

**LESSON 12**  
**“Fruitful in the Land of My Affliction”**  
**Genesis 40-45**

**OVERVIEW:**

Joseph interprets the dreams of the butler, the baker, and Pharaoh. Pharaoh makes Joseph ruler over all Egypt. Joseph makes himself known to his brothers and forgives them.

This story has only one minor correction by Joseph Smith in the JST.

**SCRIPTURES:**

THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES CALLED  
GENESIS  
CHAPTER 40

*Joseph interprets the dreams of Pharaoh’s chief butler and chief baker—The butler fails to tell Pharaoh of Joseph.*

1 AND it came to pass after these things, *that* the butler of the king of Egypt and *his* baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt.

2 And Pharaoh was wroth against two *of* his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers.

3 And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the <sup>a</sup>prison, the place where Joseph *was* bound.

4 And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward.

5 ¶ And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which *were* bound in the prison.

6 And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they *were* sad.

7 And he asked Pharaoh’s officers that *were* with him in the ward of his lord’s house, saying, Wherefore look ye *so* sadly to day?

8 And they said unto him, We have dreamed a <sup>a</sup>dream, and *there is* no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not <sup>b</sup>interpretations *belong* to God? tell me *them*, I pray you. (In spite of the fact that Joseph had been imprisoned, he still trusted in God.)

9 And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine *was* before me;

10 And in the vine *were* three branches: and it *was* as though it budded, *and* her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes:

11 And Pharaoh’s cup *was* in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh’s cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh’s hand.

12 And Joseph said unto him, This *is* the interpretation of it: The three branches *are* three days: (The Pharaoh’s birthday was in three days.)

13 Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh’s cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler.

14 But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house:

15 For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon.

16 When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also *was* in my dream, and, behold, *I had* three white baskets on my head:

17 And in the uppermost basket *there was* of all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head.

18 And Joseph answered and said, This *is* the interpretation thereof: The three baskets *are* three days:

19 Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.

20 ¶ And it came to pass the third day, *which was* Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants.

21 And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand:

22 But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them.

23 Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but <sup>a</sup>forgot him. (Joseph will stay in prison two more years.)

## CHAPTER 41

*Pharaoh dreams of the kine and the ears—Joseph interprets the dreams as seven years of plenty and seven of famine—He proposes a grain storage program—Pharaoh makes him ruler of all Egypt—Joseph marries Asenath—He gathers grain as the sand upon the seashore—Asenath bears Ephraim and Manasseh—Joseph sells grain to Egyptians and others during the famine.*

1 AND it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh <sup>a</sup>dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river. (How long was Joseph in prison? He was sold into slavery when he was about seventeen, and he was thirty years of age when he became vice-regent to the pharaoh. All together he served thirteen years with Potiphar and in prison. The record does not tell how long he served Potiphar before his imprisonment, but that he worked his way up to the overseer of the prison implies some period of time before the butler and baker joined him. So it is likely that Joseph was in prison at least three years and possibly much longer. Old Testament Student Manual, p. 95)

2 And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine (cattle) and fatfleshed; and they fed in a meadow.

3 And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured and leanfleshed; and stood by the *other* kine upon the brink of the river.

4 And the ill favoured and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke.

5 And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. (Corn is an archaic English word for grain. The corn mentioned in the KJV translation is a variety of many-headed wheat that is still grown in Egypt and has been found buried with many mummies. George A. Horton, Jr., Studies in Scripture, 3:73)

6 And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them.

7 And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, *it was* a dream.

8 And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was <sup>a</sup>troubled; and he sent and called for all the <sup>b</sup>magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but *there was* none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.

9 ¶ Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day:

10 Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, *both* me and the chief baker:

11 And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream.

12 And *there was* there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret.

13 And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged.

14 ¶ Then <sup>a</sup>Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the <sup>b</sup>dungeon: and he shaved *himself*, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.

15 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and *there is* none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, *that* thou canst understand a dream to <sup>a</sup>interpret it.

16 And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, *It is* not in me: <sup>a</sup>God shall give Pharaoh an answer of <sup>b</sup>peace. (Again, even though Joseph has been mistreated this long time, he still has faith in God. What an example!)

17 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river:

18 And, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fatfleshed and well favoured; and they fed in a meadow:

19 And, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill favoured and leanfleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness:

20 And the lean and the ill favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine:

21 And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they *were* still ill favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke.

22 And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good:

23 And, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, *and* blasted with the <sup>a</sup>east <sup>b</sup>wind, sprung up after them:

24 And the thin ears devoured the seven good ears: and I told *this* unto the magicians; but *there was* none that could declare *it* to me.

25 ¶ And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh *is* one: God hath <sup>a</sup>shewed Pharaoh what he *is* about to do.

26 The seven good kine *are* seven years; and the seven good ears *are* seven years: the dream *is* one.

27 And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them *are* seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of <sup>a</sup>famine.

28 *This is* the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God *is* about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh.

29 Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt:

30 And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the <sup>a</sup>famine shall consume the land;

31 And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it *shall be* very grievous.

32 And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; *it is* because the thing *is* established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

33 Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt.

34 Let Pharaoh do *this*, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years.

35 And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities.

36 And that food shall be for <sup>a</sup>store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.

37 ¶ And the thing was <sup>a</sup>good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.

38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find *such a one* as this *is*, a man in whom the <sup>a</sup>Spirit of God *is*?

39 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath <sup>a</sup>shewed thee all this, *there is* none so discreet and <sup>b</sup>wise as thou *art*:

40 Thou shalt be <sup>a</sup>over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be <sup>b</sup>greater than thou.

41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have <sup>a</sup>set thee over all the land of Egypt.

42 And Pharaoh took off his <sup>a</sup>ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and <sup>b</sup>arrayed him in <sup>c</sup>vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;

43 And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him <sup>a</sup>ruler over all the land of Egypt. (It is commonly believed that Joseph came to Egypt during the reign of the non-Egyptians called Hyksos. There were Semitic-speaking invaders who conquered Egypt and ruled it for many years. They adopted the Egyptian culture, ruled as pharaohs, and their few remaining monuments and scarabs are scattered from lower Egypt up into Nubia. When Joseph was elevated to authority, most likely it was under one of the pharaohs, otherwise his non-Egyptian connection would never have been countenanced. George A. Horton, Jr., *Studies in Scripture*, 3:70)

44 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I *am* Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah; ("he who reveals that which is hidden," or "God speaks" or "God reveals.") and he gave him to wife <sup>a</sup>Asenath (Some believe that Asenath was also Semitic. The wife of Joseph was Asenath, daughter of Poti-pherah, the high priest of On. Dr. A. H. Sayce, an English scholar and archaeologist, states that the name of this priest means "the gift of the sun-god," and the name Asenath probably is not Egyptian. He further says Egyptian law prevented the marriage of Joseph with the daughter of the king as "None but those of the royal blood of Egypt might marry one of the solar race. But the priestly head of the state religion ranked next to the Pharaoh, and in marrying his daughter, therefore, Joseph was taken into the very heart of the royal circle. It placed him at once on a footing of equality with the highest nobles of Egypt." (Joseph and The Land of Egypt, p. 62.) Joseph Fielding Smith, *Improvement Era*, 1953. In view of the emphasis placed on proper marriage in previous generations of the seed of Abraham, it is likely that Joseph's wife also was chosen for him through the Lord's influence. It may be assumed that the priests were of the same lineage as the kings of the dynasty; thus, Asenath, daughter of the priest of On, who was given to Joseph as a wife, could have been Semitic (see commentary on Gen. 39:1-6; cf. Gen. 24:1-5; 28:1-5; D&C 86:8). Joseph and Asenath became the parents of Manasseh and Ephraim (commentary on Gen. 41:50-52). Latter-day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament, Genesis, Ellis T. Rasmussen) the daughter of Potipherah <sup>b</sup>priest of On. And Joseph went out over *all* the land of Egypt.

46 ¶ And <sup>a</sup>Joseph *was* thirty years old (the same age as Jesus when he started his ministry.) when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

47 And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls. (The 20% tax was not at all onerous upon the people since there was so much bounty of crops during the seven years.)

48 And he gathered up all the <sup>a</sup>food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which *was* round about every city, laid he up in the same. (Elder L. Tom Perry taught: Just as it is important to prepare ourselves spiritually, we must also prepare ourselves for our temporal needs... We have been instructed for years to follow at least four requirements in preparing for that which is to come. First, gain an adequate education. Second, live strictly within your income and save something for a rainy day. Third, avoid excessive debt. Fourth, acquire and store a reserve of food and supplies that will sustain life. CR, Oct 1995, p. 46-47)

49 And Joseph gathered corn (wheat) as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for *it was* without number.

50 And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him.

51 And Joseph called the name of the firstborn <sup>a</sup>Manasseh: (Forgetting) For God, *said he*, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

52 And the name of the second called he <sup>a</sup>Ephraim: (Fruitful) For God hath caused me to be <sup>b</sup>fruitful in the land of my affliction.

53 ¶ And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended.

54 And the seven years of <sup>a</sup>dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

55 And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.

56 And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and <sup>a</sup>sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.

57 And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy *corn*; because that the famine was *so* sore in all lands.

## CHAPTER 42

*Jacob sends his sons to buy grain in Egypt—They bow before Joseph—He accuses them roughly, imprisons Simeon, and sends them back for Benjamin.*

1 NOW when Jacob saw that there was <sup>a</sup>corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another?

2 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.

3 ¶ And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy <sup>a</sup>corn in Egypt.

4 But <sup>a</sup>Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him.

5 And the sons of Israel came to buy *corn* among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

6 And Joseph *was* the <sup>a</sup>governor over the land, *and he it was* that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and <sup>b</sup>bowed down themselves before him *with* their faces to the earth.

7 And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, (He spoke Egyptian to them through an interpreter) and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food.

8 And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. (It had been twenty-two years since the sons of Jacob had last seen Joseph – thirteen years of slavery and prison for Joseph, seven years of plenty, and two years of famine – before Jacob's family was forced to go to Egypt for grain. Joseph was a teenager when his family had last seen him. Now he was a mature, middle-aged man. And, even if Joseph still looked very much as he did when he was younger, who would believe that a brother who was sold as a slave to a caravan of Arabians would have become the second most powerful man in Egypt? Old Testament Student Manual, p. 96)

9 And Joseph remembered the <sup>a</sup>dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye *are* spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

10 And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come.

11 We *are* all one <sup>a</sup>man's sons; we *are* true *men*, thy servants are no spies.

12 And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

13 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* <sup>a</sup>not.

14 And Joseph said unto them, That *is it* that I spake unto you, saying, Ye *are* spies: (He was testing



their repentance.)

15 Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither.

16 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.

17 And he put them all together into ward three days.

18 And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; *for* I <sup>a</sup>fear God:

19 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:

20 But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.

21 ¶ And they said one to another, We *are* verily <sup>a</sup>guilty concerning our brother (Joseph), 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.

22 And <sup>a</sup>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 <sup>b</sup>blood is required.

23 And they knew not that Joseph understood *them*; for he spake unto them by an interpreter.

24 And he turned himself about from them, and <sup>a</sup>wept; (He can see that they have repented of the deed done to him.) and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

25 ¶ Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's <sup>a</sup>money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them.

26 And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence.

27 And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his <sup>a</sup>money; for, behold, it *was* in his sack's mouth.

28 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?

29 ¶ And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them; saying,

30 The man, *who is* the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country.

31 And we said unto him, We *are* true *men*; we are no spies:

32 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.

33 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:

34 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 ye shall traffick in the land.

35 ¶ 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.

36 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 <sup>a</sup>Benjamin *away*: all these things are against me.

37 And <sup>a</sup>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.

38 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 <sup>a</sup>sorrow to the grave.

## CHAPTER 43

*Jacob is persuaded to send Benjamin to Egypt—Joseph's brethren make obeisance to him—They all eat and drink together.*

1 AND the famine *was* sore in the land.

2 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.

3 And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your <sup>a</sup>brother *be* with you.

4 If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food:

5 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 <sup>a</sup>brother *be* with you.

6 And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye *so* ill with me, *as* to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?

7 And they said, The man asked us straitly 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?

8 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.

9 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 <sup>a</sup>blame for ever: (By demanding that Benjamin be brought back to Egypt, Joseph allowed his brothers to show whether or not they truly were sorry for what they had done to him so many years before. Would they now show the same lack of concern for Benjamin? It is significant that Judah, who suggested that Joseph be sold, became the one who was willing to become the surety for Benjamin. There does seem to be evidence of sincere repentance on the brothers' part, and Joseph's stratagem allowed them to demonstrate this repentance. When the pressure was on, Judah's change of heart was shown to be complete. Old Testament Student Manual, p. 96)

10 For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time.

11 And their father Israel said unto them, If *it must be* so now, do this; take of the best fruits of 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:

12 And take double money in your hand; and the <sup>a</sup>money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry *it* again in your hand; peradventure it *was* an oversight:

13 Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man:

14 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. (Jacob is here showing his total faith and trust in God to make this situation turn out okay.)

15 ¶ 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.

16 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.

17 And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.

18 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.

19 And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they communed with him at the door of the house,

20 And said, O <sup>a</sup>sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy <sup>b</sup>food:

21 And it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, *every* man's

<sup>a</sup>money *was* in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand.

22 And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks.

23 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.

24 And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave *them* water, and they <sup>a</sup>washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender.

25 And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there.

26 ¶ And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which *was* in their hand into the house, and <sup>a</sup>bowed themselves to him to the earth.

27 And he asked them of *their* welfare, and said, *Is* your father well, the old <sup>a</sup>man of whom ye spake? *Is* he yet alive?

28 And they answered, Thy servant our father *is* in good health, he *is* yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.

29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother <sup>a</sup>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.

30 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 <sup>a</sup>wept there.

31 And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread.

32 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 <sup>a</sup>abomination unto the Egyptians.

33 And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his <sup>a</sup>birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another.

34 And he took *and sent* <sup>a</sup>messes unto them from before him: but <sup>b</sup>Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

## CHAPTER 44

*Joseph arranges to stop the return of his brethren to Canaan—Judah offers himself in place of Benjamin for their father's sake.*

1 AND he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks *with* food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth.

2 And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.

3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses.

4 *And* when they were gone out of the city, *and not yet* far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?

5 *Is* not this *it* in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.

6 ¶ And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words.

7 And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing:

8 Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?



9 With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.

10 And he said, Now also *let it be* according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless.

11 Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack.

12 And he searched, *and* began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

13 Then they <sup>a</sup>rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.

14 ¶ And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he *was* yet there: and they <sup>a</sup>fell before him on the ground.

15 And Joseph said unto them, What deed *is* this that ye have done? ~~wot~~ (knew) ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?

16 And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we *are* my lord's servants, both we, and *he* also with whom the cup is found.

17 And he said, God forbid that I should do so: *but* the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

18 ¶ Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my <sup>a</sup>lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine <sup>b</sup>anger burn against thy servant: for thou *art* even as Pharaoh.

19 My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother?

20 And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old <sup>a</sup>man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. (By that time, Benjamin was likely over twenty years of age and may have been married and had children. Judah, who had suggested that they sell their brother Joseph nearly a quarter of a century earlier, now offered himself as surety instead of Benjamin. Judah's plea for the welfare of his aged father and his willingness to place his own life in jeopardy reveal a heart full of love. George A. Horton, Jr., Studies in Scripture, 3:76)

21 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him.

22 And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for *if* he should leave his father, *his father* would die.

23 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest <sup>a</sup>brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.

24 And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.

25 And our father said, Go again, *and* buy us a little food.

26 And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our <sup>a</sup>youngest brother *be* with us.

27 And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two *sons*:

28 And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is <sup>a</sup>torn in <sup>b</sup>pieces; and I saw him not since:

29 And if ye <sup>a</sup>take this also from me, and mischief befall <sup>b</sup>him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

30 Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad *be* not with us; (This phrase, "and the lad be not with us" has been used often by youth leaders. Their charge is to do all they can to help the youth of the Church of remain faithful to the Lord and active in the Church. Those who have stewardship over youth in the Church should always ask themselves, how can I return home to God "and the lad be not with us?" This also pertains to the stewardship of parents and their children.) seeing that his life is <sup>a</sup>bound up in the lad's life;

31 It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad *is* not *with us*, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with <sup>a</sup>sorrow to the grave.

32 For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the <sup>a</sup>blame to my father for ever.

33 Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.

34 For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad *be* not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father. (Judah is pleading for Joseph to take him instead of Benjamin. The Lion of Judah, the Lord Jesus Christ, pleads also for us, that He be taken instead of us, upon conditions of repentance.)

## CHAPTER 45

*Joseph makes himself known to his brethren—They rejoice together—Pharaoh invites Jacob and his family to dwell in Egypt and eat the fat of the land.*

1 THEN Joseph could not <sup>a</sup>refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he <sup>b</sup>cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

2 And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I *am* <sup>a</sup>Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were <sup>b</sup>troubled at his presence.

4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I *am* <sup>a</sup>Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

5 Now therefore be not <sup>a</sup>grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did <sup>b</sup>send me before you to preserve life.

6 For these two years *hath* the famine *been* in the land: and yet *there are* five years, in the which *there shall* neither *be* earing nor harvest.

7 And God sent me before you to <sup>a</sup>preserve you a <sup>b</sup>posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8 So now *it was* not you *that* sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a <sup>a</sup>ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not:

10 And thou shalt dwell in the land of <sup>a</sup>Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast:

11 And there will I <sup>a</sup>nourish thee; for yet *there are* five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.

12 And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that *it is* my mouth that speaketh unto you.

13 And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen: and ye shall haste and bring down my <sup>a</sup>father hither.

14 And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.

15 Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

16 ¶ And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come: and it <sup>a</sup>pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants.

17 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan;

18 And take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land.

19 Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you <sup>a</sup>wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come.

20 Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt *is* yours.

21 And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way.

22 To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to <sup>a</sup>Benjamin he gave three hundred *pieces* of silver, and five changes of raiment.

23 And to his father he sent after this *manner*; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way.

24 So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.

25 ¶ And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father,

26 And told him, saying, Joseph *is* yet alive, and he *is* <sup>a</sup>governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not.

27 And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the <sup>a</sup>wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father <sup>b</sup>revived:

28 And Israel said, *It is* enough; Joseph my son *is* yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.

### Joseph – A Type of Christ

Joseph was the favored son of his father, so was Jesus.

Joseph was rejected by his brothers, the Israelites, as was Jesus.

Joseph was sold by his brothers into the hands of the Gentiles, just as Jesus was.

Judah, the head of the tribe of Judah, proposed the sale of Joseph. Certain leaders of the Jews in Jesus' day turned Jesus over to the Romans. Judas (the Greek spelling of Judah) was the one who actually sold Jesus.

Joseph was sold for twenty pieces of silver, the price of a slave his age. Christ was sold for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave his age.

In their very attempt to destroy Joseph, his brothers actually set up the conditions that would bring about their eventual temporal salvation – that is, Joseph, by virtue of being sold, would become their deliverer. Jesus, by his being given into the hands of the Gentiles, was crucified and completed the atoning sacrifice, becoming the Deliverer for all mankind.

Joseph began his mission of preparing salvation for Israel at age thirty, just as Jesus began his ministry of preparing salvation for the world at age thirty.

When Joseph was finally raised to his exalted position in Egypt, all bowed the knee to him. All will eventually bow the knee to Jesus.

Joseph provided bread for Israel and saved them from death, all without cost. Jesus, the bread of Life, did the same for all men. Old Testament Student Manual, p. 97

### Additional Reading:

2 Nephi 2: 2 Nevertheless, Jacob, my first-born in the wilderness, thou knowest the greatness of God; and he shall consecrate thine <sup>a</sup>afflictions for thy gain. (It is in our extremities that we become acquainted with God, which is life's greatest blessing. The soul of the righteous is sanctified through suffering. To a

lamenting Joseph Smith, then incarcerated in the Liberty prison, the Lord granted the assurance, “All these things shall give the experience and shall be for thy good.” D&C 122:7. DCBM, 1:190. Elaine Cannon said: “Adversity in our own lives can bring life's purpose to mind. Bad times have certain scientific value, according to Emerson. In his "Conduct of Life" essays he says that the trying times are occasions a good learner would not miss. One can learn a great deal. Can it be, then, that if one doesn't kick against the pricks, increased understanding comes—the nature of God, the importance of the adventure of life?” (Elaine Cannon, *Adversity*, p. 4) Marion G. Romney said: “If we can bear our afflictions with the understanding, faith, and courage,... we shall be strengthened and comforted in many ways. We shall be spared the torment which accompanies the mistaken idea that all suffering comes as chastisement for transgression... I have seen the remorse and despair in the lives of men who, in the hour of trial, have cursed God and died spiritually. And I have seen people rise to great heights from what seemed to be unbearable burdens.” (*Conference Report*, Oct. 1969, pp. 59-60 as taken from the *Book of Mormon Student Manual*, 1981 ed., p. 69) If you have troubles at home with children who stray, if you suffer financial reverses and emotional strain that threaten your homes and your happiness, if you must face loss of life or health, may peace be unto your soul. We will not be tempted beyond our ability to withstand. Our detours and disappointments are the straight and narrow path to Him. Marion G. Romney, CR, Oct 1987.)

D&C 64:8 My disciples, in days of old, sought <sup>a</sup>occasion against one another and forgave not one another in their hearts; and for this <sup>b</sup>evil they were <sup>c</sup>afflicted and sorely <sup>d</sup>chastened.<sup>9</sup> Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to <sup>a</sup>forgive one another; for he that <sup>b</sup>forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin. <sup>10</sup> I, the Lord, will <sup>a</sup>forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to <sup>b</sup>forgive all men. <sup>11</sup> And ye ought to say in your hearts—let God <sup>a</sup>judge between me and thee, and <sup>b</sup>reward thee according to thy <sup>c</sup>deeds.

D&C 122: 5 If thou art called to pass through <sup>a</sup>tribulation; if thou art in perils among false brethren; if thou art in <sup>b</sup>perils among robbers; if thou art in perils by land or by sea;  
6 If thou art <sup>a</sup>accused with all manner of false accusations; if thine enemies fall upon thee; (Joseph Smith: Myself and fellow prisoners were taken to the town, [Far West, Mo.] into the public square, and before departure we, after much entreaty, were suffered to see our families, being attended all the while by a strong guard. I found my wife and children in tears, who feared we had been shot by those who had sworn to take our lives, and that they would see me no more. When I entered my house, they clung to my garments, their eyes streaming with tears while mingled emotions of joy and sorrow were manifested in their countenances. I requested to have a private interview with them a few minutes, but this privilege was denied me by the guard. I was then obliged to take my departure. . . . My partner wept, my children clung to me, until they were thrust from me by the swords of the guards. I felt overwhelmed while I witnessed the scene, and could only recommend them to the care of that God whose kindness had followed me to the present time, and who alone could protect them, and deliver me from the hands of my enemies, and restore me to my family. (HC 3:193, November 2, 1838.)) if they tear thee from the society of thy father and mother and brethren and sisters; and if with a drawn sword thine enemies tear thee from the bosom of thy wife, and of thine offspring, and thine elder son, although but six years of age, shall cling to thy garments, and shall say, My father, my father, why can't you stay with us? O, my father, what are the men going to do with you? and if then he shall be thrust from thee by the sword, and thou be dragged to <sup>b</sup>prison, and thine enemies prowl around thee like <sup>c</sup>wolves for the blood of the lamb;  
7 And if thou shouldst be cast into the <sup>a</sup>pit, (Liberty Jail) or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the <sup>b</sup>deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to <sup>c</sup>hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of <sup>d</sup>hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee <sup>e</sup>experience, and shall be for thy good.

(Difficulty faced well rewards its subjects with greater strength. Greatness of character can come only from the rigors of experience in which it is forged. There is a purifying and sanctifying power that grows out of suffering that cannot, perhaps, be gained in any other way. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 960. Orson F. Whitney: It remained for the Prophet Joseph Smith to . . . set forth the why and wherefore of human suffering; and in revealing it he gave us a strength and power to endure that we did not before possess. For when men know why they suffer, and realize that it is for a good and wise purpose, they can bear it much better than they can in ignorance. The Prophet was lying in a dungeon [Liberty, Missouri] for the gospel's sake. He called upon God, "who controlleth and subjecteth the devil," and God answered telling him that his sufferings should be but "a small moment." "Thou art not yet as Job," said the Lord, "thy friends do not contend against thee." Job's friends, it will be remembered, tried to convince him that he must have done something wrong or those trials would not have come upon him. But Job had done no wrong; it was "without cause" that Satan had sought to destroy him. God said to Joseph: "If thou art called to pass through tribulation; if thou art in perils among false brethren; perils among robbers; perils by land and sea; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the billowing surge conspire against thee, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience and shall be for thy good." There is the reason. It is for our development, our purification, our growth, our education and advancement, that we buffet the fierce waves of sorrow and misfortune; and we shall be all the stronger and better when we have swum the flood and stand upon the farther shore. . . . The fall of Adam and Eve was a great calamity, but it brought forth a wonderful blessing; it gave us our bodies, with endless opportunities to advance and achieve. It brought death into the world, but it also brought forth the human family. There was the compensation. "Adam fell that men might be: and men are, that they might have joy." [2 Nephi 2:25.] The crucifixion of Christ was a terrible calamity, but the atonement connected with it was the foreordained means of man's salvation. Israel's calamitous fate proved a blessing to the world in general. God's promises to Abraham had to be made good. "In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." [Abr. 2:11.] This promise was fulfilled in Christ, but an important part of the fulfillment began when the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were flung broadcast over the world, and the barren wastes of unbelief might be sprinkled with the blood that believes, and made fruitful of faith and righteousness. So it is with all our troubles and sorrows; there is a compensation for them. The philosopher Emerson says: "A fever, a mutilation, a cruel disappointment, a loss of wealth, a loss of friends, seems at the moment unpaid loss, and unpayable. But the sure years reveal the deep remedial force that underlies all facts. The death of a dear friend, wife, brother, lover, which seemed nothing but privation, somewhat later assumes the aspect of a guide or genius; for it commonly operates revolutions in our way of life, terminates an epoch of infancy or of youth which was waiting to be closed, breaks up a wonted occupation, or a household or a style of living, and allows the formation of new ones more friendly to the growth of character. It permits or constrains the formation of new acquaintances and the reception of new influences that prove of the first importance to the next years; and the man or woman who would have remained a sunny garden flower, with no room for its roots and too much sunshine for its head, by the falling of the walls and the neglect of the gardener, is made the banyan of the forest, yielding shade and fruit to wide neighborhoods of men." How true! To whom do we look, in days of grief and disaster, for help and consolation? Who are these friendly neighbors gathered in today? They are men and women who have suffered, and out of their experience in suffering they bring forth the riches of their sympathy and condolences as a blessing to those now in need. Could they do this had they not suffered themselves? When the sky darkens and the tempest threatens, where do we go for shelter? To the sagebrush or the willow? No, rather to some spreading oak that has withstood the storms of ages and become stronger because of the fierce winds that have swayed its branches and caused its roots to strike deeper and deeper into the soil. When we want counsel and comfort, we do not go to children, nor to those who know nothing but pleasure and self-gratification. We go to men and women of thought and sympathy, men and women who have suffered themselves and can give us the comfort that we need. Is



not this God's purpose in causing his children to suffer? He wants them to become more like himself. God has suffered far more than man ever did or ever will, and is therefore the great source of sympathy and consolation. "Who are these arrayed in white, nearest to the throne of God?" asked John the Apostle, wrapt in his mighty vision. The answer was: "These are they who have come up through great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." [Rev. 7:13-14.] There is always a blessing in sorrow and humiliation. They who escape these things are not the fortunate ones. "Whom God loveth he chasteneth." [Heb. 12:6.] When he desires to make a great man he takes a little street waif, or a boy in the back-woods, such as Lincoln or Joseph Smith, and brings him up through hardship and privation to be the grand and successful leader of a people. Flowers shed most of their perfume when they are crushed. Men and women have to suffer just so much in order to bring out the best that is in them. (IE, November 1918, 22:5-7.)

8 The <sup>a</sup>Son of Man hath <sup>b</sup>descended below them all. Art thou greater than he? (Erastus Snow: It is not necessary, in the providence of God, that we should all be martyrs; it is not necessary that all should suffer death upon the cross, because it was the will of the Father that Jesus should so suffer, neither is it necessary that all the Saints of this last dispensation should perish because our prophet perished, but yet it may be necessary that some should, that a sufficient number of faithful witnesses of God and of his Christ should suffer, and even perish by the hands of their enemies, to prove and show unto the world—the unbelieving and unthinking—that their testimony is true, and that they are ready not only to bear testimony inward, but in deed, to sustain and honor their testimony through their lives; and also in their death; and greater love than this no man can have for his friend or for his bosom companion, not even David and Jonathan, whose love for each other is said to have surpassed the love of woman. [1 Sam. 20.] No one can give a stronger assurance of his devotion to the principles he has received and which he teaches to his fellow man, than to patiently endure suffering and endurance even unto death. (JD, October 1879, 21:26.) Daniel H. Wells: Do not let us be discouraged at difficulties and trials, for we are sent to this state of existence for the express purpose of descending below all things, that we may pass the ordeals and trials of this life and thereby prove our integrity and be prepared to rise above all things. And after all, we have not been called upon to endure to that extent that the Savior of the world was. But he was not subjected to the afflictions he had to endure without hope, neither are we; but we are called to pass through them that we may prove whether we have power and strength to stand in that day when all things shall be shaken, and nothing doubting, cleave to the Lord our God with full purpose of heart, no matter how much things are against us, apparently. If we can pass these tests and trials we shall prove to God and angels that we are worthy to receive the welcome plaudit, "well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of the Lord." [Matt. 25:21-23.] (JD, March 22, 1868, 12:235.))

9 Therefore, <sup>a</sup>hold on thy way, and the priesthood shall <sup>b</sup>remain with thee; for their <sup>c</sup>bounds are set, they cannot pass. Thy <sup>d</sup>days are known, and thy years shall not be numbered less; ("For there is a time appointed for every man, according as his works shall be" (D&C 121:25). As to those of the Saints who suffer with sickness or affliction, the Lord said, "It shall come to pass that he that hath faith in me to be healed, and is not appointed unto death, shall be healed" (D&C 42:48). At the funeral of Richard L. Evans, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, Joseph Fielding Smith, then president of the Church, said, "No righteous man is taken before his time" (unpublished funeral address, text in possession of authors). Joseph Smith had the sure promise that he would not be taken until his work had been completed. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 960) therefore, <sup>e</sup>fear not what man can do, for God shall be with you forever and ever. (Joseph came out of the prison a kinder man than when he went in. This prison experience had a softening affect upon the Prophet. Although he was a great man before he went into the prison, after he came out, he was even greater.)

Chapter 46 recounts Jacob and his family going to Egypt where Jacob is reunited with his son Joseph.

Chapter 47 the Israelites settle in Goshen.

Chapter 48 Jacob adopts Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh as his own children. Jacob puts Ephraim before Manasseh.

Chapter 49 Jacob blesses his sons.

Chapter 50 Jacob dies, Joseph dies. The JST version of chapter 50 includes the prophecies of Joseph regarding Joseph Smith.

The following narrative of the story of Joseph is so well written, that I have included it in its entirety. It is written by Alfred Edersheim, a non LDS Bible scholar.

WE are now approaching a decisive period in the history of the house of Israel. Yet once again everything seems to happen quite naturally, while in reality everything is supernatural. The same causes which led to a diminution of rain in the Abyssinian mountains, and with it of the waters of the Nile, brought drought and famine to Palestine. It is quite in character that, in such straits, the wild, lawless sons of Jacob should have stood helplessly despondent, while the energies of their father were correspondingly roused. "Why do ye look one upon another? . . . I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence." The ten sons of Jacob now departed on this errand. But Benjamin, who had taken the place of Joseph in his father's heart, was not sent with them, perhaps from real fear of "mischief" by the way, possibly because his father did not quite trust the honest intentions of his sons. The next scene presents to us the Hebrew strangers among a motley crowd of natives and foreigners, who had come for corn; while Joseph, in all the state of the highest Egyptian official, superintends the sale. In true Eastern fashion the sons of Jacob make lowest obeisance before "the governor over the land." Of course they could not have recognized in him, who looked, dressed, and spoke as an Egyptian noble, the lad who, more than twenty years before, had, in "the anguish of his soul," "besought" them not to sell him into slavery. The same transformation had not taken place in them, and Joseph at once knew the well-remembered features of his brethren. But what a change in their relative positions! As he saw them bending lowly before him, his former dreams came vividly back to him. Surely, one even much less devout than Joseph would, in that moment, have felt that a Divine Hand had guided the past for a Divine purpose. Personal resentment or pique could not have entered into his mind at such a time. If, therefore, as some have thought, severity towards his brethren partially determined his conduct, this must have been quite a subordinate motive. At any rate, it is impossible to suppose that he cherished any longer feelings of anger, when shortly afterwards, on their expression of deep penitence, "he turned himself about from them and wept." But we prefer regarding Joseph's conduct as consistent throughout. The appearance of his brothers before him seemed to imply that God had not meant to separate him from his family, nor yet that he should return to them, but that they should come to him, and that he had been sent before to keep them alive. But for such a re-union of the family it was manifestly needful, that their hearts and minds should have undergone an entire change from that unscrupulous envy which had prompted them to sell him into slavery. This must be ascertained before he made himself known to them. Moreover, its reality must be tested by the severest trial to which their altered feelings could be subjected.

Thus viewing it, we can understand the whole conduct of Joseph. Of course, his first object would be to separate the sons of Jacob from the crowd of other purchasers, so as to deal specially with them, without, however, awakening their suspicions; his next to ascertain the state of matters at home. Then he would make them taste undeserved sorrow by the exercise of an arbitrary power, against which they would be helpless - even as Joseph had been in their hands. Thus they might see their past sin in their

present sorrow. All these objects were attained by one and the same means. Joseph charged them with being spies, who, on pretense of buying corn, had come to find out the defenseless portions of the land. The accusation was not unreasonable in the then state of Egypt, nor uncommon in Eastern countries. It was not only that this afforded a pretext for dealing separately with them, but their answer to the charge would inform Joseph about the circumstances of his family. For, naturally, they would not only protest their innocence, but show the inherent improbability of such an imputation. Here no argument could be more telling than that they were "all one man's sons," since no one would risk the lives of all his children in so dangerous a business. But this was not enough for Joseph. By reiterating the charge, he led them to enter into further details, from which he learned that both his father and Benjamin were alive. Still their reference to himself as one "who is not," seemed to imply persistence in their former deceit, and must have strengthened his doubts as to their state of mind. But now experience of violence would show them not only their past guilt, but that, however God might seem to delay, He was the avenger of all wrong. More than that, if Benjamin were placed relatively to them in the same circumstances of favoritism as Joseph had been; and if, instead of envying and hating him, they were prepared, even when exposed through him to shame and danger, not only to stand by him, but to suffer in his stead, then they had repented in the truest sense, and their state of mind was the opposite of what it had been twenty years ago. Proceeding on this plan, Joseph first imprisoned all the ten, proposing to release one of their number to fetch Benjamin, in order to test, as he said, the truthfulness of their statements.

This excessive harshness was probably intended to strike terror into their hearts; and, at the end of three days, he so far relented as to retain only one of their number as a hostage; at the same time encouraging them both by the statement that, in so doing, his motive was "fear of God," and by the assurance that, once satisfied of their innocence, he cherished no evil design against them. The reference to "fear of God" on the part of an Egyptian, and this apparent shrinking from needless rigor, must have cut them to the heart, as it brought out in contrast their own implacable conduct towards Joseph. Simeon was chosen to remain behind as hostage, because he was the next oldest to Reuben, who was not detained, since he had endeavored to save the life of Joseph. This also must have contributed to remind them of their former wrong; and, for the first time, they avow to one another their bitter guilt in the past, and how God was now visiting it. So poignant were their feelings that, in the presence of Joseph, they spoke of it, in their own Hebrew, ignorant that Joseph, who had conversed with them through an interpreter, understood their words. Joseph was obliged hastily to withdraw, so as not to betray himself; but he wavered not in his purpose. Simeon was bound before their eyes, and the rest were dismissed; but each with ample provender for the journey, besides the corn they had bought, and with the purchase-money secretly restored to them.

The terror with which the unexpected turn of events had inspired them was deepened when, at their first night's quarters, one of them discovered the money in his sack. But, as before, the impression was wholesome. They traced in this also the avenging hand of God: "What is this that God hath done unto us?"

The narrative which, on their return, they had to tell their father was sufficiently sad. But the discovery they now made, that the money which they had paid had been secretly put back into each man's sack, seemed to imply some deep design of mischief, and filled Jacob and his sons with fresh fears. If the condition of their again appearing before the ruler of Egypt was, that they must bring Benjamin with them, then he, who had already lost two sons, would refuse to expose to such a risk his darling, the last remaining pledge of his Rachel. Reuben, indeed, volunteered the strange guarantee of his own two sons: "Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee." But this language was little calculated to reassure the heart of Jacob. For a time it seemed as if Jacob's former sorrow was to be increased by the loss of Simeon, and as if Joseph and his family were never again to meet.

If we ask ourselves why Joseph should have risked this, or added to his father's sorrow, we answer, to the first question, that, since Joseph now knew the circumstances of his family, and had Simeon beside him, he could at any time, on need for it appearing, have communicated with his father. As to the second difficulty, we must all feel that this grief and care could not be spared to his father if his brothers were to be tried, proved, and prepared for their mission. And did it not seem as if Joseph had rightly understood the will of God in this matter, since the heart of his brethren had been at once touched to own their past sin and the Hand of God?

Could he not then still further commit himself to God in well-doing, and trust Him? Nay, could he not also trust Jacob's faith to bear up under this trial? At most it would be short, and how blessed to all the fruits expected from it! Once more the event proved the correctness of his views. As the stock of provisions, which the sons of Jacob had brought, became nearly exhausted, a fresh application to the royal granaries of Egypt was absolutely necessary. This time it was Judah who offered himself in surety for Benjamin. His language was so calm, affectionate, and yet firm, as to inspire Jacob with what confidence can be derived from the earnest, good purpose of a true man. But he had higher consolation - that of prayer and faith: "God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin." Yet, even if God had otherwise appointed, - if He saw fit to take from him his children, his faith would rise to this also: "And I, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved!" - good is the will of the Lord, and he would bow before it.

It is touching, as it were, to watch the trembling hands of the old man as he makes feeble attempts to ward off the wrath of the dreaded Egyptian. It was a famine-year, and, naturally, there would be scarcity of the luxuries which were usually exported from the East to Egypt. Let them, then, take a present of such dainties to the Egyptian - "a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds." As for the money which had been put back into their sacks, it might have been an oversight. Let them take it again with them, along with the price of what corn they were now to purchase. And so let them go forth in the name of the God of Israel - Benjamin, and all the rest. He would remain behind alone, as at the fords of Jabbok, - no, not alone; but in faith and patience awaiting the issue. Presently the ten brothers, with more anxious hearts than Joseph ever had on his way to Egypt or in the slave-market, are once more in the dreaded presence of the Egyptian. Joseph saw the new-comers, and with them what he judged to be his youngest brother, whom he had left in his home a child only a year old. Manifestly, it was neither the time nor the place to trust himself to converse with them. So he gave his steward orders to take them to his house, and that they should dine with him at noon. Joseph had spoken in Egyptian, which seems to have been unknown to the sons of Jacob. When they saw themselves brought to the house of Joseph, it immediately occurred to them that they were to be charged with theft of the former purchase-money. But the steward with kindly words allayed the fears which made them hesitate before entering "at the door of the house."

The sight of Simeon, who was at once restored to them, must have increased their confidence. Presently preparations were made for the banquet. It was a deeply trying scene for Joseph which ensued when he met his brethren on his return home. Little could they imagine what thoughts passed through his mind, as in true Oriental fashion they laid out the humble presents his father had sent, and lowly "bowed themselves to him to the earth." His language ill concealed his feelings. Again and again he inquired for his father, and as they replied: "Thy servant our father is in good health; he is yet alive," they again "bowed down their heads, and made obeisance." But when he fastened his eyes on Benjamin, his own mother's son, and had faltered it out, so unlike an Egyptian: "God be gracious unto thee, my son," he was obliged hastily to withdraw, "for his bowels did yearn upon his brother." Twenty-two years had passed since he had been parted from his brother, and Benjamin now stood before him - a youth little older than he when his bitter bondage in prison had commenced. Would they who had once sacrificed



him on account of jealousy, be ready again to abandon his brother for the sake of selfishness? At the banquet a fresh surprise awaited the sons of Jacob. Of course, after the Egyptian fashion, Joseph ate by himself, and the Egyptians by themselves; he as a member of the highest caste, and they from religious scruples. We know from secular history that the Egyptians abstained from certain kinds of meat, and would not eat with the knives and forks, nor from the cooking utensils which had been used by those of any other nation. But it must have seemed unaccountable, that at the banquet their places were arranged exactly according to their ages. How could the Egyptian have known them, and what mysterious circumstances surrounded them in his presence? Yet another thing must have struck them. In their father's house the youngest of their number, the son of Rachel, had been uniformly preferred before them all. And now it was the same in the Egyptian palace! If the Egyptian ruler "sent messes unto them from before him," "Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs." Why this mark of unusual distinction, as it was regarded in ancient times?

However, the banquet itself passed pleasantly, and early next morning the eleven, gladsome and thankful, were on their way back to Canaan. But the steward of Joseph's house had received special instructions. As before, each "bundle of money" had been restored in every man's sack. But, besides, he had also placed in that of Benjamin, Joseph's own cup, or rather his large silver bowl. The brothers had not traveled far when the steward hastily overtook them. Fixing upon the eleven the stain of base ingratitude, he charged them with stealing the "bowl" out of which "his lord drank, and whereby, indeed, he divined." Of course this statement of the steward by no means proves that Joseph actually did divine by means of this "cup." On the contrary, such could not have been the case, since it was of course impossible to divine, out of a cup that had been stolen from him, that it was stolen (ver. 15)! But, no doubt, there was in Joseph's house, as in that of all the great sages of Egypt, the silver bowl, commonly employed for divination, in which unknown events were supposed to appear in reflection from the water, sometimes after gems or gold (with or without magical inscriptions and incantations) had been cast into the cup, to increase the sheen of the broken rays of light. Similar practices still prevail in Egypt.

The charge of treachery and of theft so took the brothers by surprise, that, in their conscious innocence, they offered to surrender the life of the guilty and the liberty of all the others, if the cup were found with any of them. But the steward had been otherwise instructed. He was to isolate Benjamin from the rest. With feigned generosity he now refused their proposal, and declared his purpose only to retain the guilty as bondsman. The search was made, and the cup found in the sack of Benjamin. Now the first great trial of their feelings ensued. They were all free to go home to their own wives and children; Benjamin alone was to be a bondsman. The cup had been found in his sack! Granting that, despite appearances, they knew him to be innocent, why should they stand by him? At home he had been set before them as the favorite; nay, for fear of endangering him, their father had well nigh allowed them all, their wives and their children, to perish from hunger. In Egypt, also, he, the youngest, the son of another mother, had been markedly preferred before them. They had formerly got rid of one favorite, why hesitate now, when Providence itself seemed to rid them of another? What need, nay, what business had they to identify themselves with him? Was it not enough that he had been put before them everywhere; must they now destroy their whole family, and suffer their little ones to perish for the sake of one who, to say the best, seemed fated to involve them in misery and ruin? So they might have reasoned. But so they did not reason, nor, indeed, did they reason at all; for in all matters of duty reasoning is ever dangerous, and only absolute, immediate obedience to what is right, is safe. "They rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city."

The first trial was past; the second and final one was to commence. In the presence of Joseph, "they fell before him on the ground" in mute grief. Judah is now the spokesman, and right well does his advocacy prefigure the pleading of his great Descendant. Not a word does he utter in extenuation or in plea. This



one thought only is uppermost in his heart: "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." Not guilty indeed on this charge, but guilty before God, who hath avenged their iniquity! How, then, can they leave Benjamin in his undeserved bondage, when not he, but they have really been the cause of this sorrow? But Joseph, as formerly his steward, rejects the proposal as unjust, and offers their liberty to all except Benjamin. This gives to Judah an opening for pleading, in language so tender, graphic, and earnest, that few have been able to resist its pathos. He recounts the simple story, how the great Egyptian lord had at the first inquired whether they had father or brother, and how they had told him of their father at home, and of the child of his old age who was with him, the last remaining pledge of his wedded love, to whom the heart of the old man clave. Then the vizier had asked the youth to be brought, and they had pleaded that his going would cost the life of his father. But the famine had compelled them to ask of their father even this sacrifice. And the old man had reminded them of what they knew only too well: how his wife, the only one whom even now he really considered such, had borne him two sons; one of those had gone out from him, just as it was now proposed Benjamin should go, and he had not seen him since, and he had said: "Surely he is torn in pieces." And now, if they took this one also from him, and mischief befell him, his gray hairs would go down with sorrow to the grave. What the old man apprehended had come to pass, no matter how. But could he, Judah, witness the grief and the death of his old father? Was he not specially to blame, since upon his guarantee he had consented to part with him? Nay, he had been his surety; and he now asked neither pardon nor favor, only this he entreated, to be allowed to remain as bondsman instead of the lad, and to let him go back with his brethren. He besought slavery as a boon, for how could he "see the evil" that should "come on his father?"

Truly has Luther said: "What would I not give to be able to pray before the Lord as Judah here interceded for Benjamin, for it is a perfect model of prayer, nay, of the strong feeling which must underlie all prayer." And, blessed be God, One has so interceded for us, Who has given Himself as our surety, and become a bondsman for us. (Psalm 40:6, 7; Philippians 2:6-8) His advocacy has been heard; His substitution accepted; and His intercession for us is ever continued, and ever prevails. The Lord Jesus Christ is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David," and "hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."

The last trial was now past. Indeed, it had been impossible to continue it longer, for Joseph "could not refrain himself." All strangers were hastily removed, and Joseph, with all tenderness of affection and delicacy of feeling, made himself known to them as the brother whom they had sold into Egypt, but whom in reality God had sent before for the purpose not only of saving their lives, but of preserving their posterity, that so His counsel of mercy with the world might be accomplished. Then let them not be grieved, for God had overruled it all. Three times must he speak it, and prove his forgiveness by the most loving marks, before they could credit his words or derive comfort from them. But one object Joseph had now in view: to bring his father and all his family to be near him, that he might nourish them; for as yet only two out of the seven years of famine had passed. And in this purpose he was singularly helped by Divine Providence. Tidings of what had taken place reached Pharaoh, and the generous conduct of his vizier pleased the king. Of his own accord he also proposed what Joseph had intended; accompanying his invitation with a royal promise of ample provision, and sending "wagons" for the transport of the women and children. On his part, Joseph added rich presents for his father. When the eleven returned, first alone, to their father, and told him all, "the heart of Jacob fainted, for he believed them not." Presently, as he saw the Egyptian "wagons" arriving, a great reaction took place. "The spirit of Jacob their father revived." The past, with its sorrows and its sin, seemed blotted out from his memory. Once more it was not, as before, Jacob who spoke, but "Israel" (the prince with God and man) who said, "It is enough, Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." Bible History Old Testament, Chapter 21.

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.daneprairie.com>.  
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.