

## **Dr. Kenneth Mathews, Genesis, Session 23, Joseph Reunited with his Brothers (Gen. 42-45) Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

### **1. Abstract of Mathews, Genesis, Session 23, Joseph Reunited with his Brothers (Gen. 42-45), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

Dr. Kenneth Mathews' Genesis session 23 focuses on the biblical story of Joseph's reunion with his brothers, covering Genesis chapters 42-45. The lesson highlights the **reconciliation** between Joseph and his brothers, emphasizing the **parallel between the patriarchs' experiences and the future experiences of Israel**. Mathews analyzes the brothers' journeys to Egypt, Joseph's **deception and testing of his brothers**, and their eventual **confession and remorse**. The narrative showcases God's **superintendence** over the patriarchs' lives and His ultimate plan for their redemption and prosperity. The session concludes with the **revelation of Joseph's identity** and the brothers' joyful reunion, emphasizing themes of forgiveness, transformation, and God's overarching providence.

**2. 11 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Mathews, Genesis, Session 23 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Pentateuch → Genesis).**



**Mathews\_Genesis\_  
Session23.mp3**

### **3. Briefing Document: Mathews, Genesis, Session 23, Joseph Reunited with Brothers (Gen. 42-45)**

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from Dr. Kenneth Mathews' lecture on Genesis 42-45, focusing on the reunion of Joseph and his brothers:

#### **Briefing Document: Genesis 42-45 - Joseph Reunited with His Brothers**

##### **Overview:**

This session focuses on the pivotal chapters in Genesis (42-45) where Joseph, having risen to power in Egypt, is reunited with his brothers. Dr. Mathews explores how this narrative illustrates God's providential hand in the lives of the patriarchs and, by extension, the future nation of Israel. The story highlights themes of reconciliation, divine sovereignty, human responsibility, and transformation.

##### **Main Themes and Key Ideas:**

###### **1. God's Superintendence:**

- The narrative portrays God as actively guiding events, even seemingly negative ones, for a greater purpose.
- Dr. Mathews emphasizes parallels between the experiences of Abraham, Joseph, and the future nation of Israel (e.g., descent into and deliverance from Egypt).
- Quote: "And so what I'd like for us to recall is the main ideas that have been taking place and how these, in a narrative fashion, proclaim how God is superintending the lives of the patriarchs and, in some way, will superintend the life of future Israel."
- The famine serves as a catalyst for God's plan, forcing the brothers to go to Egypt.
- Joseph interprets his hardships as being ordained by God for the preservation of life. Quote: "it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you."
- This is further emphasized when Joseph says, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done: the saving of many lives."

### 1. **Reconciliation:**

- The primary focus is the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers, mirroring earlier reconciliations like Isaac and Ishmael, and Jacob and Esau.
- Quote: "And now here we have it, the schism within the family that would always be threatening the promissory blessing that God has in mind. There, there was reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers."
- This reconciliation is presented as a necessary step to fulfilling God's promises to the patriarchs.
- The reunion highlights the resolution of the long-standing conflict and hatred stemming from Joseph's past.
- The brothers' change of heart, seen in their remorse for their past actions, demonstrates genuine repentance. Their willingness to accept slavery and put themselves at personal risk for Benjamin's sake illustrates this transformation.

### 1. **Transformation through Confession and Trial:**

- The brothers begin to recognize their guilt in the ill-treatment of Joseph (Genesis 42:21).
- Their suffering in Egypt, including the accusations of spying and stealing, forces them to confront their past. Quote: "Surely we are being punished because of our brother."
- Their trials highlight the importance of confession and acknowledging dependence on God's grace.
- Quote: "And this transformation begins with confession. It begins with a recognition that they are altogether dependent upon God's grace and mercy."
- This transformation is not immediate and is achieved through Joseph's testing of his brothers.

### 1. **Joseph's Deception and Testing:**

- Joseph initially deceives his brothers to test their character and see if they have changed.
- The two journeys to Egypt (with and without Benjamin) are used by Joseph to evaluate their moral state.

- He tests them, specifically, concerning their treatment of Benjamin as a means of assessing their remorse.
- He uses methods such as returning the brothers' silver and planting a diviner's cup to create scenarios that would reveal their true character.
- Quote: "he compromised ... If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here in prison, and the rest of you go home, get your youngest brother, bring him back to me, and this will prove that what you said is true."

#### 1. **The Significance of Benjamin:**

- Benjamin, the youngest brother and Joseph's full brother (same mother), is central to Joseph's testing of the brothers.
- Joseph is particularly concerned about Benjamin's fate, fearing that his brothers might have harmed him as well.
- The brothers' willingness to sacrifice themselves for Benjamin demonstrates their transformed loyalty.
- Benjamin's favored treatment at the meal in Egypt is designed to gauge their reactions.

#### 1. **Judah's Prominence:**

- Judah's role increases in chapter 43, and he takes responsibility for Benjamin's safety.
- Judah's pledge to his father to ensure Benjamin's safety shows his personal growth and sense of responsibility, as compared to Reuben's offer to sacrifice his own children.
- Quote: "I myself will guarantee his safety. You can hold me personally responsible for him. So here is his pledge for Benjamin."

### 1. **Reversal of Fortune:**

- The narrative is structured around reversals: famine to fullness, moral decline to spiritual renewal, and hatred to reconciliation.
- The famine in Canaan contrasts with the abundance in Egypt, highlighting God's provision.
- The "moral famine" of the brothers is reversed as they repent and seek reconciliation.

### 1. **Joseph's Transformation:**

- Joseph undergoes a personal transformation, from initially wanting to forget his past sorrows, to eventually embracing his legacy and God's bigger plan. He understands that his suffering had meaning and was part of God's larger redemptive story.
- Joseph's weeping and emotional response to his brothers demonstrate his continued affection and willingness to forgive.
- He ultimately adopts an attitude of grace and forgiveness.

### 1. **God's Plan and Blessing:**

- God's plan involves the preservation of a "remnant" and "great deliverance" for the brothers and their future family. This was intended not just for Jacob's family, but for all those who would need to come to Egypt for sustenance.
- God's plan is seen as bigger than the individual actions of the brothers. The evil they committed against Joseph was ultimately used for good.
- God's plan for blessing is universal, and the reconciliation of Joseph and his brothers is part of this larger plan.

### 1. **Segregation of Hebrews in Egypt**

- The separation of Hebrews and Egyptians during meals is significant. It foreshadows the eventual establishment of the Hebrews in the land of Goshen, segregated from the Egyptian populace. This prevents the assimilation of the Hebrews into the Egyptian culture, allowing them to retain their unique identity and purpose.

- The brothers' assimilation into Canaanite culture, as seen by Judah marrying a Canaanite woman, contrasts with their being segregated in Egypt, which will allow them to remember their purpose.

**Quotes:** Here are some key quotes from the source that help to illustrate the points above:

- "Surely we are being punished because of our brother."
- "Their hearts sank, and they turned to each other trembling. They are mortified. In their minds, they were as good as dead. They were caught between Egypt and Canaan, between this yet-to-be-revealed Joseph and then their father, Jacob. And they said, what is this that God has done to us?"
- "It was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you."
- "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done: the saving of many lives."
- "I myself will guarantee his safety. You can hold me personally responsible for him."
- "Go down to Egypt where I've learned that there is grain, in verse 2, so that we may live and not die."

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Mathews' lecture on Genesis 42-45 provides a rich interpretation of this complex narrative. It showcases God's overarching control and redemptive purposes, the transformative power of repentance, and the importance of reconciliation. The narrative emphasizes that even human failures and immoral actions are used by God to achieve a greater good. This section of Genesis lays the foundation for the subsequent story of Israel's sojourn in Egypt and its future. The ultimate message is one of hope, showing that even in the face of great hardship and sin, God's promises will prevail.

## 4. Study Guide: Mathews, Genesis, Session 23, Joseph Reunited with His Brothers (Gen. 42-45)

### Genesis 42-45: Joseph Reunited with His Brothers - Study Guide

#### Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is the primary reason the brothers travel to Egypt?
2. How does Joseph initially treat his brothers upon their arrival in Egypt?
3. Why is Simeon held as a prisoner in Egypt, and what is required for his release?
4. Why is Jacob hesitant to let Benjamin go to Egypt, and what finally convinces him?
5. What does Judah offer his father to persuade him to send Benjamin to Egypt?
6. How does the steward of Joseph's house reassure the brothers on their second visit to Egypt about their money?
7. What causes Joseph to become emotionally overwhelmed and reveal himself to his brothers?
8. What does Joseph tell his brothers about God's role in his being sold into Egypt?
9. How does Pharaoh respond to the news that Joseph's family wants to come to Egypt?
10. What is significant about the brothers' ability to speak to Joseph after his revelation in chapter 45?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. The brothers travel to Egypt because there is a severe famine in Canaan, and they need to buy grain to survive. Their father, Jacob, sends them because they are running out of food and need to replenish their supplies to avoid starvation.
2. Joseph initially treats his brothers harshly, accusing them of being spies and interrogating them. He speaks through an interpreter and disguises his identity, testing them to see if they have changed.

3. Simeon is held as a prisoner to ensure the brothers return with their youngest brother, Benjamin. Joseph makes it clear that Simeon's release depends on them bringing Benjamin back, proving their honesty.
4. Jacob is hesitant to send Benjamin because he is the only remaining son of his favored wife, Rachel, and he is afraid of losing him. He finally agrees after Judah pledges his own life for Benjamin's safety.
5. Judah guarantees Benjamin's safe return to Jacob and offers to bear the blame forever if he fails. He understands the need for food and their father's vulnerability to the loss of another son.
6. The steward tells the brothers that their God has placed their silver back in their sacks. He also reassures them that he had already received payment for the grain.
7. Joseph becomes overwhelmed with emotion when he sees Benjamin, realizes his brothers have not harmed him, and are showing genuine remorse. He can no longer hide his identity when the depth of their family loyalty is revealed.
8. Joseph tells his brothers that God sent him to Egypt to preserve life and ensure the family's survival. He says that even though they intended evil, God used their actions for good.
9. Pharaoh is very welcoming of Joseph's family, offering them the best land in Egypt to settle, promising support during the remaining years of the famine and to provide for all their needs.
10. The brothers' ability to talk to Joseph after his revelation shows that a significant change has occurred in their relationship. In the past, they hated him so much they refused to speak to him, so this interaction signifies reconciliation and forgiveness.

## Essay Questions

1. Analyze the role of deception in the story of Joseph's reunion with his brothers, examining the motivations behind Joseph's actions and their ultimate effects on his brothers and family.
2. Compare and contrast the reconciliation of Joseph with his brothers to other reconciliations in Genesis, such as Isaac and Ishmael, or Jacob and Esau. What similarities and differences do you observe, and what can we learn from these different reconciliations?
3. Discuss how the narrative of Joseph's story (chapters 42-45) develops the idea of God's providence, detailing the ways in which God's hand appears to be guiding events to fulfill his promises to the patriarchs.
4. Explore the character development of the brothers throughout chapters 42-45, paying attention to their increasing awareness of their sin, their remorse, and the sacrifices they are willing to make to protect their family and their father.
5. How does the narrative of Joseph's reunion with his brothers reflect the broader theme of moral decline and renewal as illustrated within the book of Genesis? Use specific examples.

## Glossary of Key Terms

**Canaan:** The land promised to Abraham and his descendants, which is where Jacob and his family reside prior to the events of these chapters.

**Egypt:** The land to which Joseph was sold into slavery, where he eventually rises to power, and to which his brothers travel for grain.

**Famine:** A severe lack of food, which is the immediate cause of the brothers' trip to Egypt and serves as a key plot driver.

**Reconciliation:** The restoration of friendly relations; in this case, between Joseph and his brothers, which has implications for their entire family.

**Simeon:** One of the brothers of Joseph who is held prisoner in Egypt until Benjamin is brought before Joseph.

**Benjamin:** Joseph's youngest brother, born of the same mother, and a focal point of Joseph's tests due to his favored status with Jacob.

**Judah:** A brother who takes the responsibility for Benjamin's safe return and makes a powerful plea to Joseph.

**Jacob/Israel:** The father of Joseph and the brothers, who grieves the loss of Joseph and is hesitant to risk Benjamin, showing a shift in identity between Jacob and Israel.

**El Shaddai:** A Hebrew name for God meaning "God Almighty," which highlights the divine power and faithfulness to the covenant.

**Sheol:** The Hebrew term for the underworld, used to describe the grave. Jacob uses the word to convey his despair that he will die if Benjamin is lost.

## 5. FAQs on Mathews, Genesis, Session 23, Joseph Reunited with his Brothers (Gen. 42-45), [Biblicalelearning.org](http://Biblicalelearning.org) (BeL)

### FAQ: Joseph and His Brothers (Genesis 42-45)

1. **What are the main themes explored in the narrative of Joseph's reunion with his brothers in Genesis 42-45?**
2. The primary themes revolve around reconciliation, divine providence, and the transformation of character. The narrative illustrates God's superintendence over the lives of the patriarchs, using parallels between them and the future nation of Israel (e.g., descents into and ascents from Egypt). It highlights the brothers' recognition of their past sins against Joseph, leading to confession and a dependence on God's grace and mercy, and ultimately to reconciliation. The narrative also showcases how God can use human actions, both good and evil, to achieve His larger purposes, including the preservation of life and the fulfillment of his promises.
3. **How do the brothers' two journeys to Egypt in chapters 42 and 43 contribute to the unfolding narrative?**

The first journey in chapter 42, made without Benjamin, forces the brothers to confront their past sin through the hardships they encounter in Egypt. It reveals their deep guilt and fear of divine retribution. Joseph's actions, including imprisoning Simeon and demanding the return of Benjamin, serve as a test of the brothers' character. The second journey in chapter 43, with Benjamin in tow, is a result of this test. Joseph's ultimate goal in his ruse is to see if the brothers have changed or whether they would treat Benjamin the way they had treated him. This second journey forces the brothers to make a decision in how they will respond to a younger brother being favored.

1. **What does the brothers' reaction to the discovery of the silver in their sacks reveal about their spiritual state?**

The discovery of the silver in their sacks fills the brothers with immense fear and despair. They immediately interpret this event as divine punishment for their past actions against Joseph. Their reaction demonstrates a growing awareness of God's involvement in their lives and a recognition of their own guilt and shame. They openly acknowledge that "God has done this to us" (42:28), revealing a shift from their earlier callous disregard for both Joseph and divine justice.

**1. How does Joseph test his brothers during their interactions in Egypt, and what is the purpose of these tests?**

Joseph tests his brothers primarily through deception and manipulation. He accuses them of being spies, imprisons Simeon, and demands the return of Benjamin. These tests are intended to reveal if the brothers have undergone any genuine change of heart, particularly regarding their treatment of a younger sibling and their willingness to sacrifice for one another. Joseph is also trying to assess whether they will repeat their past behavior of jealousy and violence in regard to Benjamin. The tests expose their remorse and demonstrate the significant transformation in their character.

**1. How do Reuben and Judah respond to the demand to take Benjamin to Egypt, and what does this reveal about their evolving characters?**

Initially, Reuben makes a desperate offer, declaring that his father could put his own sons to death if he failed to bring Benjamin back safely (42:37). This desperate offer, however, is not accepted. However, Judah takes on a more personal responsibility, offering himself as a guarantee for Benjamin's safety, even accepting blame if Benjamin does not return (43:9). This indicates a significant shift towards responsibility, self-sacrifice, and an acceptance of his own role in their previous sins. These different approaches highlight a growing maturity in their characters.

**1. What is the significance of Joseph's emotional response when he is reunited with his brothers, and what does this reveal about his character?**

Joseph's uncontrolled weeping and his urgent need to reveal his identity indicates that he is moved by deep affection and a sense of forgiveness towards his brothers. After an initial test, he reveals that he does not hold resentment towards them for the past, emphasizing that God's providential hand has been at work to save their lives and bring about a good outcome despite their wicked actions. This displays Joseph's mercy, patience, and understanding of God's overarching plan.

**1. How does Joseph explain the past events to his brothers upon revealing his identity, and how does this reflect a theme of divine providence?**

2. Joseph does not dwell on the betrayal, but rather tells them that it was God who sent him to Egypt before them to preserve them during the famine and bring about a great deliverance (45:5-7). He articulates that their evil actions were part of a larger, divine plan to ensure the survival of their family and God's larger purpose. This reveals the theme of divine providence, demonstrating that God can use human actions, both good and bad, to ultimately accomplish His will.

3. **What transformation is evident in both Joseph and his brothers by the end of the narrative, and how is this transformation portrayed?**
4. Both Joseph and his brothers have undergone substantial transformations. The brothers evolve from a state of animosity and jealousy to one of remorse and selflessness. This is shown by their recognition of guilt, willingness to risk their lives for Benjamin, and Judah's willingness to take responsibility. Joseph transitions from being a young, favored son to a powerful, forgiving leader who recognizes God's hand in all of their circumstances. He moves from anger and revenge to a position of forgiveness and grace, accepting his legacy and understanding the divine purpose of his experiences. This is showcased through his emotional reconciliation with his brothers, his forgiving heart, and his embracing of the role God has given to him.