

Genesis 43

Verses 1 - 5

Now the famine was severe in the land. ² So it came about, when they had finished eating the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, “Go back, buy us a little food.” ³ Judah spoke to him, however, saying, “The man sternly warned us, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.’ ⁴ If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. ⁵ But if you do not send *him*, we will not go down; for the man said to us, ‘You will not see my face unless your brother is with you.’”

³ Judah spoke to him, however, saying, “The man sternly warned us, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.

When the food ran out Jacob wanted his sons to return to Egypt but he still wanted them to go without Benjamin.

It seems that Reuben was no longer willing to take the leadership role on this second trip to Egypt. Perhaps his pledge to Jacob, that he could slay his two sons if he did not bring Benjamin back, was no longer worth the risk.

Levi should have been next in line to lead the group but either Levi was unwilling to do it or Jacob would not allow it. Judah was next in line to complete this task. However, Judah, like Reuben, was not willing to face Joseph without Benjamin.

Verses 6 - 10

⁶ Then Israel said, “Why did you treat me so badly, by telling the man whether you still had *another* brother?” ⁷ But they said, “The man specifically asked about us and our relatives, saying, ‘Is your father still alive? Have you *another* brother?’ So we answered his questions. Could we possibly know that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down?’” ⁸ So Judah said to his father Israel, “Send the boy with me and we will arise and go, so that we may live and not die, we as well as you and our little ones. ⁹ I myself will take responsibility for him! You may demand him back from me. If I do not bring him *back* to you and present him to you, then you can let me take the blame forever. ¹⁰ For if we had not delayed, surely by now we could have returned twice.”

⁶ Then Israel said, “Why did you treat me so badly, by telling the man whether you still had *another* brother?”

Did Jacob forget that his sons were being accused of being spies? Answering in a dishonest way could have jeopardized their lives. Jacob wasn’t being practical or fair to his sons.

⁸ So Judah said to his father Israel, “Send the boy with me and we will arise and go, so that we may live and not die, we as well as you and our little ones. ⁹ I myself will take responsibility for him! You may demand him back from me. If I do not bring him *back* to you and present him to you, then you can let me take the blame forever.”

Judah offered himself as security for Benjamin. This shows the difference in character between Reuben and Judah because Reuben had offered the lives of his two sons not himself.

Verses 11-14

¹¹ Then their father Israel said to them, “If *it must be* so, then do this: take some of the best products of the land in your bags, and carry down to the man as a gift, a little balsam and a little honey, labdanum resin and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. ¹² And take double *the* money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the opening of your sacks; perhaps it was a mistake. ¹³ Take your brother also, and arise, return to the man; ¹⁴ and may God Almighty grant you compassion in the sight of the man, so that he will release to you your other brother and Benjamin. And as for me, if I am bereaved of my sons, I am bereaved!”

¹¹ Then their father Israel said to them, “If *it must be* so, then do this: take some of the best products of the land in your bags, and carry down to the man as a gift, a little balsam and a little honey, labdanum resin and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds.

Even though the famine was severe in the land, some products were available. This supports the contention that even in a severe famine the land is not totally devoid of some products.

¹² And take double the money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the opening of your sacks; perhaps it was a mistake.

Jacob wanted them to return the money they had found in their sacks, and additional money to buy more grain. He was still under the impression that someone had made a mistake but that could only happen if the person collecting the money was also responsible for loading the grain into the sacks. This was too big of an operation for that to happen.

¹³ Take your brother also, and arise, return to the man; ¹⁴ and may God Almighty grant you compassion in the sight of the man, so that he will release to you your other brother and Benjamin. And as for me, if I am bereaved of my sons, I am bereaved!"

It seems that Jacobs's faith may have suffered a bit since the "death" of Joseph but he does acknowledge that God can intervene to make things turn out for the better.

Jacob had complained in Genesis 42:36 that, "All these things are against me". And here he complains that he was bereaved of his sons. It may have seemed that way at the time but God was doing something that no one could have foreseen. God was saving Jacob and his family, all of the known world, and preparing a place for Jacob to become a great nation.

From our perspective it may seem like everything is going wrong at certain times in our lives but the Lord knows how to turn a loss into a gain. Our part is to keep trusting in Him, regardless of how things may appear. There is no doubt that this can be very difficult to do, but that is the goal.

Verses 15 - 21

¹⁵ So the men took this gift, and they took double *the* money in their hand, and Benjamin; then they set out and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

¹⁶ When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to his house steward, "Bring the men into the house, and slaughter an animal and make preparations; for the men are to dine with me at noon." ¹⁷ So the man did as Joseph said, and brought the men to Joseph's house. ¹⁸ Now the men were afraid, because they were brought to Joseph's house; and they said, "*It is* because of the money that was returned in our sacks the first time that we are being brought in, so that he may attack us and overpower us, and take us as slaves with our donkeys."

¹⁸ Now the men were afraid, because they were brought to Joseph's house; and they said, "It is because of the money that was returned in our sacks the first time that we are being brought in, so that he may attack us and overpower us, and take us as slaves with our donkeys."

Their fear was irrational because Joseph didn't have to wait until they got to his house. He had the entire Egyptian army at his command and he could have given the command at any point.

How could they have possibly taken the money that they had given in payment for the grain? This would have required an Oceans 11 plot considering they were accused of being spies and were warned not to come back without Benjamin. It is amazing how a guilty conscience can cloud the minds of men.

Verses 19-25

¹⁹ So they approached Joseph's house steward, and spoke to him at the entrance of the house, ²⁰ and said, "Oh, my lord, we indeed came down the first time to buy food, ²¹ and it happened when we came to the campsite, that we opened our sacks, and behold, each man's money was in the opening of his sack, our money in full. So we have brought it back in our hand. ²² We have also brought down other money in our hand to buy food; we do not know who put our money in our sacks." ²³ But he said, "Peace be to you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; your money was in my possession." Then he brought Simeon out to them. ²⁴ Then the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed. ²⁵ So they prepared the gift for Joseph's arrival at noon; for they had heard that they were to eat a meal there.

²³ But he said, "Peace be to you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; your money was in my possession." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

In Genesis 42:25 it says Joseph gave orders to put the men's money back in their bags but we are not told who he gave that order to. The steward speaking here affirms that he had received their money and their account was paid in full. It seems obvious that Joseph had a different steward or servant put the money back into their sacks and this steward knew nothing about it. As far as this steward knew, God had blessed them. All of their worry and concern turned out to be nothing.

When the servant brought Simeon out the men finally realized that Joseph had done exactly what he had promised he would do and the men could finally be at peace.

Verses 26 - 30

²⁶ When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the gift which was in their hand, and they bowed down to the ground before him. ²⁷ Then he asked them about their welfare, and said, “Is your old father well, of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?” ²⁸ And they said, “Your servant our father is well; he is still alive.” Then they bowed down *again* in homage. ²⁹ And as he raised his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother’s son, he said, “Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me?” Then he said, “May God be gracious to you, my son.” ³⁰ Joseph then hurried *out*, for he was deeply stirred over his brother, and he looked *for a place* to weep; so he entered his chamber and wept there.

²⁶ When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the gift which was in their hand, and they bowed down to the ground before him.

This is the second time the 1st dream of Joseph had been fulfilled.

²⁹ And as he raised his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother’s son, he said, “Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me?” Then he said, “May God be gracious to you, my son.”

Benjamin was his blood brother and it’s only natural that he would be closer to him than his half-brothers. Each of Jacob’s 4 wives would have had their own tent and their children would have stayed with them. So Joseph and Benjamin would have been closer to each other just as the other children would have been closer to those in their own family.

³⁰ Joseph then hurried *out*, for he was deeply stirred over his brother, and he looked *for a place* to weep; so he entered his chamber and wept there.

This had to be a very emotional moment for Joseph but it wasn’t time for him to reveal his true identity.

Verses 31- 34

³¹ Then he washed his face and came out; and he controlled himself and said, “Serve the meal.” ³² Then they served him by himself, and Joseph’s brothers by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians. ³³ Now they were seated before him, from the firstborn according to his birthright to the youngest according to his youth, and the men looked at one another in astonishment. ³⁴ Then he took portions to them from his own table, but Benjamin’s portion was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank freely with him.

³² Then they served him by himself, and Joseph’s brothers by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians.

There were three different tables set for the participants in this feast. Joseph ate by himself, due to his rank and authority; there was another table for the Egyptians and a third for the Hebrews.

The text says it is an abomination to eat with the Hebrews, but it doesn’t explain why this was the case. We know the Egyptians had a negative experience with Abraham in Genesis 12 but that was over 200 years ago. The only dietary restriction for the Jews of that time was not eating meat with blood in it.

³³ Now they were seated before him, from the firstborn according to his birthright to the youngest according to his youth, and the men looked at one another in astonishment.

It was highly improbable that they would be seated in order of their age when you consider the age difference between the men. Jacob had 11 sons in 7 years (Not a problem when one has 4 wives). The Egyptians knew Benjamin was the youngest and probably knew Reuben was the oldest since he was the leader during the 1st Journey to Egypt. But guessing the ages of the other 9 men that were between the ages of 40 and 47 would be like guessing a pin number with 9 digits.

See chart 4505 Ages of the 11 sons.

Ch	Person	Event	Age	Year
25	Isaac	Esau and Jacob born	60	1836
25	Abraham	Abraham dies	175	1821
26	Esau	Marries two Hittites	40	1796
25	Ishmael	Ismael dies	137	1773
27 - 28	Isaac	blessing	137	1759
27 - 28	Jacob	Trip to Haran	77	1759
29	Jacob	7 years for Rachel	77-84	1752
29 - 30	Jacob	7 years and 11 sons	84-91	1752 - 1745
30	Jacob	Joseph born	91	1745
31	Jacob	6 years for the flocks	97	1739
32-33		Jacon & Esau reunite	97	1739
35	Jacob	Benjamin born	97	1739
35	Rachel	Dies giving birth	35	1739

The odds of doing that would be 1 out of 362,880. His brothers probably didn't know the math behind this anomaly but they understood how unlikely it was and they were astonished.

They should have also been amazed that they were invited to his house. Yes, they had proved that they were not spies, but how does that get you an invite to the house of the 2nd most important person in the kingdom of Egypt.

³⁴ Then he took portions to them from his own table, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank freely with him.

They should have been astonished again because there was no reason that their youngest brother should get 5 times as much.