

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

GENESIS 41-43

God's work in our lives comes in two varieties. He works both **miraculously and providentially...**

When God works a **miracle** He circumvents ordinary laws and processes to accomplish divine purposes. He hijacks nature to do His will. A miracle is *supra-natural*.

While, **providence** is God's careful engineering of the natural course of events to accomplish His will. You might say God's providence is *supernaturally natural*.

Over the course of biblical history *God's miracles* occur in clusters. The miraculous tends to come in bunches... There were the **emancipation miracles** associated with the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, the signs and wonders done by Moses and Joshua. Seas and rivers parted, or turned to blood. Nature was commandeered to serve God's purposes... Then there were **educational miracles** performed by the Hebrew prophets. Elijah and Elisha displayed God's power, and taught God's people His superiority over the pagan idols of their neighboring nations... Of course, there were the **evidential miracles** done by Jesus and His apostles that presented evidence that God's King and kingdom had certainly come... And still future, the Revelation speaks of **eschatological miracles**. Supernatural cataclysms on earth and in the heavens will judge a rebel planet and usher in the glorious age of God's kingdom... *Miracles come in blizzards...*

Yet, in between the blizzards God is still at work. But His *providential work* is more like a steady snow. Day after day after day God persistently arranges and manipulates the events of our lives as He desires!

Providence is the overarching will of God in the twists and turns of our circumstances. William Cowper wrote, "**God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform. He plants His footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm. Deep in unfathomable mines of never failing skill, He treasures up His bright designs and works His sovereign will.**" God is always behind the scenes, working in the shadows, to fulfill His purposes. *And nowhere is this better seen than in Joseph's life!*

Genesis 41, "**Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years...**" Imagine, feeling forgotten by man and by God for "**two full years!**" The butler Joseph had helped was suppose to put in a good word for him with the Pharaoh, *but it had slipped his mind for 730 long days!*

Then "**Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river. Suddenly there**

came up out of the river seven cows, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow.” Though it’s not in the text, the cows were mooing, “Eat mo’ chicken... repping Chick-fil-A.”

“Then behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ugly and gaunt, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the river. And the ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke.” The dream disturbed the Pharaoh. It shocked him when the seven sickly cows ate the seven healthy cows. It caused the Pharaoh *to have a cow!*

And if the Pharaoh was like me, in order to get back to sleep he went to the refrigerator and poured himself a glass of milk (after all, he was dreaming about cows).

Verse 5 tells us, “He slept and dreamed a second time; and suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, plump and good. Then behold, seven thin heads, blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. And the seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads. So Pharaoh awoke, and indeed, it was a dream.” So two dreams: one about **cows**, one about **corn**. And in both *the sickly consumes the healthy*.

“Now it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men.” He calls in his stable of soothsayers, and fortune tellers - all the occult practitioners - and he asks for an interpretation.

“And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh.” The supposed know-it-alls of Egypt proved to know nothing!

That’s when God jabs the butler’s memory, “*What about Joseph?*” Years ago there was a Hebrew in his prison block who’d interpreted the dream that set him free! “Then the chief butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying: “I remember my faults this day. When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, both me and the chief baker, we each dreamed a dream in one night, he and I. Each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his own dream. Now there was a young Hebrew man with us there, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him, and he interpreted our dreams for us; to each man he interpreted according to his own dream. And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him.” The butler had promised Joseph he would mention him to Pharaoh. Now he confesses, “*holy cow, it slipped my mind.*” He finally takes action to make things right.

Verse 14, “Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh.” *You groom and dress for a royal audience.*

“And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have dreamed a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it.” So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.” Joseph has been waiting years for this moment. Finally, he has a chance to spring himself. Yet he doesn’t boast. He says, “*It is not in me.*” He gives God credit for his gift of discernment...

This is no longer the haughty kid strutting about in his letter jacket. Suffering has added humility to his assertiveness. **Joseph is confident, but only in God.**

In verses 17-24 Pharaoh repeats to Joseph the dreams. Verse 25, “Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do: The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads are seven years; the dreams are one. And the seven thin and ugly cows which came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty heads blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine. This is the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do. Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land.” The two dreams had one message. Egypt is destined for a devastating famine.

“So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it will be very severe. And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.” Later we’ll learn a testimony is established in the mouth of two or three witnesses. Thus, both dreams confirm the same truth - *seven years of abundance will be followed by seven years of famine.*

But a wise and industrious man like Joseph goes beyond just offering an interpretation. He advises the Pharaoh to take action. He suggests a rationing plan.

“Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming, and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. Then that food shall be as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land may not perish during the famine.” *Then Joseph held his breath...* Realize, the Egyptians believed the Pharaoh was divine. They considered him a reincarnation of the sun god, Ra. It was daring, if not foolish, for a mere slave to tell a pharaoh what to do. Even the king’s counselors served with trepidation. But Joseph speaks boldly; for He is representing the one, true God.

Verse 37 records Pharaoh’s response, “*So the advice was good in the eyes of*

Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants.” In fact, he “said to his servants, “Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?” And here for the first time the Bible mentions the Holy Spirit indwelling a human being. *And the observation is made by a pagan king!* It was obvious, even to a godless Pharaoh that there was something special and supernatural about Joseph.

And the same will be said of you if you’re filled with God’s Spirit. The folks around you will see a difference. As Donald Gee said of the filling of the Spirit, “When you are baptized in the Holy Spirit you *know* it, and need no one to acquaint you with the fact; you will soon be acquainting them.” You’ll be a bold witness.

“Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.”

Joseph gets a big promotion! He becomes second in command in all Egypt. Again, God blesses Joseph.

Verse 41, “And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had (they called it *Air Force 2*); and they cried out before him, “Bow the knee!” So he set him over all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh also said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.”

This is incredible. Overnight, Joseph goes from *the prison to the pinnacle of power!* He came to Egypt shackled with an iron chain, now God has swapped it for a gold chain - from a slave cart to a royal carriage.

Joseph was seventeen years old when he was lifted from the pit and taken to Egypt. Now he’s thirty and he’s reached the palace. In between were thirteen long, troubling years. I’m sure there were many paths God could’ve used to get Joseph from the pit to the palace, *but destination was not the point.* By doing it His way, **God not only made a way, He made a man.**

Joseph’s dire circumstances forced him to realize God’s privileges never justify a prideful attitude. Promotion is from God. It’s the result of His grace, not our greatness. *It’s in the pit, that God makes His point.*

Verse 45, “And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paaneah” which in Egyptian means, “*Savior of the world.*” “And he gave him as a wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On.” Notice, Joseph is given an Egyptian to marry...

or a **gentile bride**.

And again, guess who's journey Joseph's life parallels? Our Lord Jesus is the true, *Savior of the world*. He was raised from the pit, clothed with glory and honor, and exalted to the right hand of the King. And notice what they say to Joseph as he rides in his royal chariot, verse 43, "**Bow the knee.**" Philippians 2:10 tells us one day every knee will bow to Jesus.

And after His resurrection and exaltation Jesus too will receive a gentile bride! The Church is His Asenath.

"So Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt. Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. Now in the seven plentiful years the ground brought forth abundantly. So he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities; he laid up in every city the food of the fields which surrounded them. Joseph gathered very much grain, as the sand of the sea, until he stopped counting, for it was without number." Joseph built national silos throughout Egypt to store the grain. He manages a great harvest.

And this is what Jesus is doing today - a harvest of souls is underway. But that harvest will be followed by seven years of famine. It's called *the Great Tribulation*.

"And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh (which means "to forget"): "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." And the name of the second he called Ephraim (which means "double fruit"): "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

Then the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Egypt ended, and the seven years of famine began to come..." This is one of thirteen famines referenced in the Bible. And few of us born and raised in America have experienced a true famine. Winds howl, blow, and lift off the topsoil. Dust settles like a powder that covers fences and houses. Empty clouds hover and tease, but lack rain to ease the problem. Crops wither in the soaring heat. Formerly fertile fields turn to a crust. There's nothing to eat because nothing grows. This was Egypt, just "as Joseph had said..."

Verse 54, "The famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, do." The famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians. And the famine became severe in the land of Egypt. So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all

lands.” And among those who journey to Egypt, and to Joseph, is a family living in Canaan - *eleven sons of a man named Israel* - a family, Governor Joseph knows all too well...

Chapter 42, “When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, “Why do you look at one another?” *This is a comical line.* The family is on the verge of starvation when they hear there’s grain in Egypt. Jacob says to his sons, “Why are you standing around looking at each other. Go buy some food!”

“And he said, “Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die.” So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, “Lest some calamity befall him.” *Jacob is still smarting from the loss of Joseph.* Over the years he probably held the older boys responsible for Joseph’s demise. He’s not risking Rachel’s other son, Benjamin.

“And the sons of Israel went to buy grain among those who journeyed, for the famine was in the land of Canaan. Now Joseph was governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with their faces to the earth.” What a moment this was! *Could you have ever imagined?* When Judah handed their little brother over to slave traders, and divvied up two shekels per brother, who would’ve dreamed they’d one day bow down before Joseph in desperate need.

Yet God had foreseen this moment all along! Recall Joseph’s dream - the one that enraged his brothers! Their bundles of wheat would one day bow to Joseph’s bundle of wheat. Now the dream they had scoffed at and resented is being fulfilled by God’s providence!

Verse 7 tells us, “Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly to them.” Imagine Joseph sitting on a platform interviewing entourage from around the world, when he notices familiar faces... suddenly, it hits him! “*Rueben, Isaachar, even Judah... my brothers!*”

He’s stunned, which probably helped him hold back his emotions. He makes a spur-of-the-moment decision. Instead of revealing his identity, *he’ll play this out.* He adopts a grim look, and disguises his voice.

“Then he said to them, “Where do you come from?” And they said, “From the land of Canaan to buy food.” So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.” The last time these brothers saw Joseph he was seventeen years old. He’s now thirty. Hey, for one, that means he’s gained some weight. He now sports an Egyptian haircut, wears Egyptian clothes, speaks the Egyptian language. Later, we learn he was communicating to them through an interpreter. Never in their wildest dreams did the

brothers expect to see Joseph again. Thus, they failed to recognize him.

“Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them, and said to them, “You are spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land!”

And they said to him, “No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. We are all one man's sons; we are honest men; your servants are not spies.” But he said to them, “No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land.” And they said, “Your servants are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest is with our father today, and one is no more.” Up until now, Joseph has been successful at hiding his emotions. But when they say, “*one is no more,*” it had to have choked him up. Joseph concluded, “*Why did they even mention me, unless they're tormented by a guilty conscience?*”

Joseph is now going to test the genuineness of their sorrow and repentance... Verse 14, “But Joseph said to them, “It is as I spoke to you, saying, ‘You are spies!’

Remember there is a species of prophecy known as typology. Often God uses OT people and stories to cast light on NT truths... And the life of Joseph is a good example. Joseph's life is a type of the life of Jesus. And how he treats his brothers after their rejection of him, forms a pattern for how Jesus will treat His Jewish brothers in the last days when He returns.

There are three phases in Joseph's dealings with his brothers. First, He relies on **mystery**. *He knows them, they don't know him.* Later, he'll reveal His **majesty**. And finally, He'll provide **ministry**. And these are the three ways Christ will deal with Israel in the last days.

When Jesus returns at the Second Coming He'll come in His *majesty*. Afterwards, in the Kingdom Age He'll *minister* to the Jews. But today, Jesus is relying on *mystery*. The Jews don't recognize their brother.

It's been said, “*Providence is God acting anonymously.*” This is how Jesus is working with Israel today - *but the day of revelation is fast approaching.*

In verse 15 Joseph drops a bombshell on his brothers, “*In this manner you shall be tested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether there is any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies! So he put them all together in prison three days.*” To let them think about their next move.

Remember Joseph and Benjamin were the only sons of Jacob's beloved wife, Rachel. That means they were full, blood brothers, while the others were half-brothers. When Joseph was shipped off, Benjamin was just a toddler. Joseph wants to make

sure he sees Ben.

“Then Joseph said to them the third day, "Do this and live, for I fear God: If you are honest men, let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house; but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses. And bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die." And they did so.”

Rather than keep nine brothers, while one retrieves Benjamin, Joseph chooses to teach them a lesson in **substitution**. Only one brother will be held until the younger is retrieved... And this is what the Jews failed to understand about Jesus. He came to earth as their substitute - to die in their place - to suffer their penalty.

Verse 21, “Then they said to one another, "We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us.” We didn't mention it in Chapter 37, but apparently Joseph put up a fight before he was thrown in the pit. After the brothers tossed him in the cistern; they sat down to eat dinner, while Joseph was still begging to be saved. The brothers' hard-hearts ignored his cries.

“And Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not speak to you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us.” Reuben chimes in, “*I told you so!*” Joseph's squeals had fallen on deaf ears. Obviously, all the brothers still carried a load of guilt and regret. Rube interprets this all as payback for their evil deed.

“But they did not know that Joseph understood them, for he spoke to them through an interpreter. And he turned himself away from them and wept.” Reuben's interpretation and their regret touched Joseph's heart.

“Then (Joseph) returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.” *Why did Joseph choose Simeon?* We're not sure! Chapter 34 reveals Simeon was a violent man. It's possible Simeon had been the ringleader in the brother's plot to get rid of Joseph.

“Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man's money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. Thus he did for them. So they loaded their donkeys with the grain and departed from there.” *Joseph gives them the grain free of charge.* You've got to love his generosity. They can't buy his blessing. His favor is free. *And so it is with God's blessing!* None of us can buy God's favor! Grace fills our sack and gives us back what we pay. It's a gift.

But notice the brother's reaction to grace, “As one of them opened his sack to give his donkey feed at the encampment, he saw his money; and there it was, in the mouth of his sack. So he said to his brothers, "My money has been restored, and there it is, in my sack!” Then their hearts failed them and they were afraid, saying to one another,

"What is this that God has done to us?" This was the same reaction the Jewish people had to God's grace. They didn't comprehend. It scared them. They thought God's blessing had to be earned.

Verse 29, "Then (the ten brothers) went to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan and told him all that had happened to them, saying: "The man who is lord of the land spoke roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. But we said to him, 'We are honest men; we are not spies. We are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no more, and the youngest is with our father this day in the land of Canaan.' Then the man, the lord of the country, said to us, 'By this I will know that you are honest men: Leave one of your brothers here with me, take food for the famine of your households, and be gone. And bring your youngest brother to me; so I shall know that you are not spies, but that you are honest men. I will grant your brother to you, and you may trade in the land." Apparently, as they explain to dad they're unpacking their supplies.

"Then it happened as they emptied their sacks, that surprisingly each man's bundle of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid." And they suspected a set-up. They figure for some reason this Egyptian is out to get them. He's framing them for burglary. *The idea they were loved, never crossed their minds. That was too good to be true.* Which is the problem folks today have with grace. *When confronted with God's mercy, they wonder can anyone, even God, be that generous?*

The last time we did our Christmas gift wrapping outreach folks would just stand there, expecting to be asked to sign a card or make a donation. They couldn't believe the wrapping was free! *They expected a catch!*

This is the world's approach to grace. People have a tough time believing, yet faith in Jesus is all God asks. Jesus paid the price for us, we only have to trust Him.

Verse 36, "And Jacob their father said to them, 'You have bereaved me: Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me.'" Obviously, Jacob doesn't share Joseph's faith in God's providence. His misfortunes have gotten the best of him. He bemoans his loss and trials, and cries, "All these things are against me." Yet here's the truth: *all these things were not against him.*

And all these things you face are NOT against you. God is at work in your life, just like Joseph, to arrange events and position us for our good and His glory.

God was working for Jacob to reunite him with Joseph, and preserve him through the famine. *Hey, when trouble strikes or circumstances unravel trust in God's providence.* He is at work behind the scenes.

“Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, “Kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you; put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you.” If Reuben doesn’t bring Benjamin back, Jacob can kill Reuben’s two boys. *Which was a stupid thing to say to a grandpa.*

Jacob still resists. “But he said, “My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.” It’ll take a severely hungry stomach to change Jacob’s mind. *Chapter 43...*

“Now the famine was severe in the land. And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, “Go back, buy us a little food.” But Judah spoke to him, saying, “The man solemnly warned us, saying, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.’”

“If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. But if you will not send him, we will not go down; for the man said to us, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.’” Remember Simeon is still being held prisoner in Egypt. And obviously, no one is spending any sleepless nights worrying about ole Simeon. He must’ve been a pretty ruthless guy, with few friends, even in his own family.

The issue though, was the kid brother Benjamin. They’d been told not to return to Egypt without him.

Verse 6, “And Israel said, “Why did you deal so wrongfully with me as to tell the man whether you had still another brother?” *They should’ve never mentioned another brother.* “But they said, “The man asked us pointedly about ourselves and our family, saying, ‘Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?’ And we told him according to these words.” *He had direct questions. We couldn’t lie.* “Could we possibly have known that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down?’”

“Then Judah said to Israel his father, “Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones.” Judah says we’ve got no choice. *Don’t send Benjamin and we’ll all starve.* “I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. For if we had not lingered, surely by now we would have returned this second time.

And their father Israel said to them, “If it must be so, then do this: Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man - a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. Take double money in your hand...” If each of the ten brothers who returned to Egypt, took with them two shekels instead of just one, it would total twenty shekels. How ironic! Recall,

Joseph had been sold into slavery for twenty shekels.

“And take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!”

In total helplessness Jacob casts himself on the mercies of God. He doesn't realize it at the time, but in reality God's mercy is always the safest place to rest.

“So the men took that present and Benjamin, and they took double money in their hand, and arose and went down to Egypt; and they stood before Joseph.”

“When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, ‘Take these men to my home, and slaughter an animal and make ready; for these men will dine with me at noon.’ Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.” Which would've been an elegant mansion. Like a visit to the White House. The brothers are wondering *why are we getting the royal treatment?*

“Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, “It is because of the money, which was returned in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may seek an occasion against us and fall upon us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys.” Their minds race with speculation... They're about to discover the truth.

Verse 19, “When they drew near to the steward of Joseph's house, they talked with him at the door of the house, and said, “O sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food; but it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there, each man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand. And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks.” They plead their case before they're even accused. “But he said, “Peace be with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money.”

And who is this who brings peace to their hearts, and assures them of the king's favor? It is an unnamed servant! And throughout the OT numerous unnamed servants appear as types of the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit is the servant who speaks not of Himself, but of Jesus. He comforts, assures us, and brings us peace.

“Then he brought Simeon out to them. So the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed. Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there.” Joseph had planned a feast.

“And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth. Then he asked them about their well-being, and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" And they answered, "Your servant our father is in good health; he is still alive." And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves. Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son." Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought somewhere to weep.”

When Joseph sees his own flesh and blood brother, Benjamin, he can't hold back his emotions. He loses it... He starts to shake. Tears well up in his eyes. He barks out some excuse, and races out of the room. *Jesus also wept at the unbelief of the Jews in His day.*

And you can feel this is all building to a crescendo. Joseph longs to be reconciled to his brothers, but it's not quite time to reveal himself. *And this is the situation Jesus faces today.* He loves the Jews, His brothers. He wants to fulfill His promises. He longs for the Jews to know Him, but their repentance has not quite ripened.

Verse 30, “And he went into his chamber and wept there. Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, "Serve the bread." So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians.” This is why God is going to keep Israel in Egypt for the next 400 years. Recall the problem they had in Canaan. They kept marrying unbelievers.

There was no danger of that in Egypt. Egyptians were prejudice against foreigners. An Egyptian wouldn't eat with a non-Egyptian, let alone marry one.

Verse 33, “And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another.” When the brothers sit down at the table, they have assigned seats, and amazingly they're seated according to birth order. *How could this be?*

Statistically, the odds of this happening to twelve brothers by chance is 1 in 36 million. You wonder if by now the brothers are starting to get suspicious...

“Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.”

In conclusion, here's a quote that describes Joseph's life, “In duty he was loyal, in temptation he was strong, in prison he was faithful, and to his brothers he was

merciful...” *Loyal, strong, faithful, and merciful* is what we all should want to be, but we develop these traits not in times of ease and comfort but in difficulties.

Joseph is putting his brothers through the ringer. He’s arranging and subjecting them to the same sort of rollercoaster ride he had endured. **Joseph knows it’s life’s ups and downs that keeps you *on the level!***