

JOSEPH MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN TO HIS BRETHREN

BIBLE TEXT : Genesis 43:15-34; 44:1-34; 45 :1-15

LESSON 38 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Though hand Join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered" (Proverbs 11:21).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Genesis 43:15-34

43:15 And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

16 And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring *these* men home, and slay, and make ready; for *these* men shall dine with me at noon.

17 And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.

18 And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses.

19 And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they communed with him at the door of the house,

20 And said, O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food:

21 And it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, *every* man's money *was* in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand.

22 And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks.

23 And he said, Peace *be* to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them.

24 And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave *them* water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender.

25 And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there.

26 And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which *was* in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth.

27 And he asked them of *their* welfare, and said, *Is* your father well, the old man

Bible References:

I The Scarcity of Food and the Second Trip to Egypt

1 The continuing famine, and Simeon's retention by Joseph as a hostage, necessitate another trip to Egypt, Genesis 43:1, 2, 15

2 The guilt-burdened brothers fail to see friendliness in Joseph's hospitality Genesis 43:16-22;

Proverbs 13:15

Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors *is* hard.

Romans 2:9

Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

3 Joseph's steward, a God-fearing man, reassures the anxious brothers, Genesis 43:23-25

II The Second Interview with Joseph

1 In greeting Joseph, the eleven brothers completely fulfill his first prophetic dream, Genesis 43:26-28;

Genesis 37:7-8 (KJV)

37:7 For, behold, we *were* binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.

8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

2 Joseph yearns to reveal himself to his brothers, but wisely refrains from doing so, Genesis 43:29-31

3 Joseph feasts with his brothers as guests, Genesis 43:32-34

4 The transaction is completed and the money is again placed in each man's sack, together with Joseph's cup in Benjamin's sack, Genesis 44:1, 2

III The Beginning of Their Return Journey and Its Delay

1 The eleven start home and are intercepted and accused of stealing, Genesis 44:3-6

2 They protest the charge, defending their innocence to the extreme, Genesis 44:7-10

3 The cup is found in Benjamin's sack and they all return to Joseph, Genesis 44:11-13

4 Joseph charges them with the crime and Judah makes a heart-touching plea for clemency, admitting their guilt before God, Genesis 44:14-34

IV Joseph's Revelation of His Identity

1 The plea that Judah made touches Joseph's heart, Genesis 45:1

2 Joseph makes himself known to his brethren, Genesis 45:1-4

3 Seeing that they are truly repentant, Joseph absolves them of blame, showing that his being sold as a slave was a part of God's plan, Genesis 45:5-8; 44:16;

Genesis 42:21-22

42:21 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

of whom ye spake? *Is* he yet alive?

28 And they answered, Thy servant our father *is* in good health, he *is* yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.

29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, *Is* this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.

30 And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought *where* to weep; and he entered into *his* chamber, and wept there.

31 And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread.

32 And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that *is* an abomination unto the Egyptians.

33 And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another.

34 And he took *and sent* messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

Genesis 44:1-34

44:1 And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks *with* food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth.

2 And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.

3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses.

4 *And* when they were gone out of the city, *and* not *yet* far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?

5 *Is* not this *it* in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.

6 And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words.

7 And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing:

8 Behold, the money, which we found in

us.

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.

Romans 8:28-31

8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

4 Joseph requests them to live in Egypt during the remaining years of famine, Genesis 45:9-15

Notes:

Twenty-two years had passed since the cruel day when Joseph was sold into bondage by nine of his brothers. This period of almost a quarter of a century had held much suffering for Joseph; false accusations had been made that caused him to languish in the dungeon of the king's prison for a long period of time; and at least twice in 13 years temporary prosperity had come to him after long and faithful service, only to be swept away overnight. He had also known the pangs of homesickness and longing for those of his own flesh and blood — which many classify as being among the most poignant sufferings of our lives. More than that, he was separated from the worship of the true God. But through it all, we find Joseph remaining true to God, a shining jewel in the midst of adversity and reverses, a light in a nation of darkness, and an example of patience such as is seldom found in any land or country.

The Bible is not the only book that tells the story of Joseph. So outstanding was his life that it has made its imprint on men of all creeds. We find references made to his unimpeachable conduct and character in secular writings of ancient as well as modern origin, and in the dogmas and writings of other religions than the true religion. False religions must borrow some truth to make their deception palatable, and the story of Joseph has been incorporated by them into their teachings as an example of a man who was true and faithful and a model for everyone to follow.

The whole story of Joseph's treatment of his brethren, of his making himself known to them after he had sufficiently proved them, and of his sending for the whole family to come down to Egypt, is so plainly and graphically told in the scriptural account that it is unnecessary to explain it here. However, we can draw some valuable object lessons from it to apply to our everyday lives. Some of these we shall attempt to show here.

First, we have the solemn fact of the unescapable guilt of sin. Our last lesson showed us how the guilt of selling their young brother into slavery had dogged the footsteps of the ten brothers for these long, weary years. No doubt, many times they thought about his Darting pleas and cries as the caravan took him away into Egypt. On their beds at night, under the stars above, God had talked to them, reminding them of their evil deeds and convicting them of their sins. Now, many years afterward, we find that this guilt had so clouded their minds that they could not see that Joseph's act of hospitality in taking them into his own royal home

our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?

9 With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.

10 And he said, Now also *let it be* according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless.

11 Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack.

12 And he searched, *and* began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

13 Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.

14 And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he *was* yet there: and they fell before him on the ground.

15 And Joseph said unto them, What deed *is* this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?

16 And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we *are* my lord's servants, both we, and *he* also with whom the cup is found.

17 And he said, God forbid that I should do so: *but* the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

18 Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou *art* even as Pharaoh.

19 My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother?

20 And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.

21 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him.

22 And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for *if* he should leave his father, *his father* would die.

23 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.

24 And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told

as guests was an act of friendliness. They thought it was part of a plot that he might seek an occasion against them and take them for bondslaves. In our present-day language we might say that they were suspecting him of "creating an incident" that he might then accuse them and take their liberty and property in retribution.

We saw how God ordered the whole affair so that the two brothers who were the most responsible for the sale of Joseph suffered the most and were required to take the positions of greatest anxiety in their trips to Egypt. This had its effect upon their hearts and consciences, and in this wonderful lesson we see what it did, particularly to Judah. When they were accused of the theft of Joseph's cup, Judah made an impassioned plea and a confession that caused Joseph to see that they had suffered enough for their sins. Twenty-two years of time had not destroyed the tender feelings of Joseph's heart. He could no longer contain himself, but wept as he revealed himself to them.

The dream that God had given Joseph as a lad was fulfilled now, many years afterward. In the dream he had seen the heavens belonging to his brothers doing "obedience" to his sheaf. They had interpreted the dream themselves and then took offense at the interpretation of it; but now they did not hesitate to bow down to the ground in his presence showing him the greatest honor possible, not realizing at the time that he was their brother. Sometimes we have to wait a long time for God's plans to be worked out. It may take patience on our part, at times, to wait until God does it according to His will; but we may be sure that it takes infinitely greater patience on God's part to wait for us, and prepare us, so that we shall be able to fill the place He has for us in that great plan.

In the incident where the brothers were falsely accused of stealing Joseph's cup some might feel that Joseph was taking unfair advantage of his brothers and that they were suffering wrongfully. This was just another step in the God-ordered plan to bring the sinful and arrogant brothers to a place of repentance. A sinner brings much suffering upon himself by his refusal to surrender to God. We can see that the brothers were here able to sense, from their own experience, the feeling of being falsely and wrongfully accused and thereby to know what suffering they had caused Joseph in the days of his youth.

They had strong confidence in their innocence of the theft; and in spite of the former incident when their money was found in their sacks, they made a strong boast as a guarantee of that innocence. God does permit things to come across our pathway to show us the foolishness of our self-sufficiency and the need that we have to lean upon Him in every phase of our life. The boastful attitude, and the overconfident assurance of their innocence, made their suffering all the greater when the cup was found —to their utmost consternation — in Benjamin's sack. Judah's heart-rending pleas revealed what was, no doubt, the deeply-felt sentiment of each of them. Any one of them would gladly have been retained as a slave, or suffered death, and let Benjamin return to his father, rather than to go back without him and witness again the now all-too-familiar grief of that old man over the loss of a favorite son.

God saw that they had suffered enough by this time and He permitted Joseph to break down in their presence and weepingly tell them that he was actually their own brother. This revelation produced an effect that is hard for any of us to imagine. Combined grief and joy must have been theirs as they looked into the face of their long-lost brother. Joseph had been promoted to high honor in the greatest nation in the world at that time; and through his wisdom, in selling the grain to others outside of Egypt, that nation

him the words of my lord.

25 And our father said, Go again, *and* buy us a little food.

26 And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother *be* with us.

27 And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two *sons*:

28 And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since:

29 And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

30 Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad *be* not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life;

31 It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad *is* not *with us*, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave.

32 For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever.

33 Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.

34 For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad *be* not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

Genesis 45:1-15

45:1 Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

2 And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I *am* Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.

4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I *am* Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

6 For these two years *hath* the famine *been* in the land: and yet *there are* five years, in the which *there shall* neither *be*

was becoming the wealthiest (**Genesis 47:13-26 47:13** And *there was* no bread in all the land; for the famine *was* very sore, so that the land of Egypt and *all* the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine. **14** And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. **15** And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth. **16** And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail. **17** And they brought their cattle unto Joseph: and Joseph gave them bread *in exchange* for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year. **18** When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide *it* from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands: **19** Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give *us* seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate. **20** And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh's. **21** And as for the people, he removed them to cities from *one* end of the borders of Egypt even to the *other* end thereof. **22** Only the land of the priests bought he not; for the priests had a portion *assigned* them of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they sold not their lands. **23** Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, *here is* seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. **24** And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the fifth *part* unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones. **25** And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants. **26** And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, *that* Pharaoh should have the fifth *part*; except the land of the priests only, *which* became not Pharaoh's.).

Joseph's attitude was remarkable. He did not blame them in the least. He did not reprove them; but instead, he attempted to comfort them in that trying hour by showing them that God was the author of the whole thing and that he had been sent to Egypt that many lives might be saved—not only the lives of the Egyptians, but the lives of his father and his father's family also, through whom God had ordained that all people of the earth were to be blessed. The Scriptures were not written at that time; but these men came to know, from actual experience, one great truth that is contained in them, in which we take great comfort and consolation: "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 3:28).

QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did Joseph's brothers have to make the second trip to Egypt?
- 2 How many made the trip?
- 3 What kind of reception did they receive?
- 4 How did they interpret this reception?
- 5 What effect did this visit have on Joseph?
- 6 Why were they intercepted on their return home?
- 7 Tell what Judah said in reply to the accusation.
- 8 What effect did Judah's plea have on Joseph?
- 9 What did Joseph give as the reason for his being sold into slavery?
- 10 Did Joseph return evil to his brothers for the evil they did him?

earing nor harvest.

7 And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8 So now *it was* not you *that* sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not:

10 And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast:

11 And there will I nourish thee; for yet *there are* five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.

12 And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that *it is* my mouth that speaketh unto you.

13 And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.

14 And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.

15 Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.