

Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church
We're glad you're here!



An open Bible is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with text, and the background is a bright blue sky with wispy white clouds. The Bible is open to a page that appears to be Genesis 42, based on the text overlay.

“The Encounter”

His Brother’s 1st Visit

Scripture text: **Genesis Ch 42**

Genesis 42:1-5 When Jacob learned that there was grain for sale in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?" And he said, "Behold, I have heard that there is grain for sale in Egypt. Go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live and not die." So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. But **Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with his brothers, for he feared that harm might happen to him.** Thus the sons of Israel came to buy among the others who came, **for the famine was in the land of Canaan.**

Act 7:9-12 "And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but **God was with him and rescued him out of all his afflictions and gave him favor and wisdom** before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who **made him ruler over Egypt and over all his household**. Now there came a famine throughout all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction, and our fathers could find no food. But **when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers on their first visit.**

The first visit of the brothers to Egypt (chap. 42)

Verses 1–5. The famine was widespread; it was in Canaan too. So Jacob sent his sons down to Egypt to buy food—all his sons except Benjamin, for **he did not want to lose Rachel's other son.** His refusal to send this lad reveals what Jacob had come to suspect. Joseph's fate had not come to light, **but the brothers' characteristics were known to the old man.** Perhaps they would harm Benjamin as well.

Genesis 42:6-9 Now Joseph was governor over the land. He was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And **Joseph's brothers came and bowed themselves before him** with their faces to the ground. **Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them**, but he treated them like strangers and spoke roughly to them. "Where do you come from?" he said. They said, "From the land of Canaan, to buy food." And **Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him**. And Joseph remembered the dreams that he had dreamed of them. And he said to them, "You are spies; you have come to see the nakedness of the land."

Genesis 42:10-15 They said to him, "No, my lord, your servants have come to buy food. **We are all sons of one man. We are honest men.** Your servants have never been spies." He said to them, "No, it is the nakedness of the land that you have come to see." And they said, "**We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan, and behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is no more.**" But Joseph said to them, "It is as I said to you. You are spies. **By this you shall be tested:** by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place **unless your youngest brother comes here.**

Verses 6–17. **Recognizing his brothers**, Joseph **tested them** by accusing them four times of being spies (vv. 9, 12, 14, 16).

He was handling them roughly (vv. 7, 30), but underneath his severity was affection, as the later reunion makes clear.

Ironically the brothers were speaking to a person they thought was dead (one is no more; v. 13).

Their presence in Egypt confirmed the truth of his dreams, but not their fulfillment. Joseph knew that all the family must come to Egypt under his rulership. He demanded that one of them bring their little brother as proof that they were not spies.

Retaining them in prison was an interesting turn of events, since the brothers had previously put Joseph in a “cistern-prison.”

Genesis 42:16-20 Send one of you, and let him bring your brother, while you remain confined, **that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you.** Or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies." And **he put them all together in custody for three days.** On the third day Joseph said to them, "**Do this and you will live, for I fear God: if you are honest men, let one of your brothers remain confined where you are in custody, and let the rest go and carry grain for the famine of your households, and bring your youngest brother to me. So your words will be verified, and you shall not die.**" And they did so.

Genesis 42:21-24 Then they said to one another, "**In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he begged us and we did not listen. That is why this distress has come upon us.**" And Reuben answered them, "**Did I not tell you not to sin against the boy? But you did not listen.** So now there comes a reckoning for his blood." **They did not know that Joseph understood them, for there was an interpreter between them. Then he turned away from them and wept.** And he returned to them and spoke to them. And **he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.**

Verses 18–24. After a three-day custody of the brothers, Joseph altered his plan and suggested keeping only one ... in prison while the other nine returned. He retained Simeon (v. 24) while the others returned home to Canaan with grain. If they would not return with their youngest brother, **Simeon would be killed**. A taste of **retribution began to awaken feelings in the brothers**, feelings that Joseph's cries for mercy (v. 21) and Jacob's tears (37:34–35) **had failed to awaken**.

Genesis 37:32-35 And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, "**This we have found; please identify whether it is your son's robe or not.**" And he identified it and said, "**It is my son's robe. A fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces.**"

Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but **he refused to be comforted** and said, "**No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning.**" Thus his father wept for him.

They sensed that having to bring Benjamin back to Egypt against the wishes of their father would be punishment for their having sold Joseph.

Since Jacob was still distressed, now they were in distress. As they spoke, **they were unaware that Joseph understood them** for he was using an interpreter. Seeing their sense of remorse touched Joseph and **he turned away and wept** (cf. 43:30; 45:2, 14; 50:1, 17).

Genesis 43:29-31 And he lifted up his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, **"Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me? God be gracious to you, my son!"** Then Joseph hurried out, for **his compassion grew warm for his brother, and he sought a place to weep.** And he entered his chamber and wept there. Then **he washed his face and came out.** And controlling himself he said, **"Serve the food."**

Genesis 42:25-28 And Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, and to **replace every man's money in his sack**, and to give them provisions for the journey. This was done for them. Then they loaded their donkeys with their grain and departed. And as one of them opened his sack to give his donkey fodder at the lodging place, he saw his money in the mouth of his sack. He said to his brothers, "**My money has been put back; here it is in the mouth of my sack!**" At this their hearts failed them, and they turned trembling to one another, saying, "What is this that God has done to us?"

Verses 25–28. **As a further means of striking the fear of God** (cf. vv. 18, 28, 35) into his brothers, **Joseph had their silver (with which they had purchased grain) put into their sacks.** Whether he meant the money to be discovered on the way home or at home, **its initial shock was effective.** The sense of guilt already aroused made the group **quickly see the hand of God in the governor's action.** So the question, **What is this that God has done to us?** was, as far as it went, a fruitful reaction to trouble. **They apparently felt that Joseph would accuse them of theft, which would support his contention that they were spies.**

Verses 29–38. When they arrived home in Canaan, the nine brothers told Jacob what had happened. **Jacob, grieved because he thought another son was dead (Simeon is no more), refused to let Benjamin return.** Reuben, the eldest, sought to assure his father that he would bring Benjamin back. This is ironic since Reuben had failed to prevent the loss of Joseph (37:21–22). But Jacob refused to let Benjamin go. **He said if something happened to his youngest, he would sorrow the rest of his days, just as he had said when he heard of Joseph’s “death” (37:35).**

Joseph's tests were important in God's plan to bless the seed of Abraham. God planned to bring the family to Egypt so that it would grow there into a great nation. But it was necessary that the people who entered Egypt be faithful to the Lord. It was necessary that the brothers be tested before they could participate in God's blessing. Joseph's prodding had to be subtle; the brothers must perceive the hand of God moving against them so that they would acknowledge their crime against Joseph and their previous unbelief in his dreams. **But one test was not enough; there must be two.**

Revelation 2:8-11 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: 'The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life. "'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. **Do not fear what you are about to suffer.** Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. **Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. **The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.'**

Why was Joseph so hard on his brothers? Why did he wait so long to reveal himself to them? Because **he wanted to be sure they had repented of their sins.**

To excuse people who are not sincerely repentant is to make them a worse sinner (see Luke 17:3–4).

Luke 17:3-4 Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' **you must forgive him."**

Romans 2:13-16 For it is not the hearers of the law who are **righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.** For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. **They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts,** while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 13:1-6 Let brotherly love continue. **Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.** Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. **Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."** So we can confidently say, **"The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"**