

Day 40 - THURSDAY: December 8th

Genesis 43

Genesis 43:1–34 NKJV

Now the famine was severe in the land. 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." But Judah spoke to him, saying, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.' If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. 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.' " And Israel said, "Why did you deal so wrongfully with me as to tell the man whether you had still another brother?" 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?'" 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. 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. For if we had not lingered, surely by now we would have returned this second time." 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. 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. Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. 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!" 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. 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." Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph's house. 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." When they drew near to the steward of Joseph's house, they talked with him at the door of the house, and said, "O sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food; 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. And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks." 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. 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. Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there. 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. 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?" And they answered, "Your servant our father is in good health; he is still alive." And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves. 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." 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. Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, "Serve the bread." 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. 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. 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.

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 2 – As the famine rages on, Jacob instructs his sons to go back to get more food from Egypt, but is reminded by Judah that they can't go back without Benjamin.

Notice what the UCG reading program shares with us regarding Judah's growth in maturity: "The many years with unresolved guilt have matured the brothers since their earlier misdeed. Contrast the younger and older Judah for instance. In Genesis 37, it was Judah who originated the idea of selling Joseph to the Arabian traders. Now, in Genesis 43, he is willing to offer himself as collateral to protect Joseph's brother, Benjamin. Before, he did not regard his father's happiness. But now he is willing to accept blame forever rather than hurt his father again. Judah will prove the genuineness of his change and the sincerity of his promise in chapter 44." [END]

Verse 11 – Even though Jacob doesn't want them to take his last son of Rachel, Benjamin, with them, the famine forces him to see he has no other choice. He's reminded that he won't just lose Benjamin, but all of his children and grandchildren.

Here at the end of this verse we see Jacob instruct them to send "presents" back to Joseph. This is the same Hebrew

word for “offerings” used earlier in the Bible (for example with Cain and Abel). When used toward God it’s translated “offering” (164x) but toward a man, a “present/gift” (35x).
What did he send them?

Balm – This is a seldom used word (6x in OT), but seems to be a type of balm/salve used for medicine at the time (see Jeremiah 8:22)

Honey – The land of Canaan (Promise Land) was known as the land of milk and honey. Jamieson–Faucet–Brown commentary states the following about the quality of this area’s honey: “the honey of Hebron, which is still valued as far superior to that of Egypt”. This is the first time we’ve seen honey mentioned in the bible.

Spices – A very rare word, only found twice in the bible (other is Genesis 37:25). Since it’s so rare, it’s difficult to know for sure what they were. Some think spices in general, others think it was more specific. Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “is supposed to mean gum storax, which might be very valuable on account of its qualities as a perfume.”

Myrrh – This is also only found twice in the bible (also in Gen 37:25). Again there are various opinions on this word.

John Gill's commentary states: "the liquor called "stacte", that drops from the myrrh tree."

Nuts – This is the only time this word is used. While there are some difference of opinion, the most common aligns with Jamieson–Faucet–Brown commentary that states:

“pistachio nuts, of which Syria grows the best in the world”

Almonds – While only appearing 4x in the Old Testament, this one seems to have agreement on the meaning. Adam Clarke's commentary states: “perhaps the only article in the collection of which we know anything with certainty. It is generally allowed that the land of Canaan produces the best almonds in the east; and on this account they might be deemed a very acceptable present to the governor of Egypt.”

As we see with these gifts, like the rare words that describe them, they likely demonstrate rare gifts that Jacob hoped would soften the Egyptian ruler's heart and aid in gaining the release of Simeon and the return of Benjamin. He also sends double the money with them.

Verse 14 – We see that Jacob once again looks to “El Shadday” (God Almighty) to bring about mercy from this ruler and places the lives of his sons in God's hands.

Verse 18 – These men are terrified. They know their very lives seem to hang in the balance and they fear the “mistake” with their previous money will end up with them being made Joseph’s servants. Little do they know he has already given instructions for a great feast to be prepared for them. What excitement Joseph must have been feeling as he was on the verge of revealing to them who he was.

Verse 23 – After they begin to plead their case and get out a head of what they think is coming, the servant puts their minds at ease and tell them it was no mistake, “he had their money previously, and had put it back.” Wow, what a relief! Simeon is brought out to them. What a mixture of emotions they must be feeling.

Verse 24 – Now in Joseph’s home, which must have been grand, they are treated with such hospitality, including washing their feet in refreshing water and having their animals fed.

Verse 27 – After the brother’s have presented Joseph with their fine gifts, he asks about the wellbeing of his father. He probably has been wondering, “would he live long enough for him to ever be re-united?” That thought probably weighed heavily on him. He must have had such great joy at finding out that he was well in the next verse.

Verse 29 – Benjamin was his only full brothers (same father & mother).

Verse 30 – Here in chapter 43 we are introduced to a new word in the bible that would end up being used 44 times. The KJV translates the word “Bowel” as in “for his bowels did yearn for his brothers”. The NKJV translates this as “heart”. However, the “heart” as an organ (Lev or Levav) in the Bible is a different word. So why “bowel”?

The Bible speaks about the “bowels” as the place where mercy, compassion, intuition come from. It’s why we use phrases about having a “gut feeling” or “gut wrenching”. Science has shown over 30 neurotransmitters that communicate between the brain and the gut, which effect the gut wall and gut bacteria. Science has long known that depression & anxiety has an effect on gut problems, but they now realize it works the other way also, that the gastrointestinal system sends signals up to the brain that effect mood also. When these passages were being written, mankind understood very little about the brain, however, they may have understood more about the interconnectedness of God’s design of humans then we know.

Back to verse 30 specifically: This whole situation continues to be very emotional for Joseph. Which makes perfect sense.

Verse 32 – This is the first time the Bible uses the Hebrew word for “abomination” (used 117x in OT). Why was it an abomination for Egyptians to eat with Hebrews?

Here’s an excerpt of what Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “There might have been some political reason for this, with which we are unacquainted; but independently of this, two may be assigned. 1. The Hebrews were shepherds; and Egypt had been almost ruined by hordes of lawless wandering bandits, under the name of Hyksos, or King-shepherds, who had but a short time before this been expelled from the land by Amasis, after they had held it in subjection for 259 years, according to Manetho, committing the most wanton cruelties. 2. The Hebrews sacrificed those animals which the Egyptians held sacred, and fed on their flesh. The Egyptians were in general very superstitious, and would have no social intercourse with people of any other nation; hence we are informed that they would not even use the knife of a Greek, because they might have reason to

suspect it had cut the flesh of some of those animals which they held sacred.”

In 2014, new research published in the Journal of Archaeological Science presented evidence that early Egyptians were largely vegetarian with the bulk of their diet made up of barley and wheat. See the following article if you are interested in more information

<https://www.livescience.com/45450-what-did-ancient-egyptians-really-eat.html>)