

The Return to Egypt

Genesis 43:1-34

- I. THE REASON FOR THE RETURN (Genesis 43:1-15)
 - A. The Brothers Must Return to Egypt (Genesis 43:1-2)
 1. *“And the famine was sore in the land”* (v. 1)
 2. *“When they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt”* (v. 2)
 3. The command to return (v. 2)
 - a. By Jacob
 - b. Because they were in desperate need of more corn (see above).
 - c. A reluctance in Jacob’s command (v. 2)
 - (1) Jacob seemed reluctant to bring the subject up.
 - (2) This is seen in his wording: *“Go again, buy us a little food.”* (v. 2)
Note: It may be that Jacob hoped that the request for a little food would not require the sending of Benjamin. The thought being he could avoid the obvious issue.
 - (3) Note: Joseph as a type of Christ: This is typical of the man of the world, he tries to get to heaven on his terms (Genesis 43:2; Ephesians 2:8; 1 Timothy 2:5)
 - B. The Brothers Cannot Go Without Benjamin (Genesis 43:3-10)
 1. Judah’s reminder (v. 3-4)
 - a. There was no use in going down to Egypt,
 - b. Without taking Benjamin with them.
 2. Judah’s refusal (v. 5)
 - a. *“If thou wilt not send him [Benjamin], we will not go down”*
 - b. *“for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.”*
 - c. Judah made it plain that the brothers would not go back down without Benjamin.
 - d. They would only go on one condition, that was if Benjamin went with them.
 3. Jacob’s complaint (v. 6-7)
 - a. *“Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?”* (v. 6)
 - b. Jacob criticizes his sons for letting Joseph know about Benjamin. Jacob’s approach was that it was their fault for “talking too much.”
 - c. However, that simply was not the case. As is seen in the next verse.

- (1) Human nature tends to want to place blame on all those around when trouble arises.
- (2) It is not in man's nature to take the blame for himself/herself.
- (3) Note: when relationships in a marriage, a family, etc. are failing likely the blame falls on both sides with those involved (Amos 3:3; Ephesians 5:22, 25; Ephesians 6:2, 4; Colossians 3:19).
- d. The sons' response (v. 7)
 - (1) The man [Joseph] asked straitly of our state, and of our kindred.
 - (2) *"Is your father yet alive? Have ye another brother? And we told him..."*
 - (3) *"Could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down?"*
 - (4) Note: This could have all been dealt with in the former chapter when they returned, yet it seems it was buried by Jacob and not dealt with in its entirety. Man's nature of "putting it off" till later won the day (Genesis 42:35-38). In many ways we see a dysfunctional family in play here.
4. Judah's request (v. 8-10)
 - a. The commitment in the request (v. 8-9)
 - (1) To end the impasse and get a return trip for food, Judah volunteers to be the one especially responsible for Benjamin's wellbeing.
 - (2) This commitment shows some character on the part of Judah, it will be seen again in front of Joseph (Genesis 44:32-33).
 - b. The care in the commitment (v. 8-9)
 - (1) Judah offers to take the blame if something happens to Benjamin (Genesis 43:9).
 - (2) Judah takes personal responsibility for Benjamin; this is seen when he confronts Joseph in chapter 44.
 - (3) Note: Judah as a type of Jesus Christ: The LORD takes full responsibility of our care as one of his own (John 10:28; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25). Judah's typology will be examined further in chapter 44.
 - c. The compulsion in the commitment (v. 8, 10)
 - (1) Judah reminds Jacob that none of them will survive if they don't make the return trip with Benjamin (Genesis 43:8).
 - (2) Judah declares that they would have already returned home by now if they had not lingered (Genesis 43:10).
- C. Jacob's Counsel for Their Return (Genesis 43:11-14)
 1. The gifts for their return (Genesis 43:11)
 - a. Take of the best fruits in the land
 - b. Offer them to the man for a present.
 - c. Take him some...

- (1) Balm
- (2) Honey
- (3) Spices
- (4) Myrrh
- (5) Nuts
- (6) Almonds
- d. This was to show some respect to the man [Joseph] and hopefully soften their encounter this time around (Proverbs 18:23).
2. The money for their return (Genesis 43:12)
 - a. Double money and the money found in the sacks.
 - b. *“Peradventure it was an oversight.”*
 - c. This was the only equitable thing to do.
 - d. Note: Joseph as a type of Christ: The sinner doubles his efforts to please God by works (Genesis 43:11, 15).
3. The son for their return (Genesis 43:13)
 - a. Finally, Jacob gets around to the subject of Benjamin.
 - b. It was hard for Jacob to capitulate concerning Benjamin, but the emergency of the hour necessitated it. If the sons didn’t go, they would all die of starvation. In reality, Jacob had no choice but to let him go.
4. The mercy for their return (Genesis 43:14)
 - a. Jacob called for the mercy of God concerning his sons’ journey.
 - (1) This was the best part of Jacob’s dialogue with his sons.
 - (2) Asking God’s blessing for both the return of Benjamin and Simeon.
5. The bereavement in the return (Genesis 43:14b)
 - a. *“If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.”*
 - b. From the best part to the worst part. Jacob was soon to learn that to him was the worse of circumstances only became the best of circumstances he would ever experience.
 - c. Thus, it is for the believer, what we think is the hardest can turn into the best of times. You see, it is in those hard times that the Christian grows the most in the grace, mercy, and knowledge of God.

II. THE FEAR IN THE RETURN (Genesis 43:15-23)

- A. The Brothers Journeyed Toward Egypt (Genesis 43:15)
- B. The Invitation for the Fear (Genesis 43:16-18)
 1. The cause of the invitation (Genesis 43:16-17)
 - a. *“When Joseph saw Benjamin”* (Genesis 43:16)
 - b. It was upon seeing Benjamin that Joseph decided to invite all of his brothers to dinner.
 - c. The servant immediately did as Joseph requested (Genesis 43:17).

2. The conclusion of the invitation (Genesis 43:18)
 - a. Joseph's brothers were afraid because they were brought into his house.
 - b. This fear was fueled by their knowledge of the bags of money they had found in their sacks of corn.
 - c. Now they believed that Joseph was looking for an occasion against them to fall upon them and make them bondmen forever.
 - d. Note: They misunderstood the situation, what was really happening would turn into a great blessing for them and everyone else in the family.
 - e. Note: Joseph as a type of Christ: Joseph's brothers are not unique in misunderstanding their circumstances. The child of God many times will misinterpret what God is doing in their life (Psalm 119:71).
 - f. Note: Joseph as a type of Christ: The sinner fears when faced with both his own guilt and the Saviour's grace (Genesis 43:18).
- C. The Interceding in the Fear (Genesis 43:19-23)
 1. The reporting in the interceding (Genesis 43:19-22)
 - a. Frantic with fear, the brothers quickly endeavored to speak up about the money.
 - b. They found a listening ear with the steward of Joseph's house.
 - c. This interceding was intended to clear any concern of them being thieves. That is, they did not steal the money, it was in their sacks unawares.
 - d. Like any honest folks, they brought the money back to give to Joseph.
 2. The reassurance from the interceding (Genesis 43:23)
 - a. The steward quashed any fears of them being taken as thieves.
 - (1) Joseph's steward calmed the brothers concerning the money (Genesis 43:23).
 - (2) The steward also knew the God of Israel and testified of God's blessing and provision.
 - b. He simply attributed the favour to the blessing of their God.
 - c. This clearing of the brothers' conduct would help them to "*fear not.*"
 3. The releasing after the interceding (Genesis 43:23)
 - a. "*He brought Simeon out unto them.*"
 - b. This action would further allay any fears the brothers had.

III. THE FEAST IN THE RETURN (Genesis 43:24-34)

A. The Welcoming for the Feast (Genesis 43:24)

1. The steward welcomed Joseph's brothers into his home.
2. This kindness to the brothers would help further remove any fears that they had.

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- B. The Gift Prepared for the Feast (Genesis 43:25)
- C. The Arrival of Joseph for the Feast (Genesis 43:26)
1. When Joseph arrived, they [his brothers] brought the present that they had for him.
 2. They bowed themselves to the ground to him.
 3. Note: Joseph as a type of Christ: The sinner may worship God (Genesis 43:26) and even enjoy His presence (Genesis 43:34) before they know Him.
- D. The Interaction at the Feast (Genesis 43:27-28)
1. Joseph's questioning concerning them and Jacob (Genesis 43:27)
 - a. Their welfare
 - b. The condition of Jacob
 - c. If Jacob was yet alive
 2. The brothers' answers to the questions (Genesis 43:28)
 - a. Jacob was in good health,
 - b. He is yet alive.
 - c. Then they bowed their heads and made obeisance.
- E. The Weeping at the Feast (Genesis 43:29-31)
1. Joseph "*lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son*" (Genesis 43:29).
 2. Seeing his brother Benjamin was an understandably great emotional experience for Joseph.
 3. "*He sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there*" (Genesis 43:30).
 4. Joseph concealed his weeping as it was not yet time to reveal to his brothers who he was. He must still test them further to prove their character change.
 5. "*He washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself*" (Genesis 43:31).
 - a. Emotions are not sinful in themselves; the sin is the failure to control those emotions.
 - b. Failure to control one's emotions can result in immorality, suicides, wars, losing one's temper and other vices.
 - c. If Joseph had not controlled his emotions, he would have spoiled everything and revealed himself too soon.
- F. The Partaking of the Feast (Genesis 43:32-34)
1. The seating arrangement – The seating was two-fold (Genesis 43:32)
 - a. First—It was according to their rank. Joseph was set by himself.
 - b. Second—It was according to their race. The Egyptians would not eat with the Hebrews. It was an abomination unto the Egyptians.

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2. The marveling of the arrangement—The seating of the brothers
 - a. The brothers were set according to their birthright.
 - b. The first according to his birthright.
 - c. The youngest according to his youth.
 - d. The boys marveled at this.
 - (1) The brothers were assigned seats which corresponded with their age.
 - (2) Joseph would have known their ages and could arrange their seats.
 - (3) The brothers not known this would be amazed at the seating arrangement.
- G. The Forgiveness Shown at the Feast (Genesis 43:34)
1. Joseph sent *“messes unto them from before him; but Benjamin’s mess was five times so much as any of theirs.”*
 - a. This was yet another test for the boys.
 - b. Would they be jealous of their brother’s portion? They had been jealous of Joseph’s favoured position years before. If they had changed they wouldn’t be upset over Benjamin’s favoured portion.
 2. Joseph was willing to forgive (see Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13).
 - a. Consider Stephen (Acts 7:60).
 - b. Consider Paul (compare sufferings of 2 Corinthians 11:22-27 with Paul’s willingness to die for his Hebrew brethren in Romans 9:1-3).
 3. *“They drank, and were merry with him.”*
 - a. This indicated that they were not jealous of Benjamin’s portion.
 - b. It also indicates that they genuinely had a good meal and time with Joseph.