

# Genesis 42 - The Move to Egypt; The Brother's First Visit; Reunion with Joseph; Nine Brothers Return to Canaan

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## Genesis 42

(C) Jacob and Joseph's brothers go to Egypt (Gen 42:1—47:26)

(a) Brothers' first trip to Egypt (42:1-38)

(i) Trip to Egypt (42:1-24)

(a) Need for trip (42:1-5)

**1** Now Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, and Jacob said to his sons, "Why are you staring at one another?"

**1** Now Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, and Jacob said to his sons, "Why are you staring at one another?"

**1** Eventually, Jacob observed that there was grain in Egypt, so he asked his sons, "Why do you keep on staring at one another?"

**1** Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another?

- The meaning of Jacob's question is, why look at one another in consternation as to what to do regarding the famine

2 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."  
2 He said, "Behold, 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."  
2 Pay attention now! I've heard that there is grain in Egypt, so go down there and buy some grain for us, so we can live, instead of dying."  
2 And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die.

3 So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt.  
3 Then ten brothers of Joseph went down to buy grain from Egypt.  
3 So ten of Joseph's brothers left to buy grain from Egypt.  
**3** And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt.

4 But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, "I am afraid that harm may happen to him."  
4 But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, "I am afraid that harm may befall him."  
4 Jacob would not send Joseph's brother Benjamin to accompany them, because he was saying, "I'm afraid that he'll come to some kind of harm."  
4 But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him.  
- Benjamin, Joseph's only full brother, stayed behind, because Jacob favored the children of Rachel, and Benjamin was all he had left (in his mind) from his favorite wife

5 So the sons of Israel came to buy grain among those who were coming, because the famine was *a/so* in the land of Canaan.  
5 So the sons of Israel came to buy grain among those who were coming, for the famine was in the land of Canaan *a/so*.  
5 Israel's sons went in a caravan that included others who were going to Egypt to buy grain, because the famine pervaded the land of Canaan, too.  
5 And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan.  
- The 10 brothers were among many who made the trek to Egypt to buy grain

(b) Initial contact with Joseph (42:6-17)

**6** 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.

**6** Now Joseph was the ruler over the land; he was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down to him with *their* faces to the ground.

**6** Meanwhile, Joseph continued to be ruler over the land, in charge of selling to everyone in the land. Joseph's brothers appeared and bowed down to him, face down.

**6** And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth.

7 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."

7 When Joseph saw his brothers he recognized them, but he disguised himself to them and spoke to them harshly. And he said to them, "Where have you come from?" And they said, "From the land of Canaan, to buy food."

7 As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he knew who they were, but he remained disguised and asked them gruffly, "Where are you from?"

"From the land of Canaan," they replied. "We're here to buy food."

7 And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food.

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

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

**8** But Joseph had already recognized his brothers, even though they had not recognized him.

**8** And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not 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."

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

9 Furthermore, Joseph remembered the dreams that he had about them. So he accused them, "You're spies! You've come here to spy on our undefended territories!"

9 And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

- After recognizing them, to carry out his ploy he accused them four times of being spies (v8,12,14,16), having come under cover of famine to gather intelligence on where Egypt

may be vulnerable to attack

- His language, his dress, his official bearing, and his position did their part in disguising him

- He was handling them roughly, but underneath his severity was affection, as the later reunion makes clear

- Ironically the brothers were speaking to a person they thought was dead (v13)

- Their presence in Egypt confirmed the truth of his dreams, but not their fulfillment

- Joseph knew that all the family must come to Egypt under his rulership

10 And they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food.

10 Then they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food.

10 "No, your majesty," they replied. "Your servants have come here to buy food.

**10** And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come.

- The denied the charge, and reiterated that they were there simply to purchase food

11 We are all sons of one man; we are honest men, your servants are not spies."

11 We are all sons of one man; we are honest men, your servants are not spies."

11 We're all sons of a common father. We're honest men, your majesty. We're not spies!"

11 We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies.

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

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

12 But Joseph kept insisting, "It's just as I've said—you've come here to spy on our unguarded territories!"

**12** And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

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."

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."

13 "But your majesty," they pleaded, "your servants include twelve brothers, the sons of a common father back in the land of Canaan. Please! Our youngest brother remains with our father, and the other one is no longer alive."

**13** And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not.

14 Yet Joseph said to them, "It is as I said to you, you are spies;

14 Joseph said to them, "It is as I said to you, you are spies;

14 "I'm right!" Joseph insisted. "Just as I said, you're spies!

**14** And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies:

15 by this you will be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here!

15 by this you will be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother comes here!

15 So here's how we'll test you. You can bet the life of Pharaoh that you're not leaving here until your youngest brother comes here!

15 Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither.

- Revealing the existence of Benjamin gave Joseph an opportunity...

16 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!"

16 Send one of you that he may get your brother, while you remain confined, that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you. But if not, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies."

16 One of you is to be sent back so he can get your brother while the rest of you remain in custody. That way, we'll test whether or not you're telling the truth. If you're not, as surely as the Pharaoh lives, you're spies!"

16 Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies.

- He demanded that one of them bring their little brother as proof that they were not spies

— The other nine brothers would be held captive in prison in Egypt until the one brother returned with Benjamin

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

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

17 Then Joseph locked them all together in prison for three days.

17 And he put them all together into ward three days.

- All 10 brothers were locked in prison for three days to think about Joseph's offer

(c) Joseph's orders (42:18-24)

18 Now Joseph said to them on the third day, "Do this and live, for I fear God:

18 Now Joseph said to them on the third day, "Do this and live, for I fear God:

18 Three days later, Joseph told them, "I fear God, so do this and you'll live.

18 And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God:

- Joseph's change of plans was the result of his fear of God

19 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,

19 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,

19 If you're honest men, leave one of your brothers here in custody, then the rest of you can leave and take some grain with you to alleviate the famine that's affecting your households.

19 If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses:

- Instead of one brother sent back to retrieve Benjamin and nine brothers held in prison, nine brothers would be sent back, with grain, and one held until Benjamin was brought back

20 and bring your youngest brother to me, so that your words may be verified, and you will not die." And they did so.

20 and bring your youngest brother to me, so your words may be verified, and you will not die." And they did so.

20 Just be sure to bring your youngest brother back to me so what you've claimed can be verified. That way, you won't die."

20 But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.

- Bringing Benjamin back would verify their word about not being spies, and also save their lives from death

21 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."

21 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; therefore this distress has come upon us."

21 "We're all guilty because of what we did to our brother!" they told each other. "We kept on watching his suffering while he pleaded with us! We're in this mess because we wouldn't listen!"

21 And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.

- A taste of retribution began to awaken feelings in the brothers, feelings that Joseph's cries for mercy (v21) and Jacob's tears (37:34-35) had failed to awaken

- They sensed that having to bring Benjamin back to Egypt against the wishes of their father would be punishment for their having sold Joseph

- This verse provides additional revelation about Gen 37, which contained no record of Joseph pleading in distress to be freed

22 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."

22 Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not tell you, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen? Now comes the reckoning for his blood."

22 "Didn't I tell you!" Reuben replied. "'Don't wrong the kid!' I said, but would you listen? No! Now it's payback time!"

**22** And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.

- This was Reuben's, "I told you so" moment

- Reuben indeed tried to interfere, and saved Joseph's life, and now he had a chance to say that he was not as guilty as the others were

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

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

23 Meanwhile, they had no idea that Joseph could understand them, since he was talking to them through an interpreter.

23 And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter.

- Throughout these discussions, Joseph was not speaking to his brothers directly, but rather through an interpreter, pretending he didn't speak their Hebraic or Semitic language

- By overhearing this conversation, Joseph learned that Reuben, the firstborn, did not participate in selling him into slavery

24 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.

24 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.

24 He turned away from them and began to weep.

When he returned, he spoke with them, but then he took Simeon away from them and had him placed under arrest right in front of them.

24 And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

- This is the first of 5x Joseph wept (43:30; 45:1-2,14-15; 50:17)

- By taking Simeon in front of them, the brothers understood that Joseph was serious about the second alteration of the plan

- He picked the second oldest brother since he was now viewed as the one most responsible for selling Joseph into slavery

#### (ii) Return to Canaan (42:25-38)

##### (a) Discovery of the provision (42:25-28)

25 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.

25 Then Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain and to restore every man's money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. And thus it was done for them.

25 After this, Joseph gave orders to fill up their sacks with grain, to return each man's money to his own sack, and to supply each of them with provisions for their return journey. All of this was done for them.

**25** Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them.

- Joseph commanded his servants to do three things:

- Fill their vessels with grain

- Restore each brother's money in their sack, so the money was placed in such a way that it was not immediately visible

- Provide them with provisions for their journey, so the brother's would not have to eat immediately from the grain; he gave them separate provisions enough to get them back to Canaan

**26** So they loaded their donkeys with their grain and departed from there.

**26** So they loaded their donkeys with their grain and departed from there.

26 Then they each mounted up, their donkeys having been loaded with grain, and left from there.

26 And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence.

27 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!

27 As one of *them* opened his sack to give his donkey fodder at the lodging place, he saw his money; and behold, it was in the mouth of his sack.

27 Later on, one of them opened up his sack to give his donkey some fodder after they had stopped at the place where they intended to lodge for the night. There, in the mouth of his sack, was all of his money!

27 And 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.

28 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?**"

28 Then he said to his brothers, "My money has been returned, and behold, it is even in my sack." And their hearts sank, and they *turned* trembling to one another, saying, "What is this that God has done to us?"

28 He reported to his brothers, "My money has been returned! It's right here in my sack!" Trembling with mounting consternation, each of them asked one another, "What is God doing to us?"

28 And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?

- "...What is this that God has done to us?" - this was a fruitful reaction to trouble

— They apparently felt that Joseph would accuse them of theft, which would support his contention that they were spies

— At this point, only one brother knew his money had been returned

(b) Explanation to Jacob (42:29-35)

29 When they came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him everything that had happened to them, saying,

29 When they came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them, saying,

29 As soon as they had returned to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him everything that had happened to them.

29 And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them; saying,

30 "The man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly with us, and took us for spies of the country.

30 "The man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly with us, and took us for spies of the country.

30 "The man who was in charge of the land spoke harshly to us," they said. "He accused us of being spies!

30 The man, who is the 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.

31 But we said to him, 'We are honest men; we are not spies.

31 But we told him, 'No! We're honest men! We're not spies!

31 And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies:

32 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.'

32 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.'

32 Our father has twelve sons, but one of us isn't alive anymore, and our youngest brother is with our father today back home in Canaan.'

32 We be twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan.

33 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.

33 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.

33 But the man who was in charge of the land responded, 'I'm going to test your honesty. Leave one of your brothers with me, take some grain for the famine that's afflicting your households, and leave.

33 And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone:

34 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.'"

34 But bring your youngest brother to me 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.'"

34 But bring your youngest brother back to me so I can be sure that you're honest men, and not spies. Then I'll return your brother to you, and you'll be allowed to trade anywhere in the land.'"

34 And bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffick in the land.

**35** 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.

**35** Now it came about as they were emptying their sacks, that behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were dismayed.

**35** Later on, as they went about unloading their sacks, each man's bundle of money was found in each man's sack. When they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were greatly distressed.

**35** And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.

- Now the rest of the brother's learned that their money had been returned

#### (c) Jacob's grief (42:36-38)

36 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."

36 Their father Jacob said to them, "You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and you would take Benjamin; all these things are against me."

36 Their father Jacob told them, "You're causing me to lose my children! Joseph is gone. Now Simeon is gone, and you're planning to take Benjamin, too. Everything's going against me!"

36 And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.

37 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."

37 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."

37 "Feel free to put my own two sons to death," Reuben responded to his father, "if I don't bring him back to you. Trust me—I'll bring him back to you."

**37** And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again.

- The always salutary Reuben made his father an offer easy to refuse—killing his grandsons

- Reuben knew the Jacob would never kills his two grandchildren; he is reassuring Jacob that he will return Benjamin to him

- Reuben once again took on the responsibility of the firstborn

38 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."

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

38 But Jacob replied, "My son isn't going back with you, since his brother is dead and he's the only one left. If something should harm him as you travel, then it'll be death for me and my sad, gray hair!"

**38** And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

- The brothers wanted to return to Egypt as quickly as possible to rescue Simeon, but Jacob refused

- In his rationale, Jacob again emphasized that Joseph and Benjamin were full brothers, and Benjamin (he thought) was the only surviving son of his favorite wife, Rachel

- It was necessary that the brothers be tested before they could participate in God's blessing

- Joseph's prodding had to be subtle; the brothers must perceive the hand of God moving against them so that they would acknowledge their crime against Joseph and their previous unbelief in his dreams. But one test was not enough; there must be two.