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Joseph is No More and Simeon is No More, and Now You Want to Take Benjamin 42: 27-38

Joseph is no more and Simeon is no more, and now you want to take Benjamin DIG: Do you think the brother's experienced true repentance or worldly sorrow in 42:21-22 and here in 42:27-28? What is Benjamin's role in the family? Why would Yosef be so interested in how the brothers feel about "their baby brother" (35:24)?

REFLECT: Like Jacob in 42:36-38, what situation in your life seems hopeless right now? From this chapter, what will you keep in mind as you face your situation with hope? What is the difference between remorse and repentance?

The journey of **the** nine **brothers** back **to Canaan** without **Simeon** must have been over a distance of about two hundred and fifty miles or more. Presumably **Jacob** was still living in Hebron, and **Joseph's** headquarters were possibly at or

near the city of Memphis, which is about ten miles from the current city of Cairo. Therefore, the journey would have taken **them** about three weeks.[652] **At the place where they stopped for the night one of them opened his sack to get feed for his donkey, and he saw that his silver had mysteriously reappeared in the mouth of his sack (42:27).** One **brother** said to all the rest: **My silver has been returned. Here it is in my sack. Their hearts sank and they turned to each other trembling** and cried out: **What is this that God has done to us (42:28)?** No answer was needed because **their** guilt was obvious.

When they came to their father Ya'akov in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them. They said: **The man who is lord over the land spoke harshly to us and treated us as though we were spying on the land. But we** said to **him, "We are honest men; we are not spies. We were twelve brothers, sons of one father. One is no more, and the youngest is now with our father in Canaan" (42:29-32).**

Then the man who is lord over Egypt said to us: **This is how I will know whether you are honest men: Leave one of your brothers here with me, and take food for your starving households and go. But bring your youngest brother to me so I will know that you are not spies but honest men. Then I will give your brother back to you, and you can trade in the land of Canaan (42:33-44).**

Up to this time, **Jacob** had taken the news in stride. But **as they were emptying their sacks, there in each man's sack was his pouch of silver! When they and their father saw the money pouches, they were frightened (42:35). Their father Ya'akov** was distraught and for the first time accused **them, "You have deprived me of my children. Yosef is no more and Simeon is no more, and now you want to take Benjamin."** Each time **his sons** have left home **(Chapters 37** and **42)**, **they** had returned with one of **his sons** missing. This was more than **he** could bear. **He** was not against **them** returning to **Egypt**; **he** would like more grain and **he** would like **Simeon** back, but **he** could not bear the possible loss of **Benjamin**. It seemed that **he** was in an impossible situation, so **Jacob** cried out, saying: **Everything is against me (42:36)!**

*Have **you** ever had one of those days? **You** must remember what **Ya'akov** did not know. **He** didn't know **his** flesh and blood was sitting on a throne of gold, with unlimited power and at that very moment was working for **his** good. **Jesus Christ** is your flesh and blood because **the word became flesh and dwelt among us***

(John 1:14a); He *sits on the throne in heaven, with unlimited power and at this very moment* ***He*** *is working for your benefit so that* ***we know that in all things God works for the good for those who have been called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).***

God has a higher **purpose** for our eternal future and **He** prepares us for it through life's **trials**. **The half-brother** of **Jesus** counsels us when **he** says: **Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything (James 1:2-4).**

Then Reuben, taking on the responsibility of the firstborn, **said to his father, "You may put both of my sons to death if I do not bring Benjamin back to you. Entrust him to my care, and I will bring him back" (42:37).** This was ironic since **Reuben** had failed to prevent the loss of **Joseph**, and obviously, killing **his** two grandsons wouldn't have made **Jacob** feel any better. **Reuben** simply spoke without thinking. The **brothers** wanted to leave immediately to go back and rescue **Simeon**.

But Ya'akov wanted no part of it. Clearly being selfish and only thinking of Rachel's children **he** says: **My son will not go down there with you; his brother is dead and he is the only one left. If harm comes to him on the journey you are taking, you will bring my gray head down to the grave in sorrow (42:38).** If **he** didn't have **Benjamin** to remind **him** of **Joseph** and Rachel, **he** would simply curl up and die **(44:31)**. **His** life was absolutely tied up in the life of **Benjamin. He** was **the son of his** right hand. **He** was **his** walking stick because **Jacob** leaned on **him**. So **Ya'akov** was still the head of **his** family and **he** said that **Benjamin** would not go down to **Egypt**.[653] And there the matter stood for some time.

Yosef's tests were important in **God's** plan to bless the seed of Abraham. **God** planned to bring the family to **Egypt** so that it would grow there into a great nation. But it was necessary that the people who entered **Egypt** be faithful to **Him**. It was necessary that **the brothers** be tested before **they** could participate in **the LORD's** blessing. **Joseph's** prodding had to be subtle; **the brothers** must perceive the hand of **God** moving against **them** so that they would not only see **their** sin but also repent of it with a changed heart. But one test was not enough; there must be two.[654] How would **they** treat **their** brother **Benjamin** when **their** lives were on the

line? That’s what **Joseph** needed to find out.