But when he returned to them and spoke to them, he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.

Part of Joseph's disguise was to speak with his brothers through an interpreter. He knew what they were saying, but they could not understand Egyptian. The distress of his brothers broke his heart. The emotion of the reunion was more than he could take. The tears flowed. He knew the big picture, but he could not reveal it to them yet.

Joseph chose Simeon to remain behind. Why? Simeon was Jacob's second son, next in line after Reuben. Twenty-two years earlier, when Reuben left Joseph alone with the nine other brothers in Dothan, Simeon was in charge. He was the oldest brother of the nine. It was Simeon who found Joseph; it was Simeon who put him in the pit. It was Simeon who approved the plan to sell Joseph. Joseph remembered! Simeon would be bound and would remain in jail until Benjamin arrived.

### **Joseph's Orders**

**Genesis 42:25 Then Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain and to restore every man's money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. And thus it was done for them. 26 So they loaded their donkeys with their grain, and departed from there.**

The nine brothers did not hear this order, at least not in Hebrew; Joseph gave the order in Egyptian so as not to reveal his identity. Even though they had to leave a brother behind, they obtained all that they had journeyed to Egypt to purchase. They did not know that it was a gift from Joseph because he returned their full payments to them by having the money hidden in each of their sacks.

### **Brother's Discovery**

**Genesis 42:27 And as one of them opened his sack to give his donkey fodder at the lodging place, he saw his money; and behold, it was in the mouth of his sack. 28 Then he said to his brothers, "My money has been returned, and behold, it is even in my sack." And their hearts sank, and they turned trembling to one another, saying, " What is this that God has done to us?"**

When we think of "grain," we must remember that it was seeds. The sons needed to buy the seeds to replant the fields for the new year in the hope that a crop would grow. The first year of the famine did not yield enough seeds to feed the livestock and family and still set aside enough to plant again. Although good farmers can predict a poor crop during the season, with a famine, the poor crop can quickly turn into a disastrous crop and animals and humans must still be fed. Jacob's only choice was to use his seed grain and hope to purchase more from somewhere else.

On the way home, the cattle had to be fed. When they opened the seed grain sacks, they found all the money they had paid to Joseph. It scared them. They did not know what to make of such on the part of Joseph. What was God doing to them?

### **Explanation to Jacob**

**Genesis 42:29 When they came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them, saying, 30 "The man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly with us, and took us for spies of the country. 31 "But we said to him, 'We**

**are honest men; we are not spies.**<sup>32</sup> 'We are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no more, and the youngest is with our father today in the land of Canaan.'

**33** "And the man, the lord of the land, said to us, ' By this I shall know that you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me and take grain for the famine of your households, and go.

**34** 'But bring your youngest brother to me that I may know that you are not spies, but honest men. I will give your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.'"

**35** Now it came about as they were emptying their sacks, that behold, every man's bundle of money *was* in his sack; and when they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were dismayed.

We must wonder how Moses knew such detail concerning the dialog recorded of these interactions with Joseph, his brothers and Jacob. Surely, it was by Divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Lord was gracious to the brothers as they returned to Hebron and their father. All of them were in shock.

### **Jacob's Reply**

**Genesis 42:36** And their father Jacob said to them, "You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and you would take Benjamin; all these things are against me."

Jacob did not agree to send Benjamin to Egypt. To him, Joseph and Simeon were gone and he was not willing to sacrifice Benjamin in the hope of getting through the famine and further dealings with Egypt.

### **Reuben Offers Own Sons**

**Genesis 42:37** Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, "You may put my two sons to death if I do not bring him *back* to you; put him in my care, and I will return him to you."

In an incredible move, Reuben offered the lives of his two sons if he did not return with Benjamin. As heartfelt as this may seem, why would Jacob want to put two grandsons to death if their father failed to keep his promise?

### **Jacob's Refusal**

**Genesis 42:38** But Jacob said, "My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he alone is left. If harm should befall him on the journey you are taking, then you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow."

Jacob was not willing to accept Reuben's offer. Nor was he willing to let Benjamin make the trip although that is not revealed here. Benjamin was not a child at this point in the story. He was a man with six sons of his own. He was the only surviving son of Jacob's beloved Rachel. Jacob had many regrets and many burdens that were completely out of his control. The loss of Joseph and Rachel were just two.

## *Chapter 43*

### **More Supplies Needed**

**Genesis 43:1 Now the famine was severe in the land. <sup>2</sup> So it came about when they had finished eating the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, "Go back, buy us a little food."**

We do not know how much time had passed since the sons returned from Egypt, but verse 10 of this chapter gives a clue. There we discover that Judah admitted that they could have gone to and from Egypt twice by this time. Two round trip journeys would have been 440 miles or a 22 hard days' journey. Therefore, probably 30 days had passed. Suffice it to say, the famine had not released its grip on the land. All the supplies that they had purchased in Egypt were exhausted and Jacob's only hope as patriarch of the family was to send his sons back to Egypt to purchase more food.

### **Judah's Fear**

**Genesis 43:3 Judah spoke to him, however, saying, " The man solemnly warned us, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.' <sup>4</sup> "If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. <sup>5</sup> "But if you do 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.'"**

We must pause to wonder why Judah spoke these words instead of Reuben or Levi, his two older brothers. For whatever reason, Judah was concerned that if Benjamin was not with them when they returned, the trip would be wasted. He believed Joseph when he said they would not have an audience with him if Benjamin was not with them. Simeon was also an older brother of Judah, but he was still in prison in Egypt. How long would Jacob allow him to remain there? When would they return with Benjamin to retrieve Simeon? Failing to return under Joseph's instructions was not an option.

### **Israel's Concern**

**Genesis 43:6 Then Israel said, "Why did you treat me so badly by telling the man whether you still had *another* brother?"**

The deception inherent in Jacob's character showed its ugly head again in this passage and he took the whole ordeal personally. His sons were truthful in every way with Joseph. Jacob took it as a personal offense that they did not lie to Joseph to protect him even though he was not in Egypt with them.

### **Brother's Reply**

**Genesis 43:7 But they said, "The man questioned particularly about us and our relatives, saying, ' Is your father still alive? Have you *another* brother?' So we answered his questions. Could we possibly know that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?"**

The sons were admitting to Jacob that Joseph was more clever in his interrogation than they expected. They could not imagine that a truthful answer would lead to such a restrictive situation.

### **Judah's Promise**

**Genesis 43:8** *And Judah said to his father Israel, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, we as well as you and our little ones. <sup>9</sup> " I myself will be surety for him; you may hold me responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame before you forever. <sup>10</sup> "For if we had not delayed, surely by now we could have returned twice."*

When the sons had returned from Egypt, they were to journey back with Benjamin in order to retrieve Simeon, but Jacob refused. At that time, Reuben offered the lives of two of his sons if the journey was not successful. In this passage, Judah offered to be personally responsible for the results of the journey. How the punishment for a failed journey would be appeased, we do not know.

### **Israel's Agreement**

**Genesis 43:11** *Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: take some of the best products of the land in your bags, and carry down to the man as a present, a little balm and a little honey, aromatic gum and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. <sup>12</sup> "And take double the money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was a mistake. <sup>13</sup> "Take your brother also, and arise, return to the man; <sup>14</sup> and may God Almighty grant you compassion in the sight of the man, that he may release to you your other brother and Benjamin. And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."*

Jacob needed grain and Egypt was his only source. His second son was imprisoned there and Benjamin, whom Jacob never wanted to leave his side, was the key to unlock the cell of Simeon and to enter through the door into the presence of the ruler. Jacob had no option but to allow his son to go. Notice the despair of Jacob's words, "I am bereaved of my children." Could Jacob have been afraid that all his sons might perish in Egypt, or was he just worried about Simeon and Benjamin? We do not know. What we do know is that he wanted his sons to have more resources than needed to purchase the grain and he wanted them to take a number of gifts to the magistrate. He was willing to pay a great price for the return of his family.

### **Gifts and Money**

**Genesis 43:15** *So the men took this present, and they took double the money in their hand, and Benjamin; then they arose and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph.*

One hundred and ten miles stood between Jacob in Hebron and Simeon in Zoan/Tanis. The sons began their journey leaving Jacob behind with Leah, Bilhah, Zilpah, and the wives of his sons, and their children. Ten sons made the journey at that time, but, including Jacob, about 60

relatives were left behind. We think of Benjamin as a young boy in this story, but as the Scripture will reveal in the next few chapters, he was married with six sons.

### **Joseph's Plan / Brother's Case**

**Genesis 43:16** When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to his house steward, "Bring the men into the house, and slay *an animal* and make ready; for the men are to dine with me at noon." <sup>17</sup> So the man did as Joseph said, and brought the men to Joseph's house. <sup>18</sup> Now the men were afraid, because they were brought to Joseph's house; and they said, "It is because of the money that was returned in our sacks the first time that we are being brought in, that he may seek occasion against us and fall upon us, and take us for slaves with our donkeys." <sup>19</sup> So they came near to Joseph's house steward, and spoke to him at the entrance of the house, <sup>20</sup> and said, "Oh, my lord, we indeed came down the first time to buy food, <sup>21</sup> and it came about when we came to the lodging place, that we opened our sacks, and behold, each man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full. So we have brought it back in our hand. <sup>22</sup> "We have also brought down other money in our hand to buy food; we do not know who put our money in our sacks."

The sons of Jacob arrived in Egypt and began the process of going through the line to purchase food and retrieve their brother. No doubt they were in the presence of the same men they had interacted with on their first visit. Joseph must have noticed them and then discerned that the stranger among them was Benjamin. Joseph had them pulled out of line and taken to his personal residence.

This new location startled the sons and fear prevailed in their souls. Unaware of their fate, the sons began to confess to the steward the circumstance of the events of their first visit a little more than a month before.

### **Instruction to Brothers**

**Genesis 43: 23** And he said, " Be at ease, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them. <sup>24</sup> Then the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys fodder. <sup>25</sup> So they prepared the present for Joseph's coming at noon; for they had heard that they were to eat a meal there.

The steward said to the sons, "Be at ease." "Your God...has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money." The steward did not have the authority to reveal much to the sons except that he was the caretaker of the transaction that took place on their first visit. We must wonder how much peace and comfort the steward's words brought to the sons. Surely, the presentation of Simeon helped.

At this juncture, we must also wonder if Simeon had been in prison the entire time or had he been in Joseph's care somewhere else? We do not know. The steward took care of the sons and their animals while the brothers prepared the gifts for Joseph. They were expecting to see him at lunch time.

## Brother's Meeting

Genesis 43:26 When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the present which was in their hand and bowed to the ground before him. 27 Then he asked them about their welfare, and said, " Is your old father well, of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" 28 And they said, "Your servant our father is well; he is still alive." And they bowed down in homage. 29 As he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, he said, "Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, " May God be gracious to you, my son." 30 And Joseph hurried *out* for he was deeply stirred over his brother, and he sought *a place to weep*; and he entered his chamber and wept there. 31 Then he washed his face, and came out; and he controlled himself and said, " Serve the meal."

We might think that a 39 year old man who had suffered many trials and tribulations over the past 22 years would be hardened like steel in his emotions, but Joseph's difficult life had been filled with the grace of God. Regardless of Joseph's circumstance, the Lord made sure he was protected by the favor of his supervisors.

Joseph knew the graciousness of God personally. It had molded him into a strong leader, beloved by the people, with a tender heart for those he ruled. Those who have been hardened like steel without the grace of the Lord are often overly bitter. Joseph had every reason to be bitter toward his brothers, but the grace of the Lord overshadowed his life. Overwhelmed by his love for Benjamin and his brothers, his retreat was necessary for him to compose himself.

## The Meal

Genesis 43:32 So they served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians, who ate with him, by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is loathsome to the Egyptians.

The clash of two cultures occurred at this meal between the Egyptians and the Hebrews. In this passage the problem was on the Egyptian side. If Egyptians could not eat with Hebrews, how was Joseph, a Hebrew, living and working in Egypt? Did the Egyptians know Joseph's background? Had Pharaoh given Joseph special dispensation? Had Joseph hidden his past from Pharaoh? We do not know.

## The Seating Arrangement

Genesis 43:33 Now they were seated before him, the first-born according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth, and the men looked at one another in astonishment.

The sons were dumbfounded to find themselves seated in perfect birth order.

## The Portions

Genesis 43:34 And he took portions to them from his own table; but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. So they feasted and drank freely with him.

The sons must have been filled with fear and wonder as they looked at the portions on Benjamin's plate. What was God doing? What was the Egyptian doing to them?

## *Chapter 44*

### **Joseph's Plant**

**Genesis 44:1** Then he commanded his house steward, 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.<sup>2</sup> "And put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his money for the grain." And he did as Joseph had told him.<sup>3</sup> As soon as it was light, the men were sent away, they with their donkeys.<sup>4</sup> They had just gone out of the city, *and* were not far off, when Joseph said to his house steward, "Up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid evil for good?<sup>5</sup> 'Is not this the one from which my lord drinks, and which he indeed uses for divination? You have done wrong in doing this.'"

We can conjecture all we want, but we will never know why Joseph played this trick on his brothers. It was no trick; it was a test. Did Joseph really use the cup hidden in Benjamin's sack for divination, which is a form of sorcery; surely not. Joseph worshipped the true God who spoke to him personally and revealed divine secrets about the future.

### **Brother's Surprise**

**Genesis 44:6** So he overtook them and spoke these words to them.<sup>7</sup> And they said to him, "Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing.<sup>8</sup> "Behold, the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks we have brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house?<sup>9</sup> " With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves."<sup>10</sup> So he said, "Now let it also be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and *the rest of you* shall be innocent."<sup>11</sup> Then they hurried, each man lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack.<sup>12</sup> And he searched, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.<sup>13</sup> Then they tore their clothes, and when each man loaded his donkey, they returned to the city.

The steward did as he was instructed; the brothers were so assured of their own honesty that they were willing to allow the son who stole the cup to die. The Scripture does not tell whether the brothers had been separated during the short stay in Egypt. They knew what each of them had done during their time in Egypt; however, they had not packed their beasts of burden; the Egyptians did that for them. Most assuredly, they had not inspected the loads for contraband.

Can you imagine the tension caused by the search beginning with Reuben's sack and concluding with Benjamin? Can you imagine their shock when the cup was pulled out of Benjamin's sack? They had already vowed to allow the culprit to be put to death; what were they thinking? Had Judah failed in his promise to be personally responsible for Benjamin on the trip? How would he explain the death of his brother to Jacob? Look at their reaction to the revelation of the cup; they

tore their clothes. Joseph surely did not use the cup for sorcery. That statement was to strike the fear of evil in their hearts. It was a test to see if they would abandon Benjamin as they had Joseph 22 years earlier. Had the brothers truly confessed their sins? Were they truly contrite? Joseph needed to know.

## At Joseph's House

Genesis 44:14 **When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still there, and they fell to the ground before him.** <sup>15</sup> And Joseph said to them, "What is this deed that you have done? Do you not know that such a man as I can indeed practice divination?" <sup>16</sup> So Judah said, "What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; behold, we are my lord's slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found." <sup>17</sup> But he said, "Far be it from me to do this. The man in whose possession the cup has been found, he shall be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your father."

The whole caravan returned to Joseph's house where he was waiting for them. It was Judah who spoke up. It was Judah who was responsible; he did not cast the blame on Benjamin; he laid the blame on all the brothers equally, but Joseph made it personal, directing the deed squarely on Benjamin. Joseph's demands that Benjamin become his slave and his intention to send the other brothers home must have been his attempt to discover the loyalty, love and commitment to their youngest brother.

## Judah's Plea

Genesis 44:18 **Then Judah approached him, and said, "Oh my lord, may your servant please speak a word in my lord's ears, and do not be angry with your servant; for you are equal to Pharaoh.** <sup>19</sup> " My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?' <sup>20</sup> "And we said to my lord, 'We have an old father and a little child of *his* old age. Now his brother is dead, so he alone is left of his mother, and his father loves him.' <sup>21</sup> "Then you said to your servants, ' Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.' <sup>22</sup> "But we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' <sup>23</sup> "You said to your servants, however, ' Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall not see my face again.' <sup>24</sup> "Thus it came about when we went up to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. <sup>25</sup> "And our father said, 'Go back, buy us a little food.' <sup>26</sup> "But we said, 'We cannot go down. If our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' <sup>27</sup> "And your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; <sup>28</sup> and the one went out from me, and I said, "Surely he is torn in pieces," and I have not seen him since. <sup>29</sup> 'And if you take this one also from me, and harm befalls him, you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow.' <sup>30</sup> "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, <sup>31</sup> it will come about when he sees that the lad is not *with us*, that he will die. Thus your servants will bring the gray hair of

**your servant our father down to Sheol in sorrow.<sup>32</sup> "For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then let me bear the blame before my father forever.'<sup>33</sup> "Now, therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers.<sup>34</sup> "For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest I see the evil that would overtake my father?"**

Judah had not forgotten his promise to his father. In this passage, we see Judah offering himself as a substitution for the sin of his youngest brother. It did not matter whether Benjamin was actually guilty of the sin, Judah would become the slave in his stead.

## ***Chapter 45***

### **Joseph Wept Again**

**Genesis 45:1 Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried, "Have everyone go out from me." So there was no man with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers.<sup>2</sup> And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard of it.<sup>3</sup> Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence.**

Judah and the brothers had proved themselves worthy to Joseph. The time had come for Joseph to reveal his true identity to his brothers; he wanted to do that privately. With the Egyptians out of the room, he shocked the brothers with his revelation, his tears and his emotions. He had tested and tried them on both visits and at the third meeting, they had proven their honesty, integrity and complete commitment to their family. They had not wavered. At the end of this passage, the brothers could not instantly believe that Joseph was truly their brother.

### **Joseph Revealed**

**Genesis 45:4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come closer to me." And they came closer. And he said, "I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.<sup>5</sup> "And now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.<sup>6</sup> "For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting.<sup>7</sup> "And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance.**

A wonderful seed of theology is planted in this passage and developed throughout the rest of the Bible. Paul put it in these words, "All things work together for those who love God who are called according to His purpose." Did the brothers intend to do evil to Joseph 22 years before? Absolutely! Did the Lord make Joseph walk alone through the evil trial of his Egyptian bondage? Not at all! The Lord was with Joseph every moment of every day in Potiphar's house,

in the jail and on the throne. The Lord was molding Joseph into a strong man, a world leader and a protector of his family. The book of James puts it like this, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." Joseph's trials produced in him the endurance he needed to be used of the Lord for a perfect result.

## God's Plan

**Genesis 45:8** "Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Joseph laid all the praise and glory at the feet of God. It was God who frustrated the brothers so that they would sell him in Egypt and so that he would take control of the land and provide food for millions of people during the disastrous seven years of famine. But God was also using Joseph as the key to unlock the door to fulfill a prophecy he had made to Abraham that his descendants would be slaves in a foreign country for 400 years. It was God's doing, not the brothers.

## Joseph's Plan

**Genesis 45:9** "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 delay.

**10** "And you shall live in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children and your flocks and your herds and all that you have.

**11** "There I will also provide for you, for there are still five years of famine to come, lest you and your household and all that you have be impoverished."

**12** "And behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth which is speaking to you.

**13** "Now you must tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt, and all that you have seen; and you must hurry and bring my father down here."

**14** Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept; and Benjamin wept on his neck.

**15** And he kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and afterward his brothers talked with him.

Joseph had won their trust and love. He had a place prepared for them in Goshen; all they had to do was go back to Hebron and bring the entire family back with all their livestock.

## Pharaoh's Joy

**Genesis 45:16** Now when the news was heard in Pharaoh's house that Joseph's brothers had come, it pleased Pharaoh and his servants.

**17** Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: load your beasts and go to the land of Canaan,

**18** and take your father and your households and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you shall eat the fat of the land.'

**19** "Now you are ordered, 'Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for

**your wives, and bring your father and come.<sup>20</sup> 'And do not concern yourselves with your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.'<sup>21</sup> Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them wagons according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the journey.<sup>22</sup> To each of them he gave changes of garments, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred *pieces of silver* and five changes of garments.<sup>23</sup> And to his father he sent as follows: ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and sustenance for his father on the journey.**

Pharaoh was in complete favor of Jacob's move to Egypt. Notice that they did not need to take their goods, Egypt would provide those things. The family and livestock were to come, but the tents, carpets, utensils, etc., were not needed except for those things necessary for the journey. Furthermore, Jacob had not paid a cent for anything up to this point and he would live free of charge in Egypt.

### **Final Instructions**

**Genesis 45:24 So he sent his brothers away, and as they departed, he said to them, "Do not quarrel on the journey."**

Why did Joseph instruct the brothers not to quarrel on the journey home? He had heard them quarrel among themselves while he was pretending to have to use a translator with them. Joseph wanted them to give the Lord the glory and, as a result, live as if they had a new nature because of the grace of deliverance that they had experienced that day.

### **Home with Jacob**

**Genesis 45:25 Then they went up from Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob.<sup>26</sup> And they told him, saying, "Joseph is still alive, and indeed he is ruler over all the land of Egypt." But he was stunned, for he did not believe them.<sup>27</sup> When they told him all the words of Joseph that he had spoken to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived.<sup>28</sup> Then Israel said, "It is enough; my son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."**

The sons returned to Jacob in Hebron with far more goods and equipment than they had money to purchase. Everything was there to move the family to Egypt. Amazingly, these items acted as a testimony to confirm the report of Joseph's well-being. Jacob's family was as whole as it could be if he would move to Egypt. Jacob agreed to the journey. It occurred 2,281 years after the creation of Adam.