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When Joseph's Brothers Arrived, They Bowled Down to Him

42: 6-26

When Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him DIG: How did Joseph's boyhood dreams come true when his brothers came to Egypt to buy grain? Why do you think Yosef reacts as he does in 42:24? Why doesn't he reveal himself then? By forcing his brothers to endure all the things they had forced him to endure, is Joseph primarily seeking revenge, repentance, or what? What five ways did Joseph foreshadow the life of Christ?

REFLECT: Define repentance. Should true repentance be judged on its intention, its emotion, or on its result? Why do you think so? Honestly, when someone has deeply wronged you, are you most likely to seek revenge or reconciliation? What does that tell you about your trust in ADONAI and His ways? Like Jacob's sons in verses 21-22, where are you still paying the price or reaping the effects of a mistake you made? Is the Lord speaking to you in this?



Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the one who sold grain to all its people. Evidently anyone wanting to buy **grain** had to deal with **him** directly. **So when Yosef's starving brothers arrived, they**, like everyone else who came into **his** presence, **bowed down to him with their faces to the ground (42:6)**. Joseph knew **they** would have to come sooner or later and **he** was watching for **them**.

*If you don't think **God** can bring you to the end of yourself, look at this picture. Those who laughed at the teenager in the pit now have **their faces to the ground** before **him**. We need to be humble before **the Lord**. Humble comes from the Greek word humas, which means ground. Meaning, when you pray to **God** put your face on the ground. If angels do it, why can't you? The Bible says **to humble yourself before God (Dani'el 10:12)** because if you do not humble yourself, **He** will humble you, for **every knee** will eventually **bow** before **Him (Philippians 2:10-11)**. It's not **if** you're going to **bow**, it's when you're going to **bow**. You can **bow** today, or you can **bow** on Judgment Day, but you will **bow**. Your choice when.*

64. Both Yosef and Yeshua saw and knew their brothers. As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them (42:7a). **His eyes were on his brothers even though they didn't recognize him. So also the eye of the Lord Jesus has been upon the children of Isra'el all through the long night of their rejection. ADONAI said:** My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from Me, nor is their sin concealed from My eyes (see the commentary on **Jeremiah**, to see link click **Cp - Judgment Before Final Restoration to the Land**). **So, too, when the LORD spoke through His prophet:** I know all about Ephraim; Isra'el is not hidden from Me (Hosea 5:3). There are eighty ways that the life of **Joseph** would prepare the Jews for the coming of **Jesus Christ** (see the commentary on **Genesis Iw - The Written Account of the Generations of Jacobs**).

But had **they** changed? **He** didn't know, but over the years **he** had decided that if **his brothers** ever came before **him**, **he** would first test them before revealing **himself** to **them**. Finally **they** stood there. There is a play on words in the Hebrew. **They** were **recognized**, but **he** made **himself** unrecognizable and **pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them** through an interpreter. **He** asked: **Where do you come from?** **They** replied: **From the land of Canaan to buy food (42:7b).**

Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him (42:8). **65. Neither Yosef nor Jesus was recognized by their own brothers. Joseph had been exalted over all Egypt, but Isra'el didn't know it. All those years he thought Yosef was dead, and then, because of the worldwide famine, the children of Isra'el went down to Egypt, but they did not recognize him. So it has been with Israel's descendants ever since the time they rejected their Messiah. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not recognize Him (John 1:11). The children of Isra'el didn't know that God the Father had raised Yeshua. They believed He was dead, and all through the Dispensation of Grace a veil has been placed over their hearts and minds. Even the beginning of the Great Tribulation will find them still ignorant of**

the exaltation and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ (Second Thessalonians 2:14).

Then he remembered his dreams about them and **realized that they were fulfilled**. He then said to **them** through the interpreter: **You are spies. You have come to see where our land is unprotected**. He really puts **them** on the defensive. **They** answered: **No my lord, your servants have come to buy food. We are all the sons of one man. Your servants are honest men, not spies (42:9-11).**

*As logical as their argument was, **Joseph** kept insisting that **they** were **spies**. **He** said to **them**, “**No! You have come to see where our land is unprotected**” (42:12). **He** really keeps the heat on. **He** had to know **their** heart.*

But they replied: **Your servants were twelve brothers, the sons of one man, who lives in Canaan. The youngest is now with our father, and one is no more (42:13)**. While the interpreter was talking to **them**, **Joseph** noticed that **Benjamin** was not with **them**. Did **they** resent **him** like **they** had **Yosef** because Rachel was **their** mother? By this time **Joseph** wanted reconciliation with **his brothers** more than **he** wanted vengeance. But **he** didn't know if **they** could be trusted. So **he** said to **them**, “**It is just as I told you: You are spies! And this is how you will be tested: As surely as Pharaoh lives, you will not leave this place unless your younger brother comes here**” (42:14-15). The test would involve **Benjamin**.

Send one of your number to get your brother; the rest of you will be kept in prison, so that your words may be tested to see if you are telling the truth. If you are not, then as surely as Pharaoh lives, you are spies (42:16)!

66. Both Joseph and Yeshua judged and disciplined their brothers. Yosef spoke harshly to them and he put them all in custody for three days (42:7b and 17). **Joseph was now the cause of their troubles. He was punishing them for their past sins. The key to the suffering of the children of Isra'el during all the past centuries is to be found in the fact that the rejected Messiah has been speaking harshly to them and disciplining them.** My God will reject them because they have not obeyed Him; they will be wanderers among the nations (Hosea 9:17). **Nothing can account for the unparalleled suffering of the children of Isra'el, but the judgment and discipline of the LORD.**

On the third day, Yosef changed **his** plan and said to **them**, “**Do this and you will live, for I fear God**” (42:18). He really didn't want to cause **his** father any more suffering than necessary. My suspicion is that **Joseph** spent **three days** in the pit at Dothan (37:24).

When **he** brings **them** out, **Yosef** mentions **God**. That must have been incredibly comforting to the **brothers**. This was the first mention of **God** between **them**. **They** probably relaxed a little, thinking everything was going to be all right. Besides, **Joseph** probably felt that three days in jail gave **them** enough time to reflect on **their** sin.

Joseph told **his brothers** that **he feared God**! Although there were dynasties in ancient **Egypt** that believed in one **God**, there is no particular evidence that this was one of them. Who would say that **he feared God**, and because of that, make the arrangement between **them** easier and lighter? What **Prime Minister** of the most powerful nation in the world ever showed compassion to a few worthless **Jewish shepherds** - *and their families*? Was **Joseph** trying to give **his brothers** a hint of who **he** was?

Then **Joseph** changed **his** strategy. Instead of all of **them** being held as prisoners and **one** going **back** to get **Benjamin**, only **one** would be held prisoner and the rest could bring **food back** to **their** families and then bring **Benjamin back**. **If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here in prison, while the rest of you go and take grain back for your starving households**. The reason for this was that how **they** treated **Benjamin** would tell **Yosef** if **they** had changed at all. That was the test. **But you must bring your youngest brother to me, so that your words may be verified and that you may not die. This they proceeded to do (42:19-20).**

Not realizing that **Yosef** could understand what **they** were saying, **they said** to one another: **Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that's why this distress has come upon us (42:21).** Twenty-two years later, **they** still felt convicted about what **they** assumed to be the death of **their** younger **brother Joseph**.

Yosef had possibly held **Reuben** responsible for having been placed in the pit because **he** was the oldest **brother**, but now **Reuben** reminded **them** that **he** tried to talk **them** out of it. **He** said to **them**, **"Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn't listen! Now we must give an accounting for his blood" (42:22).** **Joseph** never knew that before.

They did not realize that Yosef could understand them, since he was using an interpreter (42:23). As **Joseph** heard **them**, **he** realized **his** prayers had been answered. The passage of time could not dull the memory of **their** sin against **their brother**, nor ease **their** sense of guilt. **Their** confession deeply moved **Yosef** and **he** was so overcome with emotion that **he** had to leave quickly.⁶⁵⁰ **He turned away from them and began to weep, but then turned back and spoke to them again (42:24a).** **One of them** must stay in

prison while **the others** went home to get **Benjamin**. Having heard that **Reuben** had at least partially tried to prevent **their** crime, **Joseph** realized that **Simeon** must have been primarily responsible **and bound him before his brother's eyes**. He needed the instruction of time in prison and chains more than any of the others. The other **brothers** must have been shocked when the prime minister placed **the one** in prison who had been most responsible for **their** sin and therefore the retribution that seemed to be overtaking **them**.⁶⁵¹

67. Both Yosef and Yeshua made deliverance known to the children of Israel through substitution. On the third day, he had Simeon taken from them and bound before their eyes **so that one might be punished for the deliverance of his brothers (42:19 and 24b)**. **As they were plotting to kill Jesus, Caiaphas the high priest prophesied that He would deliver the Jewish nation through substitution. He said: It is better that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish (John 11:50-51). And so it was that on the third day, when our Savior rose from the dead, all who believed in Him by faith would find deliverance through substitution, His life for theirs. The rabbis teach that Simeon was the one who had thrown Joseph into the pit.**

68. Both Joseph and Jesus provided for their brothers while they were in a strange land. Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, and to put the silver that they had brought to pay for the grain back in each man's sack, and to give them provisions for their journey back to Canaan (42:25a). **Although they didn't recognize Yosef, and he spoke harshly to them and punished them; nevertheless, His judgments were tempered with mercy. Joseph did not want his brothers to perish. They were in a strange land and he ministered to their need. Even though they have endured the Holocaust, and have been severely punished by God more than any other nation, He has provided for them. ADONAI declared: I am with you and will save you. Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you, but only with justice; I will not let you go unpunished (Jeremiah 30:11).**

They paid for **the grain**, but **Yosef** instructed the servant to put the **silver** payment back in **their** sacks without **them** knowing it. **He** knew **they** would panic, but **he** also knew it would further awaken **their** consciences. **They** would be both puzzled and terrified by it because **they** knew that it wouldn't look good for **them**. **After this was done for them, they loaded their grain on their donkeys and left (42:25b-26).** **They** were clearly anxious to get home.