

I. Introduction and review: Conscience and cowardice. Romans 1:32 2:14-16

II. Joseph encounters his brothers. 42:1-38

- A. Jacob sends ten of his sons to Egypt to buy grain. 42:1-5**
1. Why doesn't he send Benjamin? v. 4 42:36
 2. God's plan is that the ten guilty brothers face Joseph together.
- B. Joseph tests his brothers. v. 6-20**
1. Was Joseph expecting them?
 2. They unwittingly fulfill Joseph's dreams. v. 6 37:5-9,19
 3. Why don't they recognize Joseph? v. 7-8
 4. Joseph speaks to them harshly and accuses them of espionage. v. 7b, 9-13
 5. Joseph imprisons them for three days. v. 17
 6. Joseph demands they bring back Benjamin to prove their alibi. v. 14-16, 18-20
 7. Joseph imprisons Simeon as a hostage. v. 24
- C. This trial awakens their consciences. v. 21-28 Num. 32:23 Gal. 6:7**
1. Three days of distress in prison did for them what the cries of their brother and the tears of their father could not do in over twenty years. v. 21-22
 2. Their affliction reminds them of their guilt. v. 21 Gal. 6:7
 3. Reuben hardly vindicates himself. v. 22
 4. When their silver is returned, they fear all the more. v. 25-28
 5. They believe their trouble is divine payback for their guilt. 42:21b,28b Nu. 32:23
- D. Jacob is consumed by fear, sadness and unbelief. v. 29-38**
1. He seems to have forgotten God's promises to himself and his fathers. v. 36 35:9f
 2. Again Reuben shows himself to be a failed leader. v. 37
 3. Jacob is absolutely determined never to send Benjamin to Egypt. v.38

III. Joseph's brothers return to Egypt with Benjamin. 43:1-34

- A. Judah persuades Jacob to send Benjamin to Egypt. v. 1-10**
1. The severity of the famine forces Jacob to relent. v. 1
 2. Judah emerges as a leader among his brothers. 37:26 44:14f 46:28 49:8f Mt. 1:2
 3. Judah guarantees Benjamin's safety. v. 8-10
- B. Jacob finally puts the matter into God's hands. v. 11-15 Job. 1:21**
1. Jacob sends the money plus a gift. v. 11-12 37:25
 2. Jacob must lose Benjamin in order to save him. v. 13
 3. He seeks help from God Almighty (El Shaddai). v. 14a 17:1 28:3 35:11
 4. He entrusts the outcome to God's sovereign will. v. 14b Esther 4:16 II Ki. 7:4
- C. Joseph welcomes Benjamin with a great banquet. v. 16-34**
1. The brothers are frightened by Joseph's generosity. v. 18
 2. They seemed to place hope in the present they brought Joseph. v. 25 Pr. 18
 3. Again they bow before him. v. 26
 4. Joseph shows tenderness towards his family. v. 27-30
 5. What is the significance of the Egyptian aloofness towards foreigners? v. 32
 6. Joseph amazes them by arranging the brothers in order of their birth. v. 33
 7. Why does Joseph give extra portions to Benjamin? v. 34

IV. How does this passage apply to us?

- A. How should we evaluate Joseph's harsh actions towards his brothers? Ro. 12:17-21
1. If his motive was revenge, he could have easily tortured, enslaved or killed them.
 2. He fears God. 42:18 43:23,29
 3. He is tender-hearted towards them. 42:24 43:30
 4. He shows them mercy and kindness. 42:19,25 Rom. 12:20 Pr. 25:21-22
 5. Was his harsh and deceptive treatment of his brothers justified? 15:13 37:8 50:20
 6. Either way, Joseph is being used of God to lead them to repentance.
 7. Are we ever to be God's hand of discipline upon others? Eph. 6:4 Co. 3:21
Heb. 12:9-10 Ro. 13:4
- B. God disciplines His wayward children. Heb. 12:4-11 Pr. 3:11-12
1. Joseph's brothers have to endure great distress before they are made tender.
 2. Guilt can cause fear and depression. Psalm. 32:3-4 Pr. 28:1
 3. The Lord brings consequences for your sin. Num. 32:23 Gal. 6:7
 4. God uses trouble to draw you to himself. Hosea 2:8f 5:15 Amos 4:6f Lu. 15:14f
Ps. 119:67,71 Rom. 2:4
 5. Not all hardship is the direct result of your sin. John 9:1-3 Job 1-2
- C. Are you troubled and afraid?
1. Jacob was fearful and unbelieving. 42:36,38 43:2,6
 2. Are you afraid of what may happen to you?
 3. Do you feel like everything and everyone is against you? Ps. 77:1-10
 4. Trust God, remembering His promises. Psalm 77:11-15 Rom. 8:31f I John 4:18
 5. What seems to be against you may be God's hand working for you. Rom. 8:28
 6. God's good and sovereign purpose will not be thwarted. 43:14 15:13 37:20 Is. 46:8f

V. Concluding applications.

- A. Where is the gospel of Christ in this passage?
1. Jesus did not use His power to take revenge on his oppressors, but rather blesses them. I Pet. 2:21-24 Mt. 26:53 Lu. 23:34
 2. Christ came as a Prince and a Savior to bring repentance to His people. Acts 5:31
 3. Favor with God can not be earned by your works or gifts. Rather, your only hope is in His undeserved favor. 43:11 John 1:12 3:16f
 4. God is good to his enemies. Rom. 5:6f Mt. 5:45f
 5. God works in mysterious ways to bring us to Himself. Often through hardship.
 6. Other possible connections.
 - a. Jesus was unknown by his brethren. John 1:11
 - b. Christ bore our guilt as Judah was willing to bear that of his brothers. Is. 53:4f
 - c. He will be our host at a great banquet in heaven. Rev. 19:9,17
- B. God offers you mercy today. Your guilt can be removed and your conscience cleared.
Ps. 139:23-24 95:7-8 103:10-14 Heb. 3:7-13 9:15 10:22 I John 1:8-10 Is. 1:18 Pr. 28:13

Discussion questions

1. Was Joseph's treatment of his brothers justified? Why or why not?
2. Is deception ever justified?
3. Where does the Bible teach about conscience?
4. What are the effects of a guilty conscience?
5. What is God doing in the lives of Joseph's brothers?
6. Is God disciplining you in some way?
7. Are you living in fear and unbelief?
8. Where can the gospel be found in this passage?