

## JANUARY 21

### Genesis 42:18-43:34

This portion of text isn't complete until Joseph reveals himself to his brothers. The question you need to be asking yourself is why Joseph is doing this. We always use Joseph as an example of "instant" forgiveness without realizing there was a process involved in him forgiving his brothers. God was working and there was a plan in progress. When people push a "just forgive" commandment on others and use Joe as an example, it shows they haven't *really* read or understood what is happening here.

Genesis 42:18-38

Vs. 18-20 So, why do you think Joseph wanted them to bring Benjamin? Was it just because he wanted to see his brother?

Vs. 21-24 These are amazing verses. What does it say to you about the power of what they had done and how it affected their lives over the past 22 years?

I always laugh at Joseph putting Simeon in prison and then seeing that Jacob isn't really in a hurry to rescue him. I wonder if Joseph chose Simeon for this reason, knowing that there would be no real pressure to come and get him. Remember, Simeon was the eldest of the two brothers who murdered the men at Shechem.

Vs. 25-28 What do you think putting their money back in their sacks was meant to accomplish? What was the reaction of the brothers? Joseph wasn't interested in generosity. He wanted them to feel something, and it worked. Notice that they understood this as judgment from God. They were living under the sense of guilt and judgment for what they had done to Joe.

Vs. 29-36 What is notable in this section to me is Jacob's words to his sons at the end. He is a bitter sad man who cannot trust his sons. Somewhere in this Jacob is still being punished by his own trickery and his inability to say that he was wrong.

Vs. 37-38 This is the offer of Reuben to protect Benjamin. There will be another offer in the next chapter and it is good to think of the difference between these offers. Reuben had already sinned against his father and family without any apology. If you look at the offer itself, there is no guarantee that Ben would come home. The option of killing Reuben's two sons sounds strange and unimaginable.

Genesis 43

Vs. 1-10 Eventually the food was running out and they had to return. Now comes the offer of Judah to protect Benjamin. Did Jacob finally accept this offer because they were out of food? When we get to chapter 49, Jacob blesses Judah above all of his brothers and predicts that the Messiah will come from Judah. There is something here that is sacrificial and like Jesus. He offered to take Benjamin's place, to be his substitute. That would ensure that Ben would return and that if payment needed to be made in Egypt, on the spot, Judah would make it with his own life. I think this is what made Judah a better man, and his offer points to the heart of our Savior. This should be the heart of a disciple.

Vs. 11-14 On the one hand this is good and polite. On the other hand this is Jacob being Jacob, making sure they have what they need to win the favor of this Egyptian tyrant. Yet in this moment of challenge, Jacob decides it is time to pray and bring God into the matter.

Vs. 15-25 When the guys arrived, Joseph prepared a meal. I always wonder how long that would have taken, like when the Lord and the angels visited Abe and Sarah... "Hey, can you guys stay to eat? Good!" Then to the servant, "Hey go kill an animal and prepare it." If it was me, I'd have said, "Do you like Chinese?" and then ordered out.

Notice that the brothers thought this was a trap because of the money that had been put back in their sacks. Apparently Joseph had briefed his steward, who went along with this test. Keep in mind that Joseph is testing his brothers to discover something about them. Now the brothers are at ease.

Vs. 26-34 It must have been a great meal.

Notice that Joe is melting down emotionally.

V. 32 Notice that the Egyptians could not eat with the Hebrews. That will become important later.

V. 33 Notice that Joe is still messing with their heads.

V. 34 Now their hearts were merry. All was well. But the big test is about to come. Soon we'll see what Joseph wants to discover about his brothers.

### **Matthew 13:47-14:12**

These look like disjointed events, but it will be good exercise to try to see how things are presented.

Matthew 13:47-58

Vs. 47-50 The parable of the fish is similar to the parable of the wheat and the weeds except there is no enemy here. Remember what Joseph told Pharaoh regarding seeing the dream twice? The repeating meant it was certain to happen. God will judge all men. Judgment is coming. People need to be told that and they need to hear the good news.

Vs. 51-52 In trying to bring the Word of God to people, the disciples were being taught to use the old and the new. I think that means Jesus was using the parable to show them how to use the truth of scripture (the old) and make it new with illustrations of today's world. I think the Lord wants us to do the same. We need to be aware of what is happening in our world to use its examples as ways to illustrate the reality of the Word.

Vs. 53-58 This is the second time Jesus has returned to Nazareth. The first time was a very solemn event where Jesus declared He was fulfilling Isaiah 61:1-2. The people should have celebrated, but instead they tried to kill Him. Now, a year later, Jesus was famous. He was a phenomenon in Israel and everybody loved Him. Look at how they "explained" Jesus away, into insignificance.

V. 58 Notice what the result was. It was not that Jesus' power was dependent on their faith, but if they disregarded Jesus, they wouldn't come to Him to be healed. He couldn't do much because they wouldn't come to Him. It's the same today.

Matthew 14:1-12

Vs. 1-12 This is the death of John the Baptist.

Vs. 1-2 Jesus was famous, but they didn't understand who He was. Herod was not only motivated by unbelief, but also by his bad conscience. Just like Joseph's brothers, Herod was interpreting everything in terms of his guilt in putting John to death.

Vs. 3-12 I remember the first time I read this account of John's death, how I was impressed by Herod having to save face. Because of his vows and his guests, he allowed himself to be pressured into doing what he knew was wrong. He was a king, but just a small, lost man. And to boot, he really was a bad guy.

So, you have the parables, that is, truth given in a story form. If people wanted to understand the Word and draw close to God they could, but there would be some effort. Then you have the people in Nazareth rejecting the living Word of God. Finally there is Herod. Mark says that

Herod would often summon John and listen to him until he worked up a lather of guilt and conviction. Then he would send him away and later hear him again. But Herod never changed. The Word had no effect on him. Both Herod and the people of Nazareth were like people in the parables who didn't comprehend and didn't even try.

### **Psalm 18:16-36**

Vs. 16-19 I always imagine that David wrote this after he was made king, looking back at running from Saul, hiding in caves and despairing of ever being blessed by God.

Vs. 20-24 Among all of the ways God protected David, He kept David from avenging himself three times. That is what David is referring to regarding staying righteous and being rewarded.

Vs. 25-27 When you look at what happened to Saul, Nabal, and others who lied and tried to hurt David, God paid them back according to their own ways. You see this with Jacob. God judged Jacob's trickery by putting him under someone who was more devious, Laban.

Vs. 28-36 What a great declaration to God's help. Amen. It may require waiting, as it did for David and Joseph, but the message is true. God will train and equip us and lead us on for His purpose and glory.

### **Proverbs 4:7-10**

Proverbs 1:7 says that the beginning of knowledge is the fear of the Lord. Here it says that the *beginning of wisdom* is to set your heart to get wisdom. I think it means that first you find Christ, and then you seek His Kingdom and ask and seek and knock.

A disciple keeps on pressing to know Christ, just like Paul said in Philippians 3:12, *Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.* Disciples keep on pressing, abiding, seeking, asking, knocking...following the Lord they love in the harvest.