

## GENESIS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Genesis chapter 42 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In our study this evening, keep in mind that Pharaoh has placed Joseph in a position where he is second in command over all of Egypt, only under Pharaoh! He is also in charge of gathering the grain during the seven years of bountiful harvest, 20% they were to give to Joseph to help them during the seven years of famine.

Now, those seven years of bountiful harvest have passed and now a devastating famine has entered the land. It is so bad that people are coming to Egypt for food; they were coming to Joseph, as he is the one who would dispense this food, making sure that there is enough food for the Egyptian people. Also, Joseph has been away from his family for over 20 years now. So with that in mind, let's begin reading in Genesis chapter 42, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

## GENESIS 42

### VERSES 1-4

1. Remember in Genesis 41:57 we were told, “**So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all lands.**” Even in the Land of Canaan this famine is seen and since their food supply was running out, Jacob suggests they go to Egypt and buy some food. You see, even in times of famine, the Egyptians used irrigation from the Nile River to irrigate their land and thus, it was a very fertile area. But this famine was severe and the land was not able to produce enough food.

Now what I find interesting here is that when Jacob mentions Egypt, it caused his son's to be a little uneasy. In fact, Leupold tells us, "The father has noted the look of perplexity in his son's faces." In other words, they looked shocked, but why? Because they knew that some 20 years earlier they sold their brother Joseph to Midianite traders who were on their way to Egypt and they more than likely sold Joseph as a slave down there and thus, they were uncomfortable! God was not only working on Joseph, helping him to grow, but He is going to be working on the brothers of Joseph big time, as we shall see!

2. Jacob sends 10 of his 11 remaining sons but keeps Benjamin behind. Why would he do that? One reason is that Benjamin was the son of his wife Rachel, whom he loved and who died as she was giving birth to Benjamin. Also, Jacob is not walking with the Lord but is living in the cave of self-pity, believing that Joseph is dead. And because of that he is bitter, pessimistic about everything it seems. Well, shouldn't he be? Absolutely not! First of all, even if Joseph was dead, what Jacob was doing was not going to bring him back. And secondly, God spoke to Joseph in a dream that he made known to his brothers and his father, that they would bow before Joseph and what God has promised He would bring to pass no matter how impossible it may seem at this point. And lastly, I don't think Jacob trusted his 10 sons, the last time he sent Joseph with them he didn't come back and in Jacob's mind, he is dead. Thus, he keeps Benjamin behind to protect him.

3. Now when we think of a famine we tend to see it as a bad thing, and it is. But God is going to use this famine to bring the brothers of Joseph to Egypt and eventually to bring the entire family there to protect them and to grow a nation from them, the nation of Israel!

#### VERSES 5-6

1. Over 20 years earlier the brothers of Joseph sold him into slavery putting an end to this dreamer's dreams. In Genesis 37:19-20 we are told, "**Then they said to one another, 'Look, this dreamer is coming! Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!'**" What I find interesting is that by their actions they fulfilled the plan of God! The dreams of Joseph are coming to pass as they bow before him and even though they don't know this is Joseph at this time, they eventually will!

2. Evil men have and will continue to try and thwart or foil the plans of God but in the end God will use their plans to fulfill His! It is as Psalm 33:8-11 tells us, "**Let all the earth fear the Lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect. The counsel of the Lord stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations.**" That should bring comfort to each of us that even during the darkest of times, God is in control and His plans and purposes will be brought to pass!

VERSES 7-17

1. As you read this and some of the other things that Joseph does to his brothers, you may come to the conclusion that he is paying them back for what they did to him. I don't believe that is what is going on here. I think Joseph's desire was to not only correct his brothers but to see them restored. Folks, when we have to correct someone in the body of Christ may it be done in love with the idea of restoration and not destruction. You want them restored to the place of fellowship and I believe that is what Joseph is doing here and will continue to do until they repent of their sin.

2. As harsh as this may seem, God will use whatever means to bring us to that place we need to be. Keep in mind that Joseph is a type or picture of Jesus and what Joseph was doing with his brothers, the Lord does with us to restore us to that place of fellowship once again. Remember what David said in Psalm 119:67, **“Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word.”** The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this; **“Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now Your word do I keep [hearing, receiving, loving, and obeying it].”** The affliction of God upon his life brought him back to God, to a place of restoration as David kept God's Word instead of rebelling against it. You see, the conviction of God draws you back to God, condemnation pushes you away from God and that is from the Devil!

3. How are they doing so far? Not too good. You see, they lie about Joseph, saying that he is dead. They knew he was sold into slavery and living a harsh life because of what they did to him but they refused to acknowledge their sin and thus, Joseph turns up the heat! Joseph accuses them of being spies and places them in prison for three days to think about this.

#### VERSES 18-20

1. After three days he releases them from prison and asks them to go home and bring their youngest brother back to Egypt. I think Joseph was wondering about Benjamin, knowing what his brothers did to him. Thus, as he asks them to bring this brother back they agree, I'm sure they would agree to anything at this point because they are afraid that they will be put to death or made slaves and never return home. And here is the problem. They were not broken yet of their sin but as we will see, guilt is eating them alive!

VERSES 21-24

1. Keep in mind that Joseph is speaking to them through an interpreter; they do not know he can understand what he is saying. And, since Joseph dealt with people from all over the land, he needed an interpreter, but not here, he understood Hebrew! And now we are seeing all those years of trying to conceal their sin and the façade that they were wearing and it is beginning to fall apart. Their guilty conscience troubled them and they realized the wrong that they did. Joseph cried out from the pit to let him go and they refused to listen, his cries fell on deaf ears. And now, as all this is happening to them, they realize that what you sow you will reap! This was a good sign. Solomon put it like this in Proverbs 20:27, **“The spirit of a man is the lamp of the Lord, Searching all the inner depths of his heart.”** Or as The Living Bible puts it, **“A man's conscience is the Lord's searchlight exposing his hidden motives.”**

You see, their conscience was not dead and now their sin was before them. But, make no mistake about it, we can harden ourselves to the Spirits leading in our life and become cold and insensitive to the things of God. Paul put it like this in I Timothy 4:1-2, **“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.”** May we be open to what the Lord is showing us because the more we harden ourselves to what God is saying; the more our conscious becomes hard and insensitive to Him! Don't sear your conscious towards God!

2. In spite of what all his brothers did to him, Joseph still loved them. He was not bitter, he was not angry with them. As Joseph heard how they are broken now over their sin, he knows that they are on their way to restoration and Joseph begins to cry, but he doesn't let them see this. And as he gets his composure, he returns to them.

3. Of the 10 brothers why did Joseph pick Simeon to be locked up until they returned with Benjamin? We don't know for sure but it is very possible that Simeon was the chief instigator in wanting to put Joseph to death and obviously Joseph knew that. Thus, as Simeon sat in prison waiting for his brothers to return, he had a long time contemplating what he had done!

#### VERSES 25-28

1. As they begin their journey back to the land of Canaan, Joseph had his servant give them back their money that they used to buy the grain in the first place and they are totally unaware of this. That is, they are unaware until one of them, as they journeyed home, opened his sack and found all the money in there. As soon as he saw this and showed his brothers what happened, they knew they were in trouble. First of all “**the man**” that is Joseph, already thought they were spies and now this, thieves also! That must have been a very long journey home knowing that they were not going to be able to go back and get Simeon now!

2. Also, talk about your guilty conscience. Everything that goes wrong they see as God punishing them. Well, yes and no but keep this in mind. God is not doing this to destroy them, but to see them restored!

#### VERSES 29-35

1. As they arrive home they tell their father Jacob all that happened and they continue with the lie of Joseph, that he was killed when in reality they sold him into slavery over 20 years earlier! But they still hid their secret. Remember, only one brother opened his money sack before they got home and now, as they all open their sacks, their money is there too! I am sure they turned pale at this point, they were afraid, they knew now that they could not go back. How will Jacob respond to all this, this man of faith, this man who was suppose to be governed by God. Look at the next verse and you will see.

#### VERSE 36

1. Fear, anxiety, depression are seen in Jacob because he took his eyes off of God and he feels that **“All these things are against me.”** Is that true? Absolutely not! In fact, all these things were working for good, to preserve a people, to raise up a nation, to restore them and not to destroy them. Isn't it easy to get into that mode of thinking when things are not going well? You bet it is! It is kind of the “Eeyore mentality!” Eeyore is the melancholy stuffed donkey in Winnie the Pooh who thinks that everything and everyone is against him. Nothing goes right, and he just goes moping around. That is Jacob and the solution for Jacob and for us is to get refocused on the Lord and trust that He knows what He is doing!



Listen to what David did in those times of fear, of uncertainty to get refocused. In Psalm 42, starting in verse 1 we are told, **“As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my food day and night, While they continually say to me, ‘Where is your God?’ When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, With the voice of joy and praise, With a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast. Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance. O my God, my soul is cast down within me; Therefore I will remember You from the land of the Jordan, And from the heights of Hermon, From the Hill Mizar. Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; All Your waves and billows have gone over me. The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, And in the night His song shall be with me — A prayer to the God of my life. I will say to God my Rock, ‘Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?’ As with a breaking of my bones, My enemies reproach me, While they say to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’ Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.”**

Psalm 42:1-11.

David meditated upon the Lord, He looked to the Lord for help, for strength, he hungered for God, he went into the house of God with praise unto God and as he did he had a correct perspective on things, **“Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.”** That is what we need to do, hope in God for He will bring about good even in the darkest of times! Jacob’s heart sang out, “No one loves me, this I know. My misfortunes tell me so!” Do you know that song? Instead, for Jacob and for us, we should be singing, “Jesus loves me, this I know. For the Bible tells me so!” In fact, all things are not against us but all things are for us as Paul tells us in Romans 8:28, **“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”** May we not forget that!

#### VERSES 37-38

1. That is all Reuben could do, offer his two sons to be put to death if he does not bring Benjamin back. But Jacob wouldn’t go for it, which tells me that he has already written off Simeon who is in prison in Egypt! Nice guy.
  
2. Folks, men may try to negate the will of God, but God has a plan, he has a purpose and it will come to pass in spite of us or we can work with Him and be a part of that plan in a positive way! Now, keep in mind that this famine is still upon the land, the people of Canaan, and because they have food now, they will put on hold another trip down to Egypt, but God wants them there and He will get them there as we will see!

**GENESIS 43****VERSES 1-2**

1. I'm sure Jacob thought they had enough food to last till the famine was over, but he did not know how long it would last and he was wrong. He could have prayed for God to bring relief, but there was no prayer offered up. Thus, they ran out of food and what else could Jacob do but send his son's back to Egypt to buy more grain.

**VERSES 3-5**

1. Judah understood the problem here. If they do not bring Benjamin with them, then **“the man”** or Joseph will put them in prison thinking they are spies. So he will not go unless Jacob allows Benjamin to go with them.

**VERSES 6-10**

1. Jacob is not happy with the situation and I'm sure it was something that they had discussed before – “Why in the world would you ever say you had another brother in the first place?” Jacob is very pessimistic because he did not trust the Lord like he should have. Yes, it was difficult. Yes, it was not easy, but he should have brought it to God in prayer and not hash out this question over and over again as to why his sons spoke like they did to **“the man.”** In fact, there is nothing they can accomplish by arguing and talking about this.

2. For Judah, he tells his father he would put his own life on the line and be surety for Benjamin. Keep in mind that Judah was the one who proposed the sale of Joseph to the Midianite traders but now he is doing what is right with Benjamin. He is willing to lay his life down for him. I think there is some spiritual growth in Judah and that is what God is doing, drawing out their faith! And, obviously, he will watch over Benjamin very closely, he does not want anything to happen to him, which is far different than what he did with Joseph years earlier!

#### VERSES 11-14

1. Notice Israel and not Jacob is going to allow them to go to Egypt with Benjamin and hopefully bring Simeon with them. And he is resting in El Shaddai, the covenant name of God given to Abraham and that truly is the place to be, resting in Almighty God! Now, that phrase, **“If I am bereaved, I am bereaved”** is not an expression of giving up, but trusting in El Shaddai, that His will is going to be done! How do I know that? Because the Holy Spirit uses the name Israel or governed by God instead of Jacob here!

2. Now what about these gifts he is sending with them? If there was a famine, how could there be these things? There may have been a failure of the cereal crops but there still could have been some fruit, even though it was not in abundance, not enough to survive off of. And Jacob wants them to also take a double portion of money plus what they brought down to Egypt the first time and ended up back in their money sacks. He was hoping that this would appease this man in Egypt, who was Joseph.

VERSES 15-18

1. So they head down to Egypt with Benjamin this time and when they get there Joseph recognized Benjamin, which must have comforted his heart knowing that his brothers did not kill him or try to sell him into slavery. And when Joseph invited them into his house for a meal, they were suspicious, they thought it was just a ploy or scheme and they were in trouble. You see, that guilt was still eating at them.

VERSES 19-23

1. They are so nervous about entering in they spill their guts before the steward of Joseph's house, telling him what had transpired. That they paid for the food and unknown to them, someone put the money back in their money sacks the last time they were there. Now I love how the steward responds to them, he says, “. . . **‘Peace be with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money.’** . . .” Genesis 43:23. Peace but not a peace from the world, not a peace from Egypt, but the peace of the true and living God! You see, God was in control and it seems to indicate to me that this steward knew the true and living God, probably through the witness of Joseph!

This must have caused these men to take a deep sigh of relief. They are beginning to see the hand of God in this, not for their destruction but for their restoration! And, here comes Simeon, released from prison. I wonder what he said to them when he first saw them? “Hey, where were you guys? What took you so long?” We don't know how long he waited; it could have been a year! But upon seeing their brother it brought great comfort to their hearts.

VERSES 24-28

1. Remember what we read back in Genesis 37:5-11, where we were told, **“Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. So he said to them, ‘Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf.’ And his brothers said to him, ‘Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?’ So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, ‘Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me.’ So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, ‘What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?’ And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.”**

Now, over 20 years later we see that the dreams that God gave to Joseph come to pass as his 11 brothers bow before him and when his father comes, it will be completely fulfilled! It is hard to wait upon God especially when we are going through tough times and yet we know what God has promised us. All I can tell you is to be faithful to the Lord no matter what and in His time, according to His plan He is more than able to bring to pass what He has promised! God is truly faithful as we are told in Numbers 23:19, **“God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”** We can trust in Him!

VERSES 29-30

1. I can't imagine the emotions going through Joseph at this time as he sees his full brother Benjamin; his other brothers were half brothers to him. The last time he saw Benjamin was when he was a small child and now he is a man!

VERSES 31-32

1. Interesting the segregation going on here, Joseph is isolated from them, but why? Because the Egyptians looked down upon shepherds, it was an abomination to them and keep in mind that the Hebrew's were shepherds. Also, keep in mind they still don't know this is Joseph, the one they sold into slavery years earlier!

VERSES 33-34

1. Why were they astonished? Because Joseph seated them according to their birth order and that was not just luck. You see, the odds of doing this 100% correctly are approximately 1 in 40 million! Thus, they are not sure what to think about this man but they do know something is going on. I'm sure that guilt is still eating at them!

2. Why would Joseph give Benjamin five times more than his brothers? I believe it is because he wants to see how they reacted to this. Joseph was honoring Benjamin as a prince, while the other brothers were just common people. What was the point of this? Remember how years earlier Jacob gave to Joseph the long-sleeved robe or the coat of many colors that I believe showed that he was the one in charge and how his brothers hated him for that. And it got so bad they wanted to kill him, but instead sold him into slavery! Joseph, in the pit cried out to let him go and his cries fell on deaf ears.

Now, as all these years have passed by, have they changed at all? When Benjamin is lifted up will they become angry, how would they respond? You see, once again this was a similar situation that happened with Joseph and how they treated Benjamin would now tell Joseph a lot about where they were at.

How did they do? The Bible tells us, “**So they drank and were merry with him.**” In other words, it didn’t matter any more to them. They had a great time even though Benjamin was lifted up and they weren’t. They were satisfied with what they had and did not let envy get the better of them. They grew!

3. As I close tonight let me leave you with this. As God tests our faith, we may fail at times. Has that ever happened to you? Of course it has but the great thing about our God is that He does not give up and if we do fail, or when we fail, we will take the test again! Yes, it is far better to pass the test the first time but also understand that what God has begun in us He will finish, He will complete the work!



It is as Peter tells us, **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls.”** I Peter 1:3-9. May we continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, walking by faith and trusting in Him!