

# Genesis 43-45

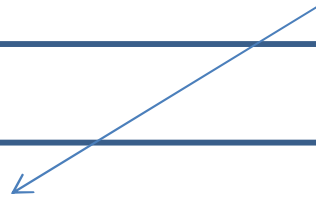
Bible study

## Review

### Chapter 41

Pharaoh is troubled by dreams—his magicians and wise men could not interpret them...

- Joseph inspired by God gives him the interpretation



Seven years of plenty would be followed by seven years of famine

Pharaoh appoints Joseph to 2<sup>nd</sup> in command in Egypt by official ceremony—

- Joseph begins to prepare for the famine by gathering and storing grain

Seven years of plenty end.... and the seven years of famine begin

### Chapter 42

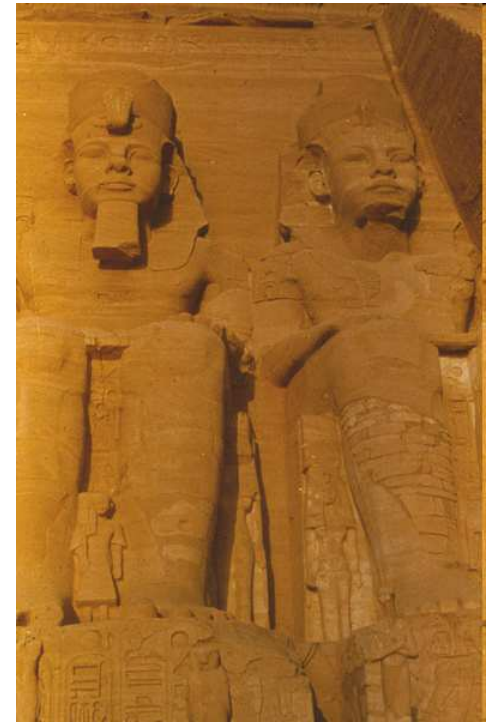
Jacob sends his ten of his sons to Egypt to buy grain...Joseph recognizes them without Benjamin and to test them accuses them of being spies....

- Joseph tells them they must bring Benjamin to Egypt
- They return with grain and food back to Hebron and tell Jacob all that happened to them

## Historical background:

(Zondervan Bible Backgrounds commentary)

“Those who feel a precise chronology can be derived from the biblical record place Joseph in the reign of Senusret Sesostris II or III”



Genesis 41: 43-44

<sup>43</sup>And he had him ride in the **second chariot** which he had; and they cried out before him, “Bow the knee!” So he set him over all the land of Egypt.

<sup>44</sup>Pharaoh also said to Joseph, “I *am* Pharaoh, and without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.”



(Exploring Ancient Egypt, Ian Shaw)

“The powers of the provincial governors at places like Beni Hasan in Middle Egypt became severely reduced starting around the reign of **Senusret III**” [**Sesostris III**]

Historical background continued:

**Genesis 41:55**

<sup>55</sup>So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, “**Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, do.**”

(Lives of the Ancient Egyptians, Toby Wilkinson)

“Senusret III [**Sesotris III** in Greek]...was a ruler who imposed **his will** on the country more effectively than most of its monarchs. Early in his reign, he set about reforming the administration of Egypt. The result was **to centralize power** in the hands of the king and his closest advisers”

(Zondervan Bible Backgrounds Commentary)

“Senusret III is known for reducing the power of the Nomarchs [provincial governors] to restore a more centralized government”

## Chapter 43

Probably a year has gone by

### Genesis 43:1-2

<sup>1</sup>Now the famine *was* severe in the land.

<sup>2</sup>And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, “Go back, buy us a little food.”

The famine was so bad...it was return to Egypt and get more food....or die

<sup>3</sup>But Judah spoke to him, saying, “The man solemnly warned us, saying, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother *is* with you.’”

<sup>4</sup>If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food.

<sup>5</sup>But if you will not send *him*, we will not go down; for the man said to us, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother *is* with you.’”

Judah informs Jacob they cannot return to Egypt without taking Benjamin

<sup>6</sup>And Israel said, “Why did you deal *so* wrongfully with me *as* to tell the man whether you had still *another* brother?”

<sup>7</sup>But they said, “The man asked us pointedly about ourselves and our family, saying, ‘Is your father still alive? Have you *another* brother?’ And we told him according to these words. Could we possibly have known that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down’?”

Judah offers a plan to the deadlock:



<sup>8</sup>Then Judah said to Israel his father, “Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you *and* also our little ones.

<sup>9</sup>I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him *back* to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever.

<sup>10</sup>For if we had not lingered, surely by now we would have returned this second time.”

(BKC) “Judah broke the deadlock with a warmly personal initiative, offering to take the blame if Benjamin were not returned. ...Judah succeeded where Reuben had failed.

Interestingly Judah was the one who had come up with the plan to sell Joseph to Egypt. Now he had to negotiate with his father to get Benjamin to see Joseph”

<sup>11</sup>And their father Israel said to them, “If *it must be* so, then do this: Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man—a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds.

(BKC) “Jacob suggested that they take some of their best products...to the man as a gift. Apparently these delicacies were not available in Egypt”

<sup>12</sup>Take double money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight.

“double money”—would have been silver....shows the wealth of Jacob

<sup>13</sup>Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man.

<sup>14</sup>And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!”

v.14 (a prayer for God’s deliverance in this predicament)

“God almighty”= **El Shaddai**—4<sup>th</sup> time in Genesis God is called El Shaddai-- [17:1;28:3; 35:11]

<sup>15</sup>So the men took that present and Benjamin, and they took double money in their hand, and arose and went down to Egypt; and they stood before Joseph.

<sup>16</sup>When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, “Take *these* men to my home, and slaughter an animal and make ready; for *these* men will dine with me at noon.”

v. 16 “When Joseph saw Benjamin with them”—the assurance of seeing his brother prompted him to make festive arrangements for his brothers

<sup>17</sup>Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph’s house.

<sup>18</sup>Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph’s house; and they said, “*It is because of the money, which was returned in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may make a case against us and **seize** us, to **take us as slaves** with our donkeys.*”

“Seize us, take us” = (fear)  
....occurs only here in this particular meaning



<sup>19</sup>When they drew near to the steward of Joseph's house, they talked with him at the door of the house,

<sup>20</sup>and said, "O sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food;

<sup>21</sup>but it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there, *each* man's money *was* in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand.

<sup>22</sup>And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks."

In a frightened condition Joseph's brothers tell Joseph's steward their story

<sup>23</sup>But he said, "Peace *be* with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

"Your God and the God of your father"—apparently Joseph had spoken to his steward about the true God

■ The sight of Simeon gave reassurance to the brothers of the steward's good faith

<sup>24</sup>So the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave *them* water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed.

<sup>25</sup>Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there.

v. 25 "made the present ready"—preparing it worthy enough to give to a high official

<sup>26</sup>And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which *was* in their hand into the house, and **bowed down before him** to the earth.

<sup>27</sup>Then he asked them about *their* well-being, and said, "*Is* your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? *Is* he still alive?"

The 2<sup>nd</sup> time that the brothers bow down to him [42:6]

His dream of eleven stars and the sun and moon bowing down—only partially fulfilled...there are now eleven brothers but no parents

Which leads to Joseph's question in verse 27 about their father

<sup>28</sup>And they answered, “Your servant our father *is* in good health; he *is* still alive.” And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves.

<sup>29</sup>Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother’s son, and said, “*Is* this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?” And he said, “God be gracious to you, my son.”

<sup>30</sup>Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought *somewhere* to weep. And he went into *his* chamber and wept there.

(Word) “wept there”

“This action, unseen by his brothers but reported to us , intimates that there is a difference between Joseph's public face and his private feelings. He is determined for some undisclosed reason to continue to hide his identity from his brothers”

<sup>31</sup>Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, “Serve the bread”

v. 31 “serve the bread”

(Word) “Joseph hosts a meal for his brothers, who years before had callously sat down to eat while he languished in the pit”

<sup>32</sup>So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, for that *is* an **abomination** to the Egyptians.

**“abomination”**

(NSB) “This word can indicate the strongest revulsion, something that might cause physical illness”  
[46: 34]...an apparent racial and ethnical prejudice of the Egyptian

(Word) “The Egyptian aversion to eating with foreigners is well attested to in classical sources”

(JFB) “The Hebrews used for food male kine, which the Egyptians universally sacrificed, and even female kine, which in Egypt were sacrificed to Isis”

<sup>33</sup>And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another.

<sup>34</sup>Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin’s serving was **five times** as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

v. 33 “looked in astonishment at one another” (accurate seating in order of age)  
‘astonishment’ –has the sense of something unexpected and divine judgment

v. 34 “five times”—the amount of attention given in the quantity

## Chapter 44

(Word) “While the brothers sleep off their banqueting, Joseph and his steward set them up for arrest”

(BKC) “Joseph, already brilliantly successful in creating tensions during their two visits, now produced his master stroke. He tested their concern for Benjamin in order to get them to recognize their evil”

<sup>1</sup>And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, “Fill the men’s sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man’s money in the mouth of his sack.

<sup>2</sup>Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money.” So he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.

Joseph tested his brothers by having the servants put their money (what they had already returned) in their sacks...and his personal silver cup in Benjamin’s sack

<sup>3</sup>As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys.

<sup>4</sup>When they had gone out of the city, *and* were not *yet* far off, Joseph said to his steward, “Get up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good?’”

<sup>5</sup>*Is not this the one* from which my lord drinks, and with which he indeed practices divination? You have done evil in so doing.’”

<sup>6</sup>So he overtook them, and he spoke to them these same words.

(New Bible Commentary) “the claim that the cup was used for divination served to make the charge of theft more threatening”

(Companion) “This was to confirm their belief that Joseph was an Egyptian”

(JFB) “Divination by cups, to ascertain the course of futurity, was one of the prevalent superstitions of ancient Egypt, as it is of Eastern countries still. It is not likely that Joseph, a pious believer in the true God, would have addicted himself to this superstitious practice.

But he might have availed himself of that popular notion to carry out the successful execution of his stratagem for the last decisive trial of his brethren”

<sup>7</sup>And they said to him, “Why does my lord say these words? Far be it from us that your servants should do such a thing.

<sup>8</sup>Look, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord’s house?

<sup>9</sup>With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord’s slaves.”

They feel so confident of their innocence, they proclaim that the thief among them should die and the rest be slaves if the cup is found

<sup>10</sup>And he said, “Now also *let it be* according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and you shall be blameless.”

v. 10 (Word) “Joseph’s whole purpose is to single out Benjamin to see whether his brothers will sacrifice him as they did Joseph”

<sup>11</sup>Then each man speedily let down his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack.

<sup>12</sup>So he searched. He began with the oldest and left off with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack.

<sup>13</sup>Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.

<sup>14</sup>So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he *was* still there; and they fell before him on the ground.

<sup>15</sup>And Joseph said to them, "What deed *is* this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination?"

<sup>16</sup>Then Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? **God has found out the iniquity** of your servants; here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and *he* also with whom the cup was found."

v. 14 Judah takes the lead as he had vouched for the safety of Benjamin to Jacob

"fell before him on the ground"—a posture of absolute humility

v. 15 (Expositors) "It is important to note how the narrative protects Joseph from the charge of actually practicing divination.....when he said to his brothers 'a man as I can certainly practice divination', he cautiously avoided saying that he in fact used the cup.  
All he said was 'a man as I' can use the cup for divination"

<sup>17</sup> But he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so; the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father."

v. 17 Benjamin is to stay in Egypt and be a slave to Joseph...what they had done to Joseph twenty-two years earlier



v. 18-34 **Judah's** plea to Joseph  
(Word) “the longest and most impassioned speech in Genesis”

➤He mentions “his father” fourteen times

Verses 18-29  
Judah reviews the past..their first visit to Egypt

<sup>18</sup>Then **Judah** came near to him and said: “O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord’s hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you *are* even like Pharaoh.

<sup>19</sup>My lord asked his servants, saying, ‘Have you a father or a brother?’

<sup>20</sup>And we said to my lord, ‘We have a father, an old man, and a child of *his* old age, *who is* young; **his brother is dead**, and he alone is left of his mother’s children, and his father loves him.’

<sup>21</sup>Then you said to your servants, ‘Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.’

<sup>22</sup>And we said to my lord, ‘The lad cannot leave his father, for *if* he should leave his father, *his father* would die.’

<sup>23</sup>But you said to your servants, ‘Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.’

v. 22 “his father would die” (without Benjamin)—mentioned two more times in the chapter  
[v. 31, 34]

v. 24-29

Judah continues reviewing the history of the situation....from the perspective of their father Jacob

<sup>24</sup>“So it was, when we went up to your servant my **father**, that we told him the words of my lord.

<sup>25</sup>And our father said, ‘Go back *and* buy us a little food.’

<sup>26</sup>But we said, ‘We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man’s face unless our youngest brother *is* with us.’

<sup>27</sup>Then your servant my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife bore me two sons;

<sup>28</sup>and the one went out from me, and I said, “Surely he is torn to pieces”; and **I have not seen him since.**

<sup>29</sup>But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.’

v. 28 “**I have not seen him since**”

Joseph’s disappearance was a forerunner of the experiences that many of his descendents would experience on a national scale during the centuries of history

v. 29 Judah portrays his father’s grief from having lost Joseph... and to lose Benjamin would be his death

v. 30-32

The consequences if Benjamin does not return with them to Jacob

<sup>30</sup>“Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad *is* not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad’s life,

<sup>31</sup>it will happen, when he sees that the lad *is* not *with us*, **that he will die**. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave.

<sup>32</sup>For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, ‘If I do not bring him *back* to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.’

v. 33-34

Judah offers himself as a slave in place of Benjamin

(Companion) “He who proposed to sell Joseph and save his life, now proposes to remain a bondman for Benjamin”

<sup>33</sup>Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers.

<sup>34</sup>For how shall I go up to my father if the lad *is* not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?”

<sup>1</sup>Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, “Make everyone go out from me!” So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers.

<sup>2</sup>And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard *it*.

Joseph had wept twice before but hid it from his brothers [42: 24; 43: 30]

“wept aloud” [Heb.] “Gave forth his voice in weeping, showing the intensity of feeling”  
(Companion)

<sup>3</sup>Then Joseph said to his brothers, “**I am Joseph**; does my father still live?” But his brothers could not answer him, for they were **dismayed** in his presence.

“I am Joseph” (NSB) “Joseph must have said this in Hebrew and not in Egyptian”

(Companion) “So the true Joseph will one day reveal Himself, and his brethren will be troubled indeed” [Rev. 1: 7; Mat. 24: 30; Zech. 12: 9-14]

### Revelation 1:7

<sup>7</sup>Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

Verse 3  
Another perspective:

<sup>3</sup>Then Joseph said to his brothers, “**I *am* Joseph**; does my father still live?” But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence.

Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers, who knew nothing of the reality of his life after they had sold him into slavery at the hands of the Midianites...to them he was dead and gone

The Joseph story of being lost and enslaved... only eventually to rise from slavery to become leader of the most powerful kingdom of the world at that time



...is a forerunner of his descendents becoming enslaved by the Assyrians...lost to history... only to become powerful nations in recent, modern history

<sup>4</sup>And Joseph said to his brothers, “Please come near to me.” So they came near. Then he said: “*I am* Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.

<sup>5</sup>But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.

v. 5 “to preserve life”

(Companion) “to preserve you a posterity in the earth [v.7], and hence, to ensure the birth of the true Joseph...”

<sup>6</sup>For these two years the famine *has been* in the land, and *there are* still five years in which *there will be* neither plowing nor harvesting.

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

<sup>8</sup>So now *it was* not you *who* sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

v. 8 “a father to Pharaoh”

(Companion) “This is not the Hebrew *Ab* ‘father’ ;but *Ab en Perao* is an Egyptian **title of high office of state**”

<sup>9</sup>“Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph: “God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry.

<sup>10</sup>You shall dwell in the land of **Goshen**, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children’s children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have.

<sup>11</sup>There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for *there are* still five years of famine.”

v. 10-14 (OKJ) Sentence begins with ‘**And**’—for emphasis and importance of what is said

v. 11 “lest you...come to poverty”—during famines people sold all or themselves into slavery

v. 10 “**Goshen**”—Nile delta region (Bible Backgrounds Commentary) “In Egyptian texts the heaviest concentration of Semites occurs in the eastern delta region closest to Canaan. This corresponds to the biblical texts in which the region of Goshen is equated to the district of Ramesses”

<sup>12</sup>“And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that *it is* my mouth that speaks to you.

<sup>13</sup>So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here.”



Goshen





<sup>14</sup>Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck.

<sup>15</sup>Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

“God was with Joseph”—being fulfilled

<sup>16</sup>Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, “Joseph's brothers have come.” So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well.

<sup>17</sup>And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan.

<sup>18</sup>Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you **the best of the land** of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land.

<sup>19</sup>Now you are commanded—do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come.

<sup>20</sup>Also do not be concerned about your goods, for **the best of all the land** of Egypt *is* yours.’”

By Pharaoh's authority Joseph's family would have the best of the land of Egypt

<sup>21</sup>Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them carts, according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey.

<sup>22</sup>He gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred *pieces* of silver and five changes of garments.

<sup>23</sup>And he sent to his father these *things*: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey.

<sup>24</sup>So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, “See that you do not become troubled along the way.”

Multiple provisions:

- carts to carry family
  - Clothing
- Plenty of food for the journey

<sup>25</sup>Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father.

<sup>26</sup>And they told him, saying, “Joseph *is* still alive, and he *is* governor over all the land of Egypt.”  
And Jacob’s heart stood still, because he did not believe them.

<sup>27</sup>But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived.

<sup>28</sup>Then Israel said, “***It is enough***. Joseph my son *is* still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”

v. 26 Jacob’s heart stood still [“fainted” OKJ]



v. 27 “spirit of Jacob their father revived”



v. 28 “Israel” — “used in connection with his strength of faith” (Companion)

## Lessons

(BKC) “Joseph’s tests were important in God’s plan to bless the seed of Abraham. God planned to bring the family to Egypt so that they would grow into a great nation. But it was necessary the people who entered Egypt be faithful to the Lord..”

Joseph realized God’s hand was involved in the events of his life—his enslavement, imprisonment, trials and suffering—God meant it for good...to save the family of Israel, as God brought them to Egypt...to the best of the land