



Genesis 42-43

Here is a brief synopsis of the story up to this point. Jacob had twelve sons by four different wives. Rachel, the wife that he loved dearly, bore him two sons; because of his love for her, they became his favorite sons. Their names were Joseph and Benjamin and they were the youngest of the twelve boys. The sons of Jacob, except Joseph, were not honorable. There developed a friction between the boys because of the dishonor of the older sons and the honor of Joseph. The older boys were treacherous and cruel; but, Joseph was compassionate. They were jealous of Joseph, of his father's obvious favoritism.

Joseph had a couple of dreams, which made his brothers angry. He dreamed that he and his brother's were out in the field binding their sheaves of barley and his brother's sheaves all bowed down to his. This really upset them, thinking they would bow to Joseph.

Later he dreamed that the sun, moon, and stars bowed down to him. His father sent Joseph out into the area of Dothan where his brother's were keeping the flock to find out how they were doing and when they saw Joseph coming, they said, "Here comes that dreamer, let's kill him and we will see what happens to his dreams then." The oldest brother Reuben said, "No, let's not kill him; because, we don't want to get our hands bloody. Let's throw him in the pit and let him starve to death."

As Joseph arrived they threw him into the pit and he begged them for mercy, and asked them to let him out, but they just had no heart for him whatsoever. When they saw a caravan heading toward Egypt, Judah suggested maybe they should sell him as a slave. That way they wouldn't have to kill him, yet, they could get rid of him.

They stopped the caravan and sold their brother Joseph for twenty pieces of silver. Joseph was taken by these traders to Egypt where he was auctioned and bought by a man whose name was Potiphar, captain of the guard for Pharaoh. Joseph, while in Egypt, was a diligent, faithful servant in the house of Potiphar. Potiphar was blessed because of Joseph's diligence; but, his wife cast lustful eyes upon Joseph and sought to seduce him. When Joseph refused to be seduced, she grabbed him by the coat, tried to disrobe him and force him into bed. He fled from the house leaving the coat in her hand and she, being scorned, began to cry out rape! rape! and reported to the servants and later to her husband that Joseph had attempted to rape her.

As a result Joseph was thrown into jail. He was seventeen years old at the time that his brothers sold him as a slave into Egypt. Just how long he was a servant in Potiphar's house we don't know. Presumably ten years.

While he was in prison he had charge over all of the other prisoners. During that time Pharaoh's butler and baker were cast into prison because they had come into disfavor with Pharaoh. Both of them had dreams which Joseph interpreted, in which the butler was to be restored to his position, and the baker was to be hung. The dreams both came to pass.

Joseph said, "When you come into the Pharaoh, don't forget me, tell him about me," but the butler forgot Joseph. He remained for another two years in the prison until the Pharaoh had a dream. He called his wise men and magicians in to interpret the dream for him, and to tell him what it meant; but, they were unable to do so. Suddenly, the RNA began to buzz in the brain of this butler and he said, "Oh king, I have done a horrible thing. There is a man of the Hebrews, he is in prison and he is able to interpret dreams. The baker and I both had dreams and he interpreted them and it came to pass as he said."

They ordered Joseph to be brought quickly and he shaved and came in before the Pharaoh. Pharaoh said, "I understand that you can interpret dreams and Joseph said, "Not really, but, God is able to give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

The Pharaoh told Joseph the dreams of the seven cows being eaten up by the seven skinny cows and Joseph said, "God has told you that there will be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine

which will be so great that the lean years will eat up the fat. Point a wise man over the kingdom during the good years, gather 20% of the crops, put them into store houses, so that when the lean years come, you will be able to distribute to the people and you will be saved."

Pharaoh said, "I can not find a wiser man in all the kingdom than you, because only you were able to tell me what the dream meant." He took his signet ring and gave it to Joseph and said, "You are in charge, only I am above you in the land." He ordered that when Joseph went out in the chariots, that the people would go in front of him crying out, "Bow down!"

During the seven years of plenty, he gathered into the store houses until they lost count of the abundance of grain. Let's continue the story with Genesis, chapter forty-two, and look at the years of famine.

"Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another?" (Gen.42:1). Now they were probably looking at each other in sort of a what are we going to do kind of a way. How are we going to survive?

"And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt; get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die." (Gen.42:2).

Now Jacob was an extremely wealthy man and he had the money to buy grain, but if there is no grain to be bought, your money doesn't do you any good, but he had heard that there was grain in Egypt.

Ten of the brothers were sent to Egypt to buy corn, but, Benjamin, the eleventh, stayed home with his father. He was Joseph's younger brother and at this time was about twenty-three years old. Joseph was seventeen when he was sold into slavery and he had been in Egypt now for twenty years, which would make him about thirty-seven years old. The last time Joseph saw Benjamin he was a small boy about three years old. He was the only full brother to Joseph and because Joseph was thought to be dead; he took the place of Joseph in the heart of his father.

"And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him." (Gen.42:3-4).

And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came; for the famine was in the land of Canaan." (Gen.42:5). People were journeying, from all over, down to Egypt to buy grain because word was out that there was plenty of grain in Egypt.

"And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land; and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth." (Gen.42:6). I can imagine at that point Joseph remembered his dream. Interestingly enough the grain and his brother's sheaves all bowed down to his. As they are bowing down with their heads on the ground, I imagine that dream flashed back in his mind. Now, in as much as, Joseph's appearance had changed from seventeen to thirty-eight and they didn't recognize him. Of course he was dressed as an Egyptian and he spoke to them through an interpreter. He would not speak in the Hebrew language to them but used an interpreter to speak to them.

"And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come." (Gen.42:7-9).

In other words, "You have been sent by governments because they have heard that we have plenty of grain and you are going to bring down your armies and invade us and try to take away the grain."

"And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies." (Gen.42:10-11).

I don't know that I would agree with that, but, in reality what they are asserting is, we are telling you

the truth. We are not spies, we are really brothers. Here they were being honest; but, they were not honest in all things.

When they sold Joseph, they took his coat, highly recognizable by his dad, killed a little goat, put the blood on the coat, tore it up and took it to the dad and said, "Do you recognize this coat?" He said, "Yes, that is the coat of Joseph. Surely he has been torn by wild beasts. "They allowed their dad to grieve and believe that lie.

"And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not." (Gen.42:12-13). They didn't really know what had happened to Joseph having lost track of him.

"And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies. Hereby ye shall be proved; By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you; or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies. And he put them all together into ward three days." (Gen.42:14-17).

I think, personally, that Joseph is taking a bit of revenge in this whole scene. There are those commentators who ascribe to Joseph higher motives than that. They say that Joseph believed in the promises of God, and that through this family the nations would be developed from which the Messiah would come. They feel that Jacob had shared with his son's these truths of God and that Joseph believed it and was seeking to prove his brothers. What, if any, changes had taken place in the twenty years that he had been gone.

I think that Joseph is enjoying this whole thing, to an extent. He had spent three years in that prison in Egypt because of what they had done to him. He had spent several years in servitude to Potiphar. The last seven years had been good and the two children that he had during the seven good years, he named the first one "Forgetting" because God has caused me to forget all of the toil and the grief that I had. But he is giving them a really bad time. For three days they sit in jail. They don't know that it is Joseph, they don't know that he is just giving them a bad time. As far as they know they may spend the rest of their lives in jail in Egypt.

"And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God." (Gen.42:18).

Now that should have given them a little bit of insight. Here is an Egyptian (as far as they are concerned) who were very polytheistic; yet, he is declaring to them, I fear God.

"If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison; go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses. But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so. And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." (Gen.42:19-21).

Guilt is a hard thing to get rid of. Our brain is a marvelous computer and it has tremendous capacities of storage. That little RNA can store up so much information. All it needs is the right someone and you think, I know them. Where do I know them from? What is their name? I know, I know them. You try so hard to remember and you can't. Then as you are driving down the street, suddenly their name and all of the information you have in your storage bank gets flashed on the screen and you remember. The brain, also stores every sin you have ever committed and all you need is the right stimulus to pop it in. Many times, events of our lives are stored with, maybe, a song. You hear a certain song on the radio and it will cause the processes in your brain to go to work.

One summer I spent several weeks up at Matilaha, and the juke box played the song "Old Black Magic" which was popular that summer. Every time I hear that song my brain flashes back on Matilaha and the summer I spent there and the great time that I had. It was just associated with that memory and that is the only stimulus I need to remember that summer at Matilaha.

Now they are in distress, their lives, as far as they know, on the line. This guy is treating them rough. He is really putting them through the paces. They just spent three days in jail and one of their brothers is going to be bound and kept in jail and he thinks they are spies and he is mean and tough. They said that they were guilty because of being so hard hearted when they saw the anguish of their brother's soul and were getting what they deserved.

They realized that though they had tried to get rid of the sense of guilt for what they did to their younger brother, still it is coming back and haunting them. Guilt is so hard to get rid of. You may think that you have suppressed it, you may think that you know you have gotten that out of your mind and now you are free, but given the right set of circumstances that haunting guilt is still there and rises as a spectator. It is so important to get rid of guilt.

From a psychological standpoint, guilt creates the subconscious desire for punishment which is manifested in self injury, accidents or in neurotic behavior patterns. Guilt can drive you crazy. It can make a nut out of you, make you do nutty things. That is why when you go to a psychologist after you are doing all these weird, quirky things, the first thing he seeks to do is find out what you feel guilty about. He gives you a battery of tests, and finds out what you are doing that makes you feel so guilty.

You have a subconscious desire to punish yourself and thus you have started the neurotic behavioral pattern. You are doing all these weird things to bring upon yourself the disapproval from your peers, rebuke, and punishment; because, subconsciously, you desire to be punished for the wrong you did. From a spiritual point, guilt will destroy you.

"For The wages of sin is death..." (Rom.6:23). "...The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek.18:4b). Guilt, unconfessed sin, can bring you into an alienated relationship with God where you no longer hear the voice of God; you no longer see the glory of God, and you no longer feel His presence. You are spiritually dead and as the psalmist said, "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." (Ps.32:3-4). Oh how sin, how guilt shrivels you up inside spiritually. You've got to get rid of it.

These guys have carried this guilt around for twenty years hidden inside themselves. Now, when faced with real problems it surfaces. "We are guilty, of what? Twenty years ago, wait a minute, twenty years is a long time." Guilt hangs on until it is removed. The only thing that I know that can effectively remove guilt is the blood of Jesus Christ. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:9).

"...And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (I John 1:7). It will do for you what no psychologist can do. It will wash the slate clean. You have got to get it washed, otherwise psychologically it will make you a neurotic and spiritually it will destroy you.

"And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required." (Gen.42:22).

I told you to let him alone. Now look what you have brought on us. If you go back in the story, it was Reuben who talked them out of killing him and told them to throw him in the pit. Reuben had intended to come back and get him out of the pit and send him home. In essence, Reuben is innocent in this and was going to help Joseph. When he came and Joseph was gone, he was extremely disturbed. Reuben is, indeed, innocent in this and he is reminding them now of how he warned them and now look what you have done to us.

"And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter. And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes." (Gen.42:23-24).

He had them bind Simeon up before their eyes. He is still acting tough and gruff before his brothers. Joseph had Simeon carried away and put in prison. I suspect that Simeon was a ring leader in selling Joseph.

Simeon was the next oldest to Reuben, and Reuben had tried to protect Joseph, so Simeon was probably the one who started the conspiracy against Joseph.

Judah was trying to protect Joseph too. He is the one that suggested, let's not kill him or let him die here, let's sell him, so that his blood won't be on our hands. I think that Simeon was the one behind the whole thing and so Joseph is going to get Simeon now. Bind him up, take him off to jail.

"Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way; and thus did he unto them. And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence. And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth. And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack; and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?" (Gen.42:25-28). He is going to think that we ripped him off, and stole the grain. How are we ever going to go back and face that guy?

"And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them; saying, The man, who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies; We be twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan." (Gen.42:29-32).

"And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone." (Gen.42:33).

"And bring your youngest brother unto me; then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men; so will I deliver you your brother, and you shall traffic in the land." (Gen.42:34). When you come back again, bring your youngest brother to prove that you are telling the truth, if not, then don't expect to see my face.

"And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack; and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid." (Gen.42:35). Oh man, what is happening to us?

"And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away; all these things are against me." (Gen.42:36). He is accusing them of bereaving him of his children, so it could be that somehow Jacob came to suspect them in regards to Joseph. You have bereaved me of my children, for Joseph is no more. Simeon is locked up in jail in Egypt and you want to take Benjamin away.

As far as Jacob could see, all things were against him. We, like Jacob, with our limited vision and our inability of seeing past today, look at the circumstances of our life and say everything or everybody is against me.

Peter said that one of our problems is that we only see that which is near. The nearsightedness of the believer. My inability to peer into tomorrow, into next week and next month. Looking at my situation today, looking at the difficulties that I am facing, I am often prone to cry out with Jacob, everything is going against me.

That is only because I don't know the full plan of God. Jacob didn't know the full plan of God. He didn't realize that this rough lad in Egypt was none other than Joseph, the son, whom he loved. He didn't realize that before long he was going to be embracing Joseph, weeping together with him for joy. He didn't know the wonderful things that God had in store for him in the whole renewing of the family ties. Being able to see only up to this point, he cried, "All things are against me." Not so, Jacob.

In your own life when you are prone to cry out that all things are against you, just remember, "...We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." (Rom. 8:28)

In the next chapter you will see the plan of God unfold, and the completion of God's plan and you will see that it is far different than what you think it should be at this point. It is our faith and trust in God that sees us through those dark hours when we think, from the circumstance, that everything is going against us. It is our faith in God's promise and faith in the word of God that sustains us, that keeps us going and we know that when we turn the corner things are going to be different because God is working out His plan in our life.

God said, "I am thinking of you constantly." David said, "If I should number the thoughts of God concerning me, they are more than the sands of the sea." The next time you get discouraged, go down to the beach, sit in the sand and try to guess how many grains of sand are on that beach.

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." (Jer.29:11). God isn't thinking, how can I teach him a lesson he will never forget. What kind of miserable thing can we put him through now? No, God is thinking of how to bless you and how to show His love. How can I demonstrate to them that I really care, that I am in control, that I love them? God's thoughts to you are good and not evil. Oh how glorious to be a child of God, to be under the father's care and concern. He thinks about me constantly.

When I think of how my little grandson came home from Sunday School and said to his dad, "Dad is it true that God is watching me?" Chuck said, "Why would you ask me that William?" William said, "My Sunday school teacher said, "God is watching me and I just wanted to know if that was true." Chuck said, "Why did your Sunday school teacher tell you that God was watching you William? William said, "I was being naughty." But he said, "I want to know dad, is that true? Does God really watch me?" Chuck being a wise father said, "Yes William it is true, God is watching you because He loves you so much he can't take His eyes off of you." Have you ever been so in love that you just can't get the person out of your mind? Thinking about them constantly. That is the way God is with you. He is just gone bananas over you. Can't get you out of His mind. Thinks of you constantly, oh how glorious it is to be loved of God.

"And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee; deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again." (Gen.42:37). He is talking about Benjamin. If I don't bring him back safely, then kill my two sons. Ah! Reuben, you are still unstable you are making wild accusations, what good would it do to kill two of Jacob's grandsons? It is sort of a wild thing to say. Now twenty years has passed and we don't know much of what has happened to the brothers of Joseph; but, we do know quite a bit about what happened to Joseph. We were following him, but meanwhile back home, all we know is that one story of Judah and Tamar in chapter thirty-eight. What we do find out is that the other sons got married, and had children which was a natural conclusion. Reuben had two sons and he promises them as a surety for Benjamin.

"And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone; if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." (Gen.42:38). He is not going. Forget it.

"And the famine was sore in the land. And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food. And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you." (Gen.43:1-3).

"If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food; But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down; for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you." (Gen.43:4-5). If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. But if you don't send him, forget it. We are not going down, for the man said to us, "You are not going to see my face unless your brother is with you." You don't understand dad, what is going on in Egypt. That guy is mean and tough and we are not going to go down, unless Benjamin goes with us.

"And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother? And they said, The man asked us straightly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words; could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down?" (Gen.43:6-7). Don't give us a bad time. How would we know he was going to say that?

"And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones. I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him; if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever." (Gen.43:8-9). Judah here indicates that they also had children, ..."also our little ones." Let me have him and let us go so we do not die of starvation here. I will take the personal responsibility for him. Hold me personally responsible.

"For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time." (Gen.43:10). We have to get going. Let us not stall around any longer. Give him to me. I will be the surety for him, we have already waited too long and we are running out of food.

"And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds. And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight." (Gen.43:11-12). Oh Jacob, still conniving and scheming. Now these were things not found in Egypt to any extent and also were the things the traders were carrying that Joseph was sold to. They were carrying balms and spices to Egypt to trade because those were all the commodities that they didn't have in Egypt.

"Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man. And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." (Gen.43:14).

Jacob was brought to the point of that full commitment. Take him and go and if I am bereaved, I am facing the worse thing that could happen.

Esther made a similar statement when her cousin Mordecai was insisting that she go in to Ahasuerus, the king, and plead for the people. She sent word to Mordecai saying, "All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter, that he may live; but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days." (Esther 4:11).

"Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed; and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer. Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day; I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish." (Esther 4:13-16). I will step out. I will take the consequences. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved. I just have to commit it into the hands of God. I can't do anything about it. It is out of my control."

That commitment where you rest in the providential care of God. "And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph." (Gen.43:15).

"And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon. and the man did as Joseph bade; and the

man brought the men into Joseph's house." (Gen.43:17).

"And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses." (Gen.43:18). It is a plot and we can see the whole picture now. He has taken us into his house, he is going to really nail us because the money was there in our sacks. He is just looking for an excuse to fall upon us and to kill us and make us slaves, take our donkeys, man we have had it. "And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they communed with him at the door of the house. And said, O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food. And it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; and we have brought it again in our hand. And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food; we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks. And he said, Peace be to you, fear not; your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them." (Gen.43:19-23).

"And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender." (Gen.43:24).

"And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon; for they heard that they should eat bread there. And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive? And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son." (Gen.43:25-29).

Joseph hadn't seen him since he was about three years old and at this time Benjamin was twenty-four years old. Joseph wanted so to go over and just hug him and kiss him.

"And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother; and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there. And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread. and they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves, because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians." (Gen.43:30-32).

There were three tables, and Joseph had his own table. The other Egyptian guests had a table for themselves and then his brothers all had their table.

"And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth; and the men marveled one at another. And he took and sent messes unto them from before him; but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of there's. And they drank, and were merry with him." (Gen.43:33-34).

When Joseph set them at the table, he set them according to their age around the table. They looked at each other and thought, what is going on here? Do you know what the chances are of setting eleven brothers according to age around the table? Thirty-nine million nine hundred and forty-one thousand! He had about one chance in forty million to set them in the order according to age. That freaked them out. At this point, they evidently figured that this guy has some divining knowledge. In fact Joseph led them to believe that he had the capacity of divination. As we get into the next chapter we will find it quite fascinating as the plot thickens. Joseph, first of all, passes off the fact, don't you know that a fellow in my position is able to divine. They no doubt believed it, because of the order around the table and the fact that he was able to set them according to age. Then he gave servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. They drank and were merry with him.

Now it could be that Joseph was looking to see if the same kind of jealousy and bitterness that they

had towards him was also manifested towards Benjamin. This could have been sort of a test to see if they were still the old guys that they used to be, bitterly jealous of the younger brother, who was obviously favored by the father.

The purposes of God cannot be fulfilled through them as a nation if there is still a semblance of that old bitterness and jealousy; but obviously it wasn't there. They all just had a good time, eating and fellowshiping together.