

Tested

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[0 : 0 0] Chapter 41 covered a lot of ground. It covered more than seven years. We saw Joseph become second in command over Egypt after he interpreted Pharaoh's dreams. We also saw the seven years of plenty that Joseph predicted and then we saw the start of the famine. Despite Joseph's power, remember that he is still a slave. We saw Pharaoh chose Joseph's new name. He also chose Joseph's wife. Before the end of those plentiful years, Joseph and his wife had two sons. He was able to name them and their name showed us how Joseph viewed his situation. Joseph had been in Egypt approximately 20 years when Manasseh was born. Those 20 years represented more than half of Joseph's life to that point, but Joseph chose Hebrew names for his sons. Joseph went beyond identifying with the covenant community. He flat out rejected

Egypt and all that it had brought him. Remember that Joseph is in the wrong land serving the wrong leader of the wrong nation. Circumstances are much better for him while serving Pharaoh, but he's still a slave who will never live in his homeland again. Despite that, Joseph is exactly where God needs him to be.

We've discussed throughout the Joseph studies that the story is not about Joseph, meaning that Joseph's life is not the main point. The main point of the book of Genesis is that God wants us to see the progression of redemptive history or how God will redeem his people from the curse of sin. Throughout Genesis, God shows that he's faithful to preserve the line of the seed who will redeem God's people.

From chapter 42 through the end of the famine, preserving the line of the Redeemer requires meeting physical needs for food. Joseph, the slave who was wrongly sold by his brothers, now has control of the only storehouses of food in the region. As chapter 42 opens, we'll see how desperately Joseph's family back in Canaan needs that food. Let's read all of chapter 42 and then we'll dig into it.

Starting with verse 1, it says, 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.

[2 : 4 0] 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. 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.

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. 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 to your households, and bring your youngest brother to me. So your words will be verified, and you shall not die. And they did so. 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. And 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. 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.

[6 : 09] At this their hearts failed them, and they turned trembling to one another, saying, What is this that God has done to us? When they came to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them, saying, The man, the lord of the land, spoke roughly to us and took us to be spies of the land. But we said to him, We are honest men. We have never been spies. We are twelve brothers, sons of our father. One is no more, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan.

Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us, By this I shall know that you are honest men. Leave one of your brothers with me, and take grain for the famine of your households, and go your way. Bring your youngest brother to me, then I shall know that you are not spies, but honest men. And I will deliver your brother to you, and you shall trade in the land.

As they emptied their sacks, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack. And when they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were afraid. And Jacob their father said to them, You have bereaved me of my children. Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and now you would take Benjamin? All this has come against me. Then Reuben said to his father, 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. But he said, My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is the only one left. If harm should happen to him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol. After 22 or 23 years, Joseph finally sees his brothers again. He's going to take time whether the ten older brothers are the same hardened men who threw him into the pit, and then sold him into slavery. Joseph puts his brothers through a series of seven tests to determine whether their character has changed. That's the main idea for the chapter.

Joseph puts his brothers through a series of seven tests to determine whether their character has changed. Along the way, Joseph's maturity will be tested as well. Some commentators think that Joseph is too rough with his brothers when he finally sees them again. That's nonsense when you think about it. Remember who those ten brothers are. Reuben forfeited his rights as firstborn when he slept with his father's concubine. Simeon and Levi massacred all the males in Shechem. The others came along behind that massacre, plundered Shechem, kidnapped the women and children, and took them back to their homes with them. And of course, these are the same ten who threw Joseph into the pit.

[9 : 10] All but one went along with the plan to sell Joseph for profit. And then after that, of course, Judah fathered twins by his daughter-in-law, thinking that Tamar was a prostitute. Joseph's older brothers were hardened criminals. Joseph needed to discern whether his brothers have changed during the years since he last saw them. If anything, really, Joseph showed amazing restraint when he met them.

We're going to break the chapter into six sections, starting with verses one through five. And in those first five verses, we see the guilt trip. The guilt trip is your first fill-in. So let's read verses one through five again. They say, 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 Joseph 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. So picture the scene here. Joseph's now middle-aged sons are still living with Jacob and depending on him. Jacob speaks to his sons as though they are still small boys who can't figure out what to do on their own. We have to remember that they're all grown and they have wives and children by this time. Their wives and kids will be referenced later in the message. However, Jacob is still very much the family patriarch. Notice too just how desperate the situation has become. Jacob refers to the circumstances as a matter of life and death. He tells his older sons to go to Egypt so that we may live and not die. This section is titled The Guilt Trip because the thought of going to Egypt makes the older sons very uncomfortable.

Think for a minute of a time when you were younger and you tried to hide some bad behavior from your parents. How did you feel when one of them said something that reminded you of the secret that you hoped they would never find out? Well, Jacob unknowingly provokes such feelings in his sons by saying the E word. And what is that E word? Egypt. Egypt is the last word the brothers wanted to hear.

[11 : 53] It's the last place the brothers wanted to think about. The thought of Egypt makes them very uneasy because they remember that the Midianite traders were taking Joseph there. The mention of Egypt brings Joseph's 10 oldest sons a reminder of their guilt trip and of their guilt. In verse 1, we see the evidence of that guilt. Jacob said, why do you look at one another? Presumably, Jacob has noticed them casting sideways glances at each other when he starts talking about Egypt. They're probably squirming a little bit too. You can imagine him thinking, has dad finally figured out what's going on? Is he doing this on purpose? Despite their reservations though, the older sons agree to go. They realize that buying grain in Egypt is their best hope for survival. And that knowledge trumps the uneasiness.

In verse 4, we see that Jacob lacks enough trust in his older sons to send his new favorite with them. Jacob says that Benjamin will stay home. Perhaps Jacob suspects that the brothers may have had some responsibility for Joseph's disappearance. We tend to think of Benjamin here as a little boy, but he's a grown man with a family of his own. Joseph has been gone for 22 or 23 years, and Benjamin was already alive when Jacob left. So Benjamin has to be at least in his late 20s. More likely, he's in his mid-30s by this time. Benjamin also represented an extra pair of arms and another donkey. And perhaps by this time, he had several sons of his own who could carry grain back from Egypt. But Jacob's fears weighed more heavily on him than his hunger did. Rather than allowing Benjamin to bring back more food, Jacob wanted him to stay home. The silence from Benjamin speaks volumes as well. Benjamin could have said, let me go, Dad. I'll be okay. We need the food.

Instead, he stayed silent and he stayed home. Verse 5 confirms that the 10 older brothers did indeed take their guilt trip. And wouldn't you like to know what happened when they passed the places that reminded them of their sin against Joseph? They arrived safely in Egypt, and they may even have been thinking that the trip wasn't so bad after all. Perhaps they even avoided a route that would evoke the worst memories. Little did they know that they were about to be tested because they were about to meet Egypt's governor. In the second section of the lesson, we see the gruff talk. The gruff talk is what comes up next. And that gruff talk comes along from Joseph himself in verses 6 through 14. So let's read verses 6 and 7 first. Those verses say, 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.

Finally, after more than two decades, a stint in slavery that's still going on, several years in prison, and nearly a decade in Pharaoh's court, Joseph meets his brothers again. Consider what Joseph must have been going through here. There's no fanfare. He had no warning. He had no dream from God to prepare him. Instead, he's just going through an ordinary work day and all of a sudden his brothers show up.

[15 : 50] Check out verses 8 and 9 again now. They say, 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. Predictably, Joseph's brothers failed to recognize him. Joseph is dressed like an Egyptian.

He's using an interpreter. He looks like an Egyptian. He's clean shaven when Hebrews typically are not. And he's changed quite a bit physically from when the brothers last saw him. Remember, he was 17 when they sold him. Now he's 39 or 40 years old. Plus, none of his brothers would have expected Joseph to be the one who was ruling Egypt. Also predictably, Joseph recognizes his brothers. Joseph's brothers, at least the older ones, were full-grown men when they dumped Joseph into the pit. Their physical appearance wouldn't have changed that much. Joseph probably also had his brothers' faces burn forever in his memory because of what the brothers had done to him. Joseph's restraint here was tested in at least two ways. Moses says Joseph remembered his dream. The dream came true exactly as Joseph had told him it would. How easy would it have been to say, I told you so? Joseph also could have ordered his brothers to be killed on the spot. Egypt was not a civilized Western society of today. Egypt was a society where rulers had virtually unquestioned authority. Rather than revealing himself or having his brothers killed, Joseph begins putting some pressure on them. He wants to see if they have changed. I believe he also wants to make them think about what they did to him. We can't prove it by the text, but Joseph likely made accusations against his brothers similar to what they once accused him of doing. In verse 9, Joseph tells them, you are spies. Turn back to chapter 37 and look at what escalated the older brother's hatred of Joseph. We're going to look at Genesis 37 verse 2. Genesis 37 verse 2 says, these are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being 17 years old, was pastoring the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives, and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. Skip down a few verses now to Genesis 37, 18 through 20. These verses happen after Jacob asked Joseph to see how things were going when the brothers were away from home pastoring the flock. Those verses say, they saw him from afar, and before he came near to them, they conspired against him to kill him. They said to one another, here comes this dreamer. Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams. When Joseph reached his brothers on that fateful day, the brothers may have said something like, you are just a spy. You've come here so that you can make another bad report to dad. You're just a spoiled little spy. I suspect that probably is what happened. Let's return to tonight's text and see how they react to Joseph calling them spies.

We'll go back to verses 10 and 11 of chapter 42. Here we hear from the brothers. It says, 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.

[19:57] Joseph also showed a lot of restraint here when the brothers claim to be honest men. He doesn't directly confront them with what they've done wrong, but he keeps turning up the heat.

If the brothers say they're honest men, then there should be evidence of that. And to really learn their spiritual condition, that's where we're going to see the seven tests that Joseph puts his brothers through.

The first test is whether Benjamin still is alive. Joseph had good reason to suspect that something bad might have happened to Benjamin.

He must have realized that Benjamin would have replaced Joseph as his father's favorite.

Meanwhile, Benjamin is nowhere in sight. Joseph probably was wondering, Did they get rid of Benjamin like they got rid of me?

Let's read verses 12 and 13. Verse 12 is where Joseph reacts to the brothers' first comments. He said to them, No, it is the nakedness of the land that you have come to see.

[21:02] 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.

Consider what may have been going through Joseph's mind when the brothers said, One is no more. Joseph may have thought, That shows how much you know. The one...

He was probably thinking, The one who is no more actually is the one who is right here. Peeking into chapter 43 provides the explanation why the brothers told Joseph about their father and Benjamin.

Joseph asks more questions than are recorded in chapter 42. We learn that from chapter 43, verses 6 and 7. This is after they're already back home and they're telling their father what happened.

Israel, or Jacob, said, Why do you treat me so badly as to tell the man that you had another brother? In other words, why did you have to open your big mouths? They replied, The man

questioned us carefully about ourselves and our kindred, saying, Is your father still alive?
[22 : 12] Do you have another brother? What we told him was an answer to those questions.
Could we in any way know that he would say, Bring your brother down? Going back to chapter 42,
Joseph resumes the gruff talk in verse 14.

Verse 42, 14 says, But Joseph said to them, It is as I said to you, You are spies. Can you visualize
Joseph watching them when the interpreter says the word spy?
They're not spies, yet they know they're guilty of far worse than spying. As Joseph puts them under
pressure, their consciences have started poking them even more.
After this first exchange, Joseph must be encouraged with the brother's comment that the youngest
brother is still with their father. Joseph wants proof, though, and he asks for that proof when he
turns up the heat even more in the next section of the chapter.
In verses 15 through 25, we see the growing tension. The growing tension is what your next fill-in is.
Let's read verses 15 through 17.

[23 : 31] Joseph says to them, By this you shall be tested. By the life of Pharaoh you shall not go
from this place unless your youngest brother comes here.

Send one of you and let him bring your brother while you remain confined, that the 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. These verses have the second test. Joseph
is testing whether one of the brothers will volunteer to get Benjamin.
Who's going to rise to the occasion and volunteer to face Jacob and ask for permission to bring his
new favorite son to Egypt? This would speak volumes about the man who stepped forward and the
most likely candidate was the oldest son, Reuben.

Leaders don't always have to volunteer themselves, though. In fact, if a man truly is a leader, all
eyes are going to turn to him when an opportunity requiring leadership arises.

[24 : 38] Unfortunately, in this case, there is neither a man who will step forward nor one who is
looked upon as being the leader. Three days pass without anybody volunteering, so Joseph gives
his brothers a third test.

And we see that in verses 18 through 20. Those verses say, 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. The third test is the inverse of the second. If no brother will volunteer to get
Benjamin, will a brother volunteer to stay behind while the others go after him?

Notice the subtle hint that Joseph dropped before he unveiled the third test. The gruff Egyptian ruler
says that he fears God. That should have caused them to wonder just a little bit.

[25 : 49] Why would an Egyptian ruler mention that he feared the Hebrew God? Test three is the
real test. These men left Joseph in a pit to be sold into slavery in Egypt.

Then they told his father that Joseph was eaten by wild animals. And they did so only after Judah
convinced them that killing Joseph would eliminate the possibility of profiting from their crime
financially.

If one of them shows enough trust in the other nine to volunteer to be left behind in Egypt, it will be
obvious that a change has indeed occurred. Meanwhile, we see that the brothers' consciences
have kicked into high gear.

Look at verses 21 through 25 again. 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.

[26 : 56] 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. I went ahead and stopped there at
verse 24 because I wanted to think for a little bit about why Joseph wept here.

This was the first time that he had seen evidence that the brothers feel even a little remorse about what they had done. We see now that Joseph was not the only one affected by what happened on that day decades earlier.

His brothers still introduced themselves as twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan. That came from verse 13 of this chapter. Despite the evidence that their consciences are now working overtime, still nobody volunteered to stay behind.

So Joseph created a fourth test when he chose Simeon to be the one that stays behind. Will the other brothers care enough about Simeon to convince Jacob to let Benjamin go to Egypt?

[28 : 07] As far as they know, if Benjamin never comes, Simeon will be in jail for life. Joseph also sets up a fifth test here, and that test is how the brothers will react to finding their money untaken.

That's where we get to verse 25. Verse 25 says, Joseph may have designed this test also to remind them even more about what they had done to him.

Would they draw the connection to the time that they had come home with one less brother because they had exchanged that brother for silver? So, so far the brothers have taken their guilt trip to Egypt.

They've endured the gruff talk. They've felt the growing tension. In the fourth section of the lesson, that growing tension progresses to the genuine trembling. The genuine trembling is what we see next.

That genuine trembling comes in verses 26 through 28. Starting in verse 26, it says, Then they loaded their donkeys with their grain and departed.

[29 : 27] 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?

Dread fell upon them at the realization of their obvious plight. They'd been charged with being spies, and now they could be charged with being thieves. Neither one of them was true, but they had no way to prove that.

Their hearts failed them, it says, and that means that they lost courage. Trembling there manifested a paralyzing fear. Their claims of innocence had been undone.

They explicitly attributed their calamity to God. They said, What is this that God has done to us? It would be nice to know the inflection that they put on that sentence, because there are a lot of different ways you could say those words.

[30 : 34] For them, none of the ways they could have said it were good. They believed that God had put them in peril, regardless of however they said that sentence. Some of the conversation on the way home from Egypt certainly would have been about how to tell their dad that another brother is missing.

The brothers must have remembered how Jacob reacted when he thought that Joseph had died. Genesis 37, 34 through 35 recorded Jacob's reaction decades earlier.

We'll look at those verses in a minute, but we'll see that these verses show us the next section of our lesson, and that is the grim tale. The grim tale is what comes next.

Before we look at the grim tale that we see in verses 29 through 34 of chapter 42, let's go back to Genesis 37 and read verses 34 and 35, where Jacob found out that Joseph was, for what he thought, dead.

Genesis 37, 34 through 35 say, 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.

[31 : 59] Thus his father wept for him. That's why the brothers know that however they tell their father what happened, it's going to be a grim tale for him.

This time, though, the remaining brothers tell their father the truth, but they leave out some of the harshest details, such as being imprisoned for three days. Look at verses 29 through 34 of chapter 42, and we'll see the grim tale there.

Those verses say, When they came to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them, saying, The man, the lord of the land, spoke roughly to us and took us to be spies of the land.

But we said to him, We are honest men. We have never been spies. We are twelve brothers, sons of our father. One is no more, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan. Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us, By this I shall know that you are honest men. Leave one of your brothers with me and take grain for the famine of your households and go your way. [33 : 09] Bring your youngest brother to me. Then I shall know that you are not spies, but honest men, and I will deliver your brother to you, and you shall trade in the land.

Despite omitting some harsher details, the brothers clearly say what must happen before Simeon will be released. The man, the lord of the land, as they call him, must see that their youngest brother exists.

So we've seen the guilt trip, the gruff talk, the growing tension, the genuine trembling, and the grim tale. We have one more section, and in that section, we see the gloomy truth.

The gloomy truth is what goes in your next set of fill-ins. That gloomy truth gets revealed during the final two tests. Joseph didn't directly do these tests, but he certainly set them in motion.

The sixth test is whether Jacob trusts the brothers enough to send Benjamin with them, even when their own lives will be in jeopardy if he doesn't do it. The seventh test is whether Benjamin trusts the brothers enough to go.

[34 : 21] Verses 35 through 38 give us the results of those tests. Check out those verses again. Starting with verse 35, it says, As they emptied their sacks, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack.

And when they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. And Jacob their father said to them, You have bereaved me of my children. Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and now you would take Benjamin.

All this has come against me. Then Reuben said to his father, 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.

But he said, My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is the only one left. If harm should happen to him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol.

Here we get the first clue that Jacob really does blame his sons for Joseph's demise. Notice he says that they bereaved him of his children, not just the child, but his children.

[35 : 34] And then he says, Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more. So this is clear evidence that the brothers have failed test six. Their father does not trust them.

Of course, Jacob is forced to eventually give in and do that because Joseph has actually forced Jacob's hand here. Eventually, Jacob is going to have to let Benjamin go if they want to get more food.

Someone will have to step forward and take responsibility for him. Reuben attempts to be that man, and he even offers his two sons to be killed if he does not return with Benjamin.

Reuben's offer may have sounded good to him, but the offer is easy to see through. What grandfather would kill two of his grandsons? Despite the obvious hollowness of Reuben's offer, Jacob's defiance must have been very hurtful to Reuben and the nine oldest others.

Reuben's offer may have been the phrase translated, My son shall not go down with you is a strongly worded prohibition. Jacob's explanation for his refusal was forcefully stated.

[36 : 45] He said, My son and his brother. And that really illustrates the closed circle of Rachel's two sons and their father. Jacob says there, Benjamin is the only one left.

He's got eleven sons standing in front of him, and yet he still says, Benjamin is the only one left. So that confirms what the brothers had known all along.

Benjamin was the only son who still counted in their father's eyes. No matter how hardened they must have been, that had to have really hurt to realize that your father didn't really care that much about you.

He only cared about one, and he wasn't about to let that one person go so that you could get more food. Also, Benjamin could have overruled his father again here, but we see one more time that Benjamin stays silent.

So that provides the result of the seventh test. Like his father, Benjamin lacks trust in his brothers. However, the gloomy truth is more than just that lack of trust.

[37 : 50] That gloomy truth also is that Jacob still is playing favorites. Benjamin believes that the grim truth puts him in danger. The main idea for this chapter was that Joseph tested his brothers to

determine if their character had changed.

They failed every test except one. Benjamin is still alive, yet none of the brothers is willing to step up and prove it, at least not yet.

In addition to the main idea, we can take a few reminders from the chapter. Chapter 42 reminds us that pangs of conscience often are sent by God to show us the need for repentance.

Chapter 42 reminds us that pangs of conscience often are sent by God to show us the need for repentance. Egypt was a word and a place that reminded Jacob's ten oldest sons of their sin. When God reminds his people of their sins, the reminder also provides the opportunity to repent and receive forgiveness. Nobody can rightfully lay a guilt trip on true believers.

[39 : 02] 1 John 1.9 says, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1.9 says, The next reminder is that Jacob's words in verse 42-2 remind us of the Bible's theme and that theme is that we may live and not die.

Jacob's words in verse 42-2 remind us of the Bible's theme that we may live and not die. We've talked often about how the theme of Genesis is to show the progression of redemptive history, how God will redeem his people from the curse of sin.

That fits into the broader theme of the entire Bible because the entire Bible shows everyone how that they may live and not die. Everything that happened in chapter 42 was part of making it possible for us and every other believer to be saved.

The fact that we may live and not die should fill us with wonder. God owes us nothing, yet God orchestrated events so that he could save for himself a people.

The third reminder is that chapter 42 reminds us to evaluate whether our salvation is real. The test in chapter 42 remind us to evaluate whether our salvation is real.

[40 : 25] We know that those who are truly saved are saved forever, yet the Bible still commands us to test ourselves. 2 Corinthians 13 13.5 says, Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith.

Test yourselves, or do you not realize this about yourself, that Jesus Christ is in you, unless indeed you fail to meet the test? Then in 2 Peter 1 verses 10 and 11 say, Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election.

For if you practice these qualities, you will never fall. For in this, there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Chapter 42 also reminds us that God uses people to free others from bondage. God uses people to free others from bondage.

None of Joseph's brothers volunteered to be the one to return home to get Benjamin. Then when Joseph reversed the test, none of his brothers volunteered to stay while the others went to get Benjamin.

[41 : 37] After Joseph picked Simeon to stay, none of the brothers, nor their father for that matter, showed any urgency to get Simeon out of bondage. Fast forward to our day, we've been blessed with the gospel that frees people from the bondage of sin.

We should be willing to forgo some of our own comfort to share that good news. The gospel is simple. We closed with it last week by using John 3.16. This time I want us to look at John 3.16 and 17.

That's where Jesus said, For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. Then verse 17 says, For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. And we should be familiar with Romans 5.8 where it says that God showed his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Unbelievers need to hear that good news. We're the ones whom God has chosen to share that good news with them. And finally, chapter 42 reminds us that believers have no need to be defined by the sins of their past.

[42 : 55] Believers have no need to be defined by the sins of their past. Joseph's brothers' past included the worst sins imaginable, yet they were God's chosen people.

We saw evidence tonight that the brothers have yet to develop the character that will make them act like the chosen people, but God is not through with his work in them. The New Testament had yet to be written when Joseph and his brothers lived.

However, the brothers illustrate the truth of Philippians 1.6. Philippians 1.6 says, And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. Let's pray. Father, we thank you again for another reminder of how you worked redemptive history to make it possible for us and every believer, past and present, and future to be saved. Help that make us more willing to share your gospel with others. Help us also be filled with wonder every time we think of what you have done for us. And let us be forever grateful.
[44 : 08] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Thank you.