

Joseph--Genesis 42

Brothers Go To Egypt to Buy Food

I. Additional Scriptures...

1. Remorseful Guilty Consciences (e.g., 42:21)
 - 1) Pharaoh (Ex 9:27).
 - 2) King David at the Numbering; the matter with Bathsheba(1 Chr 21:17; 2 Sam 12:13).
 - 3) Belshazzar (Dan 5:6).
 - 4) The Scribes & Pharisees (John 8:9).
2. More of the Comparison Between Joseph and Jesus Can Be Seen in Scripture (e.g., Gen 42:24; Heb 4:15).

II. Chronology.

Period of Bible History: Patriarchy.

The Fifteen Bible Periods: (1) Before the Flood; (2) After the Flood; (3) **Patriarchy**; (4) Egyptian Bondage; (5) The Wilderness Wanderings; (6) The Conquest; (7) The Judges; (8) The United Kingdom; (9) The Divided Kingdom; (10) Judah Alone; (11) Babylonian Captivity; (12) The Restoration; (13) Between the Testaments; (14) Period of the Christ; (15) Period of the Church.

III. Summary.

In dire times word of good news spreads fast. That Egypt had corn and to spare was noised abroad and reached the ears of Jacob. Jacob did what any loving father would do to protect his family from starving and sent his sons to buy food in Egypt. He would not allow Benjamin to go along, however, lest something terrible happen once again. Unknowingly the brothers of Joseph were fulfilling Joseph's early dreams when they came to him in Egypt and bowed themselves before him.

When Joseph saw his brothers he recognized them, but they did not recognize Joseph. Joseph thought about his dream that had just now been fulfilled. He spoke roughly to them and accused them of being spies. Perhaps Joseph wanted to see if his brothers had learned anything during the time of his separation from them. He is in the driver's seat now and they must do whatever he demands of them and surely Joseph has a little fun with the change in positions. In reacting to the charge of being spies, they describe their own family, even mentioning Joseph as "one is not" (v. 13). At first Joseph demands that one go back and fetch the missing brother, supposedly to substantiate their word and prove they were not spies. He lets them spend three days in prison. On the third day Joseph announces a change in demands: one brother would stay behind and the rest would carry back the corn they had purchased, then return again with the younger brother.

The Hebrew spoken by the brothers was understood by Joseph and he heard them speaking of that great mistake they had made in dealing with the "missing" brother. At hearing these words, Joseph had to turn away and weep. Joseph then took Simeon and bound him before the eyes of the others and sent them on their way back home. He also gave the command to put the money they had used to purchase the corn back in to their sacks. When the brothers discovered

the money in their sacks, they were afraid and considered it some kind of punishment from God (v. 28).

The brothers reported to Jacob the conversations and about the demands of the ruler in Egypt. Jacob imagined that he had now lost one more son and would not consider sending Benjamin to Egypt. Reuben intercedes and offers a vow to Jacob. Jacob's decision will not be changed, at least nor for now.

IV. Outline.

1. Jacob hears of corn in Egypt and sends his sons to buy some (1-2).
2. Benjamin was kept back with his father (3).
3. To buy the corn the brothers had to deal with Joseph and bow before him (4-6).
4. Though Joseph recognized his brothers, he treated them as strangers and even as spies, desiring to see what they would say (7-10).
5. The brothers honestly speak of their family situation and deny the accusation (11-13).
6. Joseph demanded proof of their statement and asked to see the brother that was missing (14-15).
7. They begin to be remorseful over their behavior in mistreating Joseph (16-23).
8. Joseph overhears and is moved to tears out of their presence by their conversation (24).
7. The brothers are imprisoned for three days and then allowed to leave with corn (and the money they paid for it), but were commanded to bring back the other brother, and Simeon would be detained (25-28).
8. The brothers reported all of this to Jacob (29-35).
9. Jacob refuses to send Benjamin, even with Reuben's intercession (36-38).

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ The famine had not seriously hit the land of Canaan at the time this chapter gives the record.
02. _____ This text tells us that Judah was willing to slay his two sons if Jacob would allow Benjamin to go with them back to Egypt.
03. _____ Joseph's brothers did not recognize him when they came before him to buy corn.
04. _____ The brothers of Joseph admitted their guilt in this chapter.
05. _____ It was only one of the brothers whose money had been returned in his sack.

Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. _____ Joseph was the: (a) steward; (b) collector; (c) governor—over all the land of Egypt.
07. _____ What color was Jacob's hair: (a) red; (b) gray; (c) black.
08. _____ The number of days nine of Joseph's brothers spent in prison in Egypt: (a) three; (b) twenty; (c) fifty.
09. _____ When one of the brothers discovered his money in his sack, what happened: (a) they went back to return it; (b) their heart failed them; (c) they rejoiced.
10. _____ Losing Joseph and Simeon and at the prospect of losing Benjamin, Jacob said "all these things are: (a) unbearable; (b) grievous; (c) against me."

Fill in the Blanks

11. Joseph told his brothers, "By the life of _____ ye shall not go forth hence, except your _____ brother come hither."

12. John 8:9--And they which heard [it], being _____ by [their own] conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, [even] unto the last: and Jesus was left _____, and the woman standing in the midst.
13. Joseph's brothers remembered seeing the "_____ of his soul, when he _____ us, and we would not _____."
14. 2 Samuel ____:____ "And David said unto _____, I have _____ against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die."
15. The brother who was kept behind in Egypt was: _____.

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be given on next week's handout

[**Answers to Lesson 01-05...** 1—False, 4; 2—True, 34; 3—True, 8; 4—False, 32; 5—True, 28; 6—b, 36; 7—c, 1; 8—a, 30; 9—c, 9; 10—b, 23; 11—Joseph, hastily, shaved, raiment, 14; 12—troubled, 8; 13—food, corn, 35; 14—river, fatfleshed, meadow, 2; 15—discreet, wise, 33.]

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. *...that we may live, and not die* (Gen 42:2). Surely this is a clear indicator of the severity of this famine. It was a life and death matter and required urgent action to avoid death by starvation. Jacob was acting wisely when he sent his sons to buy food in Egypt. The thought comes to me about how this action relates to modern-day world evangelism efforts. We are sometimes baffled by the quick and generous response with which our brethren are able to roll into action regarding natural disasters anywhere around the world when we compare that to the pitiful lack of action seen when a brother is wanting to take the gospel to some **spiritually starving** locale. It almost seems as if we have something backwards here (Jn 6:29-40).
2. *...Lest peradventure mischief befall him* (Gen 42:4). Obviously, Jacob has great love for Benjamin. We would think that such obvious partiality as he continues to show toward Rachel's children might have been put aside, considering the outcome with Joseph, but such does not seem to be the case. There is also in Jacob's statement an obvious lack of trust in the other sons to protect that which is precious to him. It is too bad when that situation arises within a home. This lack of trust is easy to understand in that these sons had failed him once before. However, the Bible gives us several instances of renewed trust after one has once failed (e.g., Jonah 3:1,2; John 21:15; Acts 15:37-39).
3. *...Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them...* (Gen 42:9). Would not this be the perfect time for a great big I TOLD YOU SO? How was Joseph able to restrain himself from telling these mean brothers that the dreams of the DREAMER had proved to be accurate. Such immaturity and foolishness was no part of the makeup of this godly servant of the Lord. And yet, think about the fun Joseph must surely be having with this situation. He knew what the outcome was going to be. His family was going to be reunited, but now he has opportunity to look into the thinking of his brothers to see if they had learned anything from their treacherous deed.
4. *...We are verily guilty concerning our brother,...* (Gen 42:21). It seems that perhaps these brothers did learn something from their mistreatment of Joseph. I wonder if it would not be in order for us to pray a regular petition regarding those whom we know to be lost in sin that something might happen in their lives to bring about a similar recognition of wrongdoing in their given situations. It would certainly be inappropriate to pray that they be forgiven in their rebellion.

5. ... *in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear;...* (Gen 42:21). This verse reveals to us in graphic terms the trauma of the pit experience for young Joseph. Can you place yourself into the sandals of one of these brothers as you hear Joseph screaming out your name and begging you to intervene. Joseph's soul was ANGUISHED by the experience. And how is it possible after such an experience, which would have been "gut-wrenching" (for any normal person), to sit down and eat a meal (Gen 37:25)? WE WOULD NOT HEAR--the folly of their ways seems just now to be sinking in to their tormented minds.
6. ...*Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and you would not hear* (Gen 42:22). Reuben is not beyond setting forth his own "I told you so." As they remember this scene the magnitude of their folly is even compounded by the fact that the eldest brother had advised them against what they did. Here is a great statement from the Old Testament from which many sermons have been started. DO NOT SIN AGAINST THE CHILD. Can you think of ways that this happens today? How desperately this admonition is needed in our society. The greatest way to avoid doing so is for parents, particularly fathers, to rear their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph 6:4).
7. *And he turned himself about from them, and wept;...* (Gen 42:24). The things that Joseph heard caused him to weep. He had been in their presence and had not been moved to tears, but now he was finding out that these brothers were confronting the evil they had done and beginning to understand that it should not have been done. No doubt, this was good news to Joseph's ears and he was simply overcome with emotion.
8. *Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack...* (Gen 42:25). It is not stated in the text what was in Joseph's mind here. Was he providing a further test for the integrity of these men? Was he simply so thankful to see them again that he wanted to give them a gift?
9. ...*What is this that God hath done unto us?* (Gen 42:28). The tragedy of living with a guilty conscience is clearly presented here. Every unhappy event that comes along is surely due to the sin I've committed. Of course, the fear of this brother was that he was now in big trouble with the powerful Governor of Egypt because his money had come back in the sack and he would be accused of stealing. Why would he say God had done this to him? He is seeing this as a punishment from God for the evil he did to his brother, Joseph. Just the opposite state of mind is the blessing of taking care of sins in the way our Lord has commanded in Scripture. When we deal with sin through the blood of Jesus Christ, there is a wonderful peace to enjoy (cf., Ph 4:6-8).
10. *And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee:* (Gen 42:37). Surely Reuben is using a hyperbole (exaggeration for the sake of emphasis). Reuben feels a need to do something to relieve his father's anxiety after now facing the loss of another son. We have to wonder how he was able to see his father continually, day by day, grieving over the loss of Joseph when he knew that he was likely still alive. Obviously, if Jacob took Reuben up on this vow he would have no desire to slay his own grandsons. Reuben seems to be a man of action who wants to get this matter settled.

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

A Z X W S D X C E D C V R F V B G T Y H
 N M K L E I O P U Y T G S B N M R F V C
 D E Q V A Z X S W E D C V A F R T G B S
 G B O T Y U J M K I O P K J W E P T Y I
 B R E W A K A C O M M A N D E D Z X C M
 P V B N M I N T E R P R E T E R U Y T E
 R T G B N H Y E J M K I O L Y P P O U O
 O Q A A Z X W E W S D E C L V B F R R N
 V U T C O M M U N E D G H B N M J K N I
 I N W E R F V B B N H G Y U I B K M E N
 S D R R E S T O R E U T G H V B O E D E
 I E W R T F V B H O N M H Y J S K U I P
 O R S X C V B B R I N G Y H J T P U N I
 N S R E M E M B E R E D H O R W E I F D
 R T F G H T Y U J I O P J K U A W E E F
 J O K F G H B N E W E T Y W U N I J N S
 V O B N M E R E T Y U Y I U A G G A S C
 V D B G R E R S X V C F T U O R Y E H G
 Z S V B U H I T U O P L K N M G D B S A
 X C B R T D B H J T U T E I O P L J M T

[The words listed below have something to do with the way Joseph spoke to or treated his brothers when they came before him in Egypt.]

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 01. saw | 02. knew |
| 03. roughly | 04. remembered |
| 05. spies | 06. proved |
| 07. ward | 08. three |
| 09. bring | 10. youngest |
| 11. understood | 12. interpreter |
| 13. turned | 14. wept |
| 15. communed | 16. Simeon |
| 17. bound | 18. commanded |
| 19. restore | 20. provision |