

### Joseph Saw the Good Attitude of Judah

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain how people feel when the evidence says they are guilty, especially when they are actually innocent. In this topic, we will see that Joseph was able to see the good attitude of Judah as he offered to become the slave in place of his brother Benjamin.

Joseph had told the steward to place the silver cup in the bag of Benjamin to test his brothers. We see how Judah responded to that test. Genesis 44:18-23 says, “Then Judah came near to him and said: ‘O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord’s hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you *are* even like Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, ‘Have you a father or a brother?’” And we said to my lord, “We have a father, an old man, and a child of *his* old age, *who* is young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother’s children, and his father loves him.” Then you said to your servants, “Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.” And we said to my lord, “The lad cannot leave his father, for *if* he should leave his father, *his father* would die.” But you said to your servants, “Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.”” In these verses, we see that Judah gave a quick review of what had been said on their previous visit.

Judah said the governor had questioned them about whether they had a father or a brother. Here, we see that instead of calling Joseph the governor, Judah called him “lord”. He certainly had no idea that the governor was his brother, Joseph. The word translated “lord” is most commonly translated either *lord* or *master* in the Old Testament. Since Judah called himself “your servant”, he made it clear that he was using this word to speak of a master-servant relationship. Judah went on to explain what they had said on their first visit. They had a father who was an old man. They also had a younger brother who had been born when their father was old. That younger brother was still young. In addition, his older brother was dead, and he was the only other child of his mother. They had said that their father had a great love for this youngest brother.

Then, Judah said again that they were his servants and that, as their lord, he had said, “Bring him down to me, that I may set me eyes on him.” The brothers had explained to their lord that their younger brother could not leave his father. They felt that if something happened to their younger brother, the sorrow would cause their father to die. However, as their lord, the governor did not give them a choice because he had answered them, “Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.” Judah and the other brothers knew they had to make the choice to bring Benjamin if they were going to get any additional grain.

Judah went on to explain what happened when they told their father. Genesis 44:24-29

says, ““So it was, when we went up to your servant my father, that we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, “Go back and buy us a little food.” But we said, “We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man’s face unless our youngest brother *is* with us.” Then your servant my father said to us, “You know that my wife bore me two sons; and the one went out from me, and I said, ‘Surely he is torn to pieces’; and I have not seen him since. But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.””” In these verses, we see Judah explained that when the brothers had gone home, they had told their father what the lord of Egypt had said to them.

When they became low on food again, their father had told them they needed to go to Egypt and buy additional grain so they would not starve. Judah then said they had to tell their father again, “We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man’s face unless our youngest brother is with us.” Judah said they had made it clear to their father that they had no choice. Then, they again explained to their father why they could not go down to Egypt unless they took their younger brother with them. Judah said the brothers clearly understood the lord of Egypt would not see them, or talk to them, if they did not bring their younger brother with them. They had helped their father to realize they had no choice but to bring their younger brother with them.

Judah then explained what their father had said to them. Their father had reminded the brothers that his wife had given birth to two sons. Here, we see Jacob still made it clear that Rachel was the one who had been his favorite wife. The other brothers understood the fact that they were not loved with the same love those two sons were loved. As you remember, the fact that Joseph was the favorite son, and the fact that Joseph had told his brothers about his dreams, were the two things that had caused his brothers to hate Joseph and that was why they had sold him as a slave. By this statement, Judah made it clear that he and the other brothers had accepted the fact that those two sons would always be the favorites of their father.

Then, Judah went on to explain what their father felt had happened to the son that he never saw again. Their father had said, “Surely he is torn to pieces.” Then, their father added, “I have not seen him since.” Suddenly, Joseph knew what his father thought had happened to him. His father thought he had been killed by a wild animal. This helped Joseph better understand why his father was so fearful about sending Benjamin to Egypt with his older brothers. He was afraid something might happen to him, either on the trip to Egypt, or while he was in Egypt. Judah went on to explain that his father had a great fear that something would happen to Benjamin. He was afraid that if Benjamin was taken to Egypt, he would lose both of the sons of his wife because some calamity might happen to Benjamin in Egypt. Jacob had told his sons that if something happened to Benjamin, it would bring his grey hairs down to the grave. This meant that if anything happened to Benjamin on this trip, Judah knew it would kill his father.

Genesis 44:30-34 says, “Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad *is* not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad’s life, it will happen, when he sees that the lad *is* not *with* us, that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, “If I do not bring him *back* to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.” Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. For how shall I go up to my father if the lad *is* not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?” Here, we see that Judah could not bear the thought of going to his father without Benjamin. He fully understood how special the youngest son was to his father. Judah knew that if the youngest son did not come back with the brothers, their father would die. Judah said he and the other brothers would cause their father to go to the grave in sorrow if Benjamin was not with them when they returned to their father.

Judah went on to say that he had taken the personal responsibility for the life of Benjamin. Judah said he had become surety for his younger brother. The word translated “surety” means to *become bail or surety for another*. By this statement, Judah said he had promised to personally take Benjamin’s place and would bear the blame forever if anything happened to Benjamin. Then, Judah said, “Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers.” Here, we see that Judah personally pled with the governor to allow him to become the slave and to allow Benjamin to return to his father. This statement made it clear that Judah, and the other brothers, had greatly changed the attitude that had caused them to sell Joseph as a slave, even though he had pleaded with them. Genesis 42:21 says, “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.’” The brothers had expressed their guilt the first time they had come to Egypt because they did not realize Joseph could understand what they were saying.

However, this time Joseph saw that Judah had taken the personal responsibility to stay in the place of Benjamin. This attitude, on the part of Judah, and his great concern to not cause the death of his father, showed that he no longer had the attitude that had been shown many years earlier. There was no way Judah could even bear the thought of evil coming on his father, and so, he was willing and ready to take the place of his brother. Judah showed by his words that he had passed the test and that the anger he had in the past, when they sold Joseph as a slave, was no longer present.

One of the descendants of Judah was Christ. We see that Christ also wanted to please God, the Father, and so, Christ was willing and ready to take our place and die for our sins so that we could receive forgiveness as a free gift. As a result, Judah gave us a small illustration of the much greater ministry Christ would have when He came to this earth to do the will of the Father. Christ established a new covenant by His obedience. Hebrews 10:9 says, “...then He said, ‘Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.’ He takes away

the first that He may establish the second.” We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others how the Lord changed the attitudes of Judah and his brothers during the twenty-two years since they had sold Joseph as a slave. The Lord is able to change and transform the hearts of all those who come to Him in repentance and faith, just as He changed the attitude of Judah. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.