

# Genesis 43

THE RETURN TO EGYPT

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## Opening Thoughts

- \* Conscience has awakened and confession germinated in Gen 42 ...
- \* But what is missing?
  - ◆ It is far from complete!
- \* Genuine as it was, it was lacking — How?

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## Opening Thoughts

- ◆ It was w/o reference to God, despite their recognizing God in their circumstances, and ...
- ◆ It was yet confined to the brothers — needing to be brought “into the light”
- \* As such, we come to Gen 43 realizing God has more work to do — because ...

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## Opening Thoughts

- ◆ Back in Canaan, their guilty consciences seem to have faded, perhaps suggesting ...
- ◆ They believe this will all pass over like a “summer shower”
- \* But, this and the next chapter will reveal just the opposite, namely ...

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## Structure of the Chapter

- \* Gen 43 breaks down into 2-parts
- \* In Part 1: We see God's providence at work in vv. 1-14 ...
  - ◆ [In and through life's circumstances](#) - vv. 1-7
  - ◆ [Producing His intended harvest](#) - vv. 8-14

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## Structure of the Chapter

- \* In Part 2: We see the character of true affection in verses 15-34 ...
  - ◆ It is [merciful](#) - vv. 15-25
  - ◆ It is [tender](#) - vv. 26-34

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## Life's Circumstances

- ◆ Jacob has “tarried” hoping the famine would subside, but he is now out of options
- \* The terrifying terms of restocking - vv. 3-5
- ◆ From this point forward, Judah takes the lead for the brothers — **Why?**

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## Life's Circumstances

- ◆ Reuben failed (Gen 42:37); Simeon is jailed; Levi lost Jacob's confidence over the Dinah incident ... so Judah is next in line
- \* **What does Judah's statement in v. 3 imply?**
- ◆ That Jacob was “withholding” Benjamin

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## Life's Circumstances

- \* It is terrifying to him — **Why?**
  - ◆ Because Jacob thinks Benjamin is the last of his beloved Rachel's children, and ...
  - ◆ He likely does not trust the "10" with Benjamin
- \* Next, the futility of resistance plays out in verses 6-7

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## Life's Circumstances

- \* **What is Jacob doing in v. 6?**
  - ◆ Blame shifting — **We wouldn't be in this "pickle" if it weren't for your big mouths!**
  - ◆ Venting his anger
- \* **What is wrong with Jacob's charge?**

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## Life's Circumstances

- ◆ He does not accept any responsibility for the present circumstances
- ◆ The “10” did not [“all of a sudden”](#) become unruly ...
- ◆ They are who they are, at least partially, owing to Jacob’s parenting and preferences

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## Life's Circumstances

- \* Which brings us to an important implication
- 👉 Don’t immediately point your fingers at your children for their bad behavior ...
- 👉 Instead, take a minute to reflect on your life and your parenting

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## Life's Circumstances

### \* What is “off” in the brothers reply?

- ◆ They persist in distorting the truth
- ◆ Joseph never questioned them this way ...
- ◆ Rather, the information came out as they defended themselves against Joseph's charge — “You are spies!”

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## Life's Circumstances

### \* What else is “off” in their reply?

- ◆ They blame shift right back — Not our fault ... how were we to know!
- \* Yet in all this, we recognize that God is sovereignly directing the circumstances
- \* And now, in vv. 8-14, we see the harvest

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## God's Harvest

- \* God is always working — and He will accomplish His purposes ...
  - ◆ Through His “word” (Isa 55:10-11), and ...
  - ◆ Through **life's circumstances** — as we've just seen in vv. 1-7, and see elsewhere like in the book of Job!!

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## God's Harvest

- \* His word and life's circumstances will always produce a harvest, both ...
  - ◆ “Particularly” in and through the lives of specific individuals, and ...
  - ◆ “Universally” with one common intention

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## God's Harvest

- \* What is God's common intention for mankind?
- ◆ Life Change — Yet with differing focus, remembering that ...
- ◆ The world only has 2 people types — What are they?

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## God's Harvest

- ◆ Regenerate and Un-regenerate
- \* Therefor, God's desired "life change" differs in accordance with a person's condition ...
- ◆ For the un-regenerate — "saving faith"
- ◆ For the regenerate — "sanctification"

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## God's Harvest

- \* So, now, in vv. 8-14, God directs his attention to Jacob and Judah ...
- \* What would you say God “intends to harvest,” or “produce” in these two men?
- ◆ For Jacob — “Dependence on God alone” — a quality He has been working on for some time!

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## God's Harvest

- ◆ For Judah — “repentant accountability” — which galvanizes the road to reconciliation
- \* Let's explore Judah first - note vv. 8-10
- ◆ After the group reply in v. 7, Judah again takes the lead
- \* What does Judah do?

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## God's Harvest

- ◆ He offers himself as surety for Benjamin
- \* How is Judah's offer different and better than Reuben's?
- ◆ He will personally accept responsibility and bear the weight of accountability and not ...
- ◆ Shunt it off on his son's!

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## God's Harvest

- \* What is the irony in Judah's offer?
- ◆ The very one who hatched the plan to sell off Joseph ...
- ◆ Is now the one who will become the surety to protect Joseph's blood brother

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## God's Harvest

### \* And further ...

- ◆ Judah was the one who softened the proposed treatment of Joseph — sell vs. kill
- ◆ And is now the one who tries to soften the blow to his father by becoming the surety

### \* What does v. 10 remind you of?

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## God's Harvest

- ◆ The tonality reminds me of vv. 4-5 ...

### \* So what do think the point of v. 10 is?

- ◆ It could be to give us a time marker
  - Based on a one-way journey of 21 days ...
  - It could suggest it has been about 3 months since they left Egypt

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## God's Harvest

- ◆ But more likely — I think it functions to urge Jacob to decide, using hyperbole
- ◆ Specifically, the idea of ...
- ◆ “Quit dilly-dallying around and give me Benjamin — we could have been there and back 2x’s by now!”

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## God's Harvest

- \* Now — Let's look at God's harvest in Jacob in vv. 11-14
- \* Remember, I suggested that God's intended harvest is “dependence on God alone,” or said differently ...
- \* To fully break Jacob of his self-sufficiency

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## God's Harvest

- \* Note how this progresses ...
- \* What is the 1<sup>st</sup> thing we note about v. 11?
  - ◆ Jacob is called by his covenant name "Israel," suggesting...
  - ◆ He has been growing in his faith & sanctification

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## God's Harvest

- \* Continuing in v. 11, what is Israel's first response?
  - ◆ Resignation to the circumstances — "If it must be so ..."
- \* And then what?
  - ◆ Reversion — He resorts to his old "play book"

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## God's Harvest

- \* Jacob is growing in his faith, but he still has a stubborn streak of self-reliance!!
- \* As he did to appease Esau, he attempts again now to placate the "Egyptian lord"
- \* The gifts are a combination of delicacies from Canaan and ... **What else?**

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## God's Harvest

- ◆ The money that was returned to them
- \* **And what else?**
- ◆ Benjamin — the only thing that mattered
- \* **What is going on in v. 14?**
- ◆ Submission and dependence — at last!

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## God's Harvest

- \* Verse 14 is a prayer/appeal ...
- \* He appeals to **God Almighty** — finally accepting where his true strength lies
- \* **What does Jacob appeal to?**
  - ◆ God's **mercy**

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## God's Harvest

- \* **What is mercy?**
  - ◆ An aspect of God's attribute of "**goodness**"
  - ◆ Defn: God's compassionate response to people in misery or distress demonstrated by His benevolent goodness — w/o regard for "deservedness"

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## God's Harvest

- \* Next Jacob articulates the “form” he wants mercy to take — may Simeon and Benjamin be released
- \* Verse 11 began with resignation and v. 14 now ends with [total resignation](#)
  - ◆ “... as for me, if I am bereaved ...”

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## God's Harvest

- \* **What other Biblical figure makes a similar statement in response to a crisis?**
  - ◆ Esther — cf. Esther 4:16 [READ]
- \* It seems that Jacob has **finally** grasped the essence of Prov 16:9 ...

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## God's Harvest

\* A man may plan his ways, but God will direct the outcome — which yields some important implications ...

📖 God uses afflictions to draw us to His word — cf. Ps 119:67

📖 Instead of whining over our present distress, we should embrace it as a gateway to God's blessing

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## God's Harvest

📖 Our response to affliction reveal our theology — that is, what we truly believe about God

📖 We must be willing to lose everything to gain God — which is precisely what Christ teaches in the gospels

\* God's harvest accomplished in Judah and Jacob, we now move on to the character of true affection ...

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## True Affection

- \* In these final verses of chapter 43, Joseph will model the [character of true affection](#)
- ◆ Perhaps picking up on Jacob’s appeal in v. 13, the first aspect of true affection is [mercy](#) in vv. 15-25
- ◆ Followed by the [tenderness](#) of true affection in vv. 26-34

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## Mercy Expressed

- \* Verse 15 transitions us into this section —  
The brothers (all “11”) set out for Egypt
- \* **What is the 1<sup>st</sup> expression of mercy in v. 16?**
- ◆ A invitation to the “palace” is extended to the brothers — we know for a meal, but ...
- ◆ The brothers misinterpret it fearfully

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## Mercy Expressed

### \* How do the brothers see it?

- ◆ Partially logically and partially “silly”
- ◆ Logically, they assume the impetus was the returned money
- ◆ The silly part is their view of the motive — to make them servants and steal their donkeys!

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## Mercy Expressed

- \* All of which confirms for me that ...
- \* They have forgotten the bigger picture reason for their predicament
- \* Which is?
  - ◆ Their unconfessed sin against Joseph!

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## Mercy Expressed

- \* Acting on their “logical presumption” they appeal to the steward in vv. 19-22
- \* Leading to the 2<sup>nd</sup> expression of mercy — **What is it?**
- ◆ Reassurance! — “Peace to you and do not be afraid ...”

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## Mercy Expressed

- \* **What else?**
- ◆ A reason — Your God has “given it” to you
- \* **What is interesting about this statement?**
- ◆ God has a capital “G” — interesting that all the EV’s agree, and ...
- ◆ The steward affirms he got their money

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## Mercy Expressed

\* And one more expression in v. 23 —

**What is it?**

◆ Honesty — Simeon is promptly reunited with his brothers as promised

\* But there is still more in v. 24 — **What?**

◆ Hospitality is extended

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## Mercy Expressed

\* **Why is the hospitality important?**

◆ Because it would not be extended to an enemy!

\* **What is the final act of mercy in v. 25?**

◆ Reassurance — They learn the purpose for being brought to the palace ... to share a meal

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## Mercy Expressed

- \* In all — there are 6 expressions of mercy
- \* Which collectively must have been a great relief to the brothers — and at the same time perplexing and overwhelming ...
- \* They are being treated like “royalty” — not criminals!

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## Mercy Expressed

- \* The bottom line of this first picture of [true affection](#) is this ...
- \* Joseph — in his [mercy](#) — does not keep his brothers wondering or worrying
- \* Which is far more than we can say for their treatment of him!!

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## Joseph's Tenderness

- \* Joseph enters the scene in v. 26 and interacts with the brothers ...
- \* From the very start, his "tenderness" is on display as he makes inquiry of the family
- \* Note the progression of inquiry

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## Joseph's Tenderness

- \* He starts with their (his) father's welfare ...
- \* What is unintentionally ironic about their reply in v. 28?
  - ◆ "Your servant, our father ..." echoes fulfillment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> dream
  - ◆ Though I would not press this too far as it is standard protocol for addressing a ruling "superior"

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## Joseph's Tenderness

- \* Note also the "bowing" in vv. 26, 28 — indicating both protocol and fulfillment
- \* Next Joseph's eyes fall on Benjamin ...
- \* Whom he "blesses," after which he is overcome with emotion

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## Joseph's Tenderness

- \* The depth of Joseph's tenderness comes out in the verb translated "he was deeply stirred" in v. 30 ...
  - ♦ Which literally translated means — "to grow warm and tender" ... for Joseph, to the point of tears
- \* It is rare, occurring only 3 other times in the OT; twice with the same deeply emotive emphasis
  - ♦ 1 Kgs 3:26 [READ]; Hos 11:8 [READ]

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## Joseph's Tenderness

- \* Overcome, Joseph leaves the room to gather himself, and ...
- \* Once composed, returns to eat the meal
- \* Why are the brothers "astonished" in v. 33?

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## Joseph's Tenderness

- ◆ Because they have been perfectly seated according to their "birth-order"
- \* Why does Joseph give Benjamin so large a portion?
  - ◆ To test his brothers potential jealousy ...
  - ◆ Have they "grown up?"

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## Joseph's Tenderness

- \* What does the last clause of v. 34 suggest?
  - ◆ They felt the crisis was over — and relaxed their guard ...
  - ◆ Had revenge been the goal, such a meal would not have been extended to them

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## Joseph's Tenderness

- \* But for me — the significance of this final clause is the rich irony
  - ◆ The brothers had feasted in prelude to selling Joseph, while ...
  - ◆ Joseph serves a feast in prelude to blessing his brothers

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