



The Book of Genesis

Lesson Number 68



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.

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 Stand 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= Literal 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 Tanakj (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)

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.

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

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

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.

THE BROTHERS INITIAL RESPONSE TO JOSEPH

Gen 42:21 "And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. ²² And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required. ²³ And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter. ²⁴ And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes. ²⁵ Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them. ²⁶ And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence. ²⁷ And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth. ²⁸ And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us? ²⁹ And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them; saying, ³⁰ The man, who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. ³¹ And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies: ³² We be twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan. ³³ And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone: ³⁴ And bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffic in the land. ³⁵ And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. ³⁶ And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me. ³⁷ And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again. ³⁸ And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." Gen 42:21-38

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

As the brothers prepare to return home, they said to one another, referring to Joseph, "We are guilty concerning our brother." They

confessed they saw the anguish of his soul, and did not listen to him, "therefore this distress is come upon us." Reuben reminded them that he had pled with them not to sin against the

child, but they would not hear. The brothers did not know that Joseph understood them, for he had been speaking to them through an interpreter. Upon hearing them, he

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turned aside and wept, then returned and bound Simeon before their eyes. He then commanded that their sacks be filled with grain, that every man should have his money restored in the sack, and provision was to be given them for their journey back home. Along the way, one of the brothers opened his sack and found his money restored. The brothers were afraid and said, *“What is this that God hath done unto us?”* Upon their return, they reported all of these things of Jacob. When told that Benjamin would have to go back, Jacob refused, fearing he would lose Benjamin as he did Joseph.

BEHOLDING THE EFFECTS OF SIN

In the Genesis’ records, we are beholding some of the impacts of sin upon the human constitution. Things that Adam Eve did not experience prior to the transgression began to assert themselves. Allow me to name a few of them.

HUMAN EXPERIENCES CAUSED BY SIN

- ➔ Fear of the Divine presence (Gen 3:10).

- ➔ Toiling with **sweat** (Gen 3:19).
- ➔ Childbirth with **sorrow** (Gen 3:16)
- ➔ **Anger** (Gen 4:5).
- ➔ **Murder** (Gen 4:8).
- ➔ **Bigamy** (Gen 4:19)
- ➔ Personal **repercussions** of personal sin (Gen 4:23-24).
- ➔ **Inappropriate** marriages (Gen 6:2).
- ➔ Continual evil **thoughts** (Gen 6:5).
- ➔ Pervasive **violence** (Gen 6:11).
- ➔ **Drunkenness** (Gen 9:21).
- ➔ Sinful **ambition** and self exaltation (Gen 10:8-10).
- ➔ Men uniting to **make a name** for themselves (Gen 11:3-4).
- ➔ **Barrenness** among some women (Gen 11:30).
- ➔ **Famines** (Gen 12:10).
- ➔ **Fear** of another man taking one’s wife (Gen 12:11-13).
- ➔ **Strife** between men (Gen 13:7).
- ➔ **Wars** (Gen 14:1-2).
- ➔ One person **despising** another (Gen 16:4-5).
- ➔ Aggressive **sodomy** (Gen 19:4-5,11).
- ➔ A **longing** for what was cursed (Gen 19:26).
- ➔ **Mockery** (Gen 21:9).
- ➔ Personal **grief** (Gen 21:11).
- ➔ **Sorrow** at the prospect of the death of a son (Gen 21:15-16).
- ➔ The **testing** of a man (Gen 22:1).
- ➔ A man **despising** his birthright (Gen 25:34).
- ➔ Men **having to be told** not to touch another man’s wife (Gen 26:11).
- ➔ **Envy** (Gen 26:14).
- ➔ **Maliciousness** (Gen 26:15,18).
- ➔ Men **having to agree** not to harm one another (Gen 26:28-29).
- ➔ **Deception** (Gen 29:23-25).

- ➔ The experience of **being overcome** by heat in the day and cold and frost during the night (Gen 31:40).
- ➔ A man **fearing** his brother (Gen 32:11).
- ➔ The **molestation** of women (Gen 34:2).
- ➔ Excessive **retribution** (Gen 34:14-29).
- ➔ A **mother dying** while giving birth (Gen 35:18-19).
- ➔ Brothers **hating one of their own** because he was favored by their father (Gen 37:3-4).
- ➔ A **determination to lie** (37:20).
- ➔ Brothers **selling one of their own** into slavery (Gen 37:26-28).
- ➔ **Mourning** (Gen 37:34-35).
- ➔ A **refusal** to do what was right (Gen 38: 8-10).
- ➔ **Injustice** (Gen 39:19-20).
- ➔ A widespread famine that was very **grievous** (Gen 41:31,55).
- ➔ **Frustration** (Gen 42:1).
- ➔ A **plaguing guilt** long after the sin was committed (Gen 42:21).
- ➔ **Fear** of what God had done (Gen 42:28).

Men do not often think of the panorama of human feelings and experiences that was ushered in on the wings of sin – when *“by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men”* (Rom 5:12). **Sin brought with it sorrow, disease, debilitation and weakness, as well as an ignorance of God, and alienation from Him.**

When we read these records of

The time of the flood would have been the norm for human history if God had not chosen to work through selected men to prepare humanity for the coming of a Savior, and the consequent remedy for sin.

- ➔ **Unfair wages** (Gen 31:7).
- ➔ A propensity to **idolatry** (Gen 31:32-34; 35:2-4).

people living with far less benefits than those living after Christ’s exaltation, we must keep these things in mind. It is

nothing less than the working of the Lord that kept men from descending further into the caldron of sin. The time of the flood would have been the norm for human history if God had not chosen

to work through selected men to prepare humanity for the coming of a Savior, and the consequent remedy for sin. **In view of this, we consider every person foolish who has heard of Christ Jesus, and yet**

has not come to Him, and is not currently living for Him. This is a salvation that is not to be neglected. In fact, eternal peril is associated with neglecting “so great salvation” (Heb 2:3).

WE ARE VERILY GUILTY CONCERNING OUR BROTHER

Gen 42:21 ***“And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.”***

Joseph had put the brothers together into prison, keeping them there for three days. On the third day he told them to bring their youngest brother to him in order that they might live and not die. Our present text opens with the brothers still incarcerated, and Joseph still with them.

WE ARE VERILY GUILTY

“And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother . . .” Other versions read, “They said to one another, “Surely we are being punished because of our brother,”^{NIV} “They said to one another, “Alas, we are paying the penalty for what we did to our brother,”^{NRSV} “in truth we are guilty concerning our brother,”^{RSV} “Truly, we did wrong to our brother”^{BBE} “We are in fact guilty concerning our brother”^{CJB} “Obviously, we are being punished for what we did to our brother”^{CSB} “We deserve to suffer these things, because we have sinned against our brother,”^{DOUAY} “Clearly we are being punished because of what we did to Joseph long ago,”^{NLT} and “this has all happened because of what we did to Joseph long ago.”^{LIVING}

The words spoken by Moses centuries later had been fulfilled in these brothers: *“behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out”* (Num 32:23).

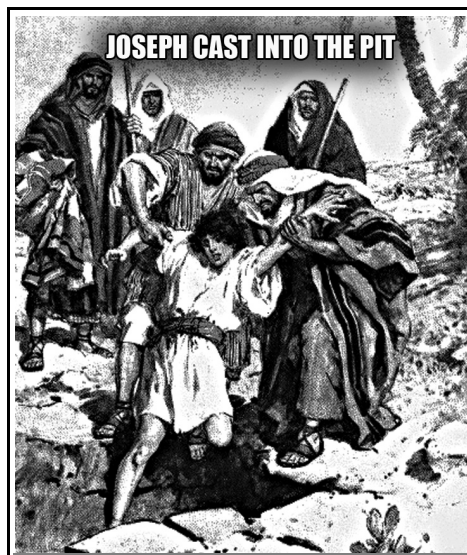
Remember, this is taking place at least twenty years after they had sinned against Joseph – yet they had no

difficulty remembering that day. I cannot help but think the Lord was working in their hearts – leading them, as it were, to repentance, for *“the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance”* (Rom 2:4).

Created in the image of God, it appears that sin etches a memory on the mind that cannot be easily erased. Paul apparently was unable to forget his own sin against God’s people, even though he did it, at the time, in consciousness of God (Acts 22:4; 26:11; 1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13). Of course, this kind of attitude did not accompany the action of Joseph’s brothers against him.

WE SAW THE ANGUISH OF HIS SOUL

“ . . . in that we saw the anguish of his soul . . .” Other versions read, “distress of his soul,”^{NASB} “grief of mind,”^{BBE} “when he saw his life on danger,”^{CEB} “his deep distress,”^{CSB} “how troubled he was,”^{GWN} “his deep misery,”^{NJB} and “his terror and anguish.”^{LIVING}



These are some details that were not provided in the initial account. There it was written, *“And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colors that was on him; And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it”* (Gen 37:23-24).

Now we find this was a bitter and frightening experience for young Joseph – and now they remembered it: *“anguish,” “distress,” “grief,” “troubled,” and “misery.”* But at that time, all of this meant nothing to them, even though it was their own younger brother who was experiencing these things. The record also points out that after they had thrown Joseph into the pit, *“they sat down to eat bread”* (Gen 37:25), doing so with absolute indifference.

WE WOULD NOT HEAR

“ . . . when he besought us and we would not hear . . .” Other versions read, “when he pleaded with us,”^{NKJV} “we did not give ear to his prayers,”^{BBE} “he begged us for mercy,”^{CEB} “he cried to us for mercy,”^{NET} “making supplication to us,”^{YLT} “we heard his pleadings,”^{LIVING} “he was begging us for mercy,”^{MESSAGE} and “he begged us [to let him go].”^{AMPLIFIED}

The picture is a heart-rending one. A young boy being thrown into a pit with the prospect of dying, crying out and pleading with his own brothers for mercy, and they would not listen to him. Now, twenty-plus years later, vivid memories of that occasion flood their minds, bringing distress to them. This was the work of the Lord, not of the devil. They were being convicted of

their sin, more than two decades after it had been committed.

THEREFORE IS THIS DISTRESS COME

“ . . . therefore is this distress come upon us.” Other versions read, “that’s why this distress has come upon us,” NIV “this anguish,” NRSV “this trouble,” BBE “this affliction,” DOUAY “this misery,” NJB “these terrible things are happening,” CEV “we’re in this mess,” ISV

and “this distress and difficulty.” AMPLIFIED

Now the brothers were experiencing what Joseph had experienced at their hands: **distress, trouble, affliction, misery, terrible things, and difficulty.** Actually, however, it was rather mild compared to what they had inflicted upon Joseph at a tender young age. **The threat of death was before them, but they had**

not been treated harshly. Even when they were imprisoned, they were put together. It was an uncomfortable situation, to be sure, but, in my judgment, it did not approximate the experience of Joseph. His vulnerable age at the time of their abuse also enters into the matter. The brothers were receiving their just deserts. They had sown to the wind, and were reaping the whirlwind (Hos 8:7).

REUBEN ANSWERED THEM

“ ²² And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.”

We will now see that when the sin against Joseph took place, there were a number of blockades thrown before the brothers. There were at least two factors involved in their rejection of these hindrances.

➔ **First, God was sending Joseph down into Egypt** (Psa 105:17), and this was the method He used – their stubborn hearts. At this point, they were like “vessels . . . unto dishonor” in the hands of the Lord (2 Tim 2:20).

➔ **Second, their basic hatred for Joseph, their own brother was revealed.** At this juncture of human history, the words of Jesus were lived out: “And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household” (Matt 10:36).

Although many boast that “blood is thicker than water,” meaning that earthly relationships trump all others, the treatment of Joseph proves that **this is not true.** Other incidents that contradict this fools-gold affirmation are as follows:

- ➔ Cain and Abel (Gen 4:8).
- ➔ Ishmael and Isaac ().
- ➔ Jacob and Esau (Gen 27:41).
- ➔ Jacob and Laban (Gen 31:7).

One’s relationship to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ is superior to all flesh-and-blood relationships. In this text, it would be Joseph’s relationship to God the Father through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Now, in this “day of salvation” (2 Cor 6:2), a considerable amount of spiritual retardation is directly traceable to an inordinate commitment to flesh-and-blood relationships.

SPAKE I NOT UNTO YOU?

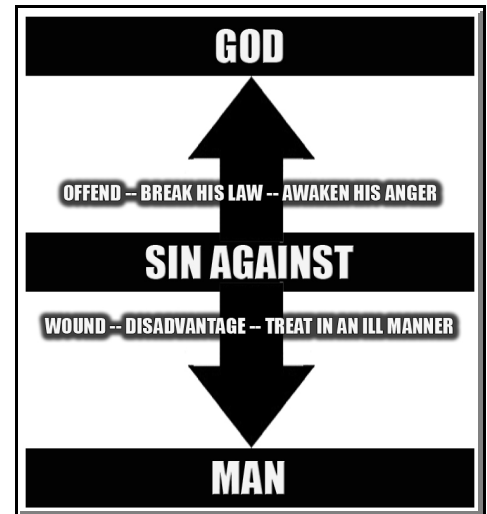
“ ²² And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you . . . ” Other versions read, “Did I not tell you,” NIV “Did I not say to you?” BBE “warned not I you?” GENEVA and “I told you.” ERV

Time had not erased this occasion from the memory of Reuben. The record of Reuben’s words is found in Genesis 37:21-22: “And Reuben heard it, and **he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him. And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.**”

Reuben’s intentions were noble, but he underestimated the wickedness of his brothers, and the magnitude of their jealousy.

Reuben’s intention was to come later, take Joseph out of the pit, and return him to his father.

He did not know there was a high purpose in works at this time. The God of Jacob was sending Joseph into Egypt, and He was going to use the dark hearts of Joseph’s brothers to get the job done. At the time to which Reuben now refers, He used Reuben to put the brother’s evil intention on hold.



DO NOT SIN AGAINST THE CHILD

“ . . . saying, Do not sin against the child . . . ” The record of the event itself does not include the words “sin against the child.” They rather read, “shed no blood . . . lay no hand on him” (Gen 37:22). This word is a proper interpretation of what was actually said. What the brothers were plotting was, indeed, a sin against Joseph.

Other versions read, “Do the child no wrong,” BBE “not to harm the boy,” CSB “Hurt not the boy” SEPTUAGINT “do not

do anything bad to that boy,"^{ERV} and "not to harm the boy."^{GNB}

From the standpoint of etymology, it is difficult to establish the meaning of "sin against." If it is the matter concerning sinning against God, that is fairly straightforward. Such involves rebellion against God, refusing to submit to His authority, and breaking His Law.

When it comes to sinning against a man, some additional facts must be taken into consideration.

have sinned against the Lord God of Israel" (Josh 7:20).

- ➔ Samuel spoke to his sons about one man sinneth "against another" (1 Sam 2:25).
- ➔ Jonathan spoke of his father, king Saul, about sinning "against David" (1 Sam 19:4-5).
- ➔ David told king Saul he had not sinned against him (1 Sam 24:11).
- ➔ Of his sin with Bathsheba David said, "I have sinned against the

ignored them both. First, the pleading of Joseph, and second the counsel of Reuben.

In the matter of sin, **there is a point that is reached when the sinner cannot be persuaded to cease their intended expression.** There has been a lot of unseen activity at this point: sinful intentions, plotting, self-justification, etc. All of this can be seen in the poignant statement concerning sin that was given by James. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14-15).

- ➔ **DRAWN AWAY:** The picture is that of being drawn aside from the appointed "highway" – "the way of holiness" (Isa 35:8). The person is drawn away from running the race while beholding Jesus (Hab 12:1-2). There comes a cessation of seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt 6:33). The person stops fighting "the good fight of faith" (1 Tim 6:12). The affection is removed from the things that are above (Col 3:1-2) to low things. No sin is, or can be, committed until the person is "drawn away."

- ➔ **ENTICED:** To be "enticed" is to be baited, beguiled, allured, and deceived by "the attraction of his own desires."^{BEBE} The particular sin is brought within reach, and the person imagines there will be an advantage in committing that sin.

- ➔ **SIN CONCEIVED:** Sin is now to the mind what a child conceived in the womb is to a woman. What is to be accomplished in the sin is seen in the imagination, as desire gives place to intention.

- ➔ **SIN BROUGHT FORTH:** Because the person yielded to the drawing away from the course to glory, sin has now advanced to the point of committing the desired deed. The person is no longer content to merely think about it. The transgression must be done!

At the root of the matter is the Divine imagery in man. In order to purposefully offend or hurt a man, one must forget the fact that he bears the similitude of God

At the root of the matter is the Divine imagery in man. In order to purposefully offend or hurt a man, one must forget the fact that he bears the similitude of God (James 3:9). This is precisely why the life of a murderer is to be taken (Gen 9:6).

Sinning Against A Person

What exactly does it mean to "sin against" a person? Ordinarily, God Himself is considered the One men sin against.

- ➔ When tempted by Potiphar's wife, Joseph said that doing what she suggested would be sinning "against God" (Gen 39:9).
- ➔ Reuben said that the plot of his brothers against Joseph was sinning "against the child" (Gen 42:22).
- ➔ God warned Israel. About sinning against God (Ex 23:33; Num 32:23; Deut 20:18).
- ➔ Moses said that Israel, in having the golden calf made at Sinai had "sinned against the Lord your God" (Deut 9:16).
- ➔ Achan said of his transgression, "I

Lord" (2 Sam 12:13).

- ➔ Solomon spoke of a man sinning "against his neighbor" (2 Chron 6:22).
- ➔ Habakkuk wrote of a person sinning against his own soul (Hab 2:10).
- ➔ Peter referred to his brother sinning against him (Matt 18:21).
- ➔ The prodigal son said he had sinned "against heaven" (Lk 15:18,21).
- ➔ The Spirit states that when we sin against "the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ" (1 Cor 8:12).
- ➔ Paul wrote of one sinning "against his own body" (1 Cor 6:18).

AND YE WOULD NOT

" . . . and ye would not hear? . . ." Other versions read, "would not listen,"^{NKJV} "gave no attention,"^{BEBE} "did not hearken,"^{DARBY} "paid no heed,"^{TNK} "hearkened not,"^{YLT} and "refused to listen."^{ERV}

The brothers had two barriers thrown up before them – and they

➔ **BRINGS FORTH DEATH:** While the “pleasures of sin” may be realized “for a season” (Heb 11:25), death is finally realized – deadness toward God, and insensitivity to the desires of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:17).

Now, for the brothers of Joseph, twenty long years have passed, and God has stabbed them awake by the wrenching reminder of Reuben.

HIS BLOOD IS REQUIRED

“ . . . therefore, behold, also his blood is required.” Other versions read, “His blood is now required of us,” ^{NKJV} “Now comes the reckoning for his blood,” ^{NASB} “Now we must give an accounting for his blood,” ^{NIV} “So now this is payback for his death,” ^{CEB} “Now we must pay for this bloodshed,” ^{GWN} “And now we are going to die because we murdered him,” ^{LIVING} “now we have to pay the price for killing him,” ^{CEV} “now we’re paying for his murder.”
MESSAGE

Technically speaking, the brothers did not shed Joseph’s blood – they did not kill, or murder, him. Yet, Reuben reasons that they are being punished for killing their brother. Reuben, as well as the other brothers, reasoned that they were being judged for their intentions, even though, according to appearance, they did not carry them out.

Some imagine that Reuben thought that Joseph had been killed. The record of his return and not finding Joseph in the pit does not say the brothers told Reuben he had been sold. Judah is the one who buttressed the counsel of Reuben by saying, “And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our

hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content” (Gen 37:26-27). It was following this that Reuben returned and not finding Joseph in the pit, said, “The boy is gone; and I, where can I turn” ^{NRSV} (Gen 37:30). He did not charge his brothers with murdering Joseph, and, in my opinion, they did not hide their deed from him.

The thing to be seen here is that the brothers knew, and we should as well, that men are judged according to their intentions, even though they may not have been able to carry them out. (Matt 5:28) That is precisely why John wrote of those who hated his brother in Christ, “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” (1 John 3:15). Such a person would rather the hated brother not be around at all – and thus he becomes guilty ,of murder.

Another thing to be seen here is that, **Guilt does not go away with time.** It does not simply dissipate after a while. A guilty conscience will hound

There are two meanings for the word translated “pricks,” or “goads.” “1. A STING, AS THAT OF BEES (4 MACC. 14:19), SCORPIONS, LOCUSTS, REV. 9:10. SINCE ANIMALS WOUND BY THEIR STING AND EVEN CAUSE DEATH, PAUL IN 1 COR. 15:55 (AFTER HOS. 13:14, THE SEPTUAGINT) ATTRIBUTES TO DEATH, PERSONIFIED, A ΚΥΤΡΟΝ, I. E. A DEADLY WEAPON, AND THAT ΚΥΤΡΟΝ IS SAID TO BE ἡ ἁμαρτία (56), BECAUSE SIN IS DEATH’S CAUSE AND PUNISHMENT (?) (ROM. 5:12).
2. AS IN THE GREEK WRITINGS AN IRON GOAD, FOR URGING ON OXEN, HORSES AND OTHER BEASTS OF BURDEN; HENCE, THE PROVERB ΠΡΟΣ ΚΥΤΡΑ ΛΑΚΤΖΕΙΝ, TO KICK AGAINST THE GOAD, I. E. TO OFFER VAIN AND PERILOUS OR RUINOUS RESISTANCE: ACTS 9:5 REC.; 26:14.”

While the word “sting” may seem appropriate, the words “hard for thee to kick against” assure us that a prod used to control cattle is the proper meaning of the word as used he mentioned texts. When dealing with the impenitent, this is a good principle to keep in mind.

While there is no extended teaching on this matter to precisely define when and when not the conscience is goading the sinner, **the fact of the matter is that the Lord does**

The thing to be seen here is that the brothers knew, and we should as well, that men are judged according to their intentions, even though they may not have been able to carry them out.

the sinner, like a painful cattle “goad.” Therefore Jesus said to Saul of Tarsus, “it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks” (Acts 9:5; 26:14). Other versions use the word “goads” in place of “pricks.”

employ this manner of dealing with sinners – bringing them to recall with criticality what they have done. This is a matter of reality. Our teaching must assist people in assessing their own situation.

THEY KNEW NOT THAT JOSEPH UNDERSTOOD THEM

²³ **And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter.**” Apparently the

brothers were speaking to one another in their native Hebrew tongue. Although we do not know when the Hebrew

language originated (and there are many theories), it is mentioned by writers writing after the enthronement of Jesus

(John 5:2; Acts 21:40; 22:2; 26:14; Rev 9:11; 16:16). Prior to that, reference is made to “the Jews’ language” (1 Kgs 18:26,28; Esther 8:9; Neh 13:24; Isa 36:11,13).

There are some unique things about the Hebrew language, its sounds and letter structure. An extensive study of the Hebrew language has been written in Ewald’s Grammar, pages 1-18 and 135-160.

At this point I will simply say that I am persuaded the uniqueness of this language is owing to its development that was impacted by Divine appearances and utterances. The nature of any society plays a key role in the language and vocabulary they use. This is evident in our own society whose basic vocabulary has been significantly altered by its loose and godless manners. **It seems to me that we ought to expect that the fathers of the Jewish nation, together with its ordained leaders, helped to mold their language so there would be a consciousness of God Himself, as well as certain preparatory implications that would enable them to respond to His commandments, promises, and directives.**

Even more ancient than that, it is generally understood that, “AMONG THE PEOPLES OF ASIA LAY THE ROOT STEM OF THESE LANGUAGES WHICH ARE DENOMINATED “SHEMITIC,” OR “SEMITIC” ACCORDING TO THE FRENCH, WHICH IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN SPOKEN BY THE DESCENDANTS OF SHEM.” McClINTOK & STRONG’S

I so not wish to pursue this matter any further here. However, for those the time and interest to look further into this, I believe you will find it more than interesting to observe that the people with whom God worked did develop a most unique language.

THEY KNEW NOT

“And they knew not that Joseph understood them . . .”

The brothers could not distinguish Joseph, and had no ideas that he was conversant with their language.

HE SPAKE UNTO THEM BY AN

INTERPRETER

“ . . . for he spake unto them by an interpreter.”

Considering that people were coming to Joseph from a rather large area, dealing with differing languages could have proved very challenging. Joseph, however, made provision for himself to understand the people who came for grain, and for them to understand him.

A Type Seen

Joseph is here set forth as a type of the Holy Spirit, who interprets the things of God to believers, and interprets their feelings and inclinations to God.



➔ **INTERPRETING TO US.** The Holy Spirit is represented as showing the things of God to us. *“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”* (1 Cor 2:12).

➔ **INTERPRETING TO GOD.** There are strong feelings and longings

produced by regeneration. Some of them cannot be adequately expressed by men in prayer. Therefore it is written, *“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”* (Rom 8:26-27).

There is a sense in which God speaks to us only through an Interpreter – the Lord Jesus who teaches us (1 John 5:20), and the Spirit who enables us to understand. In Divine communication, there is a sense in which men, with all of their learning and expertise, cannot grasp what is being communicated. Thus we read, *“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”* (1 Cor 2:14). And again, *“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be”* (Rom 8:7).

This is why it is nothing but folly to imagine there is some aspect of human wisdom that can make the things of God more understandable to us. All human knowledge is confined to the area of human experience – or what is observable by the senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. Any sphere of knowledge that extends beyond the perimeter of those senses must be revealed to us – and that is the realm in which all of the precious things of God are located.

This fact had proved very difficult for religious men to accept. With unreasonable tenacity they cling to the notion that God has made a place for the wisdom of men in the Divine economy. But this is not so, for God has affirmed that *“the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God”* (1 Cor 3:19). No amount of human reasoning or justification can alter a single syllable of that revelation.

JOSEPH TURNED ASIDE AND WEPT

“²⁴ And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.”

There are those who have been wronged whose heart grows calloused and hard. They cannot forget what was done to them, and so they live in bitterness, which consumes them.

This, however, was not the case with Joseph. Although he was severely and unjustly treated, he still remained tender – a trait of those possessing faith.

HE TURNED HIMSELF ABOUT

merely turned from them so they could not see his face. Rather, he turned from them to go to another place where he could not be seen. We know this is the case by the next verse which says he “returned to them again.”

It is important that we do not attempt to interpret Joseph’s actions through the filter of psychology. **This is the response of a man of faith, which puts it beyond the limitations of merely human diagnosis.**

AND RETURNED TO THEM AND COMMUNED

“ . . . and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took

Had he spoken to them in their own language, it would have arrested their premature attention.

HE BOUND SIMON BEFORE THEM

“ . . . and bound him before their eyes.” Other versions read, *“put chains on him before their eyes”* ^{BBE} *“tied him up in front of them,”* ^{CEB} *“he picked Simeon and had him arrested right in front of their eyes”* ^{GWN} and *“had him bound while they looked on.”* ^{NJB}

Whether he was put in chains or simply tied up is not clear. The lexical meaning of the word translated “bound” is, “TO YOKE OR HITCH; BY ANALOGY, TO FASTEN IN ANY SENSE, TO JOIN BATTLE: — BIND, FAST, GIRL, HARNESS, HOLD, KEEP, MAKE READY, ORDER, PREPARE, PRISON(-ER), PUT IN BONDS, SET IN ARRAY, TIE.” ^{STRONGS} The initial meaning of “yoke” suggests chaining with a yoke about the neck – a condition in which Joseph was placed when he was imprisoned: *“They bruised his feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons”* ^{NIV} (Psa 105:18).

Simeon will now remain a prisoner until the brothers return with Benjamin. Joseph had him bound before the brothers so they would know the gravity and reality of their situation. Joseph obviously did not want them to imagine they could work, or negotiate themselves out of this dilemma. He would not make things comfortable for them.

It is important that we do not attempt to interpret Joseph’s actions through the filter of psychology. This is the response of a man of faith, which puts it beyond the limitations of merely human diagnosis.

“And he turned himself about from them, and wept...” Other versions read, *“He stepped away from them and wept”* ^{CEB} and *“he left the room and found a place where he could weep.”* ^{LIVING}

The idea here is not that Joseph

from them Simeon . . .” Other versions read, *“spoke to them,”* ^{NASB} and *“talked with them.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

He resumed speaking with them through an interpreter, for, as yet, he has not made himself known to them.

FILL THEIR SACKS, RESTORE THEIR MONEY, GIVE THEM PROVISION

“²⁵ Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man’s money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them. ²⁶ And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence.”

Joseph will now sell them the grain they required. It will have to be enough to sustain their families and their flocks for an extended period. None of it will be used for seed, for a

famine had consumed the land, and nothing would grow. They had brought “sacks” in which the grain would be carried, and probably came in a caravan of impressive size, prepared to take a significant amount of grain back to their homeland. Their trip was actually an expedition of sorts.

FILL THEIR SACKS

“Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn . . .” Other versions read, *“their vessels,”* ^{ASV} *“their*

bags.” ^{NASB} *“their containers,”* ^{CJB} *“their panniers”* ^{NJB} [a basket/bag carried by camels or donkeys].

This would have been a significant amount of grain, all of which had to be purchased. **I assume it would have been enough to sustain seventy people and all of their herds for a significant period of time.** The amount of required time and resources is noteworthy. The brothers probably took some servants with them to assist in the journey to

and from Egypt. There were donkeys to care for, a supply of food for the travels, and containers in which to place the grain.

A Parallel

I think that this is generally indicative of the kind of effort that must be expended to obtain resources for the soul as well. **One has to locate where these are available, and make the arrangements necessary to their obtainment.** It is tragic that many people are far more diligent when it comes to feeding the body, than they are to ensure sound spiritual nourishment and health.

RESTORE THEIR MONEY

“ . . . and to restore every man's money into his sack . . . ” Other versions read, *“put each man's silver back in his sack,”* ^{NIV} *“to replace every man's money in his sack,”* ^{RSV} *“put every man's money again in their sacks,”* ^{DOUAY} *“gave secret instructions to return each brother's payment at the top of his sack,”* ^{NLT} *“The brothers had given Joseph the money for the grain, but he didn't keep the money. He put the money in their bags of grain.”* ^{ERV}

It appears from the narrative that each brother was a manager, or steward, over a part of Jacob's property. Being of age, each also had his own money. If Joseph was nearing forty years of age at this time, some of these brothers were probably nearing fifty. They were mature adults with appropriate responsibilities, having their own money. The cost of the grain was shared by them all, whether or not it was in equal portions, I do not know.

At any rate, Joseph did not feel right charging them for provisions, being much more propitious toward them than they had been with him the last time they had seen him.

A Type to be Seen

When we as brothers and sisters share in the assembly, **it must be from our own resources.** Together it will be a significant amount, yet each person gives what has resulted from his/her own labors in the Lord.

GIVE THEM PROVISION

“ . . . and to give them provision for the way . . . ” Other versions read, *“provisions for their journey,”* ^{NIV} *“provisions for their trip,”* ^{CEB} *“provision for the way,”* ^{DARBY} and *“supplies for their trip.”* ^{GWN}

In a display of holy consideration and love, Joseph directed his servants to give the brothers adequate supplies for the journey back to Canaan. He had no malice, and no hatred for what had been done for him. This was confirmed in this gracious act.

Another Type

What a marvelous depiction of the salvation of God through Jesus Christ. In our journey to our new home in the glory, we have been assured of glorification (Rom 8:30; Col 3:4), eternal life (Mk 10:30; Tit 1:2; 3:7), a reign with Jesus (2 Tim 2:12)), honor (John 12:26), and much more. **As if that was not enough, He has given us provisions for our journey, just as Joseph did for his brothers.** He daily *“loads”* us with benefits (Psa 68:18), has given us *“all spiritual blessings”* (Eph 1:3), and *“all things that pertain to life and godliness”* (2 Pet 1:3), and unimaginable supply of good things. **There is a sense in which He has given us heaven to go to heaven in** – having raised us up and made us to sit together with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph 2:6).

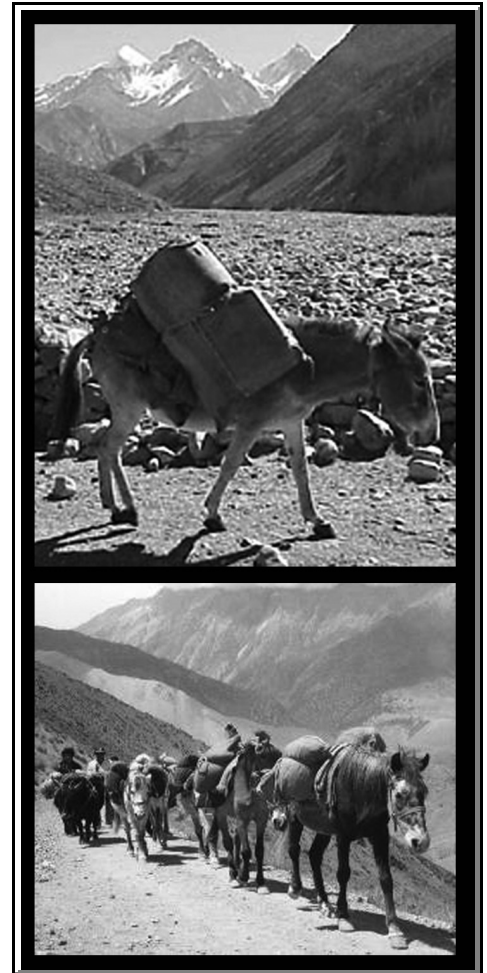
AND THEY DEPARTED

“ . . . and thus did he unto them. And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence.” Other versions read, *“the brothers loaded their donkeys,”* ^{NLT/GNB} *“they each loaded the grain on their donkeys,”* ^{CEV} *“So the brothers put the grain on their donkeys,”* ^{ERV} *“And they lifted their grain on their asses and walked from there.”* ^{LITV}

Joseph, having directed his servants to fill the brothers sacks with grain, returning their money, and giving them provisions for the way, the brothers now loaded the grain on their donkeys and began their journey home.

Another Type

While care must be taken not to



take the matter further than is expeditious, it seems to me there is a wonderful parallel between what was required to obtain the grain and carry it back to where they lived.

- The brothers had to go where the grain was being dispensed.
- They had to bear the inconvenience and cost of getting there.
- They had to have the resources required to obtain the goods.
- Once the grain had been obtained, they had to load it in their beasts of burden.
- They had to care for and direct the beasts all the way home.
- They were required to sustain themselves from the supplies they were carrying.

The procurement of spiritual resources is very similar to those procedures. Of particular note here is what is done with the resources once they have been procured or obtained.

Just as the brothers had to load their own donkeys, so the individual that buys the truth (Prov 23:23), must hide it in his heart, loading it, so to speak, for his sustenance. Thus the psalmist confessed, *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee"* (Psa 119:11). That precious Word must be stored up as in a scribe's *"treasure."* It is written, *"Then said He unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old"* (Matt 13:52).

Many professed followers of Christ never make adequate storage of the Word of God. They allow too much distracting clutter in their hearts and are more like Joseph's brothers going to Egypt than returning with supplies to Canaan. This is not an area where men can legislate for others. Neither is it something that someone else can do for you. However, it is something that must be done.

Hiding the Word in your heart involves it being your meditation *"all the day"* (Psa 119:97; Prov 2:1). It requires a certain *"delight"* in what God says (Psa 1:2). It includes laying up

God's words in the heart (Job 22:22).

If it is true that there is, as Amos prophesied, a God-caused famine of hearing the Word of God in the land (Amos 8:11), then all the more every hungry soul must be determined to obtain nourishment for the *"inward man,"* which is daily renewed (2 Cor 4:16). This will require godly determination, resolve, and diligent effort. There may be considerable inconvenience involved, but that must not deter those who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness from obtaining what is required to keep them alive.

MY MONEY IS RESTORED

"²⁷ And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth. ²⁸ And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?"

The brothers begin their trip home, unaware of all that was in their sacks. Unbeknown to them, Joseph has restored their money, and given them extra provisions for the journey home.

A Type Seen

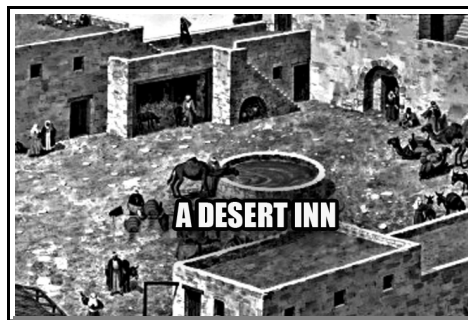
Like Joseph's brothers beginning their journey to Canaan, **believers in Christ begin their trek to glory with more in their possession than they know.** The Lord, through His apostles, has revealed what we have in our possession, and what wonderful news it is. Many have traveled for years without knowing of these things. Here are a few of the things everyone in Christ possesses, yet everyone in Him is not aware of it.

- ➔ Peace with God (Rom 5:1).
- ➔ Access to God (Eph 3:12).
- ➔ An Intercessor in heaven (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25).
- ➔ An Intercessor within (Rom 8:26-

27).

- ➔ *"All spiritual blessings"* (Eph 1:4).
- ➔ Everything pertaining to life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3).
- ➔ All things are ours including Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, life, death, things present, and things to come (1 Cor 3:21-23).
- ➔ Grace that is exceeding abundant with faith and love – 1 Tim 1:14

HE SPIED HIS MONEY



"And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth. . ." Other versions read, *"give his donkey feed at the encampment,"* ^{NKJV} *"fodder at the lodging place,"* ^{NASB} *"some food . . . resting place,"* ^{BBE} *"fodder, at the place where they rested,"* ^{SEPTUAGINT} and *"when they stopped for the night and one of them opened his sack to get*

some grain to feed the donkeys." ^{LIVING}

Inns were the historical equivalent of hotels or motels. They were provided for travelers, in this case, journeying through the desert. There was a water supply, and a place to rest. It was at such a place that the discovery of the returned money took place.

When God was angry with Moses for not circumcising his son, and *"sought to kill him,"* Moses was at *"the inn"* (Ex 4:24). When it came time for Jesus to be born, there was *"no room"* for the family in *"the inn"* (Lk 2:7). When Jesus gave the account of the good Samaritan, he said that he brought the wounded man to *"an inn, and took care of him"* (Lk 10:34).

Here, in a commercial setting, one of the brothers prepared to give *"provender,"* or *"fodder"* to his donkey. *"Fodder"* was mixture *"CONSISTING OF BARLEY OR OATS, MIXED WITH VETCHES [OF HERBACEOUS TWINING LEGUMINOUS PLANTS INCLUDING SOME GROWN FOR FODDER] AND BEANS."* ^{McCLINTOK & STRONG'S} I gather this was included in the *"provision for the way"* which Joseph graciously included in their sacks. This being the case, it was probably in the top part of one or more of the sacks.

As soon as the brother opened the

sack, his eyes fell on the money that had been returned to him. What a shock it must have been to him!

MY MONEY IS RESTORED

“ . . . And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack . . . ”

He apparently counted the money, and found that everything he had given for the grain had been returned. *“Here it is in my sack,”*^{NIV} he cried. You might imagine that this would have brought joy to the brothers – but it did not.

THEIR HEART FAILED THEM

“ . . . and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?” Other versions read,

*“Then he said to his brothers, **“their hearts sank, and they turned trembling to one another,”***^{NASB} *“they lost heart and turned trembling to one another, saying,”*^{NRSV} *“then their hearts became full of fear,”*^{BBE} *“Their hearts stopped. Terrified, they said to each other,”*^{CEB} *“they were astonished, and troubled”*^{DOUAY} *“ their heart failed them”*^{ERV} *“They wanted to die,”*^{GWN} *“their heart was wonder-struck, and they were troubled,”*^{SEPTUAGINT} *“They were dismayed,”*^{NET} *“They were filled with terror,”*^{LIVING} *and “it startled their hearts, and they were disturbed with one another.”*^{ABP}

Immediately, because of their own sin, which they had never owned to this point, they were moved to consider this

come kind of snare that would justify them being returned as captives to Egypt.

Note they did not fault the one who sold them, or the servants who had loaded their sacks. **They traced this back to God and exclaimed, “What is this that God has done unto us?”** They were not murmuring, but were in a state of consternation. They had already reasoned they were facing reprisal because of their sin against Joseph (Gen 42:21). Also, Reuben had reminded them of their stubbornness which caused them to ignore his counsel (Gen 42:22). **Now, smitten with a sense of guilt, they are fearing and trembling, wondering what may be coming next.**

THEY TELL JACOB ALL THAT BEFELL THEM

“²⁹ And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan,

me: then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men: so will

infinitely more than a human interest story. **There does come a time when the details of human experience are not profitable.** Therefore the Spirit leaps forward in order that we might have the greater benefit from the record. However we may choose to view human experience, it is secondary to the purpose of God. Those who major on such are doing something that is less significant – and sometimes, not significant at all. **I have observed in personal experience, as well as in others, that a penchant for details tends to encourage shallow thinking.**

However we may choose to view human experience, it is secondary to the purpose of God. Those who major on such are doing something that is less significant – and sometimes, not significant at all.

and told him all that befell unto them; saying,³⁰ The man, who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country.³¹ And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies:³² We be twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan.³³ And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone:³⁴ And bring your youngest brother unto

I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffic in the land.³⁵ And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.”

There must have been considerable dialog among the brothers concerning their experience, and the discovery of one brother's money in his sack of grain. **However, the Spirit does not linger on that occasion.** This is because the Scriptural record is

THEY CAME TO JACOB THEIR FATHER

“And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan . . . ”

Now they are back where they belong – at least for the time being. Remember, in all of this God is readying the promised offspring of Abraham to move into Egypt, where the *“nation”* God promised Abraham (Gen 12:2). would begin to grow exponentially. Egypt, then, would serve as an incubator for Israel, until it grew to considerable size. Thus, when they

would be delivered from Egypt it would bring the greater glory to God.

THEY TOLD HIM ALL THAT BEFELL THEM

“ . . . and told him all that befell unto them; saying, The man, who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies: We be twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan. And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone: And bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffic in the land. . . .”

They do not mention Joseph’s first proposal: *“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). **They knew that the second directive superceded the first, and therefore there was no need to mention it.**

Notice how they carefully reported precisely what they had said about Joseph: *“he is not”* (Gen 42:13,43). Other versions read, *“is no more,”* ^{NKJV} *“one is dead,”* ^{BBE} *“is gone,”* ^{CEB} *“is no longer living,”* ^{CSB} *“is no longer with us,”* ^{GWN} *“is no longer alive”* ^{NAU} *“does not exist,”* ^{ABP} *“is not living,”* ^{DARBY} *“is no longer living,”* ^{ERV} *“isn’t alive anymore,”* ^{ISV} and *“one is gone.”* ^{MESSAGE}

The literal rendering of the expression *“is not”* is *“THE ONE, THERE IS NO HIM.”* ^{INTERLINEAR} It is my understanding that they were saying Joseph was dead. **This was, of course, something they did not know.** The last they had seen of Joseph was about thirty years ago, and he was very much alive at the time. However, they shaped their answer to Joseph and their report to their father around the lie they had suggested – that Joseph was devoured by some

wild beast.

The Shaping Power of a Lie

Lying, misrepresentation, and a distortion of the truth is a serious matter. **A lie is actually project of sorts.** The Revelation makes known that those who make lies will not enter into the glory. *“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death”* (Rev 21:8). And again, *“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. **And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life”*** (Rev 21:23-27). And again, *“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and*

One of the telling marks of a powerless church is that it evokes no fear among sinners and the disobedient. People sense that God is really not among the professed church.

idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” (Rev 22:14-15).

Once a lie is fabricated and told, it takes hold of a person’s mind. Unless it is confessed and abandoned, the person will come to a point where he can no longer distinguish it as a lie. This had apparently happened to Joseph’s

brothers.

THEY EMPTIED THEIR SACKS

“And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man’s bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.”

To this point, only one of the brothers had discovered the return of his money. Now, they all empty their sacks, perhaps to arrange for the storage of the grain.

Both the brothers and Jacob *“saw the bundles of money.”* No doubt thinking that this was a cunning trap that had been laid for them, fear came upon them all. **They realized they were dealing with someone greater than themselves,** and they had no confidence that they were viewed favorably by the ruler with whom they had dealt.

A Picture of Being Faced with God

We have in this account a most vivid portrayal of a person – particularly a sinner – realizing that they are confronting God Almighty. **A realization bursts upon the soul how utterly weak and unwise they really are.** They are not dealing with one of their peers, and they know that very well.

When Ananias was slain by God for their trespass, *“great fear came*

upon all that heard these things” (Acts 5:5). When the same judgment came upon his wife Sapphira **“great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things”** (Acts 5:11). In Ephesus, when a demon-possessed man leaped on the seven sons of Sceva who had attempted to expel him in the name the Jesus Paul preached, *“this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also*

dwelling at Ephesus; and **fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.**" (Acts 19:17).

The fact that spawned this fear was that the people realized they were dealing with someone greater than themselves, and with a power that was absolutely transcendent to their own.

One of the telling marks of a powerless church is that it **evokes no fear among sinners and the disobedient.** People sense that God is really not among the professed church. Thus there are rarely reports like that depicted in First Corinthians 14:24-25. There can be an assembly where God speaks through the various members, exposing the heart of a single person. I

realize this is not something that regularly occurs, but it would be refreshing to behold such things, even if it was only occasionally. **We are living in a world that could do with a large dose of the fear of the Lord.** That fear has to begin with the church itself. Until that takes place God will not be doing much in the professed church.

ME YE HAVE BEREAVED OF MY CHILDREN

"³⁶ And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me."

YE HAVE BEREAVED ME

"And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children . . ." Other versions read, *"deprived me of my children,"* ^{NIV} *"taken my children from me"* ^{BBE} *"You have robbed me of my children!"* ^{CJB} *"made me to be without children"* ^{DOUAY} *"You're going to make me lose all my children!"* ^{GWN} *"Must you make me childless?"* ^{NAB} *"I am the one you have bereaved of children,"* ^{NRS} *"It is always me that you bereave,"* ^{TNK} *"Do you want me to lose all of my children?"* ^{ERV} and *"You're taking everything I've got!"* ^{MESSAGE}

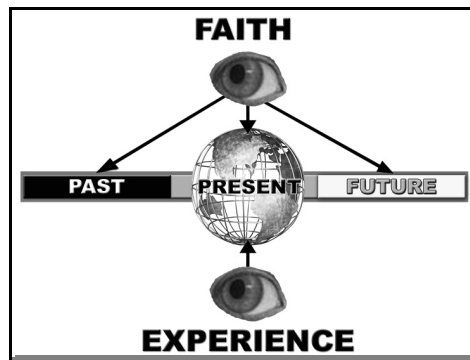
The Hebrew word translated "bereaved" means, ". . . TO BE BEREAVED, MAKE CHILDLESS, MISCARRY . . . TO CAUSE BARRENNESS, SHOW BARRENNESS OR ABORTION . . ." ^{STRONG'S} In the English language "bereave" means 1 : TO DEPRIVE OF SOMETHING . . . TO TAKE AWAY (A VALUED OR NECESSARY POSSESSION) ESPECIALLY BY FORCE. ^{MERRIAM-WEBSTER}

JOSEPH, SIMEON, AND BENJAMIN

" . . . Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away..." Other versions read, *"Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and ye will take Benjamin away,"* ^{NKJV} *"Joseph is gone and Simeon is gone, and now you would take Benjamin away,"* ^{BBE} *"Joseph is not living, Simeon is kept in bonds, and Benjamin you will take away,"* ^{DOUAY} *"Joseph is no longer with us, Simeon is no longer with us, and now you want to*

take Benjamin," ^{GWN} and *"Joseph didn't come back, Simeon is gone, and now you want to take Benjamin too!"* ^{LIVING}

Jacob is looking at his household, and sees one fourth of his children, counting Benjamin, as no longer being with him. Two are presently missing, and, if the brothers are able to do what they say must be done, the third will be



missing as well. His heart is broken.

ALL THESE THINGS BE AGAINST ME
" . . . all these things are against me."

Judging from the standpoint of the present time and the current circumstances, things looked extremely unfavorable to Jacob. Surveying the situation from the "here-and-now" perspective, everything seemed to be against him. So far as he knew, Benjamin was the only child birthed by Rachel that remained, and now he was being asked to let Benjamin go into Egypt.

Learning to Reason Correctly

Men do not find it easy to reason correctly. Nor, indeed, have men created a course that will effectively assist men to do so. By "reason correctly," I mean to **think in view of what the Lord is doing, and not being driven too and fro by circumstance.**

For the moment, Jacob has forgotten the promises of God: *"And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of"* (Gen 28:13-15). **Since that time appearance seemed to have given another picture.**

- Laban had deceived him, giving him Leah to wife instead of Rachel (Gen 29:23-25).
- He had to work fourteen years to obtain Rachel (Gen 29:30).
- Laban changed his wages ten times (Gen 31:7,41).
- He thought he was going to encounter danger when facing Esau (Gen 32:11).
- Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin (Gen 35:18-19).

- ➔ He thought that Joseph had been killed by a wild beast (Gen 37:32-33).
- ➔ They were experiencing a fierce famine in Canaan, which had also reached other surrounding territories (Gen 42:5).
- ➔ Simeon had been left bound in Egypt (Gen 42:24).
- ➔ Now he is told that the ruler of Egypt has demanded that Benjamin return with the brothers to Egypt to

confirm they were men of integrity (Gen 42:33-34).

Unlike sight, faith peruses the whole of life – past, present, and future. **That same faith also becomes the appointed means God uses for His children to put things together, draw valid conclusions, and arrive at holy determinations.** It is tragic that faith is so rarely detected in religious thought. Far too much “flesh” is being heard.

It is good to remember that faith needs a word from God, both to exist and to be maintained. Jacob had received enough revelation to trust the Lord. However, what he received was nothing to compare with what has now been revealed because of Jesus atoning death, and by the Holy Spirit. This should compel us not to judge Jacob as though he had received as much as we have on this “*day of salvation.*”

SLAY MY TWO SONS IF I BRING HIM NOT TO THEE

“³⁷ And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again.”

SLAY MY SONS

“And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee . . .”

Although Reuben had committed a grievous sin in laying with Jacob’s concubine Bilhah (Gen 35:22), he had also been an advocate for right and godly consideration concerning Joseph. When the brothers first said they were going to kill Joseph, “*Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him*” (Gen 37:21). He then admonished the brothers “*Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again*” (Gen 37:22). When he returned to the pit to rescue Joseph he found he was not in the pit, and he “*rent his clothes*” (Gen

37:29-30). Returning to his brothers he said, “*The boy isn’t there! Where can I turn now?*” (Gen 37:30). Reuben had a genuine concern for Joseph, but was frustrated by his brothers preemptive actions.

Now he offers Jacob his own two sons as a pledge. Reuben actually had four sons. As it is written, “*And the sons of Reuben; Hanoch, and Phallu, and Hezron, and Carmi*” (Gen 46:9; Ex 6:14’ 1 Chron 5:3). The book of Numbers says of these children: “*the children of Reuben; Hanoch, of whom cometh the family of the Hanochites: of Pallu, the family of the Palluites: Of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites: of Carmi, the family of the Carmites*” (Num 26:5-6). We know nothing more of these sons or their families.

There is no indication which of these sons Reuben referred to when he said, “*slay my two sons.*” Some feel as though he meant “two OF my sons.”^{Ainsworth, Murphy} Others think it may mean the two sons who were present, ^{Junius} or the two oldest. ^{Mercerus} Of course,

there is a possibility that only two of his sons had been born at this time.

I personally prefer to think that Reuben wanted his father to know he cared for his own sons as much as Jacob did for his, and he pledged himself to keep them alive just as much as he would Benjamin. Of course, all of this is nothing more than conjecture, but the latter makes more sense to me than the other explanations.

I WILL BRING HIM TO THEE AGAIN

“ . . . deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again.” Other versions read, “*put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you,*”^{NKJV} “*put him in my care,*”^{NASB} “*entrust him to my care,*”^{NIV} “*Make him my responsibility,*”^{CEB} and “*deliver him into my keeping.*”^{AMPLIFIED}

You may rest assured Reuben would not let Benjamin out of his sight as he did Joseph. However, notwithstanding his reasoning with Jacob, his father is not convinced this is the thing that should be done.

MY SON SHALL NOT GO DOWN WITH YOU

“³⁸ And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray

hairs with sorrow to the grave.”

MY SON SHALL NOT GO DOWN WITH YOU

“And he said, My son shall not go

down with you . . .”

This was Jacob’s preliminary judgment. **It was made because he was not privy to the purpose of God in this**

entire matter. Further, his reasoning and conclusion were based on his perception of the case, which was not accurate, as well as his experience, which was not thorough.

Therefore Jacob makes this final pronouncement on the matter. **Benjamin will not go down with the brothers to Egypt.** He is the head of his own household, and that is his determination. So far as he was concerned, that was the end of the matter.

HIS BROTHER IS DEAD

“ . . . for his brother is dead . . . ”

In this, he refers to Joseph, whom he assumed was killed well over two decades prior. Yet, Jacob has not gotten over, what he thought was, the loss of Joseph.

HE IS LEFT ALONE

“ . . . and he is left alone . . . ”

Other versions read, *“he is all I have,”* ^{BBE} *“he alone is left,”* ^{CSB} and *“he alone is left of his mother’s children.”* ^{LIVING}

In this statement Jacob is referring to Benjamin – **he thinks that he alone is left of Rachel’s children.** Remember, Benjamin is not a little child, but is probably close to forty years old.

IF MISCHIEF BEFALL HIM BY THE WAY

“ . . . if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go . . . ” Other versions read, *“any calamity,”* ^{NKJV} *“harm,”* ^{NASB} *“evil overtakes him,”* ^{BBE} *“if death come to him,”* ^{GENEVA} *“he is afflicted by the way by which ye go,”* ^{SEPTUAGINT} *“some disaster,”* ^{NAB} *“If an accident happens to him,”* ^{NET} *“If anything should happen to him,”* ^{LIVING} *“be infirm in the way,”* ^{ABP} *“if harm or accident should befall him on the journey.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Jacob’s reasoning is not based upon any known dangers that existed between Canaan and Egypt. After all, the other brothers had journeyed to and from Egypt without any known danger. He is reasoning on, what he thought was, the fact of Joseph’s accidental death. His brothers, he thought, were not able to protect Joseph, how will they be able to protect Benjamin?

TO THE GRAVE WITH SORROW

“ . . . then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. ”

Should Benjamin, in some way, be killed on the journey, Jacob reasons that he would die a sorrowful man, having lost both of the children he had by Rachel. It all might seem as though he was thinking soundly and considerately. **But he was reasoning upon the basis of a false premise.** No amount of reasoning and guarantees on the part the other brothers could move Jacob from this determination – at least not at this time.

I wonder how many times professing Christians become cast down, sorrowful, and filled with concern because they have reasoned upon a basic premise that was not true?

Think of this within the framework of spiritual life. What if a person thinks with the context of erroneous premises? What if they think they are not really *“kept by the power of God through faith”* (1 Pet 1:5)? Or that the Lord is not able to *“keep them from falling”* (Jude 1:24). What if they do not know that God has said those who walk on the *“way of holiness”* will not *“err”* while they are walking upon it (Isa 35:8). What if they reason as though Satan is omnipotent? Or that they can be overrun by demons? What if they think that all things are against them, instead of God working all things together for their good (Rom 8:28)?

Legion is the name of those who are cast down by thoughts and imaginations simply because they are founding their thinking on false and erroneous principles.

NOW WE WILL SEE

Now, we will see if Jacob’s reasoning will in any way thwart the purpose of God. We will see if God puts His purposes on hold until men are thinking correctly.

There is a level of Divine working that in no way depends upon the status or accomplishments of men. Here are some of them.

➔ The forming of the Jewish nation

(Gen 12:2).

- ➔ The giving of the Law (Psa 78:5).
- ➔ The coming of John the Baptist (John 1:7).
- ➔ The birth of the Lord Jesus (Gal 4:4).
- ➔ The death of the Lord Jesus (John 12:23-24; 17:1).
- ➔ The resurrection of the Lord Jesus (Acts 10:40-41).
- ➔ The ascension of the Lord Jesus (Eph 4:8).
- ➔ The enthronement of the Lord Jesus (Dan 7:13-14; Phil 2:9; 1 Pet 3:22).
- ➔ The intercession of the Lord Jesus (Heb 7:25).
- ➔ The inauguration of the New Covenant (2 Cor 3:6; Heb 9:15; 12:24).
- ➔ The second coming of Jesus (1 Tim 6:15).

There is no way that man – any man or group of men – could impact upon the time or effectiveness of these events.

In the case of Jacob, there had been decisions made in heaven that would be carried out to the finest detail. There was no way that anyone could interfere with the accomplishment of these things. Here are some of them.

- ➔ Making a great nation out of Abraham (Gen 12:2a).
- ➔ Making Abraham’s name great (Gen 12:2b).
- ➔ Abraham being a blessing (Gen 12:2c).
- ➔ The multiplication of Abraham’s seed (Gen 15:5).
- ➔ Israel going down into Egypt (Gen 15:13a).
- ➔ Egypt afflicting Israel for four hundred years (Gen 15:13b).
- ➔ The judgment of Egypt (Gen 15:14a).
- ➔ Israel coming out of Egypt, spoiling that nation as they went (Gen 15:14b).
- ➔ Israel entering into Canaan (Gen 17:8).
- ➔ The Messiah being born in due time in that nation, and in their country (Isa 9:6-7; Micah 5:2).

An Application To Those in Christ

There is such a thing as

“exceeding great and precious promises” (2 Pet 1:3). These are the appointed means through which we become *“partakers of the Divine nature”* 2 Pet 1:3b).

These promises are akin to the ones made to Abraham in that they were guaranteed to be fulfilled because of their association with God’s eternal purpose.

These are not the promises related to food and clothing (Matt 6:25,31; Lk 12:22). We are told not to become entrapped in such considerations, for they tend to be distracting. Those who are dominated by such concerns will be turned away from both Jesus and His great salvation, for such are competing interests. That is why we are admonished to give no I thought to

them.

Our minds are to be dominated by the focused consideration of *“unseen things,”* which are eternal (2 Cor 4:18). Within the sphere of those considerations, the lesser matters will be seen more clearly, and therefore not be the foundations of our reasoning, or the cause for undue concern.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 11/1/13. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The sixty-ninth lesson will cover verses 1 thru 15 of chapter forty-three: “THE BROTHERS RETURN TO JOSEPH.” As the famine continued, Jacob’s house ran out of corn, and he told the brothers to go again to Egypt and buy food. Judah responded that they had to bring Benjamin with them. Judah tells Jacob to send the lad with him so they would not die. He would be surety for Benjamin. Jacob consented instructing them to take some gifts, and double the money in case the return of their first money was an oversight. 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.