

Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 3.2%

Weekly Readings will cover: Genesis 39 - 45

Sunday: Genesis 39

Monday: Genesis 40

Tuesday: Genesis 41

Wednesday: Genesis 42

Thursday: Genesis 43

Friday: Genesis 44

Saturday: Genesis 45

Current # of email addresses in group: 533

I hope that last week's pause/catch-up week was beneficial for you all. I still did not get to all the questions that were previously sent and I will continue to try to do so.

This week we will continue through the story of Joseph and will end with the climatic reunion of Joseph with his family.

Every one of us have probably been a part of a reading program in the past where we fell behind due to life and quite the program out of discouragement. Let's strive not to let discouragement to cause us to quite this program. This is a long program and you can easily make notes about which week's you missed and need to go back and read at the end. I would encourage anyone who is more than a few days behind to jump right back in with week 7 and keep going forward. God's Word is vital for our spiritual lives, just a physical food is to our physical lives. Satan wants you to be discouraged and quit. Don't let him win! Jump in with week 7 and let's read God's Word together as a group!

As mentioned in week 5, all audio recordings will be posted on our UCG San Francisco Bay Area website at:

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/san-francisco-bay-area-ca/posts/audio-links-re-three-year-chronological-deep-dive-reading-program-circa-2022-2025-903711>

3 YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 7

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 36 - SUNDAY: December 4th

Genesis 39

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 2 – As we read through this story, it's important to see that God is always with Joseph through the up and down path to him becoming the second most powerful person in the nation of Egypt. Here it tells us that Joseph was successful because God was with him.

Verse 3 – Even Potiphar saw that the Lord was with Joseph & it was the Lord who made everything he did prosper.

Verse 4 – Jewish historian Josephus records that Potiphar taught Joseph and instructed him beyond what would have been common to a slave.

Verse 5 – Potiphar's house & field is being blessed and made to prosper by God due to Joseph's presence.

Verse 6 – The NKJV states that “Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.” The Hebrew phrase is: “[yâpheh tô'ar yâpheh mar'eh](#)”. We find this exact same Hebrew phrase used of Joseph's mother Rachel in Genesis 29:17 where it states “Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance.” Well, I guess he didn't get his good looks from his father.

Verse 7 – Jamieson-Faucet-Brown states “he ancient women of Egypt were very loose in their morals. Intrigues and intemperance were vices very prevalent among them, as the monuments too plainly attest [Wilkinson]. Potiphar's wife was probably not worse than many of the same rank, and her infamous advances made to Joseph arose from her superiority of station.” [END]

Verse 9 – Marriage was designed by God. Joseph knew that he would be sinning first and foremost against God if he committed this act.

Verse 10 – This went on day after day after day. How awful! What a test of his conviction and faithfulness!

Verse 11 – Jewish historian Josephus states “there was a public festival coming on, in which it was the custom for women to come to the public solemnity; she pretended to her husband that she was sick, as contriving an opportunity for solitude and leisure, that she might entreat Joseph again.”

Verse 21 - 23 – Even in this down turn of events, God was still with Joseph, still giving him favor and again causing him to rise through the ranks and prosper.

The UCG reading program adds some additional insights. I encourage you to look up the scriptures in third paragraph as they clearly show Joseph following these many biblical principles:

“Joseph was sold again by the Arabian traders to an officer of the Egyptian pharaoh. God surely had a hand in Joseph being sold to Potiphar, “in order that in the house of one so closely connected with the court, he might receive that previous training which was necessary for the high office he was destined to fill, and in the school of adversity learn the lessons of practical wisdom that were to be of greatest utility and importance in his future career” (*Jamieson, Fausset & Brown Commentary*, note on verse 1).

Although Joseph prospered in Potiphar’s house, this was not God’s ultimate purpose for Joseph in his human life—God had a greater design for him. To reach that intent, Joseph had to be thrown into prison, creating the environment where God would later exalt Joseph to the right hand of Pharaoh. This illustrates something very important for us to remember: Sometimes Christians must endure hardship and trial to reach God’s final outcome. Keep in mind that God has created us for an awesome purpose. While Joseph would eventually be taken from prison and given a position in Egypt equivalent to what we would call the nation’s prime minister, we will eventually be taken from this physical, limiting existence and, along with Joseph, will be made co-rulers with God over the entire vast universe! So, if it takes suffering and tribulation to help us attain that purpose, God will allow us to be subjected to it. Yet, although things may look quite bleak at times, God will never leave us nor forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:6; Hebrews 13:5). So we can be patient in times of trial, trusting God and continuing to serve and obey him, knowing that “all things work together for good to

those who love God” (Romans 8:28) and that He will not allow us to be tried beyond what we are able to endure (1 Corinthians 10:13).

We can learn *many* lessons from Joseph’s example. Take some time to look up the following scriptures and notice their relation to this trying period of Joseph’s life: Proverbs 22:29; Proverbs 10:4; Proverbs 12:24; Matthew 25:21; 1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Peter 3:17; Romans 5:3-4; Romans 8:35-39.

One important lesson is that obeying God in all circumstances ultimately works out for the best. Joseph knew that adultery was sin and refused—even though it may have cost him his life—for He trusted in God to bless those who obey Him. (And even if Joseph had lost his physical life, God would have blessed him in eternity.)

Incidentally, this particular episode brings up something else we should notice. Joseph’s response to Potiphar’s wife’s seduction provides us with important information that has sometimes gone overlooked. Joseph asks, “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9). Many today believe that the Ten Commandments were not in place before the time of Moses. Yet not only do we see Joseph’s virtue in his response, but we also find proof that God’s law was known at the time. According to Romans 5:13, “Sin is not imputed when there is no law.” Yet Joseph clearly calls adultery sin, thereby showing that God’s law was in force prior to its codification around 250 years later at Mount Sinai.” [END]

Day 37 - MONDAY: December 5th

Genesis 40

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 2 – Uses the word “butler”. This word in Hebrew means “causing to drink (Strong’s)”. This individual had the responsibility over

all the “cupbearers”. Jamieson-Faucet-Brown states “not only the cup-bearer, but overseer of the royal vineyards, as well as the cellars; having, probably, some hundreds of people under him.”

This commentary goes on to say this about the position of “baker”: “or cook, had the superintendence of everything relating to the providing and preparing of meats for the royal table. Both officers, especially the former, were, in ancient Egypt, always persons of great rank and importance; and from the confidential nature of their employment, as well as their access to the royal presence, they were generally the highest nobles or princes of the blood.”

Verse 4 – This is interesting. We learned in Genesis 37:36 that the “Captain of the Guard” (“Chief of the Butchers”) was Potiphar. We see in Genesis 39:20 that Joseph is confined in the dungeon where the King’s prisoners are sent. And in Genesis 39:23 we see Joseph is placed under the supervision of the “Keeper of the Prison”. Yet here in Genesis 40:4, we again see it’s Potiphar, the Captain of the Guard, who places Joseph over two of the King’s newest prisoners.

Jamieson-Faucet-Brown states “not the keeper, though he was most favorably disposed; but Potiphar himself, who, it would seem, was by this time satisfied of the perfect innocence of the young Hebrew; though, probably, to prevent the exposure of his family, he deemed it prudent to detain him in confinement”.

Verse 5 – Both men, Chief Cupbearer & Chief Baker, have dreams in the same night, both unique to each man. This likely added to the fact that they knew these dreams had special meaning, since this occurred at the same time.

Verse 8 – Joseph takes this opportunity to tell these two powerful men where true interpretations of dreams comes from: God alone!

The Chief-Cupbearer would have a dream dealing with his exact profession of overseeing the grape vines and being the cupbearer to the King himself.

Likewise, the Chief Baker/Cook has several baskets of food, but the highest one had all kinds of “baked goods”. The Hebrew here means

“an eatable” (Food, fruit, meat). It doesn’t mean necessarily bread or bread products, although it could have been. Josephus records the as “sweetmeats and other eatables”.

Verse 14 – Joseph asks that the Chief Cup-Bearer mentions him to Pharaoh but we learn in verse 23 that he doesn’t.

The UCG Bible reading includes this on the chapter:

“It is not clear how long Joseph was in prison, but we can deduce that the total time of his service to Potiphar and his imprisonment to this point was around 11 years. It had been that long since he was sold by his brothers at age 17, making him about 28 when the same Potiphar, captain of the guard who was over the prison warden, makes Joseph serve Pharaoh’s chief butler and chief baker during their confinement. Home may have seemed a distant memory for Joseph by now, given the time he had been away and the trouble in which he now found himself. Being in prison, he was a long way from having his family bow down to him—but he continued to make the best of the situation at hand, and God blessed him for his efforts.

Knowing that God had some big plans in mind, we can assume that these events are His doing. It surely was no accident that two high servants of Pharaoh’s court were both placed in the same prison as Joseph. If they had been servants of any lesser government official, one may not have been in a place to later tell Pharaoh about Joseph’s gift of interpretation. After hearing the prisoners’ dreams, Joseph explains their meaning—and the events come to pass just as he foretells. Perhaps after this divine fulfillment, Joseph remembered his own dream, pondering his past and his future.

It actually seems a little hard to believe that the butler, after seeing Joseph’s interpretation of the dream come true before his eyes, would actually forget about Joseph’s request for a mention to Pharaoh. Perhaps he was so elated to be restored to his high position that he

forgot what Joseph had asked of him. Or maybe after getting his job back as chief butler, he didn't want to give someone else the limelight, or perhaps he feared to remind the pharaoh that he had previously sent him to prison. Whatever the reason, God was still orchestrating events to His timetable—leaving Joseph imprisoned for another two full years before delivering him, illustrating once again that we should be patient as we wait on God. It may take some time, maybe even a *lifetime*, but He *will* come through on His promises.” [END]

Day 38 - TUESDAY: December 6th

Genesis 41

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 1 – Two years after interpreting the Chief Cup-Bearers dream, Joseph is still in prison. Remember, God has been with Joseph ever step of the way. Is this an accident that Joseph had to wait two more years? Could not God had inspired the dream to Pharaoh sooner? God was still in complete control, everything happening exactly at the right time. Pharaoh now has a dream.

Verse 4 – This must have been some sight in his dream. Cows don't eat other cows. Pharaoh wakes up, but then is able to fall back asleep.

Verse 7 – The thin grain engulfs the good grain.

Verse 9 – The NKJV states “I remember my faults this day”. The Hebrew word translated here “faults” is virtually always translated “sins” elsewhere in the Bible. He didn't keep his word, he had left Joseph in prison another two years, without bringing him up to Pharaoh.

Verse 14 – Joseph is brought quickly from the dungeon, where he quickly shaves and changes into appropriate clothes to appear before Pharaoh. Jamieson-Faucet-Brown states “The Egyptians were the only Oriental nation that liked a smooth chin. All slaves and foreigners who were reduced to that condition, were obliged, on their arrival in that country, to conform to the cleanly habits of the natives, by shaving

their beards and heads, the latter of which were covered with a close cap.”

Verse 16 – A true servant of God is careful to not take God’s credit/glory upon oneself. Joseph is clear to give God the glory for what is about to be made known to Pharaoh.

Verse 33 – Joseph advises Pharaoh that he should look for a man who contains two qualities: Discerning & wise.

“Discerning” comes from the Hebrew meaning “to separate mentally (or distinguish). It’s the quality of being able to consider and separate out what is important, how something should be handled, etc.

“Wise” means “wise, intelligent, skillful”.

We aren’t told this, but I think it’s inferred that Joseph isn’t using his own wisdom to tell Pharaoh how to handle this desperate situation that is about to come about for Egypt, but instead was supplied by God. In verse 16 Joseph told Pharaoh that “God would give Pharaoh an answer of peace.” Peace comes in understanding that everything is going to be alright and you understand that God is in control and has a plan.

Joseph tells Pharaoh in verse 33 through 36 what the plan of action was to be.

Verse 39 – Pharaoh understands that there is no one that has the two qualities (“discerning & wise”) that Joseph laid out in verse 36 more than Joseph himself.

Verse 40 – NKJV reads “all my people shall be ruled according to your word”. The literal Hebrew words mean: “At thy mouth do all my people kiss”. This had to do with the culture that those under authority would kiss anything that comes from a superior, in order to show submission and respect to that position and person. Pharaoh is saying that anything Joseph would say would be “kissed” (shown the upmost respect and submission to).

Verse 42 – Albert Barnes commentary states – “His ring.” His signet-ring gave Joseph the delegated power of the sovereign, and constituted him his prime minister or grand vizier. “Vestures of fine linen.” Egypt was celebrated for its flax, and for the fineness of its textures. The priests were arrayed in official robes of linen, and no man was allowed to enter a temple in a woolen garment (Herodotus ii. 37, 81). “A gold chain about his neck.” This was a badge of office worn in Egypt by the judge and the prime minister.” [END]

Verse 43 – Adam Clarke’s commentary says “That which usually followed the king’s chariot in public ceremonies.”, which shows Joseph’s high standing in society.

Then it says in the NKJV “and they cried out before him, "Bow the knee!" So, he set him over all the land of Egypt.”

This word “Bow the knee” is thought to probably to come from Egyptian origin meaning “to kneel” but they really aren’t sure.

This is what Adam Clarke’s commentary says about this word: “*abrech*, which we translate bow the knee, and which we might as well translate anything else, is probably an Egyptian word, the signification of which is utterly unknown.”

Jamieson-Faucet-Brown states this: “*abrech*, an Egyptian term, not referring to prostration, but signifying, according to some, “father” (compare [Gen 45:8](#)); according to others, “native prince” - that is, proclaimed him naturalized, in order to remove all popular dislike to him as a foreigner.”

You can see they aren’t sure. Even without clear understanding, we see that it results in Pharaoh setting Joseph “over all the land of Egypt.”

Verse 44 – Pharaoh continues heaping on honor for Joseph. About verse 44, John Gill’s commentary states: “which is to be taken not in a strict literal sense, but proverbially, signifying, that nothing should be done in the nation of any moment or importance, relating to political affairs, but what was by his order and authority; the hands and feet being the principal instruments of action.”

Verse 45 – This name given to Joseph from Pharaoh is not well

understood. I read several commentaries, but Jamieson-Faucet-Brown gives a succinct commentary: “variously interpreted, “revealer of secrets”; “savior of the land”; and from the hieroglyphics, “a wise man fleeing from pollution” - that is, adultery.”

Jewish historian Josephus states “who called him Psothom Phanech, out of regard to his prodigious degree of wisdom; for that name denotes the revealer of secrets.” (Antiquities-Jews, Book 2, Chapter 6).

Joseph is given a wife from the Egyptian people, from Pot-Pherah, Priest of On. While we might see some similarities between the name of Potiphar and Pot-Pherah, they were two different people.

Verse 46 – When we picked up Joseph’s story he was 17 years old (Gen 37:2), but he’s now 30 years old. A lot had happened for him in the 13 years since he was sold into slavery by his brothers.

Verse 47 – 48: Joseph begins carrying out the plan that he had explained to Pharaoh.

Verse 51 – Joseph has two sons born to him, his first he names Manasseh meaning “causing to forget”.

Verse 52 – His second son is named Ephraim meaning “I shall be doubly fruitful”

The UCG Bible reading program shows how historical documents seem to refer and confirm this account described at the end of chapter 41: “Historical confirmation of this time of abundance succeeded by a long period of great food shortage is believed to exist. The following is from a book titled *The Signature of God* by Grant Jeffrey, 1996, pages 42-43:

A fascinating inscription confirming the Bible’s account of the “seven years of great plenty” followed by the “seven years of famine” (Genesis 41:29-30) was discovered during the nineteenth century in southern Saudi Arabia. This inscription was found on a marble tablet in a ruined fortress on the seashore of Hadramaut in present-day Democratic Yemen. An examination of the writing suggests that it was

written [in the patriarchal age].... This inscription was rendered in Arabic by Professor Schultens and was later translated into English by Rev. Charles Forster. This is his translation of this ancient inscription:

We dwelt at ease in this castle a long tract of time;

nor had we a desire but for the region-lord of the vineyard.

Hundreds of camels returned to us each day at evening,

their eye pleasant to behold in their resting-places.

And twice the number of our camels were our sheep,

in comeliness like white does, and also the slow moving kine.

We dwelt in this castle **seven years of good life**

—how difficult for memory its description!

Then came years barren and burnt up:

when one evil year had passed away,

then came another to succeed it.

And we became as though we had never seen a glimpse of good.

They died and neither foot nor hoof remained.

Thus fares it with him who renders not thanks to God:

His footsteps fail not to be blotted out from his dwelling.

While remarkable, this should not surprise us too much. After all, the Bible is the Word of God—and it *is* true despite the arguments of skeptics. The following is also taken from *The Signature of God*, pages 44-45:

Explorers during the last century discovered a number of other fascinating ancient inscriptions in the Middle East that provided confirmation of facts recorded in the sacred Scriptures.... The greatest treasure of all was a fascinating engraved stone tablet [found in the tomb of a rich Yemenite noblewoman of the patriarchal age] bearing her final inscription which confirmed the biblical account of Joseph's careful management of the remaining food reserves during the seven years of famine in Egypt.

A Yemenite Inscription About a Famine During the Time of Joseph

In thy name O God, the God of Hamyar,

I Tajah, the daughter of Dzu Shefar, **sent my steward to Joseph,**

And he delaying to return to me, I sent my hand maid

With a measure of silver, to bring me back a measure of flour:

And not being able to procure it, I sent her with a measure of gold:

And not being able to procure it, I sent her with a measure of pearls:

And not being able to procure it, I commanded them to be ground:

And finding no profit in them, I am shut up here.

Whosoever may hear of it, let him commiserate me;

And should any woman adorn herself with an ornament

From my ornaments, may she die with no other than my death.

(reported in Niebuhr's *Voyage en Arabie*, PL. LIX.

Translation by Rev. Charles Forster).

It should be noted here that the above translation appears quite credible, since Frieslander Carsten Niebuhr was a respected pioneer in archaeological exploration of the Middle East and in translating inscriptions found there, having accurately translated many from ancient Persepolis." [END]

Day 39 - WEDNESDAY: December 7th

Genesis 42

Daily Deep Dive:

Famines were nothing new. Abraham had gone to Egypt during one (Gen 12:10) and Isaac had gone to Gerar (Gen 26:1). God could have intervened for Jacob and his family and provided them miraculously with food, and maybe they wondered why He wasn't providing and allowed them to be on the brink of starvation, but we know it was all apart of God's plan for them to come down to Joseph in Egypt.

Verse 6 – From the high position of power, influence and control, Joseph oversaw in detail the selling of food, so when his brothers show up, they come and not only bow the knee, but place their faces on the ground and act that John Gill's commentary says was a submission to him in the humblest of manners which brought about God's fulfillment of Joseph's dream (Gen 37:7).

Verse 7 – Even though Joseph recognizes them, he acts as he didn't, and in a hard tone "Where did you come from?".

Verse 8 – His brothers did not recognize their brother who is now a full-grown man, and they had no reason to even expect that their brother who they sold as a slave could possibly be in such a position of great power.

Verse 9 – What does it mean when it says “You have come to see the nakedness of the land!”? When something is naked, everything can be seen and nothing is hidden or held back. Joseph here makes his brothers believe he thinks they are spies looking for how the city might be vulnerable. Here’s what John Gill’s commentary states: “what parts of it are weakest, most defenseless, and less fortified, and most easy to break in at, and invade the land;”

Verse 16 – NKJV says “You shall be kept in prison”. This word for prison (['âsar](#)) means “to tie or bind”.

Verse 17 – Again the NKJV says “he put them all in prison three days.” This word for prison is not the same as the previous verse and it’s not the word used for the type of prison Potiphar threw Joseph in. This is the first time this word [mishmâr](#) is used in the Bible, and while it means “a place of confinement, prison, guard, jail, observance, etc.” It’s used throughout the bible more in the idea of putting someone in a place where they can be “watched, observed, kept contained” but not in the sense of a “dungeon or pit” like Joseph himself was in. I bring this out because initially I thought, “did Joseph throw his brothers into the same type of place where he spent so many years, and if so, was that done to teach them a small taste of what he went through?” But I also had the thought, “that seems a bit cruel to put them in such an awful place, and was that really the type of man he was?” In digging into this, I don’t think so. I think he simply had them held and contained in a place (a type of prison or confinement) so that they didn’t run away and his plan could come about, but not in a way that would treat them cruelly.

Verse 19 – After three days, Joseph let’s all but one of them go.

Verse 21 – We see that Joseph, and their guilt of him, is now squarely on the forefront of their minds. They believe they are being punished for their cruelty to him.

Verse 23 – In this verse we find that Joseph is actually in hearing distance of these conversations, but has spoken Egyptian through a translator thus far, so his brothers don't know that he understands what they are saying.

Verse 24 – Take a moment to imagine the heart ache of this moment. For years he has felt the enormous grief of being betrayed, sold and unwanted by his brothers. He probably great struggled with mixtures of anger and sadness over the years and even here at this moment. But then listening to his brothers, he hears that they at least understand to some degree their guilt and learns that his oldest brother Rueben tried to talk them out of harming him. He turns away from them and weeps. After turning back around, he then binds Simeon in front of all of them. John Gill's commentary states: "who perhaps was the most cruel and hardhearted among them; and it appears from the affair of Shechem, that he was a man of a fierce and bloody disposition. According to Jarchi, it was he that said to Levi, on sight of Joseph, behold this dreamer cometh; and that it was he that cast him into the pit; and, as the Targum says, advised to kill him: and perhaps Joseph might pitch upon him as the hostage, not only because he had used him more evilly than the rest, but because he might observe he was less concerned, and not so much humbled now for the evil he had done as the rest were;" [END]

Verse 28 – They stop at a place of lodging or an inn, and one of them after opening their sack of grain to feed a donkey, and learning that they still had their money, they are very afraid and fear that God has continued to punish them.

Verse 35 – After recounting the whole story to their father Jacob, they find that all of them still have their money, and again fear grips them all. Never in their wildest dreams do they think that they would have purposely been given their money back.

Verse 36 – Jacob is greatly grieved by this whole series of events. He's already lost his son Joseph, he assumes he will never see Simeon again, and he greatly fear if he allows Benjamin to go too, he will lose him as

well. He feels everything is going against him. In our hardest and darkest moments, we don't always remember how much God has been with us and intervened in our lives, we tend to focus on the difficulty of the moment and often feel overwhelmed.

Verse 37 – Reuben promises his father that he will bring Benjamin back, and appears to offer the life of two of his four sons if he doesn't, however, that may not be the case. John Gill's commentary states "to lose his own son, and to have two of his grandchildren slain, would have been an increase of his sorrow and grief, instead of being an alleviation of it; but Reuben's meaning was, not that his children should be slain, but this he says, to show that he would be as careful and solicitous for the return of Benjamin as if the life of two sons of his lay at stake, and was so confident of it that he could risk the life of them upon it, who were as dear to him as one Benjamin was to his father:"

Verse 38 – Jacob says essentially says, "no, you're not taking Benjamin! It would kill me if anything happened to him."

Day 40 - THURSDAY: December 8th

Genesis 43

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 than 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 Hycsos, 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>)

Day 41 - FRIDAY: December 9th

Genesis 44

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 2 – What was this silver cup? Jamieson-Faucet-Brown commentary states “It was a large goblet, as the original denotes, highly valued by its owner, on account of its costly material or its elegant finish and which had probably graced his table at the sumptuous entertainment of the previous day.”

Verse 5 – Joseph asks his servant to ask if they stole the master’s cup, the one he uses to practice divination?

Jamieson-Faucet-Brown commentary states “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”

We certainly know that this is not a practice that God accepts, the Hebrew word used here that is translated “practices divination” is the same word used in both:

Lev 19:26 'You shall not eat *anything* with the blood, nor shall you practice divination or soothsaying.

Deu 18:10 There shall not be found among you *anyone* who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, *or one* who practices witchcraft, *or* a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer,

Here's what the UCG reading program states: "When Joseph's servant confronts the brothers for their alleged crime, he is told to ask, "Is not this [the cup] from which my lord drinks, and with which he indeed practices divination?" (verse 5). Did Joseph really use the cup for prognostication or the interpretation of omens? That would surely not have been approved of by God. About the cup of divination, the *Jamieson, Fausset & Brown Commentary* remarks: "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" (note on verse 5). In other words, Joseph may have allowed them to *think* he practiced divination with this cup to instill more fear in them—as it would look to them like they would be charged with the theft of something of great importance in Egypt.

Also notice that Joseph did not order his steward to tell a direct lie—rather, he simply told him to ask a question. The real answer would have been no. But the brothers didn't know this." [END]

Verse 9 – We must be careful with rash statements. Sometimes strange things happen, and we would be wise to not put ourselves in a position that is not necessary.

Verse 12 – Imagine the emotional swings contained in these verses. The excitement they must have felt as they initially left Egypt with all their brothers and excited to return to their father. Then to be

overtaken by force and scared. Then each man must have been so relieved as their sack was opened, searched and found innocent. The excitement and relief must have built all the way until the last son Benjamin opened his sack.

Verse 13 – This is now the third time in the Bible we find the practice of tearing one's clothes as a sign of extreme grief. The first example was when Reuben returned and found the pit that had once contained Joseph empty (Gen 37:29), the second was when Jacob believed that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal (Gen 37:34) and now here.

Every culture has customs that outwardly show our internal grief. In our modern culture we in the United States often wear black to a funeral and widows often wear a black veil over their face.

In these ancient cultures, tearing of one's clothes, often marked times of extreme grief, shock or shame.

In Joel 2:13 we see the connection made between tearing one's clothes to what God truly desires, the heart to be torn, not simply the clothes.

Joe 2:13 So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He *is* gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.

We even see the practice done by Paul & Barnabas in Act 14:14.

Verse 16 – After returning to Joseph we see Judah tell him that there is nothing more they can say, they are guilty of having the cup and Judah claims that it is a punishment from God on them for their sin and he tells Joseph that they are all his slaves (not just Benjamin).

Verses 18 through 34 – Judah lays out the whole story to Joseph (including the promise to return Benjamin safely to their father) and at last Judah offers himself as slave in place of Benjamin. Judah has grown and matured into the spokesman and a sacrificial servant.

Day 42 - SATURDAY: December 10th

Genesis 45

Daily Deep Dive:

We now come to the climax of the story of Joseph!

Verse 2 – John Gill’s commentary states “the Egyptians, that were in the room or rooms adjoining to that where Joseph was, heard his cry, and perhaps a great deal of what was said; which they soon reported to others, and it quickly reached Pharaoh's court, which might not be at any great distance.”

Verse 3 – I would have loved to be able to witness this moment. They are so shocked they can’t say anything. Their minds must have been processing thoughts and information so quickly trying to put all the pieces together to how this could be true.

Verse 5 – This is an amazing moment. First, our natural human instinct would be to want them to feel terrible regret over what they had done. Joseph shows that he’s come to a place where he doesn’t want that for them, but shows them that God was working in all of it to save lives. Here’s what the UCG reading program says: “One can see a thematic parallel between the entire story of Joseph and the story of Jesus. Joseph was sent in bonds to Egypt so that ultimately, he would be exalted and his family enabled to survive the famine. In like manner, Jesus was sent ahead to suffer for others, has been exalted to the highest office and will deliver all mankind from death as a result.

Joseph saw God's hand in everything that had happened—from his first visionary dreams to his enslavement, imprisonment, exaltation and, at last, reconciliation with his family. In chapter 50, he tells his brothers, "You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive" (verse 20). And permeating Joseph's pronouncement of God's guidance of events was the expression of forgiveness for all that they had done to him. Similarly, the covenant that offers us eternal salvation through Jesus Christ is surrounded by forgiveness—of those who brought about the

necessity of His death. With this in mind, we should all take special heed to Joseph's petitioning his brothers to "come down to me, do not tarry" (Genesis 45:9), for Christ likewise calls us to follow and abide with Him—let us not delay in doing so.

Chapter 45 ends with wonderful news for Jacob. For more than two decades he has believed that Joseph his son is dead, and has never gotten over it (compare Genesis 42:35, Genesis 42:38). Now concerned about the fate of the rest of his sons down in Egypt, they return with the happiest announcement imaginable—in fact, beyond his imagination: "'Joseph is alive,' they shouted to him. 'And he is ruler over all the land of Egypt!'" (Genesis 45:26, Living Bible). This seemed utterly and hopelessly preposterous. "Jacob was stunned at the news—he couldn't believe it" (verse 26, New Living Translation). Slowly, though, he finally came around. "But when they had given him Joseph's messages, and when he saw the wagons loaded with the food sent by Joseph, his spirit revived. Then Jacob said, 'It must be true! My son Joseph is alive! I will go and see him before I die'" (verse 27, NLT). Yes, it was possible after all—beyond all hope, beyond all reason, beyond his wildest dreams—because the God of Jacob and Joseph was, and is, the Ruler of heaven and earth. And with Him *all things* are possible." [END]

Verse 6 – It's interesting to me that this famine has been so severe, but there was still going to be 5 more years of famine ahead for all these people. Imagine the tremendous loss of life that God prevented by bringing about this plan.

Verse 8 – Joseph is called a "father of Pharaoh". Adam Clarke's commentary states "It has already been conjectured that father was a name of office in Egypt, and that father of Pharaoh might among them signify the same as prime minister or the king's minister does among us. Calmet has remarked that among the Phoenicians, Persians,

Arabians, and Romans, the title of father was given to certain officers of state.”

Verse 10 – Regarding the land of Goshen, Adam Clarke’s commentary states “Goshen was the most easterly province of Lower Egypt, not far from the Arabian Gulf, lying next to Canaan”.

Verse 12 – Joseph speaks to them in Hebrew. Here’s what John Gill’s commentary states: “without an interpreter, as Aben Ezra, and in the Hebrew language, as the Targum and Jarchi; which might confirm them, and likewise their father upon their report, that the governor was not an Egyptian, but a Hebrew; and by that and other concurrent testimonies that he must be Joseph.”

Verse 18 – Regarding the “fat of the land”. This Hebrew word for “fat” can also mean “choicest, best part, abundance” (Brown-Driver-Briggs).

Verse 24 – This verse is easy to read over, but it’s worth understanding what Joseph said right before they left. The NKJV says ““See that you do not become troubled along the way.” But a literal translation is ““Do not be angry in the way.” The NLT does a good job capturing the intended meaning of this verse: “and as they left, he called after them, “Don't quarrel about all this along the way!”

The Jamieson-Faucet-Brown commentary states: “a caution that would be greatly needed; for not only during the journey would they be occupied in recalling the parts they had respectively acted in the events that led to Joseph’s being sold into Egypt, but their wickedness would soon have to come to the knowledge of their venerable father.”

This was very wise of Joseph.

Verse 26 – Imagine this moment. You’ve grieved your child’s death for more than two decades and you are told that he’s not only alive but is thriving in a way that the mind can hardly understand. “Jacob was stunned” is an understatement. What an exciting climax to an unbelievable story, possible only because of the direct involvement of Almighty God!