

Joseph – part 6

Joseph torments his brothers

by Victor Torres

Last time we saw how Joseph became the ruler of all of Egypt. Joseph, from being a prisoner, the lowest in society, becomes the ruler, second only to the king of Egypt. Joseph story, as we have learned, is the story of each one of us. His story is the story of the elect first, and then each person whom God will drag to Him. We are first prisoners of our sinful flesh, this body that apostle Paul calls the body of death:

Rom 7:24 (ESV) Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

But we are promised by God that He will set us free from this body of death, and will one day rule over it.

Psa 118:5 (ESV) Out of my distress I called on the LORD; the LORD answered me and set me free.

Rom 6:14 (ERV) Sin will not be your master, because you are not under law. You now live under God's grace.

Rom 6:15 So what should we do? Should we sin because we are under grace and not under law? Certainly not!

Rom 6:16 Surely you know that you become the slaves of whatever you give yourselves to. Anything or anyone you follow will be your master. You can follow sin, or you can obey God. Following sin brings spiritual death, but obeying God makes you right with him.

Those who don't rule over sin in this life will be taught how to do that in the lake of fire. Those people are symbolized by Joseph's ten brothers who sold him to slavery.

Gen 41:57 (KJV) **And all countries** came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy *corn*; because that the famine was *so* sore in all lands.

All countries are suffering from this famine. The whole world is suffering from the lack of understanding God's words. The whole world, except for those in the first resurrection, will have to learn God's righteousness in the lake of fire.

Gen 42:1 (ESV) When Jacob learned that there was grain for sale in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?"

Gen 42:2 And he said, "Behold, I have heard that there is grain for sale in Egypt. Go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live and not die."

Here we see the lack of concern from Joseph's ten brothers for one another. No one was probably volunteering to go, that's why Jacob said "Why do you look at one another?". So Jacob sent them all except for Benjamin.

Gen 42:3 (ESV) So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt.

Gen 42:4 But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with his brothers, for he feared that harm might happen to him.

We really can't blame Jacob for not sending Benjamin. The last time he sent Joseph to his brothers, he was killed by a wild animal, or so Jacob thought.

Gen 42:5 (ESV) Thus the sons of Israel came to buy among the others who came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

Gen 42:6 (CEV) Since Joseph was governor of Egypt and in charge of selling grain, his brothers came to him **and bowed with their faces to the ground.**

Gen 42:9 **Joseph remembered what he had dreamed about them...**

This is the dream that Joseph remembered:

Gen 37:5 (CEV) One day, Joseph told his brothers what he had dreamed, and they hated him even more.

Gen 37:6 Joseph said, "Let me tell you about my dream.

Gen 37:7 We were out in the field, tying up bundles of wheat. Suddenly my bundle stood up, and your bundles gathered around and bowed down to it."

Gen 37:8 His brothers asked, "Do you really think you are going to be king and rule over us?" Now they hated Joseph more than ever because of what he had said about his dream.

Now, these brothers who hated him and had sold him to be a slave, has now come to Joseph to buy grain from him.

Gen 42:7 – 8 (CEV) They did not recognize Joseph, but right away he knew who they were, though he pretended not to know. Instead, **he spoke harshly and asked**, "Where do you come from?" "From the land of Canaan," they answered. "We've come here to buy grain."

Gen 42:9 Joseph remembered what he had dreamed about them and said, "You're spies! You've come here to find out where our country is weak."

In this part of Joseph's story, we are given a picture of what will happen to those who will be cast in the lake of fire.

Psa 18:26 (KJV) With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward.

Psa 18:26 (BBE) He who is holy will see that you are holy; but to the man whose way is not straight you will be a hard judge.

Psa 18:26 (GNB) You are pure to those who are pure, but hostile to those who are wicked.

Joseph spoke harshly to them and treated them like enemies because that's exactly how they treated him.

Gen 37:4 (KJV) And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, **they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.**

Gen 37:4 (ERV) When Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved Joseph more than he loved them, **they hated their brother because of this. They refused to say nice things to him.**

God loves us so much that He will discipline us for the sins that we have committed. By accusing them of being spies, Joseph's brothers are now starting to feel the fear that Joseph felt when they threw him into a pit and they were deciding whether to kill him or not.

Gen 42:9 (CEV) Joseph remembered what he had dreamed about them and said, **"You're spies! You've come here to find out where our country is weak."**

Gen 42:10 "No sir," they replied. "We're your servants, and we have only come to buy grain.

Gen 42:11 We're honest men, and we come from the same family--we're not spies."

Joseph's brothers had the nerve to call themselves honest men, so Joseph increased the pressure.

Gen 42:12 (CEV) "That isn't so!" Joseph insisted. "You've come here to find out where our country is weak."

Gen 42:13 But they explained, "Sir, we come from a family of twelve brothers. The youngest is still with our father in Canaan, and one of our brothers is dead."

We cannot lie before God. He knows everything. He knows our every thoughts and every actions. Joseph, of course, knows his brothers are not telling the whole truth. They sold him as a slave, they don't know whether he is dead or not. But they probably thought that he was dead by now.

Gen 42:14 (CEV) Joseph replied: It's just like I said. You're spies,

Gen 42:15 and I'm going to find out who you really are. I swear by the life of the king that you won't leave this place until your youngest brother comes here.

Gen 42:16 Choose one of you to go after your brother, while the rest of you stay here in jail. That will show whether you are telling the truth. But if you are lying, I swear by the life of the king that you are spies!

Gen 42:17 Joseph kept them all under guard for three days,

Joseph's brother's must have felt terrified through these three days. Three is the symbol of the process of judgment. When we are being judged, we will all feel terrified for all the wrong things we have done.

Gen 42:17 (ESV) And he put them all together in custody for three days.

Gen 42:18 On the third day Joseph said to them, "**Do this and you will live**, for I fear God:

Gen 42:19 if you are honest men, let one of your brothers remain confined where you are in custody, and let the rest go and carry grain for the famine of your households,

Gen 42:20 and bring your youngest brother to me. So your words will be verified, and you shall not die." And they did so.

Joseph's brothers now have to prove that they are not spies, or they will be killed. After three days of being in jail and now being threatened to be put to death, Joseph's brothers are finally connecting their sufferings to what they did to him.

Gen 42:21 (CEV) and said to one another, "**We're being punished because of Joseph. We saw the trouble he was in, but we refused to help him when he begged us. That's why these terrible things are happening.**"

Gen 42:22 Reuben spoke up, "Didn't I tell you not to harm the boy? But you wouldn't listen, and now we have to pay the price for killing him."

Gen 42:23 They did not know that Joseph could understand them, since he was speaking through an interpreter.

Gen 42:24 **Joseph turned away from them and cried**, but soon he turned back and spoke to them again. Then he had Simeon tied up and taken away while they watched.

The fact that Joseph cried points to the compassion in his heart while he puts his brothers through judgment. But even in judgment, God is merciful!

Jas 2:12 (CEV) Speak and act like people who will be judged by the law that sets us free.

Jas 2:13 Do this, because on the day of judgment there will be no pity for those who have not had pity on others. **But even in judgment, God is merciful!**

The reason Joseph had Simeon tied up while they watched is because he wants them to feel how he felt when they sold him as a slave to the Ishmaelites. It is not uncommon to have slaves tied up during those days to prevent them from escaping, so Joseph must have been tied up at one point.

Gen 42:24 (CEV) Joseph turned away from them and cried, but soon he turned back and spoke to them again. **Then he had Simeon tied up and taken away while they watched.**

Gen 42:25 Joseph gave orders for his brothers' grain sacks to be filled with grain and for their money to be put in their sacks. He also gave orders for them to be given food for their journey home. After this was done,

Gen 42:26 they each loaded the grain on their donkeys and left.

Gen 42:27 When they stopped for the night, one of them opened his sack to get some grain for his donkey, and right away he saw his moneybag.

Gen 42:28 "Here's my money!" he told his brothers. "Right here in my sack." **They were trembling with fear as they stared at one another and asked themselves, "What has God done to us?"**

Joseph must have been trembling with fear also when he was being brought to Egypt. He must have also asked at one point, "What has God done to me?"

Gen 42:29 (CEV) When they returned to the land of Canaan, they told their father Jacob everything that had happened to them:

Gen 42:30 The governor of Egypt **was rude and treated us like spies.**

Gen 42:31 But we told him, "We're honest men, not spies."

Gen 42:32 We come from a family of twelve brothers. The youngest is still with our father in Canaan, and the other is dead."

Gen 42:33 Then the governor of Egypt told us, "I'll find out if you really are honest. Leave one of your brothers here with me, while you take the grain to your starving families.

Gen 42:34 But bring your youngest brother to me, so I can be certain that you are honest men and not spies. After that, I'll let your other brother go free, and you can stay here and trade."

Gen 42:35 When the brothers started emptying their sacks of grain, they found their moneybags in them. **They were frightened, and so was their father Jacob,**

More suffering for Joseph's brothers. They were probably so sure that the ruler of Egypt will have them killed now. First he thought they were spies, now he will think that they ran off with the grain without paying!

Gen 42:35 (CEV) When the brothers started emptying their sacks of grain, they found their moneybags in them. **They were frightened, and so was their father Jacob,**

Gen 42:36 who said, "You have already taken my sons Joseph and Simeon from me. And now you want to take away Benjamin! Everything is against me."

Gen 42:37 Reuben spoke up, "Father, if I don't bring Benjamin back, you can kill both of my sons. Trust me with him, and I will bring him back."

Gen 42:38 But Jacob said, "I won't let my son Benjamin go down to Egypt with the rest of you. His brother is already dead, and he is the only son I have left. I am an old man, and if anything happens to him on the way, I'll die from sorrow, and all of you will be to blame."

As I have taught you before, we must be prepared to give up everything in this life if we want to be worthy of the first resurrection. This must be the hardest decision for Jacob, sending his dear son Benjamin.

Gen 43:1 (CEV) The famine in Canaan got worse,

Gen 43:2 until finally, Jacob's family had eaten all the grain they had bought in Egypt. So Jacob said to his sons, "Go back and buy some more grain."

Gen 43:3 – 5 Judah replied, "The governor strictly warned us that we would not be allowed to see him unless we brought our youngest brother with us. If you let us take Benjamin along, we will go and buy grain. But we won't go without him!"

Like Jacob, we will all have no choice but to give up the most important things to us in this life. For those in the lake of fire, they won't realize first that everything that is happening is for their own good, but they're suffering will end one day and they will rejoice with the elect.

Gen 43:6 (CEV) Jacob asked, "Why did you cause me so much trouble by telling the governor you had another brother?"

Gen 43:7 They answered, "He asked a lot of questions about us and our family. He wanted to know if you were still alive and if we had any more brothers. All we could do was answer his questions. How could we know he would tell us to bring along our brother?"

Gen 43:8 Then Judah said to his father, "Let Benjamin go with me, and we will leave right away, so that none of us will starve to death.

Gen 43:9 I promise to bring him back safely, and if I don't, you can blame me as long as I live.

Gen 43:10 If we had not wasted all this time, we could already have been there and back twice."

Gen 43:11 Their father said: If Benjamin must go with you, take the governor a gift of some of the best things from our own country, such as perfume, honey, spices, pistachio nuts, and almonds.

Gen 43:12 Also take along twice the amount of money for the grain, because there must have been some mistake when the money was put back in your sacks.

Gen 43:13 Take Benjamin with you and leave right away.

Gen 43:14 When you go in to see the governor, I pray that God All-Powerful will be good to you and that the governor will let your other brother and Benjamin come back home with you. If I must lose my children, I suppose I must.

This whole time, Joseph's ten brothers must have been living in terror, not knowing if or when the governor of Egypt will send guards to get them for not returning with Benjamin and for stealing the grain.

Lord willing, we will see next time the outcome of what Joseph is doing to his brothers.