

## Genesis 42

Verses 1- 5

Now Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, and Jacob said to his sons, “Why are you staring at one another?” <sup>2</sup> Then he said, “Look, 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.” <sup>3</sup> So ten of Joseph’s brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt. <sup>4</sup> But Jacob did not send Joseph’s brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, “I am afraid that harm may happen to him.” <sup>5</sup> So the sons of Israel came to buy grain among those who were coming, because the famine was *also* in the land of Canaan.

**Jacob said to his sons, “Why are you staring at one another?”**

10 of the 11 boys at home with Jacob are between the ages of 40 and 47

See chart 4205

Ch	Person	Event	Age	Year
27 - 28	Jacob	Trip to Haran	77	1759
29	Jacob	7 years for Rachel	77-84	1752
29 - 30	Jacob	7 years and 11 kids	84-91	1752 - 1745
30	Jacob	Joseph born	91	1745
31	Jacob	6 years for the flocks	97	1739
32-33		Jacon & Esau reunite	97	1739
35	Jacob	Benjamin born	97	1739
37	Joseph	Sold to Ishmaelites	17	1728
40	Joseph	Cupbearer and Baker	28	1717
35	Isaac	Isaac dies	180	1716
41	Joseph	Years of famine	38-44	1707 - 1701
45	Joseph	5 years of famine left	40	1705

And yet they seem unable to make a decision about what to do

**“I am afraid that harm may happen to him**

Benjamin had become Jacob's favorite son and he refused to entrust Benjamin to his other sons on this trip to Egypt.

You can't blame Jacob for reaching that conclusion given what had happened to Joseph

**So the sons of Israel came to buy grain among those who were coming, because the famine was *also* in the land of Canaan.**

Numerous groups of people from many different places were coming to Egypt

Verses 6-7

**<sup>6</sup> Now Joseph was the ruler over the land; he was the one who sold grain to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down to him *with their faces* to the ground. <sup>7</sup> When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he disguised himself to them and spoke to them harshly. He said to them, “Where have you come from?” And they said, “From the land of Canaan, to buy food.”**

**<sup>6</sup> Now Joseph was the ruler over the land; he was the one who sold grain to all the people of the land.**

Even though Joseph was 2<sup>nd</sup> only to the king it seems he took a very active role in deciding who would get grain

If he had delegated this role to another, he might have missed the opportunity to confront his brothers

**And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down to him *with their faces* to the ground.**

His first dream concerning his brothers bowing down to him came true at this moment

The second dream that included his father bowing down to him will come soon enough

**7 When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he disguised himself to them and spoke to them harshly**

Before Joseph shows kindness to his brothers he is going to let them agonize a bit over their role in treating him like an enemy

Verses 8-17

**8 But Joseph had recognized his brothers, although they did not recognize him.**

**9 And Joseph remembered the dreams which he had about them, and he said to them, “You are spies; you have come to look at the undefended parts of our land.”**

**10 And they said to him, “No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. <sup>11</sup> We are all sons of one man; we are honest men, your servants are not spies.”**

**12 Yet he said to them, “No, but you have come to look at the undefended parts of our land!”**

**13 But 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.”**

**14 Yet Joseph said to them, “It is as I said to you, you are spies; <sup>15</sup> by this you will be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here! <sup>16</sup> Send one**

**of you and have him get your brother, while you remain confined, so that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you. But if not, by the life of Pharaoh, you are certainly spies!”**

**17 So he put them all together in prison for three days.**

**You are spies; you have come to look at the undefended parts of our land.**

Why do you think Joseph charged his brothers with being spies?

They had treated him like an enemy, now it was their turn to treat them like one

An enemy would come to discover the state of Egypt's military preparedness

And that made them spies

**<sup>11</sup> We are all sons of one man;**

Their response was that no father would risk sending ten sons on a single spy mission.

That was an excellent argument

## **We are honest men**

They sold their brother into slavery, and lied to your father about it

Ok, maybe not totally honest

**<sup>13</sup> But 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.**

Oops, Too much information

They shouldn't have volunteered any info about Benjamin

Of course Joseph already knew this, but they didn't know that he knew.

**<sup>14</sup> Yet Joseph said to them, “It is as I said to you, you are spies;**

Do you think Joseph was enjoying this?

**So he put them all together in prison for three days.**

Joseph did not allow one of them to leave right away

He may have wanted time to consider his next move

Verses 18-20

**<sup>18</sup> Now Joseph said to them on the third day, “Do this and live, for I fear God: <sup>19</sup> if 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, <sup>20</sup> and bring your youngest brother to me, so that your words may be verified, and you will not die.” And they did so. <sup>21</sup> Then 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; for that reason this distress has happened to us.” <sup>22</sup> Reuben answered them, saying, “Did I not tell you, ‘Do not sin against the boy’; and you would not listen? Now *justice for his blood* is required.” <sup>23</sup> They did not know, however, that Joseph understood, for there was an interpreter between them.**

### **<sup>18</sup> Now Joseph said to them on the third day**

After the three days, Joseph decided only one would be left in prison.

Perhaps Joseph considered the danger of anyone traveling that distance all alone

So he sent them all home except Simeon

### **Do this and live; for I fear God**

Spying brought the death penalty, so Simon would be executed if they failed to return

His mention of God must have been a source of hope for the brothers.

**Then 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; for that reason this distress has happened to us.**

The detail that they heard and refused Joseph's pleading was not recorded earlier

His words still haunted them and their conscience would not let them forget what they had done

### **Now *justice for his blood is required***

They had not killed their brother, but they are convinced that he is dead and they are responsible for his death

God had said "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed

See Genesis 9:6

God's law of reaping what you sow was ingrained in their thinking

**They did not know, however, that Joseph understood, for there was an interpreter between them.**

Joseph learned, from what they said, something he might not have known until then

That Reuben had attempted to restrain the others.

Verse 24-25

**<sup>24</sup> Then he 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.**

**<sup>25</sup> Then Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, but *also* to return every man's money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. And that is what was done for them.**

**<sup>24</sup> Then he turned away from them and wept**

The conversation of his brothers touched Joseph's heart

After he stopped weeping he returned to the business at hand.

**He took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.**

Why was Simeon chosen?

Reuben was the oldest and responsible for his brother's actions but he had tried to rescue Joseph from his brothers

See Gen 38:21-22

Simeon, the second in command, didn't stop them when Reuben was absent

See Gen 38:28-29

Simeon was not just imprisoned, he was also bound

**<sup>25</sup> Then Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, but *also* to return every man's money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey**

Why would Joseph be so generous to potential spies?

He gave them grain, their money back, and provisions for the trip back home

Eight of the nine men won't discover the money until they get home but would potential spies be given grain and provisions for the trip back home?

Their guilty conscience probably blocked out any thought that this was an act of kindness.

Verses 26-28

**<sup>26</sup> So they loaded their donkeys with their grain and departed from there. <sup>27</sup> But when one *of them* opened his sack to give his donkey feed at the overnight campsite, he saw his money; and behold, it was in the opening of his sack! <sup>28</sup> So he said to his brothers, “My money has been returned, and look, it is right in my sack!” Then their hearts sank, and they *turned* trembling to one another, saying, “What is this that God has done to us?”**

**But when one *of them* opened his sack to give his donkey feed at the overnight campsite, he saw his money; and behold, it was in the opening of his sack!**

Do you think that happened by chance?

When the other 8 men opened their sacks after they got home their money was not in the opening of the sack

See verse 35 ..... as they were emptying their sacks

**Then their hearts sank, and they *turned* trembling to one another**

The physical reaction to this situation says a lot about a hidden sin

If not repented of, it amplifies over time, and can affect one physically

**What is this that God has done to us?**

In verse 21, the 10 brothers said:

“Surely we are being punished because of our brother”

We know that is not the case but they are doing a good job of punishing themselves

God has given mankind a conscience, a little green cricket that whispers in our ear, and that voice is tormenting them right now

The trip home gave them plenty of time to think about all of this

But one can guess that it wasn't a pleasant trip

Verses 29-34

**<sup>29</sup> When they came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him everything that had happened to them, saying, <sup>30</sup> “The man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly with us, and took us for spies of the country. <sup>31</sup> But we said to him, ‘We are honest men; we are not spies. <sup>32</sup> We 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.’ <sup>33</sup> But the 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. <sup>34</sup> But bring your youngest brother to me so 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.’”**

All of this is a repeat of previous verses but one comment should be made here

**<sup>32</sup> We 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**

The brothers did not know for certain that Joseph was dead

But they told Joseph the same story that they had told their father 25 years ago

Those who deceive others end up deceiving themselves

Verses 35-38

**<sup>35</sup> Now it came about, as they were emptying their sacks, that behold, every man’s bag of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw their bags of money, they were afraid. <sup>36</sup> And their father Jacob said to them, “You have deprived me of my sons: Joseph is gone, and Simeon is gone, and *now* you would take Benjamin; all these things are against me.” <sup>37</sup> Then 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.” <sup>38</sup> But Jacob said, “My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he alone is left. If harm should happen to him on the journey you are taking, then you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow.”**

**<sup>35</sup> Now it came about, as they were emptying their sacks, that behold, every man’s bag of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw their bags of money, they were afraid.**

At this point the 9 men should have realized this was a blessing

What were the odds that something like this could happen by chance?

That all nine bags had their money in them

That one of the bags had the money at the opening of the bag and was discovered on the way home

That the other 8 had the money father down so it wouldn't be discovered until later

**Joseph is gone, and Simeon is gone, and *now* you would take Benjamin; all these things are against me.**

Jacob jumped to this conclusion a little too quickly; Simon was not dead yet

**But Jacob said, "My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he alone is left. If harm should happen to him on the journey you are taking, then you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow."**

In saying this, Jacob was giving Simon the death penalty

And there was no reason to believe that Benjamin would not come back