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Then Judah said to Isra'el, Send Benjamin with Me and I will Guarantee His Safety **43: 1-14**

Then Judah said to Isra'el, send Benjamin with me and I will guarantee his safety **DIG: Why is Judah successful in convincing his father to let him take Benjamin with him, whereas Reuben's similar offer of security was rejected (42:37-38)? Compare Judah's words in 43:8-9 with 37:26-27. Do you think he has changed much?**

REFLECT: What or who in your life do you have trouble trusting to the Lord?

Now the famine was still severe in the land of Canaan and **Isra'el's** family of about one hundred and fifty still needed more **grain** at Hebron **(43:1)**. There was no getting around it. If **they** did not get more **grain**, the whole family could **die**. **So when they had eaten all the grain they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, "Go back and buy us a little more food" (43:2)**. Evidently **the Egyptians** were carefully rationing the sale of **grain** and **a little** more was all they could hope for. But anything was better than nothing.

But Judah confronted **his father** with the fact that without **Benjamin** their trip would be in vain: **The man warned us solemnly, "You will not see my face again unless your brother is with you" (43:3)**. **Judah** had taken over the leadership role of the sons by this time. Reuben, the eldest son, had already been refused, and Levi, who followed Reuben and Simeon, had forfeited **his father's** confidence through the treachery and slaughter of the men of Shechem.⁶⁵⁶

Judah will not usurp the authority of **his father**, but **he** tells **him** plainly: **If you will send our brother along with us, we will go down and buy food for you. But if you will not send him, we will not go down, because the man said to us, "You will not see my face again unless your brother is with you"**

(43:4-5). The Egyptian ruler would not even talk to **them** without **Benjamin**.

But before that glorious meeting, **Isra’el** was in agony and scolds **Judah** saying: **Why did you bring this trouble on me by telling the man you had another brother (43:6)?** Thinking primarily of **himself**, this was **Isra’el’s** way of trying to escape a decision **he** didn’t want to make. It seems that **Benjamin** was not afraid to go **to Egypt**; it was **Isra’el’s** concern alone. It is interesting that, at this point in the narrative, the name **Isra’el** begins to be used instead of **Jacob**. This name has not been used since **37:13**.⁶⁵⁷ **Isra’el** means *he who prevails victoriously with God*, and the name **Isra’el** is emphasized here to point out that **God** was working behind the scenes to accomplish **His** purposes **(12:3)**.

Israel’s sons attempt to defend **themselves** by saying: **The man questioned us closely about our family and ourselves.** The questions **the brothers** say **Joseph** asked **them** are not found in **42:8-17** because they only gave a paraphrase. Then **they** said, **he** asked us: **Is your father living. Do you have another brother? We simply answered his questions. How were we to know he** would say: **Bring your brother down here (43:7)?** When **Yosef** asked **them** these questions, **they** had no suspicions whatsoever that **the Egyptian prime minister** would ask **them** to **bring Benjamin** to **him**. **They** were totally caught off-guard.

Judah, more than **Isra’el**, knew that if **they** stayed in Canaan **they** had no chance at all. So **Judah** said to **Isra’el** his father, **“Send the boy, Benjamin, along with me and we will go at once, so that we and you and our children, three generations altogether, may live and not die of hunger” (43:8).** The implication was that **Benjamin** would **die** as well. It is interesting that **Judah** should refer to **Benjamin** as a **boy**. **Benjamin** was probably about fifteen years younger than **Yosef**, and was quite an infant when **Joseph** was sold.

Just as Rebekah told **Isra’el** that she would bear the responsibility of Isaac’s curse **(27:13)**, now **Judah** said that **he** would be held **personally responsible** if **Benjamin** did not return.⁶⁵⁸ **He** said: **I myself will guarantee his safety; you can hold me personally responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him here before you, I will bear the blame before you all my life (43:9).** The Hebrew actually reads *I will have sinned against you forever* and would mean that **Judah** would be cut off from all inheritance. Back in **Chapter 37:26-27**, **Judah** had talked the brothers into selling **Yosef**; now, because **he** realizes that **his father’s** affection has transferred from **Joseph** to **Benjamin**,

he took personal responsibility for **his** return.

Friend, you and I have that same **guarantee** today. **Having believed, you were marked in Christ. He anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His promised Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing our inheritance that is to come (Second Corinthians 1:21-22 and Ephesians 1:13b-14). The Lord Jesus came from the tribe of Judah. Messiah took our place and took our penalty. He became our guarantee and gave His life for ours. Judah reminded his father, “As it is, if we had not delayed, we could have gone and returned twice” (43:10).**

Then their father Isra’el did just what **he** had done many years earlier when **he** tried to appease **his brother** Esau before meeting **him (32:13-21)**, **he** prepared **some of the best products of the land to take down to the Egyptian ruler as a gift. He said: Take a little balm, and a little honey, some spices and myrrh, some pistachio nuts and almonds (43:11).** They scraped together **a little something as a gift** to this powerful **man**. The gift includes three products that formed part of the merchandise carried by the **caravan of Ishmaelites (37:25)** that took **Joseph to Egypt**. It was ironic that now **he** would receive those very same products.⁶⁵⁹

Besides these items, **he** reminded them to **take double the amount of silver with them, for they needed to return the silver that was put back into the mouths of their sacks (43:12).** All **they** could hope for was that **the Egyptians** would realize that **the silver** had been placed in **their sacks** by mistake. It is also interesting to note that there were ten **brothers** (counting **Simeon**) with two bags of **silver** for each, so there were **twenty** bags of **silver** returning to **Egypt**. Therefore, it seems possible that **the brothers** themselves realized the ironical connection between the facts that **they** had sold **their brother** for **twenty pieces of silver into Egypt (37:28)**, and that now **they** were having to pay into the treasuries of **Egypt** not merely **twenty pieces of silver** but **twenty bags of silver.**⁶⁶⁰



Take your brother also and go back to the man at once (43:13). Thus **Isra'el** let **his** sons go with **his** blessing: **And may El Shaddai (17:1, 28:3, 35:11), who is so powerful that He can set aside the laws of nature, grant you mercy before the man so that he will let your other brother Simeon and Benjamin come back with you.** But **Isra'el** has no guarantee that **El Shaddai** will do anything, so fearing the worst, **he** said: **As for me, if I am bereaved of Benjamin and left alone, then I am bereaved (43:14).** **Queen Esther** said the same thing when **she** concluded: **If I perish, then I perish (Esther 4:16).** However, **Isra'el** does believe that **El Shaddai** will be **the One** to make the final decision about the destiny of **Benjamin**. Neither **Judah** nor the powerful ruler of **Egypt** had that authority.⁶⁶¹

When **Isra'el** finally decided to send **Benjamin back** to **Egypt** so the family could retrieve **Simeon** and buy more **grain**, **he** reacted in two different ways. First, **he** prayed that **El Shaddai** would **grant his sons mercy**. But on the other hand **he** feared for the worst when **he** basically said, "If I lose **my sons**, then I lose **my sons**." In other words, **his** "What ever will be, will be" attitude is very worldly, but **we** ought to have compassion on **Isra'el** here. *Are not our thoughts and attitudes very similar when we undergo various trials and tribulations?* On the one hand, **we** want to trust **the Lord** but our flesh is weak. **We** vacillate between hope and despair and so does **Isra'el**. Of course, the ultimate answer is to go to **El Shaddai** and seek **His mercy**, which means *not getting what we do deserve*. Only then will **we** be reconciled to our greatest trials.⁶⁶²