

## Genesis Chapter 42 - Commentary By Mike Wells

### Chapter 42 Overview:

The story of Joseph and his brothers continues. Joseph is now one of the most powerful men in the entire world and is in control of the most important resource in the world (and it is not oil) FOOD. This chapter tells of the first trip that Joseph's brothers take to Egypt.

***Genesis 42:1-6*** – *1 Now when Jacob saw that there was 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 corn in Egypt. 4 But 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 governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth.*

- Jacob heard of food for sale in Egypt.
- So, he sent his ten older sons to buy corn (grain).
- However, he kept back Benjamin his youngest fearing for him.
- The ten brothers therefore arrived in Egypt, were sent to Joseph, and bowed before him.
- What God says is going to happen, you can count on happening!!

***Genesis 42 : 7-9*** - *7 And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. 8 And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. 9 And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.*

- Joseph immediately recognized his brothers though they did not recognize him.
- He “*made himself strange unto them*” (concealed his identity) and spoke roughly (in a disguised voice) to them.
- As they were bowed before him Joseph remembered the dreams he had had as a young man in which his brethren bowed down to him.
- God once again confirmed to Joseph His hand was upon him
- What God says is going to happen, is going to happen!
- Maybe not quite knowing what to do next and maybe just to obtain some small satisfaction of payback, Joseph accused his brother of being spies.

***Genesis 42 : 10-13*** – *10 And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. 11 We are all one 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 not.*

- The tables now were turned.
- The ten sons of Jacob protested before their brother (though not realizing who he was) that they were “*true men*” (honest men) and denied that they were spies.
- They began to tell Joseph a little about their family background.
- They told him that they were twelve brothers, their youngest brother was still with their father, and “*one is not.*” (meaning they believed one was dead)
- What irony that the one they presumed to be dead was the one unto whom they bowed and were now speaking to.

***Genesis 42 : 14-18 - 14 And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies: 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 fear God.***

- Joseph told his brothers to send one of them back to bring their youngest brother (Benjamin) and the rest would be put into prison until they returned.
- He wanted them to prove they were telling the truth, (most likely just wanted to see his other brother as well as have a little fun with the situation).
- He put them in jail for three days.
- On the third day, he returned to them to tell them how he feared God
- Joseph in the midst of all this, didn’t pass up the opportunity to witness to his brothers about the God that He served!!
- We need to learn to be like Joseph and not pass up opportunities to witness about our Saviour!!

***Genesis 42 : 19-24 - 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 guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. 22 And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required. 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 wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.***

- Joseph now informed them that only one of them would be required to stay behind.
- He would send grain (corn) with them.
- In return, they must bring their youngest brother back to him to prove that they were telling the truth and then their other brother would be released.
- The brothers began to talk among themselves.
- Though not knowing they were dealing with Joseph, and though fourteen years had passed, they were convicted in their hearts about how they had treated him years earlier.

- Their guilt was evident.
- They believed that their trouble now was in because of how they had treated him earlier.
- ***“We are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.”***
- Reuben recalled how he had pled with his brothers not to do the things they did and they ignored him.
- Joseph overheard all of this.
- It must have torn his heart.
- He turned from them and wept.
- When he returned, he spoke with them and took Simeon, one of the most cruel of his brothers, and bound him before them.

***Genesis 42 : 25-28 - 25 Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man’s money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them. 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 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?***

- Joseph then commanded their sacks to be filled with grain.
- He returned all their money into the top of each man’s sack and sent them on their way.
- Upon leaving and discovering the returned money in one sack, they were even more frightened.
- They knew that God was dealing with them.

***Genesis 42 : 29-34 - 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.***

- The nine brothers returned home to Jacob and told him all which had happened to them in Egypt.
- The news for Jacob was that they were to return with Benjamin to free Simeon and have the privilege for further ***traffick*** (trade).

***Genesis 42 : 35 - 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.***

- When they arrived back at home, the brothers discovered to their astonishment that ALL of their money had been returned to them.

- This only made them more afraid.

***Genesis 42 : 36-38 - 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 Benjamin away: all these things are against me. 37 And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again. 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 sorrow to the grave.***

- Jacob didn't like the plan of them returning with Benjamin.
- He complained that, "***all these things are against me.***"
- Reuben told his father that he could slay his two sons if he did not bring Benjamin back to him safely.
- That was small comfort for Jacob for they were his grandsons.
- So, he decided to do nothing.
- As far as he knew, Joseph was dead and only Benjamin remained of the sons of Rachel.
- He would not let him go.
- He feared losing Benjamin would bring his own death from sorrow.