

Brothers Return to Egypt

Joseph 8; Genesis 43:11 – 43:14

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Genesis 43:11-14, Israel Decides What to Do

¹¹ And their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man—a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. ¹² Take double money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. ¹³ Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. ¹⁴ And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!"

What did Israel decide to do?

He agreed to send Benjamin with the brothers along with some of the local delicacies and double payment plus the previous payment (...so this payment would be 3x more).

v11 – What is the significance of the gifts of the land that was to be taken to Joseph?

As the brothers were to take gifts of gold, spices and myrrh to Joseph, so too did the Magi bring gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to Jesus [101]:

Matthew 2:11 – *when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*

The gold symbolized the kingship of Jesus, the frankincense was an incense representing His deity and the myrrh was an embalming oil indicating the importance of His death.

v14 – What is the significance of hope for mercy?

As Israel had hope in God that the boss of Egypt (Joseph) would have mercy to preserve the life of his sons, all faithful have hope in God's mercy for eternal life [102]:

Titus 3:5-6 – *not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior*

What is the difference between grace and mercy?

Grace is unmerited favor; mercy is withholding the punishment we deserve.

What is this regeneration and renewing spoken of in Titus?

Being born again, born from above (John 3:3); our human spirit has been resurrected to know God.

Why is our being born again called regeneration and renewing; why not just generation & being made new?

It is God restoring us to the state He always intended us to be.

Does all people get regenerated and renewed?

All people get a resurrected body but not all people will spend eternity with the Lord, only those who have responded to God's provision for eternal life.

Genesis 43:15-17, The Brothers Return to Joseph

¹⁵ So the men took that present and Benjamin, and they took double money in their hand, and arose and went down to Egypt; and they stood before Joseph. ¹⁶ When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Take these men to my home, and slaughter an animal and make ready; for these men will dine with me at noon." ¹⁷ Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.

What did Joseph do when he saw his brothers again?

He saw that they had Benjamin with him as he had told them so he arranged for them to have a feast in his house.

v15 – What is the significance of the brothers standing before Joseph?

As the brothers stood before Joseph, their judge, so too will we stand before Jesus, our judge [103]:

Romans 14:10 – *why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*

What is the judgment seat of Christ?

It is the Bema Seat judgment described in 1 Corinthians 3... it is where we receive our rewards for eternity, our graduation ceremony.

v16 – What is the significance of the Joseph desiring to break bread with his brothers in his house?

As Joseph desired to break bread with his brothers in his house, so too does Jesus desire to break bread with us in his house [104]:

Luke 22:15-16 – Then He said to them, “With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

Communing with Jesus recalls the sacrifice He made on our behalf and looks forward to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

v16 – What is the significance of the Joseph arranging a barbecue for his brothers?

As Joseph had an animal slaughtered to have a feast in celebration of the return of his brothers, so too did the father of the prodigal son in Jesus’ parable [105]:

Luke 15:23-24 – bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.

In the parable, the father represents God who celebrates our return to fellowship with Him after being off in a far country.

What is the blessing of the parable of the prodigal son?

Our relationship with the Father does not change despite our falling out of fellowship with Him.

What is the danger in falling out of fellowship with God?

You have to wonder if you really had a relationship to begin with.

Why doesn’t it say what kind of animal is to be slaughtered for the feast?

I find it interesting that the manner of animal Joseph asked to be slaughtered is not specified. Joseph must have trusted his servants to choose appropriately. Or maybe he just liked to be surprised by whatever his servants whipped up for him. I guess in Egypt, any meat is good meat.

Genesis 43:18-25, The Brothers in Joseph’s House

¹⁸ Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph’s house; and they said, “It is because of the money, which was returned in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may make a case against us and seize us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys.” ¹⁹ When they drew near to the steward of Joseph’s house, they talked with him at the door of the house, ²⁰ and said, “O sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food; ²¹ but it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there, each man’s money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand. ²² And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks.” ²³ But he said, “Peace be with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money.” Then he brought Simeon out to them.

²⁴ So the man brought the men into Joseph’s house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed. ²⁵ Then they made the present ready for Joseph’s coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there.

What did the brothers think of being taken into Joseph’s house?

They were afraid because they thought Joseph was going to enslave them for taking the grain without paying before. They tried to explain themselves to Joseph’s steward who set their minds at ease telling them why they had their money returned, bringing out Simeon to them, and helping them wash up to get ready for a noon meal.

What does it tell us about Joseph’s steward the way he sets the brothers at ease?

He must have believed in the God of Jacob and Joseph. Probably his close relationship with Joseph resulted in him becoming a believer.

v23 – What is the significance of the steward’s assurance, “peace be with you?”

As Joseph’s steward sought to assure the brothers by saying “peace be with you”, so too did Jesus after His resurrection [106]:

John 20:26 – after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!”

Why did the disciples need to be reassured at the appearance of the resurrected Jesus?

This was unexpected and supernatural... the sudden appearance of an apparent disembodied spirit is always a scary experience.

v24 – What is the significance of the foot washing?

As brothers prepared for their meal with Joseph, so too did Jesus wash the feet of His disciples at the last supper to illustrate the importance of serving one another [107]:

John 13:5 – *Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.*

What was the significance of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples?

It illustrated what He was about to do for them making it possible for their sins to be forgiven... and the attitude we should have toward one another.

Genesis 43:26-34, The Brothers Dine with Joseph

²⁶ *And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth.* ²⁷ *Then he asked them about their well-being, and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?"* ²⁸ *And they answered, "Your servant our father is in good health; he is still alive." And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves.*

²⁹ *Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son."* ³⁰ *Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought somewhere to weep. And he went into his chamber and wept there.* ³¹ *Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, "Serve the bread."* ³² *So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians.* ³³ *And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another.* ³⁴ *Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.*

How did the feast with Joseph go?

The brothers presented presents to Joseph, talked about their father and Joseph had to leave to weep when he saw his younger brother. Joseph, the Egyptians and the Hebrew brothers ate separately but nearby. Benjamin got five times the food of the other brothers. They had a merry time.

v28 – What is the significance of the brothers bowing their heads down and prostrated themselves before Joseph?

It fulfilled the prophecy in Joseph's dream of the sheaves in the field (Genesis 37:5-7). And all prophecy points to Jesus Christ who is the ultimate revelation of God [108]:

Revelation 19:10 – *the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*

True prophecy only comes from God...

Isaiah 46:9-10 – *Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying,*

'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure

God is outside the confines of time, a dimension of our physical universe.

v29 – What is the significance of Joseph being gracious and kind to his brothers despite their sin against him?

As Joseph was gracious and kind to his brothers despite their sin against him, so too was Jesus [109]:

Romans 5:8 – *God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

God always has the big picture in mind (seeing us in eternity with Him). We are not able to see the big picture of God; the best we can do is trust in His perspective.

v31 – What is the significance of Joseph saying at the meal, "serve the bread"?

Joseph could have said, serve the barbecued animal, but no... As Joseph said at the meal, "serve the bread", so Jesus said the same at the last supper [110]:

Luke 22:19 – *He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."*

Why did Jesus institute the Lord's Supper?

So that as we have fellowship with one another, we would remember His sacrifice for us and His promise of spending eternity with Him.

v33 – What is the significance of the brothers looking in astonishment at one another?

As the brothers looked in astonishment at one another because of Joseph, so too did the disciples of Jesus when they considered His miracles [111]:

Matthew 8:27 – *So the men marveled, saying, “Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”*

It isn't in the realm of our human imagination that our Creator-God would become one of us to make it possible for us to spend eternity with Him.

Genesis 44:1-5, Joseph's Cup

And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, “Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack. ² Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money.” So he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. ³ As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. ⁴ When they had gone out of the city, and were not yet far off, Joseph said to his steward, “Get up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good? ⁵ Is not this the one from which my lord drinks, and with which he indeed practices divination? You have done evil in so doing.’”

What happened when the brothers headed back to Canaan with their grain?

Joseph had their money hidden in the grain sacks yet again and also his silver cup was put in Benjamin's sack. Then he sent his steward after them to bring them back.

Why didn't the brothers check their grain sacks before they left since they had been tricked before?

Such extra ordinary grace was unexpected and people just don't learn the lessons of history so history ends up repeating itself...

Ecclesiastes 1:9 – *That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.*

v2 – What is the significance of Joseph's cup being used to bring the brothers back?

As the cup of Joseph was used to bring the brothers back to him, the cup of Jesus is used to bring us back to Him as we remember what He did for us [112]:

1 Corinthians 11:25 – *In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”*

What is the significance of the cup being silver?

It was a symbol of wealth and power at that time... silver was rare and thus valuable; thus, such a cup was very special (not as if it was part of a set) and would be missed if lost. So, it showing up in the grain sack of Benjamin would be totally unexpected and disconcerting.

v4 – What is the significance of Benjamin being arrested outside of the city?

As Joseph's full-brother Benjamin was arrested outside the city, so too was Jesus crucified outside the city [113]:

Hebrews 13:12 – *Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate*

v5 – What is meant by the cup being used for divination?

Apparently, there was a practice of using a cup to somehow discern the will of the gods... you've heard the phrase, “read the tea leaves” ... This comes from the practice of fortune-telling by examining the patterns of tea leaves in the bottom of a cup.

Did Joseph really use his cup for divination?

Probably not... he was still hiding his true identity from his brothers by perpetrating the narrative that he was a pagan Gentile ruler. People know to take the religion of others seriously because it can be very dangerous not to.

v5 – What is the significance of Joseph's cup being an instrument for discerning the will of the gods?

As Joseph's cup was referred to as being an instrument for discerning the will of the gods, Jesus referred to His cup of suffering as the will of the Father [114]:

Matthew 26:39 – *He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”*

What was Jesus' cup of suffering?

His bearing our sins as He died for us on the cross. Since God is Holy, He can have no fellowship with sin and for the time that Jesus bore our sins there was a break in fellowship with the Father...

Matthew 27:46 – *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*

Genesis 44:6-17, Enslavement due to Joseph's Cup

⁶ So he overtook them, and he spoke to them these same words. ⁷ And they said to him, "Why does my lord say these words? Far be it from us that your servants should do such a thing. ⁸ Look, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? ⁹ With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves."

¹⁰ And he said, "Now also let it be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and you shall be blameless." ¹¹ Then each man speedily let down his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. ¹² So he searched. He began with the oldest and left off with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. ¹³ Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.

¹⁴ So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he was still there; and they fell before him on the ground. ¹⁵ And Joseph said to them, "What deed is this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination?"

¹⁶ Then Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup was found."

¹⁷ But he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so; the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father."

v8 – What is the significance of 11 brothers of Joseph being innocent of betraying him in his house?

As 11 brothers of Joseph were innocent of betraying him at his table, Jesus had 11 disciples who were innocent of betraying Him at His table [115]:

Mark 14:17-18 – *In the evening He came with the twelve. Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me."*

v16 – What is the significance Joseph's brothers being innocent yet willing to suffer as slaves to satisfy God's demands?

Substitutionary atonement... Judah acknowledged iniquity which led to their predicament before God though was innocent in what they were accused. As the brothers were innocent and yet still willing to suffer as slaves to satisfy God's demands, so too Jesus was innocent and still willing to suffer to satisfy God's Law on our behalf [116]:

2 Corinthians 5:21 – *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

v17 – What is the significance Joseph's brother being found with his cup making him a slave?

As being found with Joseph's cup made his brother Benjamin a slave, those observing communion with the cup of Jesus are His slaves [117]:

Romans 6:22 – *But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.*

Why is being a slave of God a good thing?

God is not an evil task master as a human slave master would be...

Matthew 7:11 – *If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!*

All people are slaves of something...

Matthew 6:24 – *No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.*

We are the property of our Creator so recognizing ourselves as His slave simply recognizes reality and brings us into conformity with His will. And, trust me, you don't want to be outside the will of God.