

The Reunion for Joseph

Genesis 42:1-38

- I. THE REASON FOR THE REUNION (Genesis 42:1-5)
 - A. The News of Corn in Egypt (Genesis 42:1)
 1. The famine had affected Jacob and his family in Canaan (Genesis 41:1, 2, 5)
 2. The inaction of the sons of Jacob
 - a. It seems the sons of Jacob were sitting around doing nothing about it (Genesis 41:1)
 - b. *“Why do ye look one upon another?”* (Genesis 41:1)
 - (1) This inaction seems to be recurrent by Joseph’s brothers (Genesis 43:2)
 - (2) Notice inaction at the wrong time is called out by God (Joshua 7:6-10)
 - B. The Need for Corn from Egypt (Genesis 42:2)
 1. The crisis of food (Genesis 42:2, 5)
 - a. *“The famine was in the land of Canaan”* (v. 5)
 - b. The fundamental reason for the reunion was the famine.
 - c. The main reason for this famine was to fulfill God’s plan for His people.
 - d. Mankind often only sees secondary causes and does not perceive the primary cause for events and calamities. The primary cause is always to fulfill God’s plan (Jonah 1:1-3, 4, 5-16; Psalm 89:9).
 - e. Note: Joseph as a type of Christ: It takes a famine to show the sinner his need (Genesis 41:56-57; Note: Amos 8:11-12).
 - f. Note: Joseph as a type of Christ: The sinner will not seek spiritual things until he is hungry (Genesis 42:1).
 2. The corn in Egypt (Genesis 42:2)
 - a. *“Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt... I have heard that there is corn in Egypt.”*
 - b. Egypt had food because they had been warned through the dreams which Joseph had interpreted.
 - c. The news of Egypt having corn likely reached Jacob by caravans traveling through on their way to and from Egypt.

- d. Note: Joseph as a type of Christ: The sinner's first move is to go down to Egypt (the world) for help (Genesis 42:1-2).

C. The Brothers Journey to Egypt (Genesis 42:3-5)

1. The command of Jacob – Jacob ordered his boys (the brothers of Joseph) to go to Egypt and buy corn “*that we may live, and not die*” (Genesis 42:2).
2. The company in the journey (Genesis 42:3-4)
 - a. Only ten of the brothers made the journey (v. 3)
 - b. Benjamin was left behind with Jacob in case of trouble (v. 4)
 - (1) Joseph and Benjamin were the two sons of Rachel.
 - (2) Jacob had already lost (so he thought) Joseph, he did not want something also happening to Benjamin.
3. The compliance for the journey (Genesis 42:5)
 - a. “*Joseph’s ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt... the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came*” (Genesis 42:3, 5).
 - b. Jacob’s command got the ten older brothers of Joseph moving to get food from Egypt where they also met up with Joseph. The trip turned out to be much different than they expected.
4. Note: Joseph as a type of Christ: When the sinner comes to Christ (Joseph), he comes not for a free gift but to buy (Genesis 42:5, see Isaiah 55:1-2).

II. THE RECEPTION AT THE REUNION (Genesis 42:6-24)

A. Joseph Recognizes His Brothers (Genesis 42:6-8)

1. The reverence given to Joseph (Genesis 42:6)
 - a. Joseph was the governour of Egypt.
 - b. Joseph was the man who sold to all the people of the land.
 - c. Joseph’s brothers came to him and bowed before him with their faces to the ground.
 - d. This then fulfilled the dream of Joseph concerning the sheaves (Genesis 37:5-8).
 - e. Note: One day in the future every knee will bow before the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10).
 - f. Note: Joseph as a type of Christ: Although the sinner can practice religious forms of worship (Genesis 42:6), he worships what he knows not what (John 4:22).
2. The recognition by Joseph (Genesis 42:7-8)
 - a. Joseph recognizes his brothers, yet he does not let them know who he is. Certainly, he is curious as to where Benjamin is.
 - b. They do not know who he is – Joseph would have changed a great deal in those many years away from home. He was dressed in much

different apparel, and they did expect to see him again, especially in this position.

- c. Note: Joseph as a type of Christ: Joseph's brothers did not know him, the world knew didn't know Jesus (Genesis 42:8; John 1:10-11).

B. Joseph Troubles His Brothers (Genesis 42:7-24)

1. Joseph speaks roughly to them (Genesis 42:7-8)
 - a. He asks them where they are from.
 - b. They answered, "*from the land of Canaan to buy food.*"
2. Note: Joseph as a type of Christ: God knows the sinner and what is in him, but He asks the sinner questions to see what he will answer (Genesis 42:7; Luke 24:19).
3. Joseph accuses them of being spies (Genesis 42:9-12)
 - a. Joseph remembered his dreams concerning them (v. 9).
 - (1) The bowing of his brothers before him would help him remember those dreams from twenty plus years before.
 - (2) This had to be a moment of great encouragement for him (Psalm 27:14; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; Ephesians 3:16).
 - b. Joseph accuses them of coming to spy out the nakedness of the land (v. 10).
 - c. Note: Joseph as a type of Christ: Having come to buy, the sinner is rebuked (Genesis 42:10). Having been rebuked the sinner will immediately justify himself (Genesis 42:10-11).
 - d. Joseph's brothers give more information concerning their identity (v. 11).
 - (1) "*We are all one man's sons, we are true men,*"
 - (2) "*thy servants are no spies.*"
 - e. Joseph accuses them a second time of being spies (v. 12).
 - f. Note: Joseph as a type of Christ: God and His word will continue to insist that they are indeed sinners (Genesis 42:12, 14).
 - g. They give more information about their identity (v. 13).
 - (1) "*Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; ...*"
 - (2) "*Behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not.*"
 - h. Joseph accuses his brothers a third time of being spies (v. 14).
4. Joseph's brothers get a chance to prove their innocence (Genesis 42:15-20)
 - a. The initial plan to imprison all but one brother (Genesis 42:15-16)
 - (1) Sending one brother for Benjamin
 - (2) To bring him to Egypt.
 - b. All are imprisoned for three days (Genesis 42:17).
 - c. A new plan to release all but one of the brothers (Genesis 42:18-20)
 - (1) Leaving one brother bound, while the others leave for Canaan
 - (2) Taking with them the corn and provisions they had come for.
 - (3) With understanding they were to bring Benjamin back upon their return.

5. Joseph's brothers remember the evil they had done to Joseph (Genesis 42:21-24)
 - a. The treatment that Joseph had inflicted upon his brothers recalled their evil doing (Galatians 6:7; Job 4:8; Proverbs 1:31).
 - b. The brothers see this as punishment for what they had done to Joseph (v. 21).
 - c. Note: Joseph as a type of Christ: Finally the sinner after being given a taste of judgment, begins to recognize his guilt (Genesis 42:17, 21-22).
 - d. Reuben reminds them that he had warned them not to do it (v. 22).
 - (1) Note: Reuben's wording is curious here; his words sound as if he believes Joseph was dead. Compare verse 22 here with Genesis 37 (Genesis 37:29-30, 31-35).
 - (2) Is it possible that Reuben was not there when the other brothers dipped Joseph's coat in the goat's blood and sent it to their father?
 - e. Joseph understands their words and begins to weep (v. 23-24).
 - (1) It is interesting to note, Joseph likely did not know about Reuben's disagreement with his brethren concerning him.
 - (2) Joseph's emotional reaction is due to all these memories flooding back at once, hearing and seeing his brothers, and their dialogue concerning that day.

III. THE RESTORATION AT THE REUNION (Genesis 42:25-28)

- A. The Decree for the Restoration (Genesis 42:25)
 1. *"Joseph commanded... to restore every man's money into his sack."*
 2. Grace amid a trial. Joseph did for his brothers what God often does for us in the time of trials (2 Corinthians 12:9). He blessed them with unexpected blessings.
 3. Note: Joseph as a type of Christ: Joseph reveals that deliverance is by grace and mercy (Genesis 42:24-25; Ephesians 2:8; Titus 3:5).
- B. The Discovery of the Restoration (Genesis 42:26-27)
 1. *"As one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth."*
 2. The brothers did not discover the restored money until they stopped at an inn on the way back to Canaan. Sometimes we do not understand or realize the blessings we have until a later circumstance shows us those blessings.
- C. The Dread About the Restoration (Genesis 42:28)
 1. *"My money is restored me... and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?"*
 2. When sin haunts the mind and guilt has gripped the soul, it is difficult for the sinner to perceive any unusual experience as anything but judgment.
 3. Even blessings are not seen as blessings, but as judgments in disguise.

IV. THE REPORT OF THE REUNION (Genesis 42:29-38)

A. The Details of the Report (Genesis 42:29-34)

1. The accusation for the brothers (Genesis 42:30)
 - a. Jacob learns of his sons' trouble in Egypt.
 - b. Of course, the man is Joseph who will soon be more than just "*the man*" to them soon enough.
2. The answer of the brothers (Genesis 42:31, 32)
 - a. The brothers must have choked a little when reporting that "*one is not.*"
 - b. They acknowledge their guilt before each other but were not ready to face up to their evil deed before their father (Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9).
3. The arrangements for the brothers (Genesis 42:33, 34)
 - a. The brothers report to their father the arrangements that Joseph had made for their return.
 - b. The arrangements involved three things.
 - (1) Proof—The arrangements were to give an opportunity for the brothers to prove who they were.
 - (2) Prison—Simeon was put in prison; this would not be good news for Jacob.
 - (3) Person—Benjamin had to be taken to Egypt for proof to be final. This also would not be good news for Jacob.

B. The Discovery After the Report (Genesis 42:35)

1. The extent of the discovery
 - a. "*Every man's bundle of money was in his sack.*"
 - b. At the inn they had only opened the one, when they got home, now they discover that "*every man's bundle of money*" had been restored in his sack.
2. The effect of the discovery
 - a. "*When both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.*"
 - b. Both the brothers and their father were afraid for different reasons.
 - c. Likely, Jacob would be fearful that his sons had done some sort of mischief to still have their money. The brothers would fear meeting up with Joseph again, only to be accused of stealing.

C. The Despair Over the Report (Genesis 42:35, 36)

1. The denouncing in the despair (Genesis 42:35)

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- a. Being overcome with despair, the report and the restoration of money was more than Jacob could handle.
 - b. Jacob spoke more correctly than he realized.
 - c. The brothers were indeed the reason for Joseph's disappearance and for Simeon's imprisonment.
 - d. Jacob's denouncing of their actions would be very unsettling to their already troubled consciences. It would likely cause them to wonder what all Jacob really knew.
 - (1) Sin can be so unsettling.
 - (2) When one sins, he or she must continue to sin to cover their other sins. Sin truly takes you further than you thought you would go.
2. The defeat in the despair (Genesis 42:36)
 - a. Jacob's pessimistic view here is not unique. We all often draw the same conclusion when circumstances seem so against us.
 - b. However, Jacob was obviously wrong; for "*all these things*" were working in his favour. Christian, you can be assured that God is working everything out for good (Romans 8:28; Hebrews 12:6-12; James 1:3-4; 1 Peter 1:7-8).
- D. The Diplomacy After the Report (Genesis 42:37)
1. The son in the diplomacy
 - a. Reuben was the one who intervened on behalf of Joseph the first time. He showed some compassion.
 - b. Reuben tries to show some diplomacy here in speaking up, however, his character is stained terribly.
 2. The stupidity of the diplomacy
 - a. "*Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee; deliver him [Benjamin] into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again.*"
 - b. This was truly stupid. Why would killing his two grandsons compensate for the loss of a son? Reuben's plan for the taking of Benjamin to Egypt lacked wisdom!
- E. The Disallowing Despite the Report (Genesis 42:38)
1. "*My son shall not go down with you.*"
 2. Jacob is adamant. He will not let Benjamin go down to Egypt.
 3. Later he will be convinced that Benjamin must go down (if he doesn't, they will starve to death). But as for now, Jacob refuses to budge.