

Joseph and his Brothers

Lesson 16: Genesis 42-44

December 17, 2017

Review

- Creation
- Fall
- Tower of Babel, Scattering
- Terah, Abraham, Sarah, Lot
- Ishmael, Isaac
- Jacob, Esau
- Joseph then the Jews go to Egypt

Outline

- First trip to Egypt
- Second trip to Egypt
- The final test

Genesis 42:1-6

¹Now Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, and Jacob said to his sons, “Why are you staring at one another?”
²He said, “Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down there and buy *some* for us from that place, so that we may live and not die.”
³Then ten brothers of Joseph went down to buy grain from Egypt.
⁴But Jacob did not send Joseph’s brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, “I am afraid that harm may befall him.”
⁵So the sons of Israel came to buy grain among those who were coming, for the famine was in the land of Canaan *also*.

⁶Now Joseph was the ruler over the land; he was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph’s brothers came and bowed down to him with *their* faces to the ground.

- The famine is experienced in Canaan
- Special treatment of Benjamin
- Joseph’s continued work

Genesis 42:7-11

⁷When Joseph saw his brothers he recognized them, but he disguised himself to them and spoke to them harshly. And he said to them, “Where have you come from?” And they said, “From the land of Canaan, to buy food.”

⁸But Joseph had recognized his brothers, although they did not recognize him. ⁹Joseph remembered the dreams which he had about them, and said to them, “You are spies; you have come to look at the undefended parts of our land.” ¹⁰Then they said to him, “No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. ¹¹We are all sons of one man; we are honest men, your servants are not spies.”

- 20 years later...
- Unexpected treatment?
- Unexpected motivation
- Fulfillment of Joseph’s dreams

Genesis 42:12-17

¹²Yet he said to them, “No, but you have come to look at the undefended parts of our land!” ¹³But they said, “Your servants are twelve brothers *in all*, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold, the youngest is with our father today, and one is no longer alive.” ¹⁴Joseph said to them, “It is as I said to you, you are spies; ¹⁵by this you will be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother comes here! ¹⁶Send one of you that he may get your brother, while you remain confined, that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you. But if not, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies.” ¹⁷So he put them all together in prison for three days.

- Countries were vulnerable during famine
- Their treatment of Benjamin will reveal their character
- The brothers have their own time in prison

Genesis 42:18-23

¹⁸Now Joseph said to them on the third day, “Do this and live, for I fear God: ¹⁹if you are honest men, let one of your brothers be confined in your prison; but as for *the rest of you*, go, carry grain for the famine of your households, ²⁰and bring your youngest brother to me, so your words may be verified, and you will not die.” And they did so. ²¹Then they said to one another, “Truly we are guilty concerning our brother, because we saw the distress of his soul when he pleaded with us, yet we would not listen; therefore this distress has come upon us.” ²²Reuben answered them, saying, “Did I not tell you, ‘Do not sin against the boy’; and you would not listen? Now comes the reckoning for his blood.” ²³They did not know, however, that Joseph understood, for there was an interpreter between them.

- “I fear God”
 - Is Joseph revealing himself?
 - Why didn’t they ask about this?
- Callous hearts softened

Genesis 42:24-28

²⁴He turned away from them and wept. But when he returned to them and spoke to them, he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes. ²⁵Then Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain and to restore every man's money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. And thus it was done for them.

²⁶So they loaded their donkeys with their grain and departed from there. ²⁷As one *of them* opened his sack to give his donkey fodder at the lodging place, he saw his money; and behold, it was in the mouth of his sack. ²⁸Then he said to his brothers, "My money has been returned, and behold, it is even in my sack." And their hearts sank, and they *turned* trembling to one another, saying, "What is this that God has done to us?"

- Joseph's heart for his brothers
- He also provides food for the journey
- The event is attributed to God

Genesis 42:29-34

²⁹When they came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them, saying, ³⁰“The man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly with us, and took us for spies of the country. ³¹But we said to him, ‘We are honest men; we are not spies. ³²We are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no longer alive, and the youngest is with our father today in the land of Canaan.’ ³³The man, the lord of the land, said to us, ‘By this I will know that you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me and take *grain* for the famine of your households, and go. ³⁴But bring your youngest brother to me that I may know that you are not spies, but honest men. I will give your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.’”

- Second account of the events
- They don't confess their guilt to Jacob

Genesis 42:35-38

³⁵Now it came about as they were emptying their sacks, that behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were dismayed. ³⁶Their father Jacob said to them, "You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and you would take Benjamin; all these things are against me." ³⁷Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, "You may put my two sons to death if I do not bring him *back* to you; put him in my care, and I will return him to you." ³⁸But Jacob said, "My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he alone is left. If harm should befall him on the journey you are taking, then you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow."

- They find out about all the sacks
- Dismay at goodness
- Reuben's offer

Summary of dialog

Joseph

- Where are you from?
- You are spies.
- You look over the land.
- You are spies. I will test you.

- I fear God. Bring youngest.

Brothers

- From Canaan to buy food.
- No, we come for food.
- We are twelve brothers

- We are guilty.

Genesis 43:1-6

¹Now the famine was severe in the land. ²So 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.” ³Judah spoke to him, however, saying, “The man solemnly warned us, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.’ ⁴If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. ⁵But 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.’” ⁶Then Israel said, “Why did you treat me so badly by telling the man whether you still had *another* brother?”

- More food is needed
- Judah’s offer
- Difficult decision for Israel

Genesis 43:7-10

⁷But they said, “The man questioned particularly 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’?” ⁸Judah said to his father Israel, “Send the lad with me and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, we as well as you and our little ones. ⁹I myself will be surety for him; you may hold me responsible for him. If I do not bring him *back* to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame before you forever. ¹⁰For if we had not delayed, surely by now we could have returned twice.”

- Food required Benjamin
- Judah become surety

Genesis 43:11-15

¹¹Then 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 present, a little balm and a little honey, aromatic gum and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. ¹²Take double *the* money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was a mistake. ¹³Take your brother also, and arise, return to the man; ¹⁴and 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 children, I am bereaved.” ¹⁵So the men took this present, and they took double *the* money in their hand, and Benjamin; then they arose and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph.

- What they bring
 - A gift
 - The returned money
 - New money
 - Benjamin
- Jacob relies on God

Genesis 43:16-19

¹⁶When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to his house steward, "Bring the men into the house, and slay an animal and make ready; for the men are to dine with me at noon." ¹⁷So the man did as Joseph said, and brought the men to Joseph's house. ¹⁸Now 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, that he may seek occasion against us and fall upon us, and take us for slaves with our donkeys." ¹⁹So they came near to Joseph's house steward, and spoke to him at the entrance of the house,

- Joseph finally sees Benjamin
- More kindness and fear

Genesis 43:20-25

²⁰and said, "Oh, my lord, we indeed came down the first time to buy food, ²¹and it came about when we came to the lodging place, that we opened our sacks, and behold, each man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full. So we have brought it back in our hand. ²²We have also brought down other money in our hand to buy food; we do not know who put our money in our sacks." ²³He said, "Be at ease, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them. ²⁴Then the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys fodder. ²⁵So they prepared the present for Joseph's coming at noon; for they had heard that they were to eat a meal there.

- The brothers explain themselves
- God is mentioned by the steward
- Simeon is restored

Genesis 43:26-30

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

- Joseph asks about his father
- Benjamin is blessed
- Second time Joseph weeps

Genesis 43:31-34

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

- The groups at the meal
 - Joseph
 - The brothers
 - The Egyptians
- Age based seating
- Benjamin is singled out
 - Doesn't cause any problems

Kindness shown by Joseph

- 42:19 Kept only one in prison
- 42:24 Joseph wept
- 42:25 Returned money
- 42:25 Gave provisions
- 43:24 Water for feet
- 43:24 Fodder
- 43:30 Joseph wept
- 43:31 Dinner
- 43:34 Served from his table
- 44:1 Returned money

Genesis 44:1-5

¹Then he commanded his house steward, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack. ²Put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his money for the grain." And he did as Joseph had told *him*. ³As soon as it was light, the men were sent away, they with their donkeys. ⁴They had *just* gone out of the city, *and* were not far off, when Joseph said to his house steward, "Up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid evil for good? ⁵Is not this the one from which my lord drinks and which he indeed uses for divination? You have done wrong in doing this.'"

- Similar to first time
- Benjamin is singled out

Genesis 44:6-11

⁶So he overtook them and spoke these words to them. ⁷They said to him, “Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing. ⁸Behold, the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks we have brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord’s house? ⁹With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord’s slaves.” ¹⁰So he said, “Now let it also be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and *the rest of* you shall be innocent.” ¹¹Then they hurried, each man lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack.

- Their previous honesty
- The steward lessens the penalty
- Assured of their innocence

Genesis 44:12-16

¹²He searched, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. ¹³Then they tore their clothes, and when each man loaded his donkey, they returned to the city.

¹⁴When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still there, and they fell to the ground before him.

¹⁵Joseph said to them, "What is this deed that you have done? Do you not know that such a man as I can indeed practice divination?" ¹⁶So Judah said, "What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; behold, we are my lord's slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found."

- Age based search
- Deep grief
- God found their iniquity
- They all want to be slaves

Genesis 44:17-21

¹⁷But he said, “Far be it from me to do this. The man in whose possession the cup has been found, he shall be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your father.”

¹⁸Then Judah approached him, and said, “Oh my lord, may your servant please speak a word in my lord’s ears, and do not be angry with your servant; for you are equal to Pharaoh. ¹⁹My lord asked his servants, saying, ‘Have you a father or a brother?’ ²⁰We said to my lord, ‘We have an old father and a little child of *his* old age. Now his brother is dead, so he alone is left of his mother, and his father loves him.’ ²¹Then you said to your servants, ‘Bring him down to me that I may set my eyes on him.’

- Only Benjamin will be a slave
- Judah pleads for Benjamin
- Third account of the events

Genesis 44:22-28

²²But we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.'

²³You said to your servants, however, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will not see my face again.' ²⁴Thus it came about when we went up to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.

²⁵Our father said, 'Go back, buy us a little food.' ²⁶But we said, 'We cannot go down. If our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' ²⁷Your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; ²⁸and the one went out from me, and I said, "Surely he is torn in pieces," and I have not seen him since.

- Judah reveals what Jacob thought had happened to Joseph

Genesis 44:29-34

²⁹If you take this one also from me, and harm befalls him, you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow.’
³⁰Now, therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not *with* us, since his life is bound up in the lad’s life, ³¹when he sees that the lad is not with us, he will die. Thus your servants will bring the gray hair of your servant our father down to Sheol in sorrow. ³²For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, ‘If I do not bring him back to you, then let me bear the blame before my father forever.’ ³³Now, therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. ³⁴For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me—for fear that I see the evil that would overtake my father?”

- Death was likely for Jacob if Benjamin did not return
- Judah’s noble substitution
- He wants to spare Jacob from another loss

Summary

- Joseph acted in love
- He tested his brothers to determine their character
- He showed kindness even while being severe
- Judah offers himself in Benjamin's place