

Genesis - Lesson 43

Genesis Chapter 43

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Memory verses for this week: Pro 6:10 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: Pro 6:11 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

Introduction: We continue our study on the book of Genesis this week as we have Joseph's brothers returning to Egypt for the second time. We begin with Jacob having to decide whether to send Benjamin with the others.

I. Jacob Under the Pressure of Famine

Gen 43:1 *And the famine was sore in the land.*

Gen 43:2 *And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food.*

Gen 43:3 *And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.*

Gen 43:4 *If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food:*

Gen 43:5 *But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.*

Jacob reasons that food must be found. He asks his sons to go to Egypt and buy some more food. Judah reminds him that Benjamin must go if they were to receive additional food. Joseph had said that they would not see his face unless their youngest brother returned with them.

Gen 43:6 *And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?*

Gen 43:7 *And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down?*

Gen 43:8 *And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones.*

Gen 43:9 *I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever:*

Gen 43:10 *For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time.*

Israel (Jacob) complains about why did they ever tell the ruler about having another brother. The brother give their answer. They were simply responding to his exact questions when they told him of Benjamin.

Judah shows readiness to be surety. In the close of last week's lesson, Reuben promised that Jacob could take the lives of his sons if he did not take Benjamin down and back home safely. Now, Judah is very serious, and says he will do it for it is a life and death matter. Again, he pledges his own life as a surety for Benjamin. "Surety" means "to exchange; to become surety for any one . . . properly to exchange with him, to stand in his place; to become surety for one's life, to pledge oneself for the life of another ..." William Wilson, O.T. Word Studies.

Like Judah was willing to be surety for Benjamin, we too had one take up for us. Let us remember the One from the tribe of Judah who became surety for us.

Heb 7:19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

Heb 7:20 And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest:

Heb 7:21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)

Heb 7:22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

Albert Barnes in his commentary explained the brothers feelings during this time. A lot of blame was felt by all at this time.

The famine was severe. The pressure began to be felt more and more. The twelve households had at length consumed all the corn they had purchased, and the famine still pressed heavily upon them. Jacob directs them to return. "And Judah said." Reuben had offended, and could not come forward. Simon and Levi had also grieved their father by the treacherous slaughter of the Shekemites. Judah therefore, speaks. "Is your father yet alive?" "Have ye a brother?" These questions do not come out in the previous narrative, on account of its brevity. But how pointed they are, and how true to Joseph's yearnings! They explain how it was that these particulars came out in the replies of the brothers to Joseph. For the charge of being spies did not call for them in exculpation.

Judah now uses all the arguments the case would admit of, to persuade his father to allow Benjamin to go with them. He closes with the emphatic sentence, If I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me have sinned against thee all my days; that is, let me bear the blame, and of course the penalty of having sinned against thee in so tender a point. Both Judah and his father knew that this was a matter that touched the interest of the former very deeply. Reuben was bearing the blame of a grievous sin, and had no hope of the birthright. Simon and Levi were also bearing blame, and, besides, had not the natural right, which belonged only to Reuben. Judah came next, and a failure in securing the safe return of Benjamin might set him also aside. He undertakes to run this risk.

Gen 43:11 And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds:

Gen 43:12 And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight:

Gen 43:13 Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man:

Gen 43:14 And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.

After thinking things over, Jacob has a change of resolution. In last week's lesson he had formerly stated that he would not send Benjamin.

Gen 42:38 And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

He comes up with a plan for several gifts for "the man." The honey, spices, myrrh, nuts, and almonds were all things could be grown during a drought. Also, he tells them to take back the money that they had received when they returned. This is great that his honesty and integrity were more important than the money. Then he shows his faith by saying that they can take Benjamin on the trip. This shows his surrender to the will of God. We need to so trust God that we will take a few risks if that is what God would have us to do. Going out on a limb is not easy, but Jacob does not hesitate after seeking the Lord's will. Notice the usage of "the man" in v. 11,13,14. To them Joseph was just "the man." Tragically, this is the way that many Jews and Gentiles look upon Christ, just as "the man."

Adam Clarke said Jacob seemed to understand totally that Benjamin must go.

This verse 14 may be literally translated thus: - "And God, the all-sufficient, shall give you tender mercies before the man, and send to you your other brother, and Benjamin; and I, as I shall be childless, so I shall be childless." That is, I will submit to this privation, till God shall restore my children. It appears that this verse is spoken prophetically; and that God at this time gave Jacob a supernatural evidence that his children should be restored.

II. Joseph's Brethren Under the Pressure of Guilty Fear

Gen 43:15 And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

Gen 43:16 And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine

with me at noon.

Gen 43:17 And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.

Gen 43:18 And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses.

The brothers show their consternation. They take all the money (double money in their hand) and take their brother Benjamin and head to Egypt. They arrive before Joseph and he sees his younger brother. The brothers are all recognized by Joseph. He tells the servants to bring the men into his house as they will dine with him at noon. Not knowing what is about to transpire, the brothers are very much afraid. They are afraid he will find an occasion against them and take them in as bondmen. This would mean they would become servants to Joseph.

Gen 43:19 And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they communed with him at the door of the house,

Gen 43:20 And said, O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food:

Gen 43:21 And it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand.

Gen 43:22 And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks.

Gen 43:23 And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them.

Gen 43:24 And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender.

Gen 43:25 And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there.

The men give their confession. In fear they tell the steward of the money. They were being totally honest about the money. They did not know how they got the money back in their sacks or who put it in there. But they showed total willingness to repay for the grain. While this was great, the steward showed knowledge of God. He tells them that God had given them their treasure back in their sacks. Since he knew about God, this indicates that Joseph had taught him about God. They are reunited with Simeon it says in verse 23.

All of the brothers are brought into Joseph's house. This is after they made their confession. The steward might be viewed as a type of the Holy Spirit. He gives glory to God and brings the sinner to the Bread of Life. When they come in, they bring their present for Joseph made ready.

Gen 43:26 And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth.

Gen 43:27 And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?

Gen 43:28 And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.

Again the brothers show their contrition before Joseph. Here they fulfilled the dream of the sheaves.

Gen 37:7 For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.

Gen 37:8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

Gen 37:9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

The brothers are well received by Joseph. He asks them of their welfare and how their father is doing. This had to be a relief to the brothers to see the warm reception by Joseph. He desires news of Jacob which is of course his own father.

Gen 43:29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.

Matthew Henry had these words about this prayer for Benjamin from Joseph.

The kind notice he took of Benjamin, his own brother. (1.) He put up a prayer for him: *God be gracious unto thee, my son, Gen 43:29*. Joseph's favour, though he was the lord of the land, would do him little good, unless God were gracious to him. Many seek the ruler's favour, but Joseph directs him to seek the favour of the **ruler of rulers**. (2.) He shed some tears for him, *Gen 43:30*. His natural affection to his brother, his joy to see him, his concern at seeing him and the rest of them in distress for bread, and the remembrance of his own griefs since he last saw him, produced a great agitation in him, which perhaps was the more uneasy because he endeavoured to stifle and suppress it; but he was forced to retire into his closet, there to give vent to his feeling by tears.

Note, [1.] Tears of tenderness and affection are no disparagement at all, even to great

and wise men. [2.] Gracious weepers should not proclaim their tears. *My soul shall weep in secret*, says the prophet, Jer 13:17.

Gen 43:30 And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there.

Gen 43:31 And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread.

Gen 43:32 And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians.

Joseph sees Benjamin and his emotions overwhelm him. It has been over 20 years since he had been in Egypt, and now he weeps when he sees Benjamin. As much as Joseph loved his younger brother, we have one that loves us even more. Our Savior is there for us every single day and is willing to help us in our hour of need.

Heb 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

Heb 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Verse 32 explains the order of the tables. The Hebrews at one table, the Egyptians at another table, and Joseph all alone. They must have wondered why Joseph did not sit with the Egyptians. The customs of Egypt were followed. It is wise to follow customs, if they do not cause one to sin against God. They did not seek to remove all racial barriers.

Gen 43:33 And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another.

Gen 43:34 And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

The brothers marveled that Joseph knew the order of their ages. He has them seated from the oldest to the youngest. We need to remember that the Lord knows everything about us. They were not all treated alike, but there is no complaint. This was a test, to see if the brothers had changed, or whether they would be resentful of Benjamin, as they had of Joseph.

Our New Testament Joseph bids us set at His table that He has richly furnished.

Psa 23:5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Psa 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What did Judah remind his father that they must do if they were to go into Egypt again?

Must take Benjamin with them.

2. What would be the result of not complying with this request?

They would not be seen by Joseph, the man in charge.

3. Which of the brothers offered to be surety for Benjamin?

Judah

4. What does "surety" mean?

to exchange; to become surety for any one . . . properly to exchange with him, to stand in his place; to become surety for one's life, to pledge oneself for the life of another

5. Why were the brethren of Joseph so afraid?

Because they were brought into Joseph's house. They were fearful of the fact that they had received their money back in their sacks on the first trip and might be considered thieves, and that he might find occasion.

6. Of what are verses 26,28 the fulfillment?

They fulfilled the dream of the sheaves that Joseph had when he was a young lad.

7. How does Joseph react upon seeing Benjamin?

His emotions overcame him, and he had to go out and weep.

8. What was the seating order of Joseph and his brethren at the eating of the meal?

He sat the oldest to the youngest.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.