

First Southern Baptist Church - April 14, 2021
Joseph Tests His Brothers - Genesis 42-43

Introduction:

1. Repeated themes-fractured family, father's favoritism, dreams, a lost brother (this time it's Simeon)
2. The circumstances force them to come to Egypt, and eventually force Jacob to release Benjamin (43:8)
3. The process of "testing" - chapters 42, 43, 44

I. The Brothers Go to Egypt to Buy Corn (42:1-5)

1. Sent by dad (1-2)
2. There is corn in Egypt
3. Forced by circumstances to buy grain in Egypt

II. Meeting with Joseph (42:6-20)

1. They bow (6)
2. They come face to face with Joseph because this is his job -to oversee the selling of grain (41:43, 55-57)
3. Do not recognize Joseph (7)
 - roughly
 - "strange" unto them
 - they do not recognize
 - dressed like an Egyptian, head shaved, etc
 - 17 years old vs 30 years old
 - spoke Egyptian (23)
4. He remembered the dreams (9)
 - his first son was Manasseh ("forgetting") because God had made him forget, but here he "remembers"
 - remembered a dream of twenty years ago
5. Accused them of being spies (9-14) **
6. Joseph occupies the position of all-powerful Lord to them
 - they are no one... he holds their very lives in his hands... and he has them at a disadvantage, - he knows them, and they do not know him
7. "Proved" (15-24)
 - A. The plot of Joseph
 - prove it
 - send one of you* (16)
 - bring your youngest brother
 - think on it for three days (17)
 - leave one of you (19) and carry your corn home*
 - bring your youngest brother
 - "on the life of Pharaoh" - 15, what an oath
 - took Simeon "bound before their eyes" (24)
 - B. Have they changed?
 - C. Joseph's rough treatment

- spoke roughly
- put in prison for three days
- took Simeon

D. A test?

- 1) He puts them into the same position that they were at before... and failed
- 2) The “test” would bring his brother Benjamin to Egypt, under his watchful eye
- 3) If they fail to return, then the charge of being “spies” stands
- 4) Three terms (in Hebrew) for “test” in Genesis:
 - a) *Nasa* - testing of Abraham with Isaac (Gen. 22:1)
 - to put to the test to determine ones faithfulness
 - b) *Bahan* - has religious significance... to make a religious oath
 - c) *Sarap* - used at Ps. 105:19 for Joseph’s test of brothers
 - to refine or purge
- 5) Joseph used the word “*bahan*” - he was saying... hereby I swear you will be “refined”
- 6) Their confession at 21-22 shows that they were well on their way to have learned from their sins

E. What is the test? Why the test? -their integrity/ character

- 1) Tests keep us from becoming callous... because when we become so, we become worse than unbelievers
- 2) Tests help to set things right - sometimes it takes great upheaval to make things right - for example a death in the family
- 3) Conscience must be trained and informed... it does not tell us right and wrong, but only if we are true to the “right and wrong” we know
- 4) Conscience pronounced them guilty... we saw the anguish of his soul

III. The Brothers are Bothered (42:21-24)

1. Guilty over Joseph (21)
 - Reuben... I told you so
 - After all these years... carry the guilt of their deeds toward their brother
2. Joseph weeps (24) - because they are guilty

IV. The Plot of Joseph Thickens (42:25-28)

1. Put their money in their sacks
2. Found
3. Their hearts sank
 - “failed” them
4. What is God doing to us?

V. Discussions with Jacob (42:29-38)

1. Accusation by the “man”
2. The “man’s” plan - to prove you are not spies
3. Bring me your youngest
4. The sacks had their money
5. Jacob grieves

- Joseph is gone
- Simeon is gone
- and now you want Benjamin?
- 6. Reuben's plan - he offers his sons
- 7. I can't do that... I've already lost one son (38)
 - Jacob was NOT going to let his "Benjamin" go (42:38)
- !!). Now they are in a pickle... he cannot stay in Canaan, he'll starve to death. They cannot go back, they'll be accused of stealing the money.

VI. Must Return to Egypt (43:1-2)

1. Food is gone
2. In chapter 42, Jacob says he will not let Benjamin go... here he relents (43:1-2)
3. When we experience dark times... could it be that God is doing something?

VII. Request to Take Benjamin (43:3-7)

1. Judah is now the spokesman
 - Reuben has fallen to complaining (42:22)
 - a telltale sign of lost influence is a failed leader's "I told you so!"
2. "You will not see my face" - audience with the Prime Minister (Joseph)
3. Jacob fights back - they had created an impossible situation
 - Jacob said the same thing when Levi and Simeon killed the Shechemites

VIII. Judah's Pledge 43:(8-10)

1. He offers himself as security
 - "greater love hath no man..."
2. We have "lingered" too long (10)
 - all reluctant to return, for at the end of chapter 42, they had found their money in their bags

IX. Jacob's Instructions (43:11-14)

1. Jacob's plan - at 32:10 he used a lavish gift - almost a bribe
 - A. "A gift opens the way for the giver and ushers him into the presence of the great" - Prov. 18:16
 - B. Things exported from Canaan
 - best fruits in the land
 - balm, honey, spices, myrrh, nuts, almonds

*after all, it was the land flowing with "milk and honey"
2. Jacob - the "schemer?" - the old man comes out
 - we like to pay our way
3. Jacob's responses to this plight:
 - "everything is against me" (42:36)
 - "why did you do it differently?" (43:6)
 - "take a gift" - (43:11)
 - "if it has to be it has to be" (43:14)

This is pessimism, or fatalism, but it is not faith
4. May God have mercy (14)*

X. Joseph and His Steward (15-22)

1. Instructions for the steward (15-17)
 - make a feast and bring them into my house
 - at verse 18 the brothers are afraid... -from their perspective, they are being accused of the money in the bags
 - what role does fear have in repentance?
2. Receiving the brother's gift (18-22)
 - I received your silver... "it's all right"

XI. Joseph Receives Benjamin (25-30)

1. How is Jacob?
2. Benjamin and the brother makes "eleven"
 - Joseph's dream is fulfilled ("eleven stars" - 37:9)
- !!). 3. God made Joseph a "savior" for Israel... but also for Egypt, and surrounding nations
 - how? -through Joseph
 - how does God save us? - through Jesus
4. He is "deeply moved" - literally "his compassion grew hot"
 - Joseph weeps more than once when restored with his family:
 - 45:14,15,29; 50:1,17

XII. Joseph Favors Benjamin (43:31-34)

1. Joseph struggles to contain his emotions (30-31)
2. Food on his plate is "five times greater"
 - the same activity preceded the sale of Joseph by the brother (37:25)
3. Note the segregated seating - Hebrews and Egyptians do not sit together
 - Herodotus said that Egyptians would not eat or sacrifice cows... because they were sacred, - for this reason they would not live with the Israelites
 - they were "detestable" - morally or ritually repulsive to God or man
4. They were seated in birth order (33) - the brothers marveled at the "coincidence"
5. Special favor and drink
 - "they drank largely" (34)