

Genesis Ch. 43

V: 1 The famine was very bad in the land.

- As we go through the Bible, we'll see that famines, like droughts are generally symbolic of judgment.
- The famines that we've seen thus far have been times of testing for each of the Patriarchs.

1 Corinthians 10:13 "There hath no temptation (trial) taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

Deuteronomy 8:2 "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no."

Notice the litmus: the keeping of God's word or not.

- Will we trust the Lord? Will we call upon the name of the Lord? Will we wait on the Lord for deliverance? Will we be obedient to His word?

Isaiah 49:23 "... and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for Me."

James 1:2-4 "2My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4but let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

- These trials are an opportunity for us both grow and to shine for Jesus!
- At the least they are usually bench marks in our walk with the Lord.

V: 2 When the food was all gone, Jacob instructs his sons to go and purchase more food.

- There is no indication how long it took to exhaust their food supply, purchased from Egypt – but it is clear that this is the only motivation to return to Egypt – not to ransom their brother Simeon who is held hostage in an Egyptian prison.

V: 3-5 Judah speaks, Reuben the 1st born is silent, seemingly disqualified from leadership by his actions, inactions, and foolish gestures.

- Simeon would be next, but out of the picture in prison, no word from Levi, next in line is Judah who will cut to the chase.

- Send us with Benjamin or we don't go. The ruler / Joseph won't even see us unless we have Benjamin with us.

V: 6 "Israel" complains about their not having been looking out for his interest – not quite questioning why they told the truth – but close.

V: 7 That is not exactly what happened: Joseph accused them of being spies; they responded:

Genesis 42:13 “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.”

- Judah explains that they had no idea that they would be required to produce their little brother - how could they have known?
- Because that was pretty off the wall of Joseph to demand.

V: 8-9 Judah tries to assure his father that he will be the surety or guarantee for his brother's safety – or let Israel require it of him – hold Judah accountable.

- It's no longer just Jacob and his sons, but the "little ones" as well – there is more at stake.

V: 10 We've waited too long, we're running out of food – we could have been there and back by now.

V: 11 "Israel" is seemingly resolved at this point, recognizing their situation for what it is – no longer avoiding the action that is needed.

- Take the best fruit, balm, honey, spices, myrrh, nuts (cashews), and almonds.
- Take the best that we have and give this tough ruler a present – possibly to soften his heart.
- Technically this is the fruition (no pun intended) of Joseph's second dream wherein his parents also made obeisance to him.
- In sending this present, Israel is humbling himself before this ruler / Joseph in disguise.
- These were some of the same commodities that the caravans that took Joseph to Egypt were also carrying – things not readily available in Egypt.

V: 12 Take money, take double the amount that is needed, and take what was already owed to them.

V: 13 Most importantly, take your brother.

- This may seem like a minor point in the grand scheme of things, it may have seemed like a forgone conclusion – of course take Benjamin or we don't get any food.
- This is a real test for Israel:

Matthew 10:37 “He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”

- When Abraham went to sacrifice his son, his only son Isaac – and as he purposed in his heart to do what God had commanded him, knowing that God could raise him from the dead – God accounted it, imputed it to him for righteousness – because of his faith; and he was called the friend of God. (Genesis Ch. 22 & James 2:21-23)
- Israel trusted God, and relinquished his beloved son to God's care.

V: 14 Israel invokes or asks for the blessing God Almighty – committing this whole venture to God.

- 1st mention of poor old Simeon who has been locked up in the Egyptian slammer.

“If I'm bereaved, I'm bereaved...”

Romans 14:8 “For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lords.”

- Israel committing everything that he held dear into God's hands.

Hebrews 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please Him;...”

Esther Ch. 4 – Esther, a Jewess - is queen, married to Ahasuerus, King of the Medo-Persian Empire.

1. Haman hatches a plot to destroy, to exterminate all the Jews.
2. Mordecai, Esther's cousin gets wind of the whole thing and sends word to Esther that she must enter into the king's court and somehow intervene.
3. Problem: if you enter the king's court without an invitation – a death sentence is immediately carried out – unless the king extends his scepter.
4. Esther is waffling – Mordecai sends the message:

Esther 4:13-14 “¹³Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king’s house, more than all the Jews. ¹⁴For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father’s house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

- Her response? She called for fasting & prayer – then she committed her ways to the Lord.

Esther 4:16b “... so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.”

- Jesus is looking for a full commitment from each of us, holding nothing back.

Matthew 12:30 “He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad.”

- The issue for us is that often times we think and declare that we are totally sold out for Jesus; that we are entirely in His camp.
- Often times the trials in our lives are to test and prove whether those assumptions and statements are true because we are so easily self deceived.

Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

Deuteronomy 8:2 “And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no.”

Psalms 139:23-24 “²³Search me, O God, and know my heart: Try me and know my thoughts: ²⁴And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

V: 15 Sort of a summary:

- They took, the best of the land, the best of his substance, and the best of his heart, Israel held nothing back, he gave it all.
- It was sent to the one who is a type of Jesus.
- This is why V: 11 refers to “Israel” – governed by God.

V: 16-17

V: 18 A guilty conscience needs no accuser.

- They are afraid of being taken prisoner as slaves – afraid of the same thing that they did to Joseph.
- And that their donkey's will get swiped...
- **They don't know who they're dealing with – and often times neither do we.**
- God is not the judge waiting to pounce upon us – we can't clean ourselves up before we get there. God wants us to know His love for us, He wants to bless us, keep us, help us to know Him – to set us free from our sin and to have fellowship with Him.

V: 19-22 Looking for a sympathetic ear; trying to give a quick explanation.

V: 23 The conversation at the doorway of Joseph's house with his steward ends with

“Peace be to you, fear not, your God, and the God of your father, hath given you...”

- This man is talking like a believer – not surprising given Joseph's witness.
- This un-named servant is giving comfort to the sons of Israel.
- This un-named servant is also giving credit / glory to God who is the giver of good gifts.

James 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

- This reminds me of another un-named servant who is referred to as the comforter:

John 14:16 “And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.”

John 14:26 “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

- Simeon is re-united to his brethren, “Hearing” is restored.

V: 24-25 The men are brought in and received with hospitality: their fears, like ours didn't materialize.

- They are given water to wash their feet – refreshment.
- Their animals are taken care of, not stolen away.

V: 26 Again, the fulfillment of Joseph's dreams, specifically the 2nd dream which included his parents – through the offering of the gifts from Israel combined with the brothers bowing down in obeisance to Joseph.

V: 27-28 Joseph inquires about their welfare and that of their father.

- A definite contrast to their last encounter wherein he accused them of being spies and was harsh with them.

V: 29 He looked specifically upon Benjamin.

“... *God be gracious unto thee, my son.*”

- Joseph is pronouncing a blessing upon his brother – a distinctly Hebrew blessing.
- “God” = Elohim, “In the beginning God... created the heavens and the earth.”
- “gracious” (G2603) “chanan”; mercy, merciful, pity, favor.
- A different word than when “Noah found grace in the sight of the Lord.” **Genesis 6:8.**

But the same as God speaking to Moses:

Exodus 33:19 “... I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee: and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.”

Numbers 6:24-26 “²⁴The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: ²⁵The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: ²⁶The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”

- Joseph made it personal – “*my son*”. A term of endearment.

V: 30-31 Joseph is having a hard time containing himself, his heart wants to burst – but he's trying to show some self control.

- He has a plan and he's trying to see it through.

V: 32 3 tables: One table for Joseph, due to his rank and position.

- One table for the sons of Israel, and one for the other Egyptians.
- Joseph is set apart because of his rank and position, the Egyptians consider eating with Hebrews an abomination.
- The Hebrews partook of the flesh of kine / cows, both male and female. Herodotus informs us that the male “kine” if clean are used / eaten by the Egyptians, but the females they are not allowed to sacrifice, since they are sacred to Isis, their pagan god.
- The Egyptians won’t eat with the Hebrews because the Hebrews have this nasty habit of eating the Egyptian’s gods.

The Psalmist tells us about pagan gods and idols:

Psalm 115:4-8 “⁴Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands.
⁵They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not:
⁶They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not:
⁷They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not:
neither speak they through their throat. ⁸They that make them are like
unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.”

- I’m glad that I worship a God that is too big to eat, and that I believe in a God than cannot be consumed!

The Bible says:

Hebrews 12:29 “For our God is a consuming fire!”

V: 33 Joseph sat them in order of their birth – an amazing thing to his brothers.

- This will come into play in the next chapter as Joseph “divines” his brothers crimes.

V: 34 They each had a place setting, but Benjamin had 5 times as much.

- Possibly a test, would they murmur or complain, would they express any kind of jealousy as they had with Joseph when he was younger. Joseph may still have been probing, testing them.
- Apparently that old resentment was not there, they drank and were “merry” with him, quite pleased to enjoy the meal.