

LESSON 7

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS RETURN TO EGYPT

Scripture Text: *Genesis 43*

Things do not seem good for the brothers now. Joseph's dreams are beginning to be fulfilled. His father and mother, as well as his brothers, now bow to his wishes. He has dominion over them. They are being tested by Joseph, but they do not realize it at this time. Step by step, God's plan begins to take shape. We see a little of the working but not the purpose as yet.

MEMORY VERSE: *"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."*

Psalm 37:5

Let Benjamin Go

Genesis 43:1-7 The second trip to Egypt for corn was delayed while Jacob's sons urged him to send Benjamin along. They pointed out again that Joseph had demanded it—**Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.**

8-10 Judah pointed out the prospect of starvation without more food. He offered to be personally responsible for Benjamin. A big promise, but he meant it, as we shall later see. He remembered with painful remorse a time when he failed to bring a brother home.

11-15 Not willingly but of necessity, Jacob yielded. He advised taking a present to Joseph that the best possible treatment could be received. How sad it is that so many people, after knowing for certain what God requires of them, desire to withhold that one thing. They will gladly give anything else but the Benjamin in their lives that God wants. Many face spiritual starvation before they will let Benjamin go. Let go through love, not because of being forced into a corner by circumstances.

Jacob felt that loss of his children would be the worst bereavement he could suffer. Children are given us as a trust from God. Each is a soul that is to continue forever and ever. Parents should consider it a great privilege to guide that soul into the path of God and Heaven. No loss can surpass the loss of a child to the clutches of Satan. Yet it is happening in many, many cases. We are living in those perilous times of the last days described in 2 Timothy, Chapter 3—a time when children will be disobedient to parents and parents and children will be without natural affection. The sad part is that many parents who are neglecting and losing their children do not realize their bereavement. Without a return to bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, the end can only be the eternal loss of many souls. That is a much greater bereavement than loss of physical lives.

All at once the brothers were living very careful lives; they were paying attention to detail. Besides the present, they must take **double money**—the payment returned on the previous trip (which they could not understand) and money for more corn. Most precious, they were to take their brother, Benjamin. Jacob added a prayer that God would be merciful and send his sons home safely.



Dining With the King

16-25 Coming to Egypt, the brothers stood before Joseph. When Joseph saw Benjamin (saw that they had been obedient), he ordered them taken to his house for dinner. Nothing short of obedience will allow us to sup with Christ (Revelation 3:20). This frightened them. They feared a trick. They hastened to explain to Joseph's steward. They told how they had found the money and that they had brought it back. They truthfully told how they had no knowledge of how it came in their sacks. The steward reassured them. **Peace be to you, fear not.** He called the money a gift from God, or a treasure.

Since Benjamin had come, Joseph's requirement was met. Accordingly Simeon was freed and brought with his brothers. They cleaned up and prepared the gift for Joseph.

True Love

26-31 Joseph came and inquired after their father and, answering, they bowed again **and made obeisance**. No doubt, Joseph remembered his dreams once again. The fulfillments proved that the dreams came from God. More fulfillments will follow. Then Joseph looked at Benjamin, his mother's son, his only full brother. Greeting him with a blessing, he had to hurry out. The longing in his heart brought tears, and he dared not yet tell his brothers who he was. He must first complete the testing of them. Finding a place alone, he wept there. Then washing away the tears, he gained control of his emotions and came out for dinner.

To tell his brothers would have thwarted Joseph's purpose, but if they had known the love in his heart while he spoke roughly to them, they could have borne the testing without fear. If they had known the purpose of the hard things he made them bear and what the outcome would be, they could have stood the test with courage. God tests His children (Hebrews 12:5-7). Just remember that God loves you, and the outcome will be glorious. Joseph showed no resentful attitude toward his brothers who had wronged him because he had none.

An Obvious Change

32-34 There were three tables, one for the brothers who were Hebrews, and one for the Egyptians who would not eat with Hebrews. A third table was for Joseph because of his position. The seating of the brothers in order of age created wonder. How did Joseph know? Serving the meal, Joseph favored Benjamin above the rest. In the festive air, they were merry together. It was obvious to Joseph that the brothers were not jealous of Benjamin as they once were of him. They had passed another portion of their test.

JUST A THOUGHT

"A highbrow is one who is educated beyond his intelligence."

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