

Genesis 43:1-34 Journey to Egypt – The Sequel

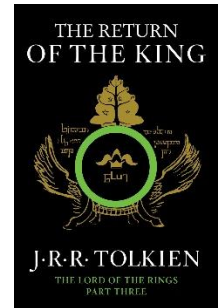
Joseph's Brothers' Second Journey to Egypt

Brown Community Group September 1, 2019

As we learned last week, this is part two of the trilogy, or, at least, a trilogy and epilogue. As a recap, here is what has brought us to this point:

The Story So Far

- Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery. They inferred to his father, Jacob, that he was dead. It appears that after some years they also assumed he was dead.
- Joseph spent approximately 11 years as a servant and then two years in prison after being falsely accused.
- God allowed him to interpret Pharaoh's dreams. This set Joseph up as Governor in Egypt which was approximately 11 years before today's story.
- Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to purchase food. Joseph recognized them but they did not recognize Joseph. Joseph accused them of being spies. He exchanged grain for silver but ended up putting the silver BACK in the sacks of grain.
- Joseph let them go but his deal was that they had to bring their youngest brother, Benjamin, to him. As collateral, he kept the brother Simeon whom he had bound.



- When they told their father, Jacob, what had happened he refused to let Benjamin go.

43 Now the famine was still severe in the land. ² So when they had eaten all the grain they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, "Go back and buy us a little more food."

³ But Judah said to him, "The man warned us solemnly, 'You will not see my face again unless your brother is with you.' ⁴ If you will send our brother along with us, we will go down and buy food for you. ⁵ But if you will not send him, we will not go down, because the man said to us, 'You will not see my face again unless your brother is with you.'"

⁶ Israel asked, "Why did you bring this trouble on me by telling the man you had another brother?"

⁷ They replied, "The man questioned us closely about ourselves and our family. 'Is your father still living?' he asked us. 'Do you have another brother?' We simply answered his questions. How were we to know he would say, 'Bring your brother down here?'"

⁸ Then Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the boy along with me and we will go at once, so that we and you and our children may live and not die. ⁹ I myself will guarantee his safety; you can hold me personally responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him here before you, I will bear the blame before you all my life. ¹⁰ As it is, if we had not delayed, we could have gone and returned twice."

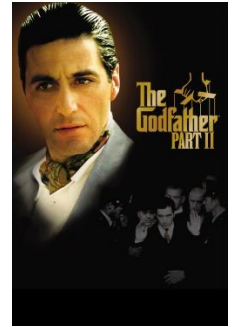
¹¹ Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be, then do this: Put some of the best products of the land in your bags and take them down to the man as a gift—a little balm and a little honey, some spices and myrrh, some pistachio nuts and almonds. ¹² Take double the amount of silver with you, for you must return the silver that was put back into the mouths of your sacks. Perhaps it was a mistake. ¹³ Take your brother also and go back to the man at once. ¹⁴ And may God Almighty grant you mercy before the man so that he will let your other brother and Benjamin come back with you. As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved."

Observations:

1. In the last chapter, Jacob was called "Jacob" but suddenly in this chapter he is called "Israel" as God had declared.
2. Does no one notice that Simeon is STILL being held in Egypt? There seems to be no urgency to rescue him.

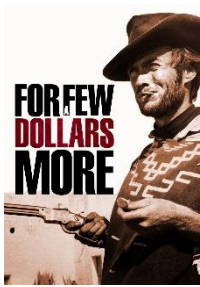
- Jacob/Israel is nothing if not consistent. He thinks only of himself and even criticizes his sons for telling the truth.
- Why did Jacob change his mind? Was it Judah's bargain?

¹⁵ So the men took the gifts and double the amount of silver, and Benjamin also. They hurried down to Egypt and presented themselves to Joseph. ¹⁶ When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Take these men to my house, slaughter an animal and prepare a meal; they are to eat with me at noon."



¹⁷ The man did as Joseph told him and took the men to Joseph's house. ¹⁸ Now the men were frightened when they were taken to his house. They thought, "We were brought here because of the silver that was put back into our sacks the first time. He wants to attack us and overpower us and seize us as slaves and take our donkeys."

¹⁹ So they went up to Joseph's steward and spoke to him at the entrance to the house. ²⁰ "We beg your pardon, our lord," they said, "we came down here the first time to buy food. ²¹ But at the place where we stopped for the night we opened our sacks and each of us found his silver—the exact weight—in the mouth of his sack. So we have brought it back with us. ²² We have also brought additional silver with us to buy food. We don't know who put our silver in our sacks."



²³ "It's all right," he said. "Don't be afraid. Your God, the God of your father, has given you treasure in your sacks; I received your silver." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

²⁴ The steward took the men into Joseph's house, gave them water to wash their feet and provided fodder for their donkeys. ²⁵ They prepared their gifts for Joseph's arrival at noon, because they had heard that they were to eat there.

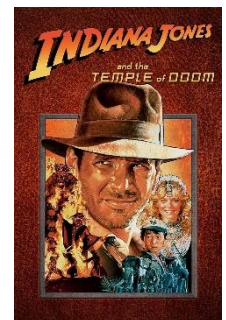
²⁶ When Joseph came home, they presented to him the gifts they had brought into the house, and they bowed down before him to the ground. ²⁷ He asked them how they were, and then he said, "How is your aged father you told me about? Is he still living?"

²⁸ They replied, "Your servant our father is still alive and well." And they bowed down, prostrating themselves before him.

²⁹ As he looked about and saw his brother Benjamin, his own mother's son, he asked, "Is this your youngest brother, the one you told me about?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son." ³⁰ Deeply moved at the sight of his brother, Joseph hurried out and looked for a place to weep. He went into his private room and wept there.

³¹ After he had washed his face, he came out and, controlling himself, said, "Serve the food."

³² They served him by himself, the brothers by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because Egyptians could not eat with Hebrews, for that is detestable to Egyptians. ³³ The men had been seated before him in the order of their ages, from the firstborn to the youngest; and they looked at each other in astonishment. ³⁴ When portions were served to them from Joseph's table, Benjamin's portion was five times as much as anyone else's. So they feasted and drank freely with him.



Observations:

- Isn't it odd that the Egyptians won't eat with Joseph's brothers because they are Hebrews but they WILL eat with Joseph?
- How would the brothers have felt to have been seated by birth order?
- Why does Joseph say "Your God, the God of your father?" He later says "God be gracious to you."
- What is the deal about the table? Why the significance?

Eating at someone's table has always held great significance. In the South during the 18th and 19th centuries, if a young man was invited to eat at your table you were saying that it was permissible to marry your daughter. The significance is the same as Theodore Roosevelt hosting Booker T. Washington to dinner at the White House. But the significance goes back even further. Here are two stories from the Bible:



2 Samuel 9:6-11 When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor.

David said, "Mephibosheth!"

"At your service," he replied.

⁷"Don't be afraid," David said to him, "for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table."

⁸ Mephibosheth bowed down and said, "What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?"

⁹ Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul's steward, and said to him, "I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. ¹⁰ You and your sons and your servants are to farm the land for him and bring in the crops, so that your master's grandson may be provided for. And Mephibosheth, grandson of your master, will always eat at my table." ...

¹¹ Then Ziba said to the king, "Your servant will do whatever my lord the king commands his servant to do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons.

As you can see from the story, even though David gave Mephibosheth land and servants and made him set for life, the REAL significance was that he was able to eat at the King's table.

Luke 22:29-30 And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, ³⁰ so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

In yet another example of foreshadowing, Joseph invites his brothers to eat at his table. Similarly, Jesus, through the Lord's supper, invites us to eat at HIS table. Is it any wonder that the Bible emphasizes that not just anyone can partake of the Lord's supper and it must be taken with great solemnity.