

The Testing Of Hearts

Genesis 42:1-38

Introduction

I The Adversity Of Famine

- A. Jacob learned that there was **grain** in Egypt - Ps 105:16
- B. Jacob sent his sons to buy grain in Egypt - Acts 7:11-13
- C. Jacob **refused** to send Benjamin

II The Testing Of Hearts

- A. Joseph was governor of Egypt
 - 1. His brothers **bowed down** to him - Gen 37:6-11
- B. Joseph recognized his brothers, but:
 - 1. He pretended to be a stranger
 - 2. He spoke **harshly** to them - Prov 18:23
 - 3. They did not recognize him
 - 4. He **remembered** his dream - Gen 37:5-9
 - 5. He accused them of being **spies** - Heb 12:5-7, 11
- C. Joseph's brothers protested
 - 1. We are your servants, **honest** men, not spies
 - 2. We are 12 brothers, all sons of one man
 - 3. We have a younger brother and one is **no more**
- D. Joseph put them in **custody** for three days - Prov 19:23
- E. Joseph permitted his brothers to return home with grain
 - 1. But they were to return with Benjamin
 - a. So that their words could be **verified**
 - b. So that they would not **die**

III The Power Of Guilt

- A. They were being **punished** because of Joseph - Prov 28:17
- B. Rueben rebuked his brothers - Eccl 12:14; Num 32:23
- C. Joseph's response:
 - 1. He understood them and **wept**
 - 2. He had Simeon **bound** before their eyes
 - 3. He gave them grain, silver, provisions - Rom 12:20-21
- D. The brother's discovery:
 - 1. They found the silver in their sacks

- 2. Their hearts sank and they **trembled** with fear
- 3. They **blamed** God and told their father - Prov 19:3
- E. Jacob's response:
 - 1. He was **frightened** and blamed his sons
 - 2. He spiraled into **self-pity** - Rom 8:28-29
- F. Rueben's sacrificial offer:
 - 1. He offered his sons in place of Benjamin
 - 2. He gave his word to return with Benjamin - Gen 35:22
- G. Jacob **refused** - Rom 4:20-21; Isa 41:10

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Take some time this week to consider the following:

1. Have you ever been without food or money? What were your circumstances? What was the outcome?
2. There were three simultaneous "tests" taking place in this story:
 - 1) Joseph's brothers were being tested in repentance, 2) Joseph was being tested in mercy, and 3) Jacob was being tested in faith. Which test is most difficult for you to pass? Why?
3. What do you think is going on with Joseph's brothers in verses 21-22 and 27-28: Godly sorrow or worldly sorrow? Support your answer from the text.
4. When someone has wronged you, are you more likely to seek reconciliation or revenge? What does this tell you about yourself? About your faith in God?
5. Is there something from your past that is haunting you? Why not go back, acknowledge your sin, repent of your sin, make restitution and be free? Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance and power to cooperate with Him to be unshackled from the past.

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

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