

GENESIS 43: JOSEPH'S KINDNESS TO HIS BROTHERS

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. We've all experienced God's kindness and mercy in various ways
 - i. Some ways are very basic and seem mundane
 - a. The sun rises every morning
 - b. The rain comes and waters the ground so that it produces food
 - ii. Others are more extraordinary and personal
 - a. Unexpected money
 - b. Restored relationships
 - c. Supernatural protection from disaster
- B. Joseph's brothers are going to experience God's kindness through Joseph
 - i. The purpose is for God's mercy to bring them to repentance

II. OVERVIEW

- A. Jacob and his family ate all the food they had bought from Egypt
 - i. So Jacob told his sons to go buy more food
 - ii. Judah reminded him that they had to bring Benjamin with them
 - a. Or they would not be able to buy food
 - iii. Jacob and Judah argue
 - a. Judah promised to keep Benjamin safe
- B. Jacob finally agreed to let Benjamin go
 - i. He told his sons to bring some produce and double the money with them
 - ii. So his sons agreed and left for Egypt
- C. Joseph saw that Benjamin was with his brothers
 - i. So he brought them to his house for a meal
 - a. The brothers were afraid so they confessed about the money
 - ii. Joseph assured them he received their money and brought out Simeon
- D. Joseph returned home and his brothers bowed to him
 - i. He asked them about their father and Benjamin
 - ii. Then they ate together

III. THE FAMINE WAS SEVERE - V. 1

- A. Joseph knew the famine would last seven years but his family didn't

- i. This was a long time for a famine to last

IV. WHEN THEY HAD EATEN - V. 2

- A. They may not have realized they would need to return to buy more food

V. GO AGAIN – V. 2

- A. They will need to go a second time to Egypt
 - i. Another example of the theme of doubling

VI. JUDAH SAID TO HIM - V. 3

- A. We continue to see the transformation of Judah into a leader in the family
 - i. He will be the one who will receive the birthright and blessing

VII. YOU SHALL NOT SEE MY FACE – V. 5

- A. This phrase is repeated word for word from verse 3
 - i. Another example of doubling
 - ii. God is using Judah to give wise counsel to his father

VIII. TREAT ME SO BADLY - V. 6

- A. As if his sons intentionally told Joseph to make life difficult for their father
- B. This is an outrageous and completely self-centered statement
 - i. There is no way Jacob's sons could have known what would happen
 - ii. Nor would they have shown Benjamin the same favoritism Jacob showed him

IX. SEND THE BOY WITH ME - V. 8

- A. Could also be translated *young man*¹

X. LIVE AND NOT DIE – V. 8

- A. Continues the theme of the Torah
 - i. The Torah is compared to food
 - a. Deuteronomy 8:3 ***And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.***
 - ii. Now Jesus is the bread of life
 - a. John 6:48-51 ***I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat***

¹ Guzik, D. (2018). Genesis 43 - Joseph Meets His Brothers A Second Time. Enduring Word. <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/genesis-43/>

of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

XI. BOTH WE AND YOU – V. 8

- A. Not only would buying more food sustain them physically
- B. But Jacob would be revived in spirit
 - i. Genesis 45:26-28 ***And they told him, "Joseph is still alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt." And his heart became numb, for he did not believe them. But when they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. And Israel said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."***

XII. I WILL BE A PLEDGE – V. 9

- A. Previously, Reuben had spoken up to offer protection of Benjamin
 - i. Now Judah is offering to protect him
- B. Reuben and Judah had both spoken up to save Joseph's life in Genesis 37
 - i. Genesis 37:21-22 ***But when Reuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him"— that he might rescue him out of their hand to restore him to his father.***
 - ii. Genesis 37:26-27 ***Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers listened to him.***
 - iii. Now Reuben and Judah have both spoken up to save Benjamin and Simeon's lives

XIII. BEAR THE BLAME FOREVER – V. 9

- A. Literally, miss the mark
 - i. Most common word for sin in the Hebrew bible
- B. Jewish rabbis considered this to be a vow lasting into the age to come
 - i. Judah would bear this guilt for all eternity

XIV. RETURNED TWICE – V. 10

- A. Another example of doubling

- B. The trip from Canaan to Egypt would have taken about two weeks²
 - i. So the time passed from chapter 42 was about two months

XV. JACOB GIVES FIVE INSTRUCTIONS – V. 11-14

- A. Carry a present – v. 11
- B. Take double the money with you – v. 12
- C. Carry with you the money that was returned – v. 12
- D. Take your brother and go to the man – v. 13
- E. May God Almighty grant you mercy and send back your brother – v. 14
 - i. This is the key to these instructions
 - ii. Five is the number of God's grace or favor

XVI. CARRY A PRESENT – V. 11

- A. Jacob had tried this earlier with Esau and it worked
 - i. Genesis 33:10-11 ***Jacob said, "No, please, if I have found favor in your sight, then accept my present from my hand. For I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of God, and you have accepted me. " Please accept my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." Thus he urged him, and he took it.***
 - ii. Jacob lists seven presents
 - a. A little balm
 - i. From Gilead
 - ii. Had medicinal properties
 - iii. Later would symbolize Israel's need for healing for their spiritual problem³
 - a. Jeremiah 8:21-22 ***For the wound of the daughter of my people is my heart wounded; I mourn, and dismay has taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of the daughter of my people not been restored?***
 - b. A little honey
 - i. Symbolizes God's abundance and provision⁴

² Armstrong, S. (2013, April 7). Genesis 2011 - Lesson 43A. Verse By Verse Ministry International. https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_43a

³ Bolinger, H. (2021, March 17). What Is the Balm of Gilead?. Christianity.com. <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/christian-terms/what-is-the-balm-of-gilead.html>

⁴ Ryan, J. (2021, May 4). What is the Significance of Honey in the Bible?. Christianity.com. <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/bible/what-is-the-significance-of-honey-in-the-bible.html>

- a. Exodus 3:8 ... *and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.*
- b. Exodus 16:14-15, 31 *And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat... Now the house of Israel called its name manna. It was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.*
- c. Gum
 - i. An aromatic spice, possibly for incense
- d. Myrrh
 - i. Used in anointing oil, perfume, and burial
 - a. Exodus 30:23-24 *"Take the finest spices: of liquid myrrh 500 shekels, and of sweet-smelling cinnamon half as much, that is, 250, and 250 of aromatic cane, and 500 of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil."*
 - b. Esther 2:12 *Now when the turn came for each young woman to go in to King Ahasuerus, after being twelve months under the regulations for the women, since this was the regular period of their beautifying, six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and ointments for women—*
 - c. John 19:39-40 *Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.*
- e. Pistachio nuts
 - i. Used for food or oil
- f. Almonds

- i. Symbolized God's watchfulness⁵
 - a. Jeremiah 1:11-12 ***And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?" And I said, "I see an almond branch." Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it."***
- g. Double the money
 - i. In addition to the money that was returned to them previously
- h. These were gifts with very little value other than the double money⁶
 - i. They didn't want to make it look like they were bribing Joseph
- i. The Ishmaelite traders were bringing many of these items to Egypt
 - i. Genesis 37:25 ***Then they sat down to eat. And looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt.***

XVII. DOUBLE THE MONEY – V. 12

- A. Continues the theme of doubling
 - i. Indicates God is still working in these circumstances
- B. They sold Joseph for 20 pieces of silver
 - i. Genesis 37:28 ***Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt.***
 - ii. Now they are returning to Joseph with 20 extra bags of money

XVIII. GRANT YOU MERCY – V. 14

- A. That's exactly what they will receive
 - i. And exactly what they don't deserve
- B. This is the central theme of the chapter
 - i. This idea is surrounded by repeating words in the same order
 - a. Carry a present down to the man – v. 11
 - i. Take double the money with you – v. 12
 - a. Take also your brother – v. 13
 - 1. And arise – v. 13

⁵ Parsons, J. J. (2024). *Sign of the Almond Tree*. Hebrew for Christians.

https://www.hebrew4christians.com/Holidays/Winter_Holidays/Tu_B_shevat/Almond_Tree/almond_tree.html

⁶ Armstrong, S. (2013, April 7). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 43A*. Verse By Verse Ministry International.

https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_43a

- a. Go again to the man – v. 13
 - i. ***May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man, and may he send back your other brother and Benjamin.*** – v. 14
 - b. The men took this present – v. 15
 - i. They took double the money – v. 15
 - a. And Benjamin – v. 15
 - 1. They arose – v. 15
 - a. And stood before Joseph – v. 15

XIX. IF I AM BEREAVED – V. 14

- A. Jacob is surrendering to fate rather than trusting in God⁷
- B. Even though he had seen God provide and protect him countless times

XX. WENT DOWN TO EGYPT – V. 15

- A. For the second time

XXI. THE MEN WERE AFRAID – V. 18

- A. They had no reason to fear
- B. We already know they were being brought there for a feast
 - i. But they thought Joseph was going to enslave them

XXII. MAKE US SERVANTS – V. 18

- A. There was no reason for them to believe this
 - i. If Joseph wanted to enslave them he could have just done it
 - ii. No reason to make a show of inviting them for lunch

XXIII. SPOKE WITH HIM – V. 19

- A. To plead their case
- B. They went to the first person who would hear their story
 - i. So they wouldn't be accused of theft

XXIV. WE CAME DOWN THE FIRST TIME – V. 20

- A. They will now tell the story of their first trip a second time
- B. The fear and anxiety is very apparent in their explanation

XXV. HE REPLIED – V. 23

- A. With two exhortations

⁷ Wiersbe, W. W. (2010). *Be Authentic: Exhibiting Real Faith in the Real World: OT Commentary, Genesis 25-50*. David C. Cook.

- i. Peace to you
 - a. Be at ease
- ii. Do not fear
 - a. There is nothing to be afraid of

XXVI. THE GOD OF YOUR FATHER – V. 23

- A. This expresses the central theme of Genesis⁸
- B. God provides land and wealth to Israel's fathers
 - i. Now He has given it to Israel
 - a. They would be reading this just before entering the promised land

XXVII. I RECEIVED YOUR MONEY – V. 23

- A. Someone else paid the price
 - i. Likely Joseph himself

XXVIII. GIVEN THEM WATER – V. 24

- A. They did not expect to be treated with kindness
 - i. They were afraid to go to Joseph's house – v. 18
- B. Joseph treated them with the same honor that Abraham treated God
 - i. Genesis 18:4-5 *Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.”*

XXIX. BOWED DOWN – V. 26

- A. Just like in Joseph's dream

XXX. HE INQUIRED – V. 27

- A. Joseph showed genuine interest in his brothers
- B. They must have been completely astounded at the kindness shown to them

XXXI. HE LIFTED UP HIS EYES – V. 29

- A. Contrasted with his brothers bowing their heads
- B. Reveals the contrast in roles
 - i. The younger brother rules over the older brothers
 - ii. Just as God had intended in Joseph's dreams

⁸ Sailhamer, J. H. (2017). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (T. Longman & D. E. Garland, Eds.). Zondervan.

XXXII. GOD BE GRACIOUS TO YOU – V. 29

- A. Another central theme of the book of Genesis
 - i. God's grace is poured out on the family of Abraham
 - a. He brought them out of a wicked, pagan people
 - b. He showed them kindness and patience
 - c. He gave them treasure and wealth and blessing for no reason

XXXIII. COMPASSION – V. 30

- A. Same word as mercy in verse 14
 - i. God answered Jacob's prayer

XXXIV. HE SOUGHT A PLACE TO WEEP – V. 30

- A. Because he hadn't seen Benjamin since he was a small child

XXXV. SERVE THE FOOD – V. 31

- A. Joseph's brothers thought they would be turned into Joseph's servants
 - i. Instead they were served by their brother

XXXVI. ABOMINATION TO THE EGYPTIANS – V. 32

- A. Egyptians believed they came from the gods
 - i. So they were superior to other nations⁹
- B. This is why Israel had to spend 400 years in Egypt
 - i. They would have been corrupted and assimilated by the Canaanites
 - ii. But they were racially isolated in Egypt
 - iii. So they couldn't be corrupted

XXXVII. BENJAMIN'S PORTION WAS FIVE TIMES – V. 34

- A. This was a test for the brothers
 - i. To see how they respond when the youngest is shown favor¹⁰
 - ii. Since last time the youngest was shown favor they wanted to kill him

XXXVIII. WERE MERRY – V. 34

- A. Or, *intoxicated*
 - i. Possibly intentional to see if they would confess anything
- B. This was false joy and celebration

⁹ Guzik

¹⁰ Guzik

- i. They still had not dealt with their sin¹¹

XXXIX. POINTS TO JESUS

- A. Joseph told his brothers they will not see his face until Benjamin is with them
 - i. Jesus will not return until Israel repents from their sin
 - a. Matthew 23:37-39 ***“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”***
 - ii. All Israel will repent and receive their Messiah
 - a. Romans 11:25-27 ***Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”; “and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”***
 - iii. But it will require a worldwide crisis for seven years to add enough pressure to repent
- B. Joseph showed his brothers kindness when they were still unrepentant
 - i. Jesus showed us kindness when we were unrepentant
 - a. Romans 2:4 ***Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?***
- C. Joseph wants to dine with his brothers – v. 16
 - i. Jesus wants to eat with us
 - a. Revelation 3:20 ***Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.***
- D. Joseph ate separately from the Egyptians and the Hebrews
 - i. Jesus was not accepted by the world
 - ii. He will not be accepted by the Jews until after the seven year Tribulation
- E. The steward is a picture of the prophets
 - i. Just like the servant in Genesis 24

¹¹ Wiersbe

- a. Matthew 21:33-40 ***“Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”***
- ii. He gives a prophetic message
 - a. Bring the men into the house
 - b. Slaughter an animal
 - c. Make ready
 - d. The men are to dine with me
 - e. Peace to you
 - f. Do not fear
 - g. Your God has put treasure in your sacks
 - h. I received your money
- F. Judah would bear the blame if Benjamin didn’t return
 - i. He would take his place
 - a. Genesis 44:32-33 ***For your servant became a pledge of safety for the boy to my father, saying, ‘If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father all my life.’ Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a servant to my lord, and let the boy go back with his brothers.***
 - ii. Jesus would take our place one day
 - a. Isaiah 53:5-6 ***But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.***

XL. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- A. What have you learned about God and the way He draws people to repentance through this story?

- B. What have we seen in Jacob's life that has led to him becoming bitter and self-centered? How can we avoid this in our own lives?

- C. How does it make you feel that Jesus was willing to take your place? What are some ways that you respond to His willingness to bear your guilt?

- D. Have you ever been treated with kindness when you expected to be treated harshly? Have you ever had the opportunity to do this to someone else? What was the result?

- E. How has God's kindness to you drawn you into repentance?

XLI. FURTHER STUDY

- A. What parallels do you notice between John 4:1-42 and Genesis 43:16? What point could the author of John be trying to make through these parallels?

B. How does the lesson of Proverbs 14:19 play out in this chapter?

C. What does the steward who already received the brothers' money point to? See Isaiah 55:1-3.

D. What parallels do you notice between Revelation 7 and Genesis 43? What is the prophetic message that Joseph's brothers provide in their journey to Egypt?

E. How does the Torah (God's commands) bring life? See Psalm 118:17-18. How do we follow this principle in the New Covenant?
