



Genesis – 43:1 - 44:34
(43:1-25)
Shalom and Do Not Be Afraid
(Lesson #53)

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Joseph's Timeline

Event	Joseph's Age	Genesis
Joseph's father moves family from Haran	6	31:17-21
Joseph is sold into slavery	17 / Jac 108	37:12-36
Joseph interprets the dreams of cupbearer and baker while in prison	28	41:1
Joseph's grandfather Isaac dies	29 / Jac 120	35:28-29
Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams and is released from prison	30	41:46
Seven years of plenty, Manasseh and Ephraim born during this time	30-37	41:47-52
Seven years of famine	37-44	41:47-52
Joseph and Jacob reunite (2 years into famine), and family moves family to Egypt	39 / Jac 130	45:6, 47:9, 28
Jacob dies	56 / Jac 147	47:28
Joseph dies	110	50:22-26

Outline for chapters 43-44:

1. Jacob directs his sons to go back to Egypt and buy additional grain (43:1-2)
2. Judah reminds Jacob what the Lord of the land said and agrees to go back only if Benjamin comes with them (43:3-5)
3. A discussion follows with the brothers about the Lord of the land's demand to bring Benjamin to Egypt (43:6-7)
4. Judah declares that he will be a pledge for the safety of Benjamin (43:8-10)
5. Judah gives in and allows Benjamin to go and provides additional recommendations (43:11-14)
6. The ten brothers make the trip back to Egypt (43:15)
7. Joseph directs his steward to take the ten to his house and prepare lunch for all of them (43:16-17)
8. The brothers worry that they are going to be taken as slaves, so engage with the servant over the money in their sacks (43:18-22)
9. The steward ensures them that he received their money and also restores Simeon to them (43:23)
10. The brothers clean up, their donkeys are fed, and they prepare their gift for the Lord of the land (43:24-25)
11. Joseph comes home at noon, the brothers bow before him, present their gift, and discuss the wellbeing of their father (43:26-28)
12. Joseph engages with Benjamin and is momentarily overcome with emotion (43:29-30)
13. At Joseph's direction the food is served to the entire group (43:31-34)
14. Joseph then directs his steward to fill each man's sack with grain, restore their money in their sacks, and put his silver cup in Benjamin's sack (44:1-2)
15. The eleven brothers leave for Canaan early the following morning (44:3)
16. Joseph directs his steward to overtake them and accuse them of stealing his cup (44:4-5)
17. The steward overtakes them and makes the accusation of theft of the Lord of the lands cup (44:6)
18. The brothers deny that they stole the cup (44:7-8)

19. The brothers declare that if any of them have the cup that person shall die, and they will all become slaves of the Lord of the land (44:9)
20. The steward responds, no the one who has the cup shall become a slave, the rest will be free to go (44:10)
21. The steward searched their bags, and the cup was found in Benjamin's bag (44:11-12)
22. They tore their clothes and returned to the city (44:13)
23. They arrive back at the Lord of the land's home and fall to the ground before him (44:14)
24. Joseph feigns amazement at their crime (44:15)
25. Judah accepts responsibility and declares that they are all the Lord of the land's servants (44:16)
26. The Lord of the land declares no, only the guilty party will be punished, the rest are free to go (44:17)
27. Judah explains how devastating this will be for his father and offers himself in place of Benjamin (18-34)

43:1 Now the famine was severe in the land. 2 And when they had eaten the grain that they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, "Go again, buy us a little food." 3 But Judah said to him, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.' 4 If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. 5 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.'"

43:1 - This second trip to Egypt is quite detailed, we will spend a total of 3 chapters here in Genesis, looking at all that occurs during this trip.

The nine brothers (minus Joseph, Benjamin, and Simeon), traveled back from Egypt, they had likely been home for a couple of months and we come to the **circumstance** here in our text that advances the narrative, namely **the famine continued to wax severe in the land**.

Now they had no idea that there were five years left before the famine would ease, only that it was creating difficult times for the **tribe of Israel** in the land of Canaan.

Vs 2 - Here we find the **timing** of our story this morning: So over time, Israel and his sons and their families consumed the grain that the nine had brought back from Egypt.

Then Israel (Jacob) looks at them and tells them: *"Go again, buy us a little food."*

We can picture this; Israel gathers up his sons and tells them to go by more grain.

Vs 3 - This response is interesting for it is not the oldest son (Reuben) who responds, but instead Judah. It is the fourth son who responds.

Israel speaks to all of them, Judah speaks to Dad and tells dad: **"The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.'"** You can sense where Judah is going with this conversation.

We do wonder, **where is Reuben, where is Levi**, we know where **Simeon** is.

But here, **Judah takes the lead** and in fact although he is the fourth born, he now begins to speak for the entire group.

Vs 4 - First the positive: Judah goes on, if you will send Benjamin with us, then we will go.

Vs 5 - Second the negative: Judah **throws down the gauntlet**. Dad, if you will not send Benjamin with us, we will not go to get food.

Notice how **Judah continues to speak for the group**. If you do not do this, we will not go down. Then, Judah clearly expresses why: **The man, the Lord of the land, told us plainly that you will not see my face unless your brother is with you.**

I can picture Judah: Dad if we go, we are not likely to get food, but we are very likely to end up being cast in prison and charged by the most powerful nation in the area as spies. **Sorry dad, if you do not send Benjamin, we will not go!**

6 Israel said, "Why did you treat me so badly as to tell the man that you had another brother?" 7 They replied, "The man questioned us carefully about ourselves and our kindred, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother?' What we told him was in answer to these questions. Could we in any way know that he would say, 'Bring your brother down?'" 8 And Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the boy with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones.

Vs 6 - Israel (Jacob) is afraid, now he begins to question Judah, why did you even tell this man you had **another brother**. Notice the charge; **why did you treat me so badly in bringing up Benjamin?**

Vs 7 - Notice, **"they"**, it seems now other brothers join in responding to Israel.

The brothers review exactly what happened, it was the man, the Lord of the land who **questioned us very carefully**, who questioned us very accurately about ourselves and our kin-folk.

He is the one who asked us specifically: **"Is your father still alive?"** He is the one who asked us specifically: **"Do you have another brother?"**

We were simply answering his questions. There is no way we could have known that he was going to demand that we bring **Benjamin to Egypt**.

Vs 8 - The Judah speaks and says to Israel (Jacob): **Send the boy with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones.**

You can picture what Judah is saying, dad there is no other choice, send Benjamin with me. **Let's be honest, death by starvation is a real possibility!**

9 I will be a pledge of his safety. 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. 10 If we had not delayed, we would now have returned twice."

Vs 9 - Further Judah tells his dad (Israel/Jacob), I will be **a pledge for Benjamin's safety**. It could be translated I will **surety for Benjamin's safety**.

The Hebrew word translated safety is ערב ('arab), and this is the **first time** this Hebrew word is used in the Bible.

What Judah is saying is that I, myself will serve as the **security deposit for Benjamin's safe return!**

According to Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, the back half of verse 9 reads this way in Hebrew: **"If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then I have sinned against you forever."**

Further, quoting Fruchtenbaum: This statement: **"carries with it the consequence to be cut off from any and all inheritance."** Judah **"was saying that he would be willing to be cut off from any and all inheritance, and that would be a sizeable inheritance at this point. Furthermore, any of Judah's present property would become the property of Jacob."**

Thus, this is likely meaning of: **from my hand you can require it, if I do not bring the boy back.**

Judah is putting everything he has on the line as a pledge that he will bring Benjamin back.

Before we go any further, I want to remind us of what went down in Dothan:

"26 Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? 27 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. 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.” (Ge 37:26-28 ESV)

It was Judah who had hatched the plan to sell Jacob into slavery and it is now Judah, who is telling his dad, I will serve as the **surety for Benjamin**.

If I do not bring him back, you can cut me off from any and all inheritance.

*** Note, if you remember I told you when we saw Judah, hatch this plan, that Judah would ultimately redeem himself. Here it is.

He sees his father’s love for Benjamin, and rather than becoming Jealous, as he had with Joseph, he is willing to become the guarantee of Benjamin’s safe return

APPLICATION: Paul juxtaposes the works of the flesh and works that are of the spirit:

“19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” (Ga 5:19-23 ESV)

Equally, we sense what is brewing in the background. **What choice is there?**

Vs 10 - So Judah states, in fact, **had we not delayed**, we would have made the trip twice.

This is very insightful to get an idea of how much time has passed.

In the time that has elapsed, the time you have delayed, we could have **went and returned twice**.

If you remember last week I told you: Generally, on average, a donkey can travel about 15 miles a day. The exact number depends on the environmental conditions, age of the donkey, and weight the donkey is carrying. At 250 miles this would be roughly a 17-day journey. So, 34 days x twice = 68 days or a little over two months is a reasonable estimate.

11 Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags, and carry a present down to the man, a little balm and a little honey, gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds. 12 Take double the money with you. Carry back with you the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks. Perhaps it was an oversight. 13 Take also your brother, and arise, go again to the man.

Vs 11 - Here Jacob finally relents. He recognizes truly he does not have a choice.

It appears that Israel is caught between a rock and a hard place. Or maybe, the sovereign God has brought all of this to a head to build **Israel’s faith, to build his reliance on Him**.

APPLICATION: That is what God often does in our life. He brings us into a straight, He brings us into a place, where **we come to the end of ourselves**, we reach the point where in the flesh, we will not be able to fix it. Then as a **last resort** we cry out to Him. It is then, that God often shows up, and He shows out!

Jacob says ok, if this is the only option, then do it and take a **goody bag**. Take the Lord of the land a **goody bag** of local delicacies including:

- **Choice fruits** - Rare and in high demand in a famine, likely a delicacy.
- **Balm** – Had medicinal purposes.
- **Honey** – Rare and a delicacy.

- **Gum** – From one or more of the local trees
- **Myrrh** – A special gum used in various ways including the holy ointment (Ex 30:23).
- **Pistachio nuts** – Rare and a delicacy.
- **Almonds** - Rare and a delicacy.

These would all be of **particular value** during this **horrific famine!** This is a present that Jacob has put together for the man, the Lord of the land.

This gift included balm, myrrh, and spices. I bring that up because of what we read about the Midianite traders who were headed to Egypt:

“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.” (Ge 37:25 ESV)

Vs 12 - Further, Israel (Jacob) provides additional direction. **Take twice as much money with you.** Take money to buy grain and take the money that was in your sacks. Perhaps this was all some type of oversight, (mistake).

Vs 13 - Finally, take your brother also, arise, go, go back to Egypt, go back to the man, back to the Lord of the land. Imagine for a moment you are Jacob, there is likely this sense of **helplessness**.

APPLICATION: When we find ourselves in this position, we need to remind ourselves of the great God who we serve.

“My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.” (Ps 121:2 ESV)

“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.” (Ro 8:26 ESV)

Ready for the grand reality, **we are in this place all the time**, it is only the question if we realize it or not. **We are reliant on God’s grace and mercy every day.** Good health, like fame and riches, can be gone in an instant.

Understanding our dependence on God is a very **liberating truth!**

One passing note, it is interesting that here in chapter 43, Israel and the other sons call Joseph “the man” **nine times** (43:3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 17, 24). It seems they were never informed of his Egyptian name (Zaphnath-Paaneah).

14 *May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man, and may he send back your other brother and Benjamin. And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.* **15** *So the men took this present, and they took double the money with them, and Benjamin. They arose and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph.*

Vs 14 - Here it is, here is where I suspect, God wanted Israel to be. I believe this is where God has been working to bring Israel.

Here is Israel’s **prayer**, let’s break it apart:

First, May **God almighty** grant you **mercy**. May אֵל (**ale**), שַׁדַּי (**Shadday**) grant you mercy. May the **mighty God** grant you mercy. Now this is one of the many titles of God that we find here in the book of Genesis.

This is the fourth time we have seen this name in Genesis (17:1; 28:2-3; 35:9-11; 43:14).

APPLICATION: This is who **you and I serve**, we serve the “**mighty God**” we serve the maker of heaven and earth. We serve the **sovereign of the universe**.

Here, to get back into context, Israel reaches out in prayer, and his prayer began with an acknowledgement of who God is. He is the **mighty God!**

Point #1: May God Almighty...

Point #2: May God Almighty **grant you mercy before the man...**

May God almighty **grant mercy**, may he **grant compassion**, may he **grant favor** before **this man**. May God Almighty lean in and grant mercy before this Egyptian ruler.

Do you see what the prayer is, **may the mighty God, cause this man, the Lord of the land to show mercy to my family!**

Do you believe that the mighty God can cause even lost people to behave for your good, to make decisions for your welfare?

APPLICATION: The Psalmist expressed this reality like this:

"The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will." (Pr 21:1 ESV)

Point #3: May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man, **and may he send back your other brother and Benjamin.**

Notice the specificity, mercy in that everyone will be sent home (Simeon, Benjamin, and of course everyone else)! This is not a vague prayer, but a very specific prayer.

I would encourage us to ask for specifics from our father. That way it is all the more obvious when he steps in and answers our prayer.

APPLICATION: James said it this way:

"2b ... You do not have, because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions." (Jas 4:2b-3 ESV)

Vs 14b - Then in the back-half of the verse Israel kind of resigns himself to whatever happens. If I am **deprived of my sons, I am deprived!**

It seems, that is where Israel is here, whatever happens, happens.

Vs 15 - So the ten sons of Jacob (minus Joseph and Simeon), **loaded up the donkeys**, with the **"present"** as outlined by Jacob, took **double the money**, and **Benjamin**, and they began the long and arduous journey back to Egypt.

Having arrived they found themselves once again standing at the **granary** before **Jospeh**.

16 When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Bring the men into the house, and slaughter an animal and make ready, for the men are to dine with me at noon." 17 The man did as Joseph told him and brought the men to Joseph's house. 18 And the men were afraid because they were brought to Joseph's house, and they said, "It is because of the money, which was replaced in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may assault us and fall upon us to make us servants and seize our donkeys."

Vs 16 - Joseph sees the brothers coming, and he sees that Benjamin is with them. You can imagine his first of many questions is answered. The boy is alive, his blood brother is alive, and they had not sold him into slavery. Here he is.

Because they have fulfilled their end of the bargain, Joseph looks over to the **steward or ruler**, over **his house and says:** Take the men to my house, slaughter an animal, and make ready for dining, for I will eat with the men at noon.

What we call lunch is the **main meal** of Middle Easterners both during this time and now.

Vs 17 - OK, this is something new. The brothers had never been to Joseph's house.

So that we can picture this, the steward likely comes up to the men, and tells them to follow him.

He takes them to a home, a house, no doubt an amazing house. The type of house the second in power in all of Egypt would live in.

The steward takes the brothers to **Joseph's house**.

Vs 18 - It seems the steward told them where they were, or at least when they realized where they were, then we read: *And the men were afraid because they were brought to Joseph's house.*

As they are here in front of Joseph's house, we learn what they are discussing with one another. They collectively come to a **three-point determination**:

- **First**, it is because of all the money that they made out with, when they left Egypt the first time, that is why the **Lord of the land is holding us accountable**.
- **Second**, it is here that the Lord of the land is going to assault them, fall upon them, and **make them his slaves**.
- **Third**, the Lord of the land is going to seize our donkeys. **I must admit that is kinda funny**.

But, they are afraid...

APPLICATION: We have said it a number of times, but it bears repeating, fear is the antithesis of faith, fear is the opposite of faith, fear can block our view, that faith might otherwise provide.

19 So they went up to the steward of Joseph's house and spoke with him at the door of the house, 20 and said, "Oh, my lord, we came down the first time to buy food. 21 And when we came to the lodging place we opened our sacks, and there was each man's money in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight. So we have brought it again with us, 22 and we have brought other money down with us to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks."

Vs 19 - It appears, while in the courtyard, they have not yet entered the house, they are fearing for their lives. There at the door, prior to entering the house, they engage the steward.

Vs 20-21 - Here, at the front door, they begin rehearsing what happened. **Ohh my Lord**, we came down the first time, a couple of months back to buy food.

At a lodging place, we opened our sacks, and to our surprise, the money we had provided for grain was there in the mouth of each man's sack. Our money in full weight, nothing missing.

We are not sure how this happened, we are assuming that was **some type of oversight**, but we have **brought that money back** with us.

Vs 22 - So we brought that money back and we have also brought money to buy more grain. We have **double money**.

23 He replied, "Peace to you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has put treasure in your sacks for you. I received your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them. 24 And when the man had brought the men into Joseph's house and given them water, and they had washed their feet, and when he had given their donkeys fodder, 25 they prepared the present for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they should eat bread there.

Vs 23a - Then the steward over Joseph's house replies to the brothers, a **fourfold response** that no doubt was **more mercy laden** than anything they could have **ever imagined**. Let's look at his **four points** in response to what they said:

First, the steward of the house said: *Peace be to you: שלום (shalom)*. The Hebrew word is a multifaceted word that means **peace, wholeness, soundness, health and prosperity be to you**.

Shalom is one of the richest words in the Hebrew Bible. It is like the **Hawaiian word aloha**, in that it can be used as a greeting that means “hello” or even “goodbye.” it is **loaded with various meanings**, all of which I might add are **positive**.

Can you imagine, what went **through the brothers minds** when they heard him say **Shalom**.

Second, he says: *Do not be afraid...*

They are quaking in their boots, and here this **Egyptian steward**, who has been trained to speak in Hebrew, tells these brothers **“do not be afraid.”**

We have seen this many times in Genesis (Gen 15:1; 21:17; 26:24)

APPLICATION: *“I sought the LORD, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears” (ESV, Ps 34:4).*

Third, the steward says: *Your God and the God of your father has put treasure in your sacks for you...*

What, we are in Egypt, we are in the center of a polytheistic culture, first the Lord of the land says that he fears Elohim (Gen 42:18) and now the steward over this man’s house says this!

PAUSE: Has Jacob been witnessing to these Egyptians about the one true and living God? Have some Egyptians come to know the one true and living God through the testimony of this one-time slave, now second in command in Egypt?

Jacob is not only going to save Egypt from the famine, he is going to save Israel from the famine, and he is winning Egyptians to the One True and Living God.

APPLICATION: I am amazed at what God can do through one person who will walk with him. I wonder what He can do with a room full of them.

Fourth – I received your money. What does he mean? Is he lying? Did Joseph pay for their grain.

Vs 23b - Then he brought Simeon out to them. Can you imagine the joy that flooded their souls? It appears, that while they are engaging at the front door, still fearful to enter the house, the steward sends for Simeon and brings him out and presents him to them!

I am not sure how much comfort the stewards’ **Shalom** brought or how much comfort his encouragement to them **“not to fear”** brought. But I am absolutely certain that **restoring Simeon brought great comfort**.

Vs 24 - OK, finally we make it into the house. The steward brings them into the house and further, the steward gave them water to wash their feet and it appears the steward fed their donkeys.

Everything is going great! Everything is good. A sense of real **Shalom**.

Vs 25 - Then the brothers prepared the present for Joseph’s coming at noon.

They learn he is coming, and they put together the little goody bag that they had assembled back in Canaan.

Equally, they learn that they are going to have lunch with the Lord of the land. What a change of events!
