

GENESIS 42-43

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Genesis chapter 42 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

As we have seen in our previous studies, Joseph has gone from a slave to prison to the position of second in charge over all of Egypt! He was only under Pharaoh!

How did this happen?

Pharaoh had a couple of dreams that troubled him, he didn't know what they meant. So he called for his men and they had no idea what the dream was about.

Then, the chief butler, who was put in prison for a time, until Pharaoh found out who was trying to kill him, and it was the baker, and he was put to death, but the chief butler remembered Joseph. But it was two full years after Joseph told the chief butler about his dream that the butler remembered him. Two full years, but it was the timing of God as we have seen!

But now he told Pharaoh that there was this guy in prison by the name of Joseph who interpreted their dream, and he nailed it. He said I would be released from prison, and I was. And he also said that the dream the baker had meant he would be put to death, and he was!

And we are told in Genesis 41:14-16 what took place as Pharaoh heard of this man, Joseph. We are told, **“Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it.’ So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, ‘It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.’”**

So as Joseph is brought before Pharaoh, we see that Pharaoh told Joseph that he heard that he could interpret dreams. And you have to love the humility of Joseph and that he understood where these interpretations were from. He told Pharaoh that God is the One who can do this, it is not something he can do!

And as Joseph is told the dream, he then interprets this dream for Pharaoh. And he told Pharaoh that the two dreams are speaking of the same thing.

That there would be seven years of great produce in the land and then seven years of very severe famine.

After this we see that Pharaoh placed Joseph in a position where he is second in command over all of Egypt, only under Pharaoh!

Not only that but Joseph is also in charge of gathering the grain during the seven years of bountiful harvest. The people were taxed 20% on their grain, they were to give this 20% 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.

And, as Genesis 45:6 tell us, “**For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting.**” So as we move into Genesis chapter 42 tonight please understand that this severe famine has been going on for less than two years. Maybe just a year, there are still some six years or so to go!

And this famine is not only affecting the Egyptians but even the people living in the land of Canaan, like Jacob and his family!

So with that in mind, let's begin our study tonight 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

This famine was not just in Egypt, but it also affected the people living in the land of Canaan as I have said. Back 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.”**

Yes, 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.

Here's the thing, 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 for the people. That is how bad this famine was!

And I can just hear Jacob speaking to his sons. ***“Boy's, what is wrong with you. You are just standing around with a funny look on your face and that is not going to put food on the table. There is grain down in Egypt, so don't just stand there, do something!”***

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 twenty 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. That made them very uncomfortable! And for twenty years now they have had that guilt that they were carrying.

What we are seeing is that 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, as well as Jacob!

So we see that Jacob sends ten of his eleven 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.

How can I be so sure that he is not walking with the Lord?

Look at his actions and look at what the Holy Spirit calls him – **JACOB!** When he is not walking with God, he is called Jacob, heel catcher, schemer. And when he is walking with God he is called – **ISRAEL!** In other words, governed by God!

Keep an eye on that as we go through these chapters, when he is called Jacob and when he is called Israel, it will give you an idea if he is walking with God or not!

Now when you look at all that Jacob has been through, shouldn't he be bitter, pessimistic about everything?

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 ten 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.

Here's the thing – ***IF JACOB ONLY KNEW!***

What do I mean by that?

If Jacob only knew that he could trust the Lord even though he could not see how things were going to work out.

Why was their grain down in Egypt?

Because God sent Joseph down there ahead of time, to provide grain for his family, as well as others, to preserve the tribes of Israel.

Jacob could not see that, and he was not trusting God even though he could not see how this would all work out!

Now when we think of 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!

Does God bring famines into our lives?

I think He does, and it may be a famine of finances, or a famine of friends, a famine of work, a famine within the family and it is hard.

Here's the thing. Can we trust that God is in control of our lives and even though we don't see how this can ever work out, can we believe that it will? We need to because God is always working, even when we don't see it!

Remember the census that Caesar Augustus imposed on all the citizens of the Roman Empire. Why did he do that?

Well, I am sure that he had his reasons, but God was going to use that census to get Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem from Nazareth. A journey they would have never made at that time because Mary was long into her pregnancy with Jesus. But, as the Scriptures tell us, the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem of Judea and He was! (Micah 5:2)

So these ten sons of Jacob are now heading down to Egypt to buy grain because the famine was so bad. And, like I have said, we are maybe only one year into this famine, and thus, it was really bad, and they had six more years or so to go!

VERSES 5-6

Keep in mind that over 20 years earlier the brothers of Joseph sold him into slavery, putting an end to this dreamer of 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!’”**

They tried to destroy Joseph so this dream would never happen and yet, we are told that,
“... Joseph’s brothers came and bowed down before him with their faces to the earth.”

Genesis 42:6.

Isn't that interesting. What they did with Joseph, by their actions they fulfilled the plan of God! They were accountable before God for what they did, but God used it for good!

And what we see here is that 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!

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!

Please understand that this never excuses man's evil that he is doing, but it truly does mean that God's wisdom and goodness are far greater than man's evil!

It is as Palm 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! And notice it never says that God's plans *MIGHT* come to pass, they *WILL!*

VERSES 7-17

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. This is not revenge for Joseph. Remember, the Spirit of God was at work in Joseph as we seen when he was a slave for Potiphar, in prison and what Pharaoh saw in him. That has not changed.

Then what is going on? Why did he do these things to his brothers?

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.

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! But you have to be willing to not only listen, but then obey!

How are they doing so far?

Not too good.

Why did I say that?

Because 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.

Why did he put them in prison for three days?

It is very possible that they kept Joseph in the pit for three days before selling him into slavery!

What these men had done to Joseph, what they had sown in the life of Joseph, they were now reaping in their own lives, and all this was done to bring them to a place of brokenness and confession!

They are not there yet!

VERSES 18-20

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 and he was wondering if Benjamin was okay.

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!

And that is what happens often. You know you did wrong, and yet; you refuse to deal with it, and it will eat at you until you do! Much better to deal with it than get eaten alive by your guilt!

VERSES 21-24

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!

So as they are talking to each other they have no idea that this man, Joseph can understand them.

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.

Can you imagine how hard their hearts were. We are told that 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 because it will lead you to all kinds of evil!

Let me share this with you about a guilty conscience, and also how our heart is wicked.

Just listen to this,

The United States government has something called the Federal Conscience Fund, which collects money people send in because they know they cheated the government in some way.

People have sent in money because they took army blankets for souvenirs, for cheating on postage, or on income tax.

But our consciences are notoriously weak or corrupt.

One man wrote the IRS and said, “I cheated on my taxes and can't sleep at night. Here is a check for \$100. If I still can't sleep, I'll send the rest I owe.”

- David Guzik

God won't let us get away with that because He loves us too much to leave us in that place. He will keep working and working until we come back, and we will see that with the brothers of Joseph!

Now, 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.

And notice what he does. Of the ten brothers, he bound Simeon.

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, the ringleader in wanting to put Joseph to death and obviously Joseph knew that.

But how did Joseph know that?

I think when Reuben turned to his brothers and said, “**. . . Did I not speak to you saying, ‘Do not sin against the boy’; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us.**” I think Reuben was looking at Simeon, showing that he was the leader in all of this. (Genesis 42:22)

And as we have seen, Simeon was a very cruel and vindictive man. Remember that he and his brother Levi butchered the men of Shechem because of the man who raped their sister Dinah. So I do think he was the ringleader in what happened to Joseph and thus, Joseph bound him up and is going to put him in prison.

Thus, as Simeon sat in prison waiting for his brothers to return, he spent a long-time contemplating what he had done!

VERSES 25-28

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! He will also think that they are thieves as well!

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!

Think about what is going on here.

This was a test – not from Joseph – but from God.

What would they do with the money?

What would be revealed about their ***heart?***

- The deceptive heart would hide it.
- The lying heart would make up a story about it.
- The proud heart would think it deserved it.
- The superficial heart would think nothing of it.

And this is true for us as well. We are tested by what Jesus gives to us – and Jesus tests ***the heart***.

What we do is important, but God goes deeper than the action itself and wants to develop not only our *behavior*, but also our *character*.

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

Can you imagine what was going on as they journeyed home.

“What are we going to tell dad? How are we going to explain this to him? He is going to notice Simeon is gone.” I am sure it was not an easy journey home.

Now, when they get 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 supposed to be governed by God.

Look at the next verse and you will see.

VERSE 36

Fear, anxiety, depression is 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. Jacob will be reunited with his son Joseph shortly, but in the midst of all this, he can't see that, and he feels like everything is against him!

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 pouting 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!

Now when you read stories like this, do you ever feel, ***“How in the world can he act like that. God has spoken to him. God has blessed him. And yes, it is not easy now, but God is not going to forsake him!”***

And then God says, ***“Then why do you feel like everything and everyone is against you? It is not true. I am for you!”***

How can we get refocused?

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 of looking at life like that, 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!

Jacob is going to learn that powerful lesson, that even in the midst of a mess, even when it is the darkest times, the dawn of day will shine forth!

VERSES 37-38

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! He is basically saying, "*Simeon can rot in prison. Look, I have lost one of my sons from my beloved Rachel, and there is no way I am going to lose another!*"

I know, nice guy. I wonder how Simeon is going to feel as he is waiting there in an Egyptian prison for them to come and get him and no one is showing up!

And here's the thing. 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. But remember, the children of Jacob came back with food and thus, since they have food, they will put on hold another trip down to Egypt.

They are probably thinking that this famine can't last that much longer, but it will, some six years or so.

And here's the thing. God wants them there in Egypt and He will get them there as we will see!

GENESIS 43

VERSES 1-2

I'm sure Jacob thought they had enough food to last until the famine was over, but he did not know how long it would last and he was wrong.

They probably went down to Egypt in the first year of the famine and to think this would last much longer was hard to believe. But it did!

And for Jacob, I am sure that he prayed for God to bring relief, but there was no answer to that prayer that was offered up.

And what we see here is that they ran out of food and what else could Jacob do but send his son's back to Egypt to buy more grain.

But, as we will see, it is not as easy as that. Remember, this man in Egypt, Joseph, wanted them to bring their other brother, Benjamin back when they returned and keep in mind Simeon is still in prison!

VERSES 3-5

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.

God has placed them in a one-way situation. The only thing they can do, since they have no more food, is to go down to Egypt with Benjamin.

But for Jacob, this will not be an easy solution, he does not want to lose Benjamin like he lost Joseph.

VERSES 6-10

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?*”

But wait a minute, the Holy Spirit calls him Israel now or governed by God!

I find that interesting because the Holy Spirit is saying that he is not acting in the flesh here, but he is walking in the Spirit you might say.

I think Israel is speaking from his heart here and this was not going to be easy for him, to let Benjamin go.

And in the midst of all this, we see Judah step forward. And Judah 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

Once again we see the Holy Spirit call him Israel and not Jacob. And we see that Israel is going to allow them to go to Egypt with Benjamin and hopefully bring Simeon back 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! (Genesis 43:14)

Now, that phrase, "**If I am bereaved, I am bereaved**" is not an expression of giving up, a fatalistic approach.

Now some do feel it is, and that Israel is not trusting God. But, like I have said, the Holy Spirit has changed his name to Israel or governed by God and that tells me that something changed in this man. You see, he is trusting in El Shaddai, and it is the will of God that will be done, and Israel is going to rest in that!

How can I be so sure about this?

Like I have said, the Holy Spirit uses the name Israel or governed by God instead of Jacob here! When he is called Jacob, he is walking in the flesh and when he is called Israel he is walking in the Spirit!

Now what about these gifts he is sending with them?

Think about it. If there was a famine, how could there be these pistachios, nuts and almonds?

It is possible that these were stored before the famine or 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 keep in mind that most of these were not staples like wheat for bread.

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

Here they go again, heading down to Egypt but this time Benjamin is with them. 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. That guilt was still eating at them.

VERSES 19-23

These brothers are so nervous about entering that 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.

Now this is interesting. He is speaking of peace but not a peace from the world, not a peace from Egypt, but the peace of the true and living God!

How could this Egyptian speak like that about the living God?

I believe that Joseph led this man to the Lord, the God of Israel!

And he is telling the brothers of Joseph that God was in control and again, it just shows me that this steward knew the true and living God!

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?*” I think his words were a little harsher than that, I probably could not repeat them here.

Now we don't know how long he waited in prison; it could have been a year!

VERSES 24-28

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 came to pass as his eleven brothers bow before him and when his father comes, it will be completely fulfilled!

This is the very thing that they rejected all those years ago. They did not want to do this and yet, this was what God had said would come to pass.

Think about this for a minute. Joseph is a type of Jesus and just like his brothers who did not want to bow before Joseph, look at the millions of people that are refusing to bow their knee to Jesus.

But, in the end, what will happen? They will bow their knee to Jesus as Paul tells us in Philippians 2:10-11, **“that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**

It doesn't mean that everyone will be saved, but those that have rejected Jesus in this life will bow before Jesus because He is Almighty God!

Think about all those years Joseph waited, and they were hard years. Isn't it 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

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.

Think about this for a minute. The last time he saw Benjamin was when he was a small child and now, he is a man!

And as Joseph sees him, he has to leave, and he just begins to weep with emotion!

VERSES 31-32

Notice the prejudice that was going on here in Egypt. We see that Joseph did not eat with his brothers, because at the time, Egypt was one of the most racially separated societies on earth.

They believed that Egyptians came from the gods, and all other people came from lesser origins.

Because of that there was little social mixing with foreigners in the Egypt of Joseph's day.

Why was this so important to bring the family of Jacob down to Egypt to live and not just for a few years, but for some 400 years?

One writer put it like this and in this you see the wisdom of God. He wrote,

Herein is the wisdom of God. Before Genesis is finished, God brought the entire family of Jacob into Egypt, where they were isolated from the surrounding people for some 400 years.

In that time, they multiplied greatly, increasing to the millions.

If God had allowed them to remain in Canaan they would have simply assimilated into the corrupt and godless peoples of Canaan.

God not only had to take the family of Israel out of the corrupt environment of Canaan, but He had to put them among a racially separated people who would not often intermarry or mingle with them. God simply sent Joseph on ahead to make the arrangements.

- David Guzik

Isn't that amazing, but God's plans are perfect!

Also, keep in mind they still don't know this is Joseph, the one they sold into slavery years earlier!

VERSES 33-34

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!

We also see Joseph give Benjamin five times more food than his brothers. Why would Joseph do that?

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.**" Genesis 43:34.

In other words, it didn't matter anymore 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!

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.

We are secure in Christ and thus, may we continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, walking by faith and trusting in Him!