



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

## The Book of Genesis

### Lesson Number 67



**TRANSLATION LEGEND:** ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Standard Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT=Goodspeed (1923), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE=International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV=Literary Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV=Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakh (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

#### ----- GREEK LEXICON LEGEND -----

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

**DISCLAIMER:** The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

# FAMINE IN CANAAN AND THE APPEAL TO JOSEPH

Gen 42:1 "Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. <sup>4</sup> But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him. <sup>5</sup> And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. <sup>11</sup> We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies. <sup>12</sup> And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies: <sup>15</sup> Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> And he put them all together into ward three days. <sup>18</sup> And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God: <sup>19</sup> 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: <sup>20</sup> But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so." . . . Genesis 42:1-20

## INTRODUCTION

### A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

The scene now shifts from Egypt to Canaan. We find that there is also a

famine in the promised land, and chapter forty-two opens with Jacob being made aware that there was

"corn" in Egypt. Immediately he tells his sons to go there and buy corn for them in order that they might live. He

*Jacob finds out there is corn in Egypt and sends ten of Joseph's brothers to buy some, keeping Benjamin at home with him – Given O. Blakely*

*Famine in Canaan and an Appeal to Joseph 1 of 18*

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sends ten of the brothers, retaining Benjamin at home. When they arrive, they have to petition Joseph for food – not knowing the one to whom they were speaking. Joseph, however, did recognize them. Seeing them bow before him, he remembered the dreams he had over twenty years before. Testing them, Joseph said they were spies. In order to prove they were not spies, he ordered them to return with their younger brother. After putting them in prison for three days to think the matter over, he told them to bring their younger brother back. In the meantime, one of them would remain in prison until they had proved their integrity. Thus, the stage is Divinely set for the migration of the seed of Abraham to Egypt, where they would multiply and grow, and from which they would eventually be miraculously delivered in a single night.

### TO SOME, GOD WORKS ALL THINGS TOGETHER FOR GOOD

It is written, *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose"* (Rom 8:28). The *"things"* that are worked together, or are fitted together, are not necessarily pleasant things. However, they are purposeful things.

Let us be clear about this, God is not working happenstance and coincidence together for the good of those who love Him and are the called according to His purpose. He is not taking random occurrences and pressing them together like clay to form one good thing. These are *"things"* God either personally sends – as in sending manna to Israel (Deut 8:3), and bread and meat to Elijah (1 Kgs 17:6) – or allows another to bring – as in the cases of Job (Job 1:7-12; 2:1-6), Peter (Lk 22:31-32), and Paul (2 Cor 12:7-8).

In Israel, the *"things"* involved the oppression of the Egyptians (Ex 1:14; 2:23), and a mighty deliverance from them (Ex 13:3). Among the early disciples, there was being endured with power from on high (Lk 24:49; Acts 2:2-4), and suffering the opposition of men (Acts 5:40).

#### Things God Is Teaching

Paul confessed that he had learned some things under Divine tutelage, and in the house of human experience. *"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every*

*all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"* (Phil 4:11-13).

In Christ, all valid teaching comes from the Lord. Circumstance itself cannot teach us. The world is not a suitable instructor. Certainly our adversary the devil has no intention of profitably instructing us.

#### In the Case of Joseph

In the case of Joseph we have a marvelous instance of God working all things together for his good. God was present in all of these matters, governing them, seeing to it that they were not excessive, and managing them to a conclusion that glorified Him.

- Being favored by Jacob.
- Receiving a special coat from Jacob.
- Being hated by his brothers.
- Having two informative dreams.
- Being hated by his brothers when he told them of his dreams.
- Being rebuked by his father when he told him of his dreams.
- When sent by his father to find his brothers, he could not find them.
- A stranger directs him to his brothers.
- His brothers take his coat from him.
- With the intention of killing him, they throw him into a pit.
- They draw him out of the pit and sell him to a band of Ishmaelites.
- He is purchased by Potiphar, the captain of the Egyptian king's guard.
- Potiphar makes him the head of his house.
- Potiphar's wife attempts to allure him into adultery.
- Upon his refusal, Potiphar's wife concocts a lie against him.

**Let us be clear about this, God is not working happenstance and coincidence together for the good of those who love Him and are the called according to His purpose.**

*where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do*

- Upon hearing the lie, Potiphar imprisons Joseph.
- Joseph is chained and put in

**It is both wise and beneficial to frequently ponder your salvation. As you do, you will find your perspective of it widening and deepening to the glory of God and your personal benefit.**

He has called according to His purpose.

These various aspects of salvation are introduced to us through the lives of men of faith – initially through Noah, Abraham, Isaac Jacob, and now Joseph. We are acquainted with how He initiates involvement with Himself, directs and keeps the feet of His saints (1 Sam 2:9), subdues their enemies (Psa 78:53), causes them to increase (Psa 105:24), brings them to their desired haven, where He wants them (Psa 107:30), and a whole lot more. All of these things are introductions to the manner in which God saves people through Christ Jesus. **Holy familiarity with these records will enable the saved to recognize Divine workings in their own lives.** This recognition, coupled with faith, will produce both joy and confidence.

**This is how we are to think about our salvation, correlating these records with apostolic doctrine and the experience of faith.** When we do this, our faith will be made stronger, our hope will be more solidly anchored, and our peace more pervasive within. It is both wise and beneficial to frequently ponder your salvation. As you do, you will find your perspective of it widening and deepening to the glory of God and your personal benefit.

shackles.

- ➔ Joseph is made the head of the prisoners.
- ➔ He interprets special dreams had by fellow prisoners who had formerly been in Pharaoh's court.
- ➔ Joseph asks the Butler to mention him to Pharaoh when he is released.
- ➔ The butler forgets Joseph.
- ➔ After two years, on Pharaoh's birthday, and upon hearing that Pharaoh had two dreams, the butler remembers Joseph and informs Pharaoh that he interpreted dreams.
- ➔ Pharaoh calls for Joseph.
- ➔ Joseph interprets the dreams.
- ➔ Joseph tells Pharaoh what course of action to take.
- ➔ Pharaoh makes Joseph the head of the land, and puts him in charge of managing the grain.

circumstances like that and make them fit together so precisely that Joseph is made the ruler of Egypt. On top of that, his own brothers now stand before him, depending upon him alone to sustain them, although they do not know this is Joseph, whom they sold twenty years earlier.

#### The Ultimate Design

Ultimately, this is all designed to teach us about the salvation of God. This great salvation includes the personal involvement of God with man, and the higher management of their affairs. He **draws** men (John 6:44), saves and calls men (2 Tim:8-9), and then **keeps** them through Christ Jesus (1 Pet 1:5). The things that happen to them, as illustrated in the life of Paul, fall out to the furtherance of His purpose (Phil 1:12) and the ultimate good of those who love Him – whom

Who but God could take a set of

## JACOB SAW THERE WAS CORN IN EGYPT

Gen 42:1 *"Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another?"*

We learn in this record that God does not always provide human need by means of personal miracles. He gave Israel manna in the wilderness, where nothing grew (Deut 8:3). He sustained Elijah during the first part of a famine by having ravens bring him flesh and bread every day (1 Kgs 17:4-6). He made a widow's barrel of meal and cruse of oil remain filled, although they were constantly used, through a famine (1 Kgs 17:16). When the multitudes

following Jesus became hungry, after three days, Jesus miraculously provided bread and fish for them (Mk 6:41). **But this is not how He provided for Jacob and his family during a grievous famine.** In this case, the food was supplied in another country, the news of it had to come to Canaan, and Jacob had to act upon the basis of that news.

**O that all believers would learn that spiritual nourishment does not always come easily.** There are times when extensive effort is required to obtain what is essential to spiritual life.

JACOB SAW THERE WAS CORN IN

#### EGYPT

*"Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt . . ." Other versions read that Jacob "learned that there was grain in Egypt," <sup>NIV</sup> "hearing that food was sold in Egypt," <sup>DOUAY</sup> and "found out." <sup>GWN</sup>*

Jacob was obviously alert in his quest for food. Perhaps he saw someone who had obtained food, and asked them how they had obtained it. **At any rate, it seems to be that the people were so aware of their condition that they talked frequently about it, and were alert for any reliable information related to the obtaining of food.**

### The Parallel Circumstance

Many have noted that these are times of spiritual famine, when food required for sustaining the soul is often very difficult to find. If this assessment is correct, what should those who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness do? They should talk about their condition with those who are in a similar state — like those noble souls of old time who, during a spiritually decadent time, spoke often with one another (Mal 3:16-17). **When they find someone who is obviously being nourished, they should inquire about it. It may be they will become aware of a place where food for the soul can be obtained.** Should this happen, they should not hesitate to take advantage of the opportunity, as Jacob does in this text.

As simplistic as this solution may seem, there are not many people who appear to have taken this kind of action to ensure their souls are nourished.

### HE SAID UNTO HIS SONS

" . . . Jacob said unto his sons, *Why do ye look one upon another?*" Other versions read, "Why are you staring at one another?" <sup>NASB</sup> "Why do you just keep looking at one another?" <sup>NIV</sup> "Why are you staring blankly at each other?" <sup>CEB</sup> "Why are ye careless?" <sup>DOUAY</sup> "Why gaze ye one upon an other?" <sup>GENEVA</sup> and "Why are ye indolent?" <sup>SEPTUAGINT</sup>

Jacob saw an uncomely attitude in his sons. They were standing about looking at one another as though nothing could be done about their situation. Perhaps they were in a state of despair, and had given up all hope. They may have been looking at one another hoping one of them would have a meaningful suggestion. It appears from the text that the sons had heard the same word that now moves Jacob, but they had not done anything about it. It seems they should have been on the initiative to go to Egypt, but instead were standing about looking in despair at one another. Now, Jacob will take command of the situation, acting upon the word he has received.

### A Parallel Circumstance

There are still a lot of people in Christ who are suffering from malnutrition of soul. They are unable to obtain nourishment on their own, at least not on a consistent basis. They may even hear of some souls who have found food, and are enjoying the joy of nourishment. But they do not act upon what they hear. Instead they stand about, as it were, looking at one another and wishing they could also find food. But they keep looking in the wrong place. Poor souls! They, as yet, are unaware that they can go where food is being served up, and obtain what they long to have. Perhaps they, like Elijah, will have to journey from a dried up brook to a widows house from which God will arrange their need.

➔ **SOMETIMES THEY ARE FED WITHOUT ANY LABOR.** *"And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to*

*first month. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil."* (Joel 2:23-24)

➔ **SOMETIMES YOU ARE SENT TO SOMEONE ELSE WHO WILL SUSTAIN YOU.** *"And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee."* (1 Kgs 17:9).

➔ **SOMETIMES THE LORD SENDS ADEQUATE SUPPLIES TO YOU.** *"Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end."* (Deut 8:16)

➔ **SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO LABOR FOR THE MEAT THAT ENDURES.** *"Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto*

**Part of spiritual growth involves coming to the point where you know what to do to obtain nourishment for the inner man. Such a thing will not always be easy to discern.**

*Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, and houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full"* (Deut 6:10-11).

➔ **SOMETIMES WHAT YOU HAVE SOWN PRODUCES A BOUNTIFUL HARVEST.** *"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the*

*everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."* (John 6:27)

In this particular instance, Jacob and his sons will have to procure food from someone else. They will not be able to grow it in their fields, and God will not rain it upon them as He did Israel in the wilderness.

**Part of spiritual growth involves coming to the point where you know what to do to obtain nourishment for the inner man.** Such a thing will not always be easy to discern. However, godly effort will yield results.

## I HAVE HEARD THERE IS CORN IN EGYPT

<sup>2</sup> *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."*

### I HAVE HEARD

*"And he said, Behold, I have heard . . ." Other versions read, "I have had news," <sup>BBE</sup> "I hear," <sup>NAB</sup> and "now I hear." <sup>TNK</sup>*

The phrase "I have heard" occurs thirty-four times in Scripture. Several times it is the introduction to some kind of change – news that changed what a person or persons thought about a situation, or how they determined to address it. Those who heard what was said were alert and paying attention. Others were not alert, and did not have ears to hear – such as when God spoke from heaven, and some thought it "thundered," while others thought an angel had spoken (John 12:29).

**One of the greatest disadvantages of living in an era of multitudinous distractions is the effect it has upon hearing.** People become so absorbed in the affairs of this world that they become incapable of hearing the Lord,

### THERE IS CORN IN EGYPT

*" . . . that there is corn in Egypt . . ." Other versions read, "there is grain in Egypt," <sup>NKJV</sup> "wheat is sold in Egypt" <sup>DOUAY</sup> "there is grain for sale," <sup>ESV</sup> "there is food in Egypt," <sup>GENEVA</sup> "there are supplies in Egypt," <sup>NJB</sup> "there are rations to be had in Egypt," <sup>TNK</sup> "there is grain available in Egypt," <sup>LIVING</sup> and "there is grain for sale in Egypt." <sup>ERV</sup>*

Jacob had been alert, something that apparently could not be said of the sons he now addresses. It appears that the word he had heard was also supported by some local citizens who had taken advantage of the opportunity. If not local people, it must have been some people traveling back to their homeland who had some grain with them that they had procured in Egypt.

### GET YOU DOWN THITHER

*" . . . get you down thither . . ." Other versions read, "go down to than place," <sup>NKJV</sup> "go down there." <sup>NASB</sup>*

There was an urgency to Jacob's command. They were to go down to Egypt immediately, and without delay.

survive. So, actually, the only difference between Egypt and the rest of the world was that they had received a word from the Lord spelling out was going to take place, when it was going to take place, and what to do to prepare for it.

### BUY FOR US FROM THENCE

*"...and buy for us from thence..."*

Jacob does not specify how much or how little grain to purchase. I am persuaded that he intended for them to bring back as much as they could procure and carry.

### THAT WE MAY LIVE

*" . . . that we may live, and not die."*

The objective is straightforward: "that we may live and not die" – something to be experienced that is ongoing, and something to avoid. As required in this world, this was the maintenance of life and the avoidance of death. These things are not intended to be permanent, but are required as long as we are in the body. There comes a time to all men – an appointed time – when they will not be able to remain alive in this world, and will not be able to avoid death. But until that time comes, most men know that it is vital to stay alive and not die.

### An Area Where This Is Not So Easy to Perceive

When it comes to spiritual life, these two things are more difficult to keep in mind. Unless people walk in the light, live by faith, and walk in the Spirit, these critical matters will escape their attention, putting them in eternal jeopardy.

### An Application

There is a religious culture that has developed in professed Christendom that is flawed to the core. It is this: that in times of spiritual malnutrition, the people seek only an instant and temporary solution. That is

**So, actually, the only difference between Egypt and the rest of the world was that they had received a word from the Lord spelling out was going to take place, when it was going to take place, and what to do to prepare for it.**

or picking up on vital communications.

A fundamentally self-centered and self-seeking society is one that anesthetizes the soul and impacts the inner hearing-capacity of the individual.

Egypt was south of Canaan, so geographically, they had to "go down." Actually, the famine was also in Egypt. They were not reaping any crops there either. The difference was that, through Joseph, God had alerted the ruler to the coming seven-year drought, and outlined what needed to be done to

what makes counseling, workshops, and various forms of literature so popular. Generally speaking, none of those things present long-term benefits.

The salvation of God is not intended to be a quick-fix of the human condition. It is, one might say, a long-term solution. It involves the following:

- ➡ Being justified from all things (Acts 13:39).
- ➡ The giving of a new heart and spirit (the new birth, or regeneration) – Ezek 36:26; 1 Pet 1:23).
- ➡ Old things passing away (2 Cor 5:17a).
- ➡ All things becoming new (2 Cor 5:17b).
- ➡ Receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; Tit 3:5).
- ➡ The end of the dominion of sin (Rom 6:14)
- ➡ The termination of the rule of the flesh (Rom 8:10).
- ➡ Fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:9).
- ➡ Access to God with confidence (Eph 3:12).
- ➡ Membership in the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:18).

➡ We are given hope as an anchor for the soul (Heb 6:19) – a hope that compels us to purify ourselves even as He is pure (1 John 3:1-3).

Nothing about these things suggest a quick-fix, or a temporal benefit. Salvation itself is referred to as what Jesus Himself authors: an *“eternal salvation”* (Heb 5:9). The life we receive through Christ Jesus is *“eternal life”* (John 17:3), or *“everlasting life”* (Rom 6:22). The objective of our experience in Christ is referred to as an *“eternal weight of glory”* (2 Cor 4:17). The things that are intended to capture our attention are said to be *“eternal”* (2

*consolation”* (2 Thess 2:16).

Just how do temporary benefits fit into that kind of salvation? Must we not eventually forfeit everything that is temporal? **Why, then, should such things capture and monopolize our attention?** Is it not written, *“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; WHILE WE LOOK NOT at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal”* (2 Cor 4:17-18). What person can justify placing an

**The modern church needs to experience a significant shift of focus and emphasis. The “world” appears to mean too much to the vast body of professing Christians**

Cor 4:18). The resurrection body, is referred to as *“a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”* (2 Cor 5:1). Salvation is said to be *“with eternal glory”* (2 Tim 2:10). Jesus is declared to have *“obtained eternal redemption”* for us (Heb 9:12). In Jesus God has promised us an *“eternal inheritance”* (Heb 9:15). In Christ we been given *“everlasting*

emphasis on the things that are temporal? Is anyone so foolish as to imagine that any temporal experience will work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory? **The modern church needs to experience a significant shift of focus and emphasis.** The *“world”* appears to mean too much to the vast body of professing Christians (1 John 2:15).

## BUT BENJAMIN JACOB SENT NOT

*“<sup>3</sup> And Joseph’s ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. <sup>4</sup> But Benjamin, Joseph’s brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him.”*

THEY WENT TO BUY CORN  
*“And Joseph’s ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. . .”*

**Joseph’s Brothers, Not Jacob’s Sons**

Notice that the brothers are referred to as *“Joseph’s brethren,”* not *“Jacob’s sons.”* Later, when the whole family migrates to Egypt, they are called *“Jacob’s sons”* (Gen 46:26).

Here, however, the language reflects a change of emphasis, as concerning individuals, in the book of Genesis. From this verse to the end of Genesis, *“Joseph”* is mentioned eighty-four times. Jacob is mentioned thirty

one times. He is referred to as *“Israel”* thirty times.

➡ Joseph is referred to in regards to the brothers obtaining corn from Genesis 41:3 thru Genesis 44:15.

➡ The record of Joseph revealing himself to his brothers is contained in Genesis 45:1 thru Genesis 45:8).

➡ Joseph’s word to bring Jacob and

- his family to Egypt where he would care for them, together with Pharaoh's directive, is recorded in Genesis 45:9 thru Genesis 45:24.
- ➔ The report of the brothers to Jacob Genesis 45:25 thru Genesis 45:28.
- ➔ Jacob's journey with his family and belongings is recorded in Genesis 46:1 thru 46:27.
- ➔ The record of Joseph meeting them,

- Shem (Gen 5:32; 6:10; 7:13:18).
- ➔ Nimrod (Gen 10:8-9).
- ➔ Sarah (Gen 11:29-30; 21:1-8).
- ➔ Pharaoh (Gen 12:15-20)
- ➔ Herdmen of Gerar (Gen 13:7-8).
- ➔ Melchizedek (Gen 14:18-20)
- ➔ The king of Sodom (Gen 14:21-24).
- ➔ Hagar (Gen 16:1-4).
- ➔ Ishmael (Gen 16:15-15).
- ➔ Eliezer, Abraham's steward (Gen 15:2).
- ➔ Abimelech (Gen 20:2-18)

The purpose of God is not something that can be discovered academically. It is not discovered by means of making a conclusion concerning what has been written. God's purpose can only be known by Him revealing it. Some of these revelations are listed below.

➔ **THE SEED OF THE WOMAN.** *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel"* (Gen 3:15). IN THIS GOD REVEALED THAT THE ANSWER TO THE DILEMMA CAUSED BY SIN WOULD COME THROUGH A MAN — A SPECIAL MAN THAT WOULD BE THE SEED OF THE WOMAN, NOT THE MAN. THIS IS THE FIRST PROPHECY OF JESUS CHRIST.

➔ **A GREAT NATION.** *"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing"* (Gen 12:2; 22:17; 26:4,24; 46:3; 48:4). THIS WAS THE NATION THROUGH WHOM THE COMING "SEED" WOULD COME — A NATION GOD WOULD SCHOOL CONCERNING THE NECESSITY OF A SAVIOR. THAT NATION WOULD ALSO BE THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THE "SEED" WOULD GROW "IN WISDOM, AND IN STATURE, AND IN FAVOR WITH GOD AND MAN" (Lk 2:52).

➔ **GLOBAL BLESSING.** *"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed"* (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14). WHILE THE FIRST PROPHECY OF A MESSIAH DEALT WITH THE FINAL AND COMPLETE DEMISE OF THE ADVERSARY, GOD NOW REVEALS THAT HIS PURPOSE INVOLVED THE BLESSING OF ALL PEOPLES OF THE EARTH.

To this point enough has not been revealed to provide any significant details about the coming revelation of the Law of God, a Savior from sin, justification, the imputation of righteousness, the destiny of men after death, the resurrection of the dead, the day of judgment, or dwelling forever with the Lord. Little has been made known concerning access to God, the potency and scope of faith, and good hope through grace. Further, the absence of understanding concerning these things immediately impacted upon

**The Almighty God managed all of these people to accomplish His purpose: A special nation through whom the Savior of the world, the Seed of Abraham, would come.**

giving them some directions, and the welcome of Pharaoh, are recorded in Genesis 46:28 thru Genesis 47:12.

- ➔ The record of Joseph distributing the grain to Egypt, and the manner in which it was done is found in Genesis 47:13 thru Genesis 47:26.
- ➔ The multiplication of the Israelites in Egypt is mentioned in Genesis 45:27.
- ➔ The blessing of Jacob upon his sons, his death, and his burial are recorded in Genesis 45:28 thru Genesis 50:21.
- ➔ The remainder of Joseph's life, together with his death and burial, are recorded in Genesis 50:22 thru Genesis 50:26.

#### A Shift of Emphasis

Throughout the book of Genesis, the emphasis was on individuals: Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

There were also a number of individuals associated with God's working with these key figures.

- ➔ Noah's sons: Ham, Japheth, and

- ➔ The sons of Heth (Gen 23:3-20).
- ➔ Rebekah (Gen 24:15,29-25:21).
- ➔ Esau (Gen 25:25-30; 28:6-8; 32:3-19).
- ➔ Laban (Gen 24:29-25:20).
- ➔ Leah (Gen 29:16-32).
- ➔ Bilhah (Gen 30:3-7).
- ➔ Zilpah (Gen 30:9-13)
- ➔ Lot (Gen 12:4; 13:1-14).
- ➔ Lot's wife (Gen 19:26).
- ➔ Lot's daughters (Gen 19:30-38).
- ➔ Dinah (Gen 34:1-26).
- ➔ Shechem (Gen 34:2).
- ➔ Jacob's sons (Gen 29:31-35:18).
- ➔ A certain man" whop directed young Joseph to his brother (Gen 37:15).
- ➔ Potiphar (Gen 37:36).
- ➔ Potiphar's wife (Gen 39:7-19).
- ➔ The prison keeper (Gen 39:21-23).
- ➔ The chief Butler (Gen 40:1-12; 41:9).
- ➔ The chief Baker (Gen 40:5,16-22; 41:2-10).

This is not a complete listing, but it does serve the accent the lack of emphasis upon people groups and nations during this time. **The Almighty God managed all of these people to accomplish His purpose: A special nation through whom the Savior of the world, the Seed of Abraham, would come.** If we fail to see this point, we shall have gleaned very little from the book of Genesis.

how men thought and lived.

#### BENJAMIN WAS NOT SENT

" . . . But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him." Other versions read, "lest some calamity befall him," NKJV "afraid that harm may befall him," NASB "some evil might come to him," BBE "he thought something bad might happen to him," CEB "perhaps he take any harm in the journey" DOUAY "Least death should befall him," GENEVA "Lest, haply, disease befall him," SEPTUAGINT "some disaster might befall him," NAB "What if some accident happens to him?" NET "for fear some harm might happen to him [as it had to his brother Joseph]," LIVING "Lest at any time should come to pass to him an infirmity," ABP and "Lest mischief meet him." YLT

This fear was **not** because of Benjamin's youth, for he was probably well over twenty years of age by now. He had been born shortly after Joseph, who was probably about forty years old at this time – thirty years old when he was made ruler over Egypt, plus the seven years of plenty, plus time enough for the famine to have consumed the

**He still had good powers of reason, knowing what to do during the time of famine. He also retained his sensitivity and ability to be comforted.**

land. The concern was because Benjamin was, like Joseph, a "son of his [Jacob's] old age" (Gen 37:3). He was the only remaining child of Rachel, whom he had loved so dearly. His fear was no doubt related to the fact that Joseph, when young, and according to Jacob's understanding, had been slain by a wild beast. The thought of something like that happening to Benjamin was more than Jacob could bear to think. Therefore, he kept him home to comfort him, and bring some delight to him.

At this time Jacob was about one hundred and thirty years old – that was his age when he stood before Pharaoh after himself going to Egypt (Gen 47:8). Later he would confess, "*few and evil have the days of the years of my life*

*been*" (Gen 47:9). Yet he was not a pessimistic old man. **He still had good powers of reason, knowing what to do during the time of famine. He also retained his sensitivity and ability to be comforted.**

It is good to seek to maintain the ability to reason soundly and be comforted and encouraged, regardless of how many hardships we may have suffered. Especially the people of God must not allow a difficult life to leave them in an embittered and gloomy state. They must continue to live by faith and maintain a strong hope. Faith and hope bring durability and soundness to those possessing them. Men of faith are never bitter and hopeless. Their faith sustains them, and their hope is an anchor that stabilizes them.

## THE SONS OF ISRAEL CAME TO BUY CORN

**"<sup>5</sup> And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan."**

#### THE SONS OF ISRAEL CAME TO BUY CORN

"And the sons of Israel came to buy corn . . ."

This chapter commenced by referring to these brothers as "*Joseph's ten brethren*" (Gen 42:3), and "*his brethren*" (Gen 42:4). Later, they will also be referred to in that manner (Gen 42:6,7,8,28). Here, however, they are referred to as "*the sons of Israel*." This is because the action being taken was in order to the preservation of the nation of Israel with whom God would make a covenant. While it may have

looked like a mere household project on the surface, this had directly to do with the culturing of a people for God. The sons relationship to Jacob was the ultimate reason for their identity with Joseph.

#### Something to Be Seen

Those in Christ have a similar identity. Concerning their relationship to each other, they are "*brethren*" (Matt 23:8; 1 Pet 1:22). However, they are also brethren to Jesus Christ (Heb 2:11), and the "*sons of God*" as well (1 John 3:1-2).

➔ There are matters that are to be addressed in view of the fact that we are brethren – members of the same household (Eph 2:19). As

brethren, we are to live "*preferring one another*" (Rom 12:10), edifying (1 Thess 5:22), serving one another (Gal 5:13), exhorting one another (Heb 3:13), and loving one another (1 John 3:11).

➔ There are also matters that have to do with us being the brethren of Jesus, having been united with Him (1 Cor 6:17). We are to see to it that His name is not blasphemed because of us (Rom 2:24). He is to be followed (1 Cor 11:1), looked to (Heb 12:2), and our fellowship with Him maintained (1 Cor 1:9).

➔ There is also a posture of life that has to do with our relationship to God the Father. We are to "*live*



unto” Him (Rom 6:10), bear fruit unto Him (Rom 7:4), draw nigh unto Him (Heb 7:19), and be followers of Him as dear children (Eph 5:1).

This is why no apostle ever addressed God’s people as “*Christians*” – although that would not technically be improper, for “*Christian*” means “of Christ.” However, we are not to view ourselves as a kind of independent group, or glory in our religious identity. **While we are related to one another, it is wholly because we are related to God and Christ, which are the preeminent associations.**

As this pertains to our text, merely being brothers to Joseph had no significance of itself. **It was because of Jacob, and ultimately Abraham, that their brotherhood had significance.**

We must never lose sight of the fact that our identity with one another is only significant because of our identity with God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son. **Independent of those realities, fraternity has no spiritual value.**

**AMONG THOSE THAT CAME, FOR THE FAMINE WAS IN THE LAND OF CANAAN**

*“ . . . among those that came: for the famine was in the land of*

*Canaan...” Other versions read, “among those who were coming,”<sup>NASB</sup> “among those who went to buy corn,”<sup>NIV</sup> “among the other people,”<sup>NRSV</sup> “with all the others to get grain,”<sup>BBE</sup> “among the other travelers,”<sup>NET</sup> “along with many others from many lands to buy food,”<sup>LIVING</sup> “others from Canaan who were going to Egypt,”<sup>CEV</sup> “so there were many people from Canaan who went to Egypt to buy grain,”<sup>ERV</sup> “went in a caravan that included others who were going to Egypt to buy grain,”<sup>ISV</sup> “among those coming,”<sup>LITV</sup> “joined everyone else that was going to Egypt to buy food,”<sup>MESSAGE</sup> and “in the midst of those coming.”<sup>YLT</sup>*

At least one version misrepresents this text, saying that the ones the sons joined, or with whom they were identified, were “*others from many lands.*”<sup>LIVING</sup> While it is true that people from other lands and nations went to Egypt for food (Gen 41:57), a particular point is made here of the famine being “*in the land of Canaan.*”

Keep in mind that at this time the nation of Israel was only sixty-six people in number, excluding Jacob’s sons wives, and Jacob himself (Gen 46:26). If we add Jacob, Joseph, Manasseh, and Ephraim, we have seventy souls, as Genesis 46:27 reads.

The people with whom the ten sons journeyed were others from the land of Canaan, for the famine “*was in the land of Canaan.*” At the time the land was promised to Abraham, the following nations were said to have been there: “*The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites*” (Gen 15:19-21). When Joshua drove out the nations, they were said to be “*the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites*” (Joshua 3:10).

I gather there were representatives of some or all of these nations that journeyed to Egypt for food.

**A Type Seen Here**

A picture of the spiritual condition of the world is seen here. **Sin has entered the world, making the totality of it morally and spiritually bankrupt.** All must go to Jesus for sustenance. There is a sense in which every individual who comes to Jesus joins an exceedingly large group that are coming to Jesus for salvation, rest, and spiritual sustenance. Sin has leveled the human race. At the root of the matter, “*there is no difference*” (Rom 3:23).

## JOSEPH’S BRETHREN CAME AND BOWED BEFORE HIM

*“<sup>6</sup> 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.”*

JOSEPH WAS THE GOVERNOR

*“And Joseph was the governor over the land . . .” Other versions read, “the ruler,”<sup>NASB</sup> “in charge of the country,”<sup>CSB</sup> “the man in authority over the country,”<sup>NJB</sup> “the vizier of the land,”<sup>TNK</sup> “the potentate,”<sup>LITV</sup> and “was running the country.”<sup>MESSAGE</sup>*

The last time Joseph’s brothers had seen him he was a seventeen year-old boy whom they despised, and had sold into slavery. How different they would find him now! **God, who can intervene in the affairs of men at will, has totally altered Joseph’s circumstances.** To do so he has overturned the intentions of his brothers, countermanded the intentions of Potiphar’s wife, and caused Pharaoh to favor Joseph above all of his Egyptian counselors. **This is the kind of God we are beholding in the book of Genesis.** Ponder what God is set forth as doing to this point.

**God, who can intervene in the affairs of men at will, has totally altered Joseph’s circumstances.**

- ➔ He has forced Adam and Eve out of the Garden and imposed mortality upon them,
- ➔ He has imposed a curse upon Cain.
- ➔ He has imposed a curse upon the whole world, abruptly ending its reign of terror.
- ➔ He has separated Noah and his family from the rest of the world, saving them by His own intention.
- ➔ He has governed the commencement and cessation of the flood.
- ➔ He has halted the unified efforts of the people in the plain of Shinar.
- ➔ He has caused Pharaoh's plans for Sarah to be aborted.
- ➔ He has caused Abraham to prosper.
- ➔ He has brought an abrupt end to the transgressions of Sodom and Gomorrah.
- ➔ He has caused the birth of Isaac under impossible circumstances.
- ➔ He has overturned the trickery of Laban.
- ➔ He has frustrated the intentions of Joseph's brothers.
- ➔ And now He has vaulted Joseph to be governor over all of Egypt.

**Not a single one of these things could have been accomplished by the will or ability of men.** Furthermore, they were all facets of His determinations that were made before the foundation of the world. They are all parts of, so far as man is concerned, a complex purpose that could only be conceived and worked out by the Almighty God.

#### One Other Thing to Note

The perception, or lack thereof, of the brothers had nothing whatsoever to do with the reality of the situation. **What men think – any men – has no effect upon the purpose of God at all.** Joseph was the Governor over Egypt whether the brothers recognized it or not. Their will and ability had nothing whatsoever to do with the circumstance. This whole matter was being directed by the Lord, and it will conclude with His will being done.

#### HE IT WAS WHO SOLD

*" . . . and he it was that sold to all the people of the land . . . "*

If any person or group of persons

wanted corn, or grain, they had to go to Joseph. They also had to have the required means to obtain it. There were no blackmarket sales. There were no other resources because the famine had consumed all grain except that which had been stored up and managed by Joseph.

#### A Similar Situation

All the world is in a similar situation. **By Divine intention, a spiritual famine has enveloped the earth, so that no spiritual resources are available from nature or the sons of men.** Those who want to have life, and have it *"more abundantly"* (John 10:10), must obtain it from Jesus Christ – the exalted and enthroned Christ. **Nothing that pertains to life and godliness can be obtained anywhere else.** This includes deliverance from the guilt and power of sin, and what is required to maintain spiritual life – including faith and hope. **There are no humanly devised plans that can resolve the alienation from God and the inimical state that sin has caused.** There is no resource required to make men truly better, enable their recovery from sin, or make and keep them alive that can be obtained independently of Christ Jesus Himself. No can church be started or maintained with resources that are sourced by nature or by men. Just as surely as Canaan in particular, and the world in general, had to come to Joseph for grain, so churches and the world must come to Jesus to obtain anything and everything pertaining to life and godliness.

The practice of going to someone other than Jesus for needed resources has been popularized in our day. Charlatans and opportunists are exploiting the human situation that has been caused by sin. They have fattened their own coffers, but the human situation outside of Christ remains fundamentally the same.

#### JOSEPH'S BRETHREN CAME

*" . . . and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth."*

Personal rights were not being championed in the days of Joseph.



There was an imposed recognition and respect for rulers that has become uncommon in our day. **Therefore when Joseph's brothers came before Joseph, not knowing who he really was, they bowed before him because of his position.** Actually, this is the first example of this sort of thing – bowing before a ruler. Abraham bowed when the Lord came to him in the appearance of three men (Gen 18:2). Lot bowed before the angels that visited him in the form of men (Gen 19:1). Abraham bowed before the children of Heth (Gen 23:7,12). Jacob and his household bowed before Esau (Gen 33:3,6,7). Our text is the next reference of someone bowing before men.

While I do not wish to linger on this, here is an example of something Paul made known to believers: *"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God . . . Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; **honor to whom honor**"* (Rom 13:1,5-7).

Because of the general view that refuses to honor God-ordained positions, there has been a decided

reduction of a high regard for God Himself. **In the ideal situation, society should have customs in place that mirror the Divine order.** Paul mentioned *"Tribute"* (or taxes), custom (revenue <sup>RSV</sup>), fear, and honor.

### The Time God Used To Set Up His Kingdom

In my judgment, there was a reason why God chose to set up His Kingdom in the days of the great kings of the earth: *"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever"* (Dan 2:44).

The *"kings"* to which the Lord referred were over the kingdoms of Babylon, the Medio-Persian, Greece,

and Rome. The particular kings to which He referred were Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, Alexander the Great, and the Caesars. These are mentioned because they were clustered together, and were all global in nature. The kings themselves were earthly sovereigns whose word was carried out precisely and thoroughly. They ruled over the whole world, which they had conquered.

**This is precisely the kind of Kingdom the God of heaven set up on the earth.** His Kingdom pertained to the fulfilling of His eternal purpose, which involved the creation of a dwelling place for Himself (Eph 2:22; Rev 21:3).

**God Himself is Sovereign , and thus it is His will that is ultimately being carried out.** There is no place where He does not rule. The concepts of this kind

of king and kingdom were not in the world until the time from Daniel thru John the Baptist. Significant kingdoms like that of Egypt, and even that of China, were provincial, not global.

However, as the time of the coming of Christ approached, the concepts of a global Sovereign and Kingdom were developed. It is my understanding that this was the working of God. Now, when Jesus spoke of a King, and of God's Kingdom, it would be perceived from a more full-orbed point of view. **This was essential to a proper understanding of what God was doing in the world.**

As pertaining to our text, the concept of submission to a body of people being in submission to a higher authority was in place. Therefore, the sons of Jacob bowed before Joseph.

## HE MADE HIMSELF STRANGE TO THEM

*"<sup>7a</sup> And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them. . . "*

At this point we do not know how much Joseph knew about the spread of the famine. In his interpretation of Pharaoh's dream he spoke of *"seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt,"* and *"seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land"* (Gen 41:29-30). According to the wisdom given to Joseph, the man who was to be in charge of storing and distributing grain was to be placed *"over the land of Egypt"* (Gen 41:33). There is no indication that he was aware of the spread of the famine into other lands – at least not as these two seven-year periods began.

At the time of our text, it is somewhere between seven and fourteen years after Pharaoh's dream. I would estimate that it was around ten years, for the second seven-year period

of famine had already consumed all of the grain. We do not know precisely when the seven years of famine ended. Even then, there would be an additional number of months before any crops would be reaped.

### JOSEPH KNEW THEM

*"And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them . . ."* Other versions read, *"he recognized them,"* <sup>NKJV</sup> *"it was clear to him who they were"* <sup>BBE</sup> *"recognized his brothers instantly"* <sup>NLT</sup> and *"discerneth them."* <sup>YLT</sup>

**Although it had been over two decades since he had seen his brothers, he instantly recognized them.** He saw

and knew them when had drawn close to, and bowed before, him. While they had advanced in years, their primary appearance remained the same with certain facial features, perhaps the way they carried themselves, and the clothes that they wore.

### Something to Be Seen

Among other things, this confirms the phenomenal versatility of the mind. It can reach into the past and bring forward particular details. It can enable the recognition of things that were seen years ago, and do so with great clarity.

I do not doubt that this is a peculiarity of mankind that was

**It is good for us to use this capacity to recall the blessings wrought by God in our past, together with times of deliverance and revelation. This is part of loving the Lord with all of our mind**

intended to peruse things pertaining to God, life, and godliness that may have taken place in the distant past. It can also promote great thanksgiving, as in the case of Paul remembering his sordid past (1 Tim 1:13), and Peter recalling the Lord's transfiguration on the holy mount (2 Pet 1:18).

It is good for us to use this capacity to recall the blessings wrought by God in our past, together with times of deliverance and revelation. This is part of loving the Lord with all of our mind (1 Chron 28:9; Matt 22:37).

### JOSEPH MADE HIMSELF STRANGE TO THEM

"...but made himself strange unto them..." Other versions read, "acted as a stranger," <sup>NKJV</sup> "disguised himself," <sup>NASB</sup> "pretended to be a stranger," <sup>NIV</sup> "treated them like strangers," <sup>NRSV</sup> "acted like he didn't know them," <sup>CEB</sup> "estranged himself from them," <sup>SEPTUAGINT</sup> "concealed his own identity from them," <sup>NAB</sup> "did not make himself known to them," <sup>NJB</sup> and "Pretended he didn't [recognize them]." <sup>LIVING</sup>

Joseph did not consider this to be an opportune time to make himself known. Perhaps he desired to know if they had improved any since last he saw them. At any rate, he did not leap into this occasion hastily, choosing to keep his true identity from them.

### A Divine Manner

For those who are able to receive it, this also a manner in which the Lord deals with men. He often disguises Himself, as it were, so the people do not know whom they are confronting. He did this to the two on the road to Emmaus, appearing to them in "another form" (Mk 16:12). He also spoke to them as though He was a stranger in those parts (Luke 24:13-32).

Another sterling example of this is revealed in Jesus' teaching about the day of judgment. He spoke of Himself having appeared to men as one that was "hungry," "thirsty," "a stranger," "being naked," "being sick," and being "in prison" (Matt 25:35-36). These appearances were made to both the righteous and the unrighteous. What is

even more, the eternal destiny of those favored by such appearances was determined by their reaction to those appearances (Matt 25:37-46).

### JOSEPH SPAKE ROUGHLY TO THEM

"...and spake roughly unto them..." Other versions read "harshly," <sup>NASB</sup> "with a harsh tone," <sup>CEB</sup> "somewhat roughly," <sup>DOUAY</sup> "speaketh with them sharp things," <sup>YLT</sup> "demanded roughly," <sup>LIVING</sup> "spoke to them hard," <sup>ABP</sup> "spoke hard words," <sup>BRENTON</sup> "he was rude," <sup>ERV</sup> and "asked them gruffly." <sup>ISV</sup>

The lexical meaning of the word "roughly" is, "HARD, CRUEL, SEVERE . . . DIFFICULT, SEVERE, FIERCE, INTENSE, VEHEMENT . . . TOUGH OR SEVERE . . . HEAVY." <sup>STRONG'S</sup>

In speaking in this manner, Joseph was not being hardhearted. His tenderness will be revealed later. For the moment, this was the best way to deal with his brothers, as the outcome of it all will confirm. While he may not have been aware of it, it is my persuasion that the Lord was directing the manner in which he spoke, as well as what he actually said.

### When Jesus Spoke Roughly

The Lord Himself also spoke in this manner to His own disciples. Here are a few examples.

- "And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" (Matt 8:26)
- "Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?" (Matt 15:17)
- "Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?" (Mat 16:9)
- "How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?" (Matt 16:11)
- "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how

long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me." (Matt 17:17)

- "And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." (Mark 5:39)
- "And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." (Mark 5:39)
- "Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?" (Mark 8:17)
- "And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?" (Mark 8:21)
- "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" (Luke 6:41)
- "And he said unto them, Where is your faith?" (Luke 8:25)

You should not expect the Lord to always pamper you. Every child of God must learn to take rebuke and correction from Jesus. Our sensitivity is to be in the spirit, not in the flesh. Speaking rudely and without heart is not to be our manner. But there are times when severity must be employed. Here are some apostolic examples.

- "I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?" (1 Cor 6:5)
- "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (1 Cor 15:12)
- "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame." (1 Cor 15:34)
- "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you

*into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." (Gal 1:6)*

➔ *"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" (Gal 3:1)*

➔ *"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend*

*of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4)*

➔ *"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." (Heb 5:12)*

Every growing follower of Jesus eventually comes to realize that there

are timers when He speaks *"roughly"* with His children. That roughness is really Him shouting through fleshly growths that are around the ears and the heart of some. Knowing this manner of the Lord the Psalmist prayed, *"O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure"* (Psa 6:1). And again, *"O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure"* (Psa 38:1). Tender words are for tender hearts!

## AND JOSEPH KNEW HIS BRETHREN

*" 7b . . . 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."*

Joseph knew by experience how expertly his brothers could lie. Perhaps he was putting them to the test, to see if they would tell the truth under these circumstances.

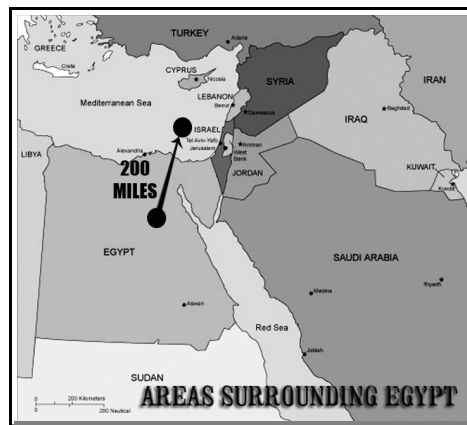
### WHENCE COME YE?

*" . . . and he said unto them, Whence come ye? . . ." Other versions read, "where do you come from?" NKJV "from what place have you come?" ABP*

I gather that this was indicative of the general way Joseph managed the distribution of the grain. He no doubt kept track of areas given a supply of grain in order that a fair distribution might be made. In this case, when he interrogated his brothers, he asked the question *"roughly,"* or with an intimidating tone.

### FROM THE LAND OF CANAAN

*" . . . And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. . . ." Other versions read, "From the land of Canaan, to buy necessities of life," DOUAY "From Canaan, to buy food," GWN "Out of the land of Canaan, to buy food," SEPTUAGINT "From the land of Canaan, to procure food," TNK "From the land of Canaan," they replied. We have come to buy grain." LIVING*



The land of Canaan was northwest of Egypt. We do not know where Joseph was managing the distribution of the grain. Canaan was probably at least two hundred miles away, maybe more, depending on where the grain sales were stationed.

Can see from the map that this involved a journey that was anything but convenient. Also, it reveals the extent of the famine that had spread far beyond the borders of Egypt.

### A Parallel Thought

In the obtaining of spiritual nourishment there is a parallel to the record with which we are dealing. There is a certain inconvenience associated with the obtaining of truth. The flesh must be subdued, and holy zeal must grip the heart if food for the

soul is to be obtained. People do not often stumble upon the truth as they are living in a kind of casualness. To *"buy the truth"* (Prov 23:23) like Joseph's brothers were buying Egyptian grain requires determinate fortitude. That is precisely why *"few there be that find it"* (Matt 7:14).

### BUT THEY DID NOT KNOW HIM

*" . . . And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him."* Other versions read, *"So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him," NKJV "But Joseph had recognized his brothers, although they did not recognize him," NASB "Joseph saw that these were his brothers, they had no idea who he was," BBE and "Joseph discerneth his brethren, but they have not discerned him." YLT*

How is it that Joseph recognized them, but they did not recognize him? There are at least two possibilities. First, that time had eroded their memory of Joseph. Second, that their eyes were *"holden,"* or restrained by God, like the two on the road to Emmaus, so that they could not recognize him (Lk 24:16). I prefer the latter – that their eyes were *"holden that they should not know him."* I prefer this view because later, before they knew who Joseph was, they spoke with one another about the time when they threw Joseph in a pit, ignoring his cries (Gen 42:21-

22). They had not forgotten Joseph, but they would not be able to recognize him until their eyes were opened.

#### A Parallel

A parallel circumstance exists concerning Jesus Christ. Although they prophets had prepared them to recognize Jesus, when He came into the world, the Jews as whole *"received Him not"* (John 1:10). As if that was

not enough, *"He came unto his own, and his own received him not"* (John 1:11). Demons recognized Him (Mk 1:24), but men did not. One exception was Philip, who said to Nathaniel *"We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph"* (John 1:45). A few others said of Him, *"When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?"*

(John 7:31). However, even that fell far short of the proper recognition of the Son of God.

It ought to be noted that sin makes a person incapable of perceiving Christ. A saving recognition of Jesus requires the indispensable work of the Holy Spirit, who can persuade a person of the reality of Christ. (John 16:7-11).

## JOSEPH REMEMBERED THE DREAMS

*"<sup>9</sup> 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."*

One can only imagine the multiplicity of thoughts that were coursing through Joseph's mind. They probably ranged from temptations to retaliate to deep and profound longings to embrace them.

#### JOSEPH REMEMBERED THE DREAMS

*"And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them . . ."*

At least twenty years earlier, Joseph had two dreams than involved his brothers.

- ➡ His brothers were seen as twelve sheaves of grain that bowed down to his sheaf of grain (Gen 37:7). The brothers properly interpreted this as Joseph reigning over them and having the dominion over them (Gen 37:8).
- ➡ His brothers were seen as stars, together with his father seen as the Son, and his mother as the moon, all making obeisance to him. Although Jacob *"observed his saying,"* or kept it in mind, <sup>NIV</sup> He *"rebuked"* Joseph saying, *"What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"* (Gen 37:10)

Nothing more is said of these dreams during the next twenty years. Now, as Jacob sees his brothers bowing down before him, *"with their faces to the earth"* (Gen 42:6), he recalls those dreams. They were prophetic.

**Sometimes we are required to wait for a long time for God to fulfill His Word, or answer our prayers.**

Jesus indicated this in the parable of a widow pleading with an unjust judge. The record states, *"And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint,"* (Luke 18:1). In His parable he said that a certain widow *"continually"* came to the judge pleading, *"Avenge me of my adversary."* Jesus said that the judge *"would not for a while."* Yet *"afterward,"* being provoked by the widow's unrelenting insistence, *"he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me"* (Luke 18:4-5).

Jesus immediately reasoned upon this parable. *"Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith*

*on the earth?"* (Luke 18:8).

God had borne long with Joseph, but now he would so work with his brothers that they would acknowledge what they had done was unjust.

#### YE ARE SPIES

*" . . . and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come."* Other versions read, *"the undefended parts of our land,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"where our land is unprotected,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"see how poor the land is,"* <sup>BBE</sup> *"to spot our country's weaknesses,"* <sup>CJB</sup> *"to see the exposed places,"* <sup>DARBY</sup> *"to view the weaker parts of the land,"* <sup>DOUAY</sup> *"observe the marks of the land,"* <sup>SEPTUAGINT</sup> *"to see if our land is vulnerable!"* <sup>NET</sup> *"study the tracks of the place in which you have come,"* <sup>ABP</sup> *"You came to learn where we are weak,"* <sup>ERV</sup> *"to see the bareness of the land,"* <sup>LITV</sup> and *"You are spies and with unfriendly purpose you have come to observe [secretly] the nakedness of the land."* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

This was not really how Joseph felt about his brothers. He was testing them, perhaps to see if they had improved in handling a situation with more integrity. I do not doubt that there were people from other nations to spy out the land, and learn if there were any weak area through which they might launch an attack. But that was not the issue in this case.

## WE ARE TRUE MEN

*"<sup>10</sup> And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. <sup>11</sup> We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies. <sup>12</sup> And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come."*

### WE ARE TRUE MEN

*"And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies. And he said unto them . . ." Other versions read, "honest men," <sup>NKJV</sup> "upright men," <sup>CJB</sup> and "peaceable men" <sup>DOUAY</sup> "right men." <sup>YLT</sup>*

All of this made bo favorable impression in Joseph. He remembered when they had given a false report to their father about his disappearance. They sent Joseph's bloody coat to their

father with a message: *"know now whether it be thy son's coat or no. And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces."* (Gen 37:32-33). That is precisely what they had planned to say to him (Gen 37:20), but instead Jacob deduced this to be the case. After selling Joseph, his brothers had killed a kid of the goats, and dipped Joseph's coat in the blood, sending it back fo Jacob.

It is possible that during the interim that Joseph was in Egypt, these brothers had behaved themselves truthfully – although that is difficult to believe. May remember their conduct against the men of Shechem, whom they deceived into thinking they were making a peace treaty with them through circumcision, rather than setting them up to take their lives (Gen

34:13-25).

### NAY!

*" . . . Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come."*

God is using Joseph to draw their true nature out of them. It must be seen that this is the Divine manner – to put us into circumstances, and subject us to evaluations that tend that draw our true nature out of us. This subjected to such sifting are not always like Joseph's brethren. Some, like Paul, endure all manner of siting, from external circumstances (2 Cor 11:21-28), to fightings and fears within (2 Cor 7:5), and erroneous reports (Rom 3:8; 2 Cor 6:8). O, that believers would recognize that criticism is often a test, and hardship is a Divinely appointed means of become more acquainted with our own persons.

## THY SERVANTS ARE TWELVE BRETHREN

*"<sup>13</sup> 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."*

When Joseph at home, they had not spoken of themselves as *"twelve brethren."* Instead, they pushed the fact that Joseph was a dear son to Jacob

into the background, and determined to rid themselves of his presence. It is only the hand of the Almighty God, working through Reuben that restrained them from carrying out their intention to kill Joseph (Gen 37:21-22).

Notice also the cunning way in which they referred to their family: *"Sir, there are actually twelve of us. We,*

*your servants, are all brothers, sons of a man living in the land of Canaan. Our youngest brother is back there with our father right now, and one of our brothers is no longer with us."* <sup>NLT</sup>

Actually, they had no idea where Joseph was, or even if he was alive. However, as this event proceeds along, they will soon learn about Joseph.

## HEREBY SHALL YE BE PROVED

*"<sup>14</sup> And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies: <sup>15</sup> Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. <sup>16</sup> 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."*

### HEREBY SHALL YE BE PROVED

*"And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies: Hereby ye shall be proved . . ." Other versions read, "It is as I spoke to you, saying, 'You are spies!'" <sup>NKJV</sup> "Joseph said to them, "It is just as I told you: You*

*are spies!" <sup>NIV</sup> "What does that prove? You are spies," <sup>LIVING</sup> and "I can see that I am right. You are spies." <sup>ERV</sup>*

It is as though Joseph replied, "WHAT DOES YOU BEING MEMBERS OF A FAMILY WITH TWELVE SONS, WITH ONE AT HOME, AND ONE NO LONGER WITH YOU HAVE TO DO WITH WHAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT? ARE YOU SAYING THAT THIS SUPPORTS THE CLAIM THAT YOU ARE TRUE AND HONEST MEN?"

**YOUR YOUNGEST BROTHER MUST COME**

*" . . . By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither . . . "*

Answers that are generated by the flesh are like men wandering about in a desert with no certain purpose or place in mind. It is good for us to be alert to the questions that are asked of us. Often they are nothing less than God testing us, drawing out things that must be addressed.

**ONE OF YOU FETCH YOUR BROTHER**

*" . . . Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother . . . "*

**YOU SHALL BE KEPT IN PRISON**

*" . . . 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. "*

While they were thinking about this matter, Joseph put them into prison, where there were not so many distractions, and thinking would tend to be more honest. This Divine method was often God's means of dealing with

Israel. He would afflict them, putting them into yard situations, which eventually would move them to call upon Him (Judges 10:10,15; 1 Sam 7:6; 2 Chron 6:37; Psa 106:6-7; Jer 8:14-19; Dan 9:5-6).

Every child of God must culture such a spiritual sensitivity that as quickly as they are drawn aside from the highway of holiness, then sense the call of the Lord, and get on the highway again. Chastening should not be a long and drawn-out affair. Chastening will not be long if we do not despise it.

## HE PUT THEM ALL TOGETHER INTO WARD

*" 17 And he put them all together into ward three days. "* Other versions read, *"in prison,"* <sup>NKJV</sup> *"in custody,"* <sup>NIV</sup>

*"he locked them up in the guardhouse for three days,"* <sup>NAB</sup> *"removeth them unto charge three days"* <sup>YLT</sup> and *"he threw them all into jail for three days."* <sup>LIVING</sup>

This was a time of testing. For Joseph, it would confirm that his brothers had made some advance – they might even consider how they had treated him twenty + years ago.

He did not isolate them from one another, but put them all together. That

would give them opportunity to speak with one another concerning their current status.

**Three days are often mentioned in Scripture as a time of waiting.**

- The plague of darkness in Egypt lasted for three days (Ex 10:22).
- Moses led Israel three days journey into the wilderness, where there was no water, and they murmured (Ex 15:22-24).
- The spies that came to Rahab in Canaan were advised to hide themselves three days (Josh

2:16,22).

- Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days (Jonah 1:17).
- Joseph and Mary lost Jesus for three days when they attended the Passover feast in Jerusalem (Lk 2:46).
- Saul of Tarsus was blinded for three days, and neither eat nor drink during that period (Acts 9:9).
- Jesus was in the tomb for three days (Matt 12:40; Mk 8:31).

This was adequate time for the brothers to review their lives and be convinced of their wrong doing

## FOR I FEAR GOD

*" 18 And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God. "*

**THIS DO AND LIVE**

*"And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live . . . "*

After three days in prison, Joseph now puts the pressure on his brothers to ponder their situation. They are to understand that their lives are at stake in this matter. He will now see what kind of men they are – whether they are *"true"* and honest, or not.

**FOR I FEAR GOD**

*" . . . for I fear God. "* Other versions read, *"I am a god-fearing man"* <sup>BBE</sup> *"God I fear!"* <sup>YLT</sup> and *"I reverence and fear God."* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Joseph now gives the brothers something to do, telling them their lives are at stake. He explains his action by saying, *"I fear God."*

Notice how differently Joseph speaks of himself, as compared to what his brothers spoke. They said of

themselves, *"we are true men,"* or *"honest men"* <sup>NKJV</sup> (Gen 42:11). Joseph, who has said nothing of himself to this point, said *"I fear God!"*

Some years earlier, when yet in his teens, Joseph had expressed this same fear in another way to Potiphar's wife. When she attempted to allure him into sin he refused her suggestions saying, *"how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"* (Gen 39:9).

There you have the Psalm fulfilled,



*"The fear of the Lord is clean" (Psa 19:9), and again, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Psa 111:10). And again, "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil," (Prov 8:13).*

The indictment against humanity is, "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom 3:18) – yet, here was

Joseph who confessed he did fear God. This is the first time in Scripture that a man is said to have feared God. Abraham had said of Canaan prior to Israel inhabiting it, "Surely the fear of God is not in this place" (Gen 20:11).

Highlights what an extraordinary man Joseph was. He had been away

from home for over twenty years. He was in a land dominated by idolatry, And yet he continued to fear God. I do not doubt that he will rise in the day of judgment to condemn those who lived in the remarkable day of salvation, yet did not fear God. Every young man can learn from this tender saint.

## IF YE BE TRUE MEN

*"<sup>19</sup> 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:<sup>20</sup> But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so."*

### IF YE BE TRUE MEN

*"If ye be true men . . ."*

The brothers had affirmed they were true and honest men, and now they must prove it. Joseph really does not know whether or not Benjamin is safe at home. He was also a favored son of his father Jacob. Perhaps they had rid themselves of Benjamin also. Whether or not this was the way he thought, I do not know. However, he must have known it would take some extraordinary wisdom to convince their father that Benjamin should return to Egypt with them.

### LET ONE OF YOUR BRETHREN BE BOUND

*" . . . let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison . . ."*

Now Joseph changes what he had said, further confusing them. Originally he had said, *"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"* (Gen 42:16).

Now the brothers had to agree who would remain behind. Now, the remaining brothers not only has to think about Benjamin and Jacob, but about the one who would remain in Egypt, to say nothing about themselves. They had told Joseph where they were from, and he could easily dispatch a group of soldiers to bring them back. At least they had to consider these things.

### CARRY CORN FOR THE FAMINE

*" . . . go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses . . ."*

The first priority was to get the corn back to Canaan, so Jacob and his offspring might live. That is the primary reason the Lord sent Joseph into Egypt (Gen 50:20). Furthermore, the reason for this was found in the promise God made to Abraham of an "everlasting covenant" (Gen 17:19). Over and above even that, it was to prepare the way for the coming of a Savior into the world through a special chosen and cultured people.

### BRING YOUR YOUNGEST BROTHER TO ME

*" . . . But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die . . ."*

The commission was clear. They were not to send Benjamin back, but to personally bring him back. In doing this, their word would be established, and

their lives would be spared.

### AND THEY DID SO

*" . . . And they did so."* In Joseph, they had met one who ruled over them, just as was indicated by Joseph's dreams when he was at home. In those days his brothers had said to him, *"Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words"*. (Gen 37:8-9).

Joseph's brothers did not yield easily. You may remember what they did when their younger sister Dinah was molested. *"And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister. They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field, And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house."* (Gen 34:25-29). But none owe no such thought entered their minds. They knew this man reigned over them.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 10/18/13. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The sixty-eighth lesson will cover verses 21thru 38 of chapter forty-two: "THE BROTHERS INITIAL RESPONSE TO JOSEPH." Not knowing they were standing before their younger brother Joseph, the brothers reasoned that they were guilty concerning their brother, when they ignored his pleas and treated him heartlessly, selling him to passing merchants. Therefore, they reasoned, this distress had come upon them. They were unaware that Joseph heard and understood what they were saying. What he heard caused him to weep. Joseph had their sacks filled with grain, and put their money in their sacks. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.