

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Let's pray...

[Gen 42:1-38 NKJV] 1 When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?" 2 And he said, "Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die." 3 So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt.

4 But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, "Lest some calamity befall him."

The seven years of plenty have ended and now the seven years of famine have begun.

And it doesn't take long for Jacob and his family to be affected by the famine.

Remember, Jacob has been blessed with a huge flock – he has a multitude of animals that need to graze. If the animals didn't graze, they die and if they die then Jacob and his family will have nothing to eat as well.

However, Jacob is the one who takes the initiative – as he pretty much says, “Don't just stand there looking at each other – go down to Egypt and buy us some grain so that we will not die.”

Think about what is going through the brothers head as they hear the words Egypt.

Because Egypt is the place that they sold Joseph to.

They have been living with the guilt in their hearts for twenty years already. They don't know the whereabouts of Joseph.

They don't know if he is dead.

And I am pretty sure every time they hear the word Egypt – they would be reminded of what they did to their brother Joseph.

In verse 4 it mentions that Jacob did not send Benjamin.

Benjamin is the other son from Rachel – the one that Jacob loved. So, either Jacob didn't trust his 10 other sons with Benjamin – as a result to what happened with Joseph - or he simply continued to show favoritism among his children.

5 And the sons of Israel went to buy [grain] among those who journeyed, for the famine was in the land of Canaan. 6 Now Joseph [was] governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with [their] faces to the earth. 7 Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly to them. Then he said to them, "Where do you come from?" And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food." 8 So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.

So 10 of Joseph's brothers finally show up in Egypt and they bow before him – fulfilling the first dream that Joseph had.

Notice that Joseph is able to recognize them. However, they are not able to recognize him. Why???

Well Joseph, is 20 years older at this time.

How many of us still look like we did back in High School???

I had all my hair when I was 17!!!

We learned last week that before he was presented to Pharaoh, he was cleaned up and shaven and dressed in royal attire. **He didn't look Hebrew and he certainly didn't look like a slave.**

Sitting on a throne in the governor's palace is the last place they would have thought that Joseph was.

And later on in this chapter, we will also see that Joseph spoke to his brothers through an interpreter. So he wasn't

even speaking to them in Hebrew. He was using an ancient Egyptian dialect to speak to them.

Not only does Joseph act as a stranger toward his brothers – we are told that he spoke roughly to them???

Why would Joseph speak roughly to his brother???

Is Joseph seeking revenge???

And the answer of course is no, because last week we saw that he names his first child Manasseh, and the name Manasseh means to forget.

[Gen 41:51 NKJV] 51 Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: “For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father’s house.”

I truly believe that Joseph, being guided by the Holy Spirit – and we know Joseph was guided by the Holy Spirit because Pharaoh acknowledged it last week, Joseph speaks to them roughly because God wants to first restore their relationship with Joseph before He saves them from the famine.

9 Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them, and said to them, "You [are] spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land!" 10 And they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. 11 "We [are] all one man's sons; we [are] honest [men]; your servants are not spies." 12 But he said to them, "No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land." 13 And they said, "Your servants [are] twelve brothers, the sons of one man in

the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest [is] with our father today, and one [is] no more." 14 But Joseph said to them, "It [is] as I spoke to you, saying, **'You [are] spies!'**

Joseph accuses the brother of being spies. You guys are here to scout the land so that you can attack it.

And the brothers responded with **"we are honest men"**

Where they honest men????

- Honest men would not have slaughtered every man in the city of Shechem. Simeon and Levi did just that as a result of the Dinah incident.
- Honest men would not have slept with their father's concubine. Reuben did.

- Honest men would not have done what Judah did to Tamar.
- Honest men would not have thrown their brother into a pit and then sell him into slavery and deceive their father into thinking that his favorite son was dead for twenty years.

And then in verse 14, Joseph states that they are spies once again.

You see, by calling them spies – what Joseph is doing is trying to demonstrate to the brothers the injustice that they had done to him.

Why did Joseph's brothers hate him?

Because he was always bringing home a bad report to his father. He was a tattler.

In fact, when the brothers turn on Joseph, it was as a result of Jacob sending him to spy on them. Remember, they see him walking toward them and then the scriptures tell us that they conspired to kill him.

15 "In this [manner] you shall be tested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. 16 "Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether [there is] any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you [are] spies!" 17 So he put them all together in prison three days. 18 Then Joseph said to them the third

day, **"Do this and live, [for] I fear God: 19 "If you [are] honest [men], let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house; but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses. 20 "And bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die." And they did so.**

Joseph places his brothers under arrest for three days.

He wants to make sure that his brothers are being truthful about Benjamin. He doesn't know if he is really alive or if the brothers have done something to him.

Joseph also changes the plan as initially he was only going to release one to go get Benjamin and then after three days he only decides to keep one imprisoned.

Joseph is exercising a bit of grace in the way he tests his brothers.

Now I asked you to underline when Joseph tells his brothers, "Do this and live, [for] I fear God:

The Hebrew word for God here is the word Elohim. So Joseph is telling his brothers that he fears the Hebrew God and not one of the many Egyptian gods.

This should have raised red flags for the brothers – that a Gentile was worshipping the Hebrew God.

21 Then they said to one another, "We [are] truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us." 22 And

Reuben answered them, saying, "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." 23 **But they did not know that Joseph understood [them], for he spoke to them through an interpreter. 24** And he turned himself away from them and wept. Then he returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.

For twenty years, the brothers have kept this secret between them.

They ignored Joseph's cries as he lay in the pit that they threw him into. In fact, they had dinner amidst the cries of Joseph.

And then as they sold him to the Ishmaelite's, they ignored his cries as well.

And now, the guilt of their sin has become unbearable as they have hit rock bottom.

And there is only one thing to do when we face guilt – **repent** and ask for forgiveness.

That is the first step to reconciliation.

The parable of the prodigal son, the son takes his inheritance and he blows it. But, it wasn't until he hit rock bottom that he brings himself to the mercy of his father and asks for forgiveness.

Turn with me to Psalm 32, I am going to read it in the NLT

[Psa 32:1-5 NLT] 1 A psalm of David. Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! 2 Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty! 3 When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. 4 Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Interlude 5 Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the LORD." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.

As the brothers are discussing among themselves, they don't realize that Joseph can hear them. They didn't know that he knew Hebrew.

And Joseph becomes overcome with emotion as he saw and understood this work of God in the conscience of his brothers.

You see, God had to do a deep work in the hearts of these brothers for the relationship to be reconciled.

25 Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man's money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. Thus he did for them.

Joseph does not accept his brother's money. In the same way that Jesus will not accept our efforts to purchase either our own salvation or His continued favor.

26 So they loaded their donkeys with the grain and departed from there. 27 But as one [of them] opened his sack to give his donkey feed at the encampment, he saw his money; and there it was, in the mouth of his sack. 28 So he said to his brothers, "My money has been restored, and there it is, in my sack!" Then their hearts failed [them] and they were afraid, saying to one another, "What [is] this [that] God has done to us?" 29 Then they went to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan and told him all that had happened to them, saying: 30 "The man [who is] lord of the land spoke

roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. 31
"But we said to him, 'We [are] honest [men]; we are not
spies. 32 'We [are] twelve brothers, sons of our father;
one [is] no [more], and the youngest [is] with our father
this day in the land of Canaan.' 33 "Then the man, the
lord of the country, said to us, 'By this I will know that
you [are] honest [men]: Leave one of your brothers
[here] with me, take [food for] the famine of your
households, and be gone. 34 'And bring your youngest
brother to me; so I shall know that you [are] not spies,
but [that] you [are] honest [men]. I will grant your
brother to you, and you may trade in the land.' " 35 Then
it happened as they emptied their sacks, that
surprisingly each man's bundle of money [was] in his

sack; and when they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. 36 And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me: Joseph is no [more], Simeon is no [more], and you want to take Benjamin. **All these things are against me.**"

Notice that it is Jacob who says these words and not Israel "governed by God"

All these things are against me.

You see, at the exact time that God was working the salvation of him and his family, Jacob felt as though everything was going against him.

And we could say the same thing about our lives.

When we feel as though everything is against us, we should take hope and trust in God's providential care. Everything may seem as though it is against us, but God is indeed working.

Jacob simply has to wait a few chapters to see how all these things are going to work out.

37 Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, "Kill my two sons if I do not bring him [back] to you; put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you." 38 But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave."

At the end of chapter 42, Jacob refuses to take up the offer of Reuben.

His fear of losing Benjamin is delaying the salvation of the family. Every day that Jacob waits, is a day closer to losing his family to famine.

[Gen 43:1-34 NKJV] 1 Now the famine [was] severe in the land. 2 And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, "Go back, buy us a little food." 3 But Judah spoke to him, saying, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, '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 will not send [him], we will not go down; for the man said to us,

'You shall not see my face unless your brother [is] with you.' " 6 And Israel said, "Why did you deal [so] wrongfully with me [as] to tell the man whether you had still [another] brother?"

So here in chapter 43, they have ran out of food. And Jacob wants to send the boys down to Egypt again but the sons say no – not without Benjamin.

And then in verse 6 Jacob blames them for opening their big mouth and disclosing to Joseph that they had another brother.

7 But they said, "The man asked us pointedly about ourselves and our family, saying, '[Is] your father still alive? Have you [another] brother?' And we told him according to these words. Could we possibly have

known that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?" 8
Then Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the lad with
me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not
die, both we and you [and] also our little ones. 9 "I
myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall
require him. If I do not bring him [back] to you and set
him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. 10
"For if we had not lingered, surely by now we would
have returned this second time."

This is very similar to what Reuben had offered about a year earlier (42:37), but Israel did not accept Reuben's offer.

However, Judah had already lost two children and it could be that Jacob feels that Judah can relate to his pain of losing a child.

11 And their father Israel said to them, "If [it must be] so, then do this: Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man--a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. 12 "Take double money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. 13 "Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. 14 "And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!"

It seems that Jacob has finally come to the point that if he has to suffer the loss of Benjamin he's willing to do it.

15 So the men took that present and Benjamin, and they took double money in their hand, and arose and went down to Egypt; and they stood before Joseph. 16 When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Take [these] men to my home, and slaughter an animal and make ready; for [these] men will dine with me at noon." 17 Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph's house. 18 Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, "[It is] because of the money, which was returned in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may make a case against us and seize us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys." 19 When they drew near to

the steward of Joseph's house, they talked with him at the door of the house, 20 and said, "O sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food; 21 "but it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there, [each] man's money [was] in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand. 22 "And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks." 23 But he said, "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." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

Keep in mind that these words were spoken by the steward – not Joseph. Joseph hasn't shown up yet.

24 So 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 Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there. 26 And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which [was] in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth.

So the brothers were expecting the worse. They thought that they were going to be taken slaves and that their donkey would be taken from them.

But instead, they were served and their donkeys were fed.

27 Then he asked them about [their] well-being, and said, "[Is] your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? [Is] he still alive?" 28 And they answered, "Your servant our father [is] in good health; he [is] still alive." And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves. 29 Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "[Is] this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son." 30 Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought [somewhere] to weep. And he went into [his] chamber and wept there. 31 Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, "Serve the bread."

Despite all the emotions that all the emotions that Joseph must have been going through as he sees Benjamin before him. He still does not reveal himself to his brothers.

Why?

Because God still has some work to do on his brothers, the testing of his brothers had not concluded.

32 So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, for that [is] an abomination to the Egyptians.

Verse 32 is a significant verse in scripture.

Because the Egyptians thought they were so superior to other races and nations that they would mingle with those that were not Egyptians.

And God in His immense wisdom uses this to preserve the nation of Israel.

Because as God brings them out of Canaan – into Egypt, for four hundred years – they multiplied and did not take Egyptian wives or husbands for themselves because they couldn't.

Unlike in Canaan, where we had already seen some of the men take Canaanites as wives.

33 And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another. 34

Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

Joseph sits his brothers according to their age, from the oldest to the youngest. And he proceeds to give Benjamin five times as much food as he gives the other brothers.

The reason, Joseph wants to see the reaction of his brothers.

Are they going to respond with envy or jealousy toward Benjamin in the same way that they demonstrated towards Joseph when he received preferential treatment from his father??

Or have the brothers changed???

The brothers show no ill fillings toward Benjamin – however, one more tests await them. We will see that in two weeks.

One of the things that we can learn from these two chapters is the importance of true repentance.

Sorry wasn't going to be enough.

Sorry isn't repentance.

Remorse isn't repentance.

There has to be that change in our lives, there has to be a changed mindset – to see sin in the same way that God sees sin.

That is the process that Joseph's brothers are going through and the process that we go through in our Christian walk.

Amen..

Let's pray...

