



2022 2Q Genesis—Lesson 12

Joseph, Prince of Egypt

by Tim Jennings

SABBATH

Read second paragraph, “Interestingly, this whole next sequence of events...” What does it mean that “Joseph’s brothers live that whole experience as a divine judgment”?

What kind of judgment? Is it judicial? Are they saying, God examined the legality of their actions, ruled that they were guilty and sentenced them to suffer so many years of guilt, worry, anxiety, bad sleep, shame, and eventually God arranged for them to be falsely accused of stealing back their money, held in jail for three days, have Simeon restrained in Egypt while the others go back for Benjamin, and then have Benjamin falsely accused etc.

Are they saying God ordered all of this as a judgment against them?

Do we find anything in the experience of Joseph’s brothers that could qualify as judicial, as penal/legal other than what Joseph manufactured and falsely accused them of?

Joseph’s actions are not God’s actions, so we cannot count Joseph as being divine, then what is God’s divine judgment here?

When considering the question of judgment, always ask **what law lens**.

Human law = judicial judgments of guilt or innocence and infliction of punishments.

Design law = dealing with some aspect of reality, diagnosing and therapeutically intervening.

So, regarding Joseph’s brothers, what kind of judgment is this? It is the diagnosing of the condition of the heart for the purpose of bringing them to repentance and salvation.

- What law is involved?
 - The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction (Galatians 6:8 NIV84).

What caused the brother’s guilt, shame, anxiety, fear?

What caused them to be put through the trials of being falsely accused and imprisoned etc.? Wasn’t this reaping what they had sown? In other words, this isn’t punishment inflicted to pay for crimes, but it is



because the way they treated Joseph revealed their selfish, abusive, jealous and untrustworthy character. And Joseph, not being God, cannot read the secret condition of their hearts. So in order for Joseph to know whether his brothers have changed he needs to put them in situations that require them to make choices that will reveal whether they will protect others or sacrifice others to benefit themselves.

Thus, they are reaping in their relationship a trial that is a result of what they sowed into their relationship with Joseph.

Had they always treated Joseph with respect, love, self-sacrifice and IF instead of selling Joseph as they did, Joseph had been taken by raiders while his brother's fought to protect him, but the brothers were grievously wounded and almost died in their attempts to protect him, but the slavers won and took Joseph—if that had been the history what would have been their experience when they came for grain? Would they have been put through these trials?

As we discussed last week, Joseph is a real historical person who did real things and the history we have in Scripture is reliable. However, these events are recorded as lessons for us to teach us the plan of salvation, the battle between sin, fear, selfishness and righteousness, love, and trust.

Joseph is a type of Christ as we discussed last week, and in this scenario, in regard to the diagnostic and therapeutic judgments, Joseph also acts the role of Christ. The difference is that Jesus doesn't need to do such things to determine the condition of our heart, but Jesus will do such things to help US DETERMINE the nature of our own hearts in order to bring us to repentance and healing.

- Joseph judged that his brothers were selfish and untrustworthy when he last knew them.
 - Joseph had already forgiven them and did not seek or desire revenge against them—but reconciliation requires them to be trustworthy in addition to Joseph to forgive.
- Joseph judged that in order for him to know whether they were trustworthy a trial was necessary—but it wasn't a jury trial, it was a trial of experience, they had to be tried by events to reveal their character. **And each and every one of us will be tried by life events also! In God's judgment we are not tried in a courtroom, we are tried by life and our choices!**
- Then Joseph judged he could trust them and revealed himself to them.

God does this also, He judges our hearts, what is wrong, what is needed to bring us to repentance. If we refuse the easier, kinder, gentler methods, because God loves us, He will either remove His protections and allow painful consequences to come to teach us, or He will bring specific judgments (like the plagues of Egypt) to cause us to examine ourselves and the situation and come to repentance. These judgments of God are not judicial, they are therapeutic.

Consider this historic quote:

"How great is the long - suffering of God toward the wicked! The idolatrous Philistines and backsliding Israel had alike enjoyed the gifts of His providence. Ten thousand unnoticed mercies were silently falling in the pathway of ungrateful, rebellious men. Every blessing spoke to them of the Giver, but they were indifferent to His love. The forbearance of God was very great toward



the children of men; **but when they stubbornly persisted in their impenitence, He removed from them His protecting hand.** They refused to listen to the voice of God in His created works, and in the warnings, counsels, and reproofs of His word, and thus **He was forced to speak to them through judgments.**" - PP 587.4

What about the question of forgiveness?

- When does God forgive?
- Does God forgive those who have not repented?
- If God forgives those who have not repented are they saved?
- Does God's forgiveness save a person?
- What saves a sinner?
- Could a sinner be saved if God refused to forgive?

SUNDAY

The lesson points our attention to Genesis 41:28, when Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream, and it reads:

"It is just as I said to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do" (Genesis 41:28 NIV84).

Does this mean that God is the one who brought the famine?

In the Bible if it says that God did something does that mean God did it?

What about these texts?

- While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "**The fire of God fell** from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" (Job 1:16 NIV84)
 - Who brought the fire? It was Satan, yet the Bible says God did it.
- "Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance, and did not inquire of the LORD. **So the LORD put him to death** and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse." (1 Chronicles 10:13–14 NIV84).
 - How did Saul die?
 - "Saul took his own sword and fell on it. When the armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he too fell on his sword and died with him." (1 Samuel 31:4–5 NIV84).
 - Yet the Bible also says that God put him to death because he was unfaithful.

So, when the Bible says that God was about to do this, does it mean God was the active agent to bring the famine, or that God foresaw what was going to happen and sent a message of warning to protect from the famine?



If we look at this strategically through the lens of the Great Controversy, the principles and methods of God and the goals of God, then we may put this text in with the two I already read where the Bible says God did something that He didn't directly do.

After Adam sinned could humanity be saved without Jesus?

- Genesis 3:15 Jesus is promised to come and crush the serpent's head and save humanity.
- The entire Old Testament focus is on fulfilling this promise.
- We focus in on Abraham's family through Isaac and Jacob because it is through them that Messiah comes.
- Satan knows this and thus Satan works constantly to try and destroy this family.
- So, who benefits if a famine comes and the family of Jacob dies?
- One way to understand this is that Satan is working to destroy Jacob's descendants to interfere with the plan of salvation. God in His foreknowledge sees what Satan will do and sends a warning message to prepare and protect the avenue for Messiah so that all the peoples of the world may be blessed through Him.

Then why does the Bible read the way it does? Because that is how Joseph explained things to Pharaoh. But why didn't Joseph just explain to Pharaoh the conflict between God and Satan and that God's enemy was going to bring a famine, but that God sent a warning to prepare and protect?

What is the common mindset about supernatural things in Joseph's day?

They were polytheistic, meaning that they worshipped many gods. To present the Great Controversy in that setting may have fueled a polytheistic worldview—"there is more than one supernatural being, let's offer sacrifices to the god who brings famines so he won't bring famines anymore and so forth."

So, if Joseph presented the GC to Pharaoh, Pharaoh and the priests of the various other gods, may have decided to offer sacrifices to the god that was going to bring the famine, rather than prepare for the famine. They may have considered, well if your God who warned us isn't powerful enough to stop the god who is bringing the famine, maybe we should be worshipping the god who can control the weather and bring famines.

So all through the Old Testament we find God taking credit for things He didn't do, primarily to reach the people where they were in their understanding of things and lead them to truth and salvation.

MONDAY

Read third paragraph which focuses on the meeting where the brothers bow down to Joseph, "Second, this prudential..." What do you think about the idea of "just retribution" the lesson inserts into this narrative?



So I looked up retribution in the dictionary, just to be sure I wasn't misunderstanding the meaning and it reads:

- requital according to merits or deserts, especially for evil.
- something given or inflicted in such requital.

Then I looked up requital and it means:

- to make repayment or return for (service, benefits, etc.).
- to make retaliation for (a wrong, injury, etc.); avenge.
- to retaliate on (a person, group, etc.) for a wrong, injury, etc.

When you read the story of Joseph and his brothers, their meeting, Joseph's actions, and the outcome. Do you see Joseph seeking to retaliate, avenge a wrong, make them pay? Or do you see Joseph longing for reconciliation, heart aching to be reunited with his family, but unsure of whether he can trust them, so he creates circumstances that require them to act and reveal their values and character?

What is going on that the lesson authors would pervert the Scripture like this and twist it to teach that Joseph was seeking just retribution, when Joseph was in fact living out God's law of love and seeking to heal and restore?

It is evidence that whoever wrote this has the wrong understanding of God's law. If we accept Satan's lie that God's law functions like human law, then one must believe that justice requires God to inflict punishment for sin.

This is Satan's greatest achievement, his lies about God's law, that get believers in God to promote Satan's view of God and ultimately practice Satan's methods on others, such as crucifying the Son of God, all the while claiming they were honoring and worshiping God.

In the bottom gray section it reads, "Most of us, surely, have done things for which we are sorry. How can we, to whatever degree possible, make up for what we have done?"

This language is ambiguous—it could be understood in a way that is beneficial and a part of God's healing solution, but it could also be understood in a way that fuels Satan's methods and practices.

What is the key to understanding this in a healthy way?

What law lens are we thinking through.

If design law then we understand that sin damages—it damages the sinner and others. Thus, if we are truly repentant we want to mitigate the harm we have caused others, and we seek to restore what we have taken from them. But the motivation is for their best interest, not to make us feel good about ourselves. Thus, we must assess whether our actions will help or hurt the person we want to make up to.

This is why in the 12 steps of AA, which are really the steps of conversion and spiritual growth to Christian maturity, steps 8 and 9 read:



- Step 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
- Step 9: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

So, this is a healthy way to understand making up, meaning seeking to heal any wound or harm we have caused.

But this could also be understood in an unhealthy way and that is when we think through imposed law. And in that mindset making up means making payments, appeasements, and atonements, doing something that is designed to propitiate wrath, to influence the wronged party not to be upset any more, to turn away their anger. This leads to false theologies and activities like:

- Offering God sacrifices to turn away His wrath, to propitiate Him in some way
- Doing various good works as a means of “balancing the scales” in the cosmic justice system
- Doing various penances
- Purgatory
- Indulgences
- Any form of offerings designed to alleviate guilt and make one feel better
- Any form of works designed to make one feel like they have made up for their sin—a form of paying a fine

TUESDAY

The lesson focuses on Joseph treating Benjamin with greater favor than the brothers, such as larger portions of food.

Why did Joseph do this?

Why did Joseph put the cup in Benjamin’s bag and then threaten to keep Benjamin as a slave?

Couldn’t Joseph have just revealed himself to his brothers as they arrived the first time and then simply asked them, “Have you changed? Have you repented? Can I trust you now?” And if they said “Yes, we are sorry. We will never do such things again. You can trust us” wouldn’t that have been good enough? Why not?

Is it any different today? Can we rely on what people say when we don’t have a track record of their reliability? Worse, can we rely on those who have already proven to be either untrustworthy or incompetent?

What is the basis of trust? Trustworthiness, but what makes someone trustworthy?



They must love you more than themselves, they must have a desire for your good rather than a desire to use you to benefit themselves, they must have maturity to govern self and fulfill whatever the role is, and they must have wisdom to understand and practice God's methods.

But can a person be trustworthy in heart motive, genuinely want to benefit you, and yet you still cannot trust them? Why? You can trust their motive, but you may not be able to trust their recommendations, choices, actions, or follow their advice, because they may not understand the situation correctly. The point being, you must think for yourself and be persuaded in your own mind.

WEDNESDAY

Read the third paragraph, "That Joseph was using a divination cup did not mean that he believed in its power..." Aren't we relieved to realize that Joseph didn't believe in spiritualism, or divination, or any other form of black magic or fortune telling?

But, what transpired here was more than Joseph just allowing them to believe this idea on their own. Joseph instructed his servants to say to his brothers when they pulled the cup out of Benjamin's sack, "Isn't this the cup my master drinks from and also uses for divination?" (Genesis 44:5).

So this isn't merely allowing the brothers to come to their own flawed conclusion, it is purposeful misdirection, planting an idea in order to mislead the mind. Isn't this a form a deception?

And if it is deception, is it wrong? Is it sin? Why or why not?

Do we have any other examples of people working for God who deceived, even lied? There of course of Rahab who hid the spies and lied and we find both in the lineage of Jesus and the hall of faith in Hebrews.

But what about prophets of God, any of those who purposely misled others, told things in a way that wasn't factual, who presented something in a false light?

What about the story in 1Kings 20:

By the word of the LORD one of the sons of the prophets said to his companion, "Strike me with your weapon," but the man refused.

So the prophet said, "Because you have not obeyed the LORD, as soon as you leave me a lion will kill you." And after the man went away, a lion found him and killed him.

The prophet found another man and said, "Strike me, please." So the man struck him and wounded him. Then the prophet went and stood by the road waiting for the king [Ahab]. He disguised himself with his headband down over his eyes. As the king passed by, the prophet called out to him, "Your servant went into the thick of the battle, and someone came to me with a captive and said, 'Guard this man. If he is missing, it will be your life for his life, or you must pay a talent of silver.' While your servant was busy here and there, the man disappeared."



“That is your sentence,” the king of Israel said. “You have pronounced it yourself.”

Then the prophet quickly removed the headband from his eyes, and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. He said to the king, “This is what the LORD says: ‘You have set free a man I had determined should die. Therefore it is your life for his life, your people for his people.’” Sullen and angry, the king of Israel went to his palace in Samaria. (1 Kings 20:35–43 NIV84).

Was the prophet deceiving Ahab? Was it sin to do so? Why or why not?

Or the story in 1Kings 13 where Jeroboam was confronted by the prophet of the Lord prophesying about the birth of Josiah and Jeroboam reaches out his hand to grab the prophet and his hand withers and the altar splits in two. Jeroboam asks the prophet to pray his hand be restored and it was. Jeroboam wants to treat the prophet to a great feast but the prophet replies that the Lord instructed him not to eat bread or drink water or return the same way he came. But on his way back home he is met by an older prophet and this is what happened:

So the prophet said to him, “Come home with me and eat.”

The man of God said, “I cannot turn back and go with you, nor can I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. I have been told by the word of the LORD: ‘You must not eat bread or drink water there or return by the way you came.’”

The old prophet answered, “I too am a prophet, as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the LORD: ‘Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.’” (**But he was lying to him.**) So the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house.

While they were sitting at the table, the word of the LORD came to the old prophet who had brought him back. He cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah, “This is what the LORD says: ‘You have defied the word of the LORD and have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you. You came back and ate bread and drank water in the place where he told you not to eat or drink. Therefore your body will not be buried in the tomb of your fathers.’”

When the man of God had finished eating and drinking, the prophet who had brought him back saddled his donkey for him. As he went on his way, a lion met him on the road and killed him, and his body was thrown down on the road, with both the donkey and the lion standing beside it. Some people who passed by saw the body thrown down there, with the lion standing beside the body, and they went and reported it in the city where the old prophet lived.

When the prophet who had brought him back from his journey heard of it, he said, “It is the man of God who defied the word of the LORD. The LORD has given him over to the lion, which has mauled him and killed him, as the word of the LORD had warned him.”

The prophet said to his sons, “Saddle the donkey for me,” and they did so. Then he went out and found the body thrown down on the road, with the donkey and the lion standing beside it. The lion had neither eaten the body nor mauled the donkey. So the prophet picked up the body of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back to his own city to mourn for him and bury him. Then he laid the body in his own tomb, and they mourned over him and said, “Oh, my brother!”



After burying him, he said to his sons, “When I die, bury me in the grave where the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones. For the message he declared by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel and against all the shrines on the high places in the towns of Samaria will certainly come true.” (1 Kings 13:15–32 NIV84).

Was it sin for the older prophet to lie to the younger prophet?

Consider the story in 1Kings 22. The setting is Ahab meeting with Jehoshaphat trying to get Jehoshaphat to join him in attacking Ramoth Gilead. The prophet Micaiah is called and this is what the prophet told them:

Micaiah continued, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. And the LORD said, ‘Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?’

“One suggested this, and another that. Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD and said, ‘I will entice him.’

“ ‘By what means?’ the LORD asked.

“ ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,’ he said.

“ ‘You will succeed in enticing him,’ said the LORD. ‘Go and do it.’

“So now the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The LORD has decreed disaster for you.” (1Kings 22:19-23 NIV84).

Does God actually lie? No, then is the prophet lying to Ahab about the spirits in heaven being sent from God to lie to him? What does it mean? That God is sending a message to Ahab, a man who worships Baal and believes all things happen by God who makes them happen. **So, in grace, God steps down and assumes the role of causing the lies** to be told in order to inform Ahab that going to war will result in his death. This was not about how things truly happen in heaven, but a message of mercy communicated in the only way the listener could comprehend that he had been lied to, all in order to save the sinner.

Did Joseph and these various prophets mislead, present things in a false light that caused the other party to draw false conclusions? Yes, they all did, but was it sin? Why or why not?

The commandment says: “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor” (Exodus 20:16 NIV84).

Were these various deceits bearing false witness against someone, misrepresenting them to another to hurt them?

What is the difference between these falsehoods and the lies told by Simeon and Levi at Shechem? What was the motive for the lies by Simeon and Levi? What was the motive for the deceits told in these stories?



What about truth telling, can truth telling be sinful? Can people tell truths for the purpose of causing harm, injuring another's reputation, for evil purposes? Can it be sin if it is the truth?

For instance, I am a psychiatrist, I have an ethical, moral, and legal obligation to keep people's confidences, including the fact that a person is a patient of mine.

What would the righteous response be for me if I had a patient who was a pastor that came to see me to get help with an addiction, because he is under conviction and wants to get help to overcome. I have never met this pastor in any other capacity than as my patient. But later a member of our class comes up to me and asks "Do you know pastor so and so..." What should I say? Should I say, "Well, my ethical duties and legal obligations as a psychiatrist prohibit me from answering your question"? Should I say, "Yes I do." And then what do I say when they ask where I met him or how I know him? Or do I say, no? What is the answer that protects the reputation of the pastor and does him no harm?

What do you think of this historic comment about the ninth commandment:

The ninth commandment requires of us an inviolable regard for exact truth in every declaration by which the character of our fellow men may be affected. The tongue, which is kept so little under the control of the human agent, is to be bridled by strong conscientious principles, by the law of love toward God and man. Sons and Daughters of God 64.2

False-speaking in any matter, every attempt or purpose to deceive our neighbor, is here included. An intention to deceive is what constitutes falsehood. By a glance of the eye, a motion of the hand, an expression of the countenance, a falsehood may be told as effectually as by words. All intentional overstatement, every hint or insinuation calculated to convey an erroneous or exaggerated impression, even the statement of facts in such a manner as to mislead, is falsehood. This precept forbids every effort to injure our neighbor's reputation by misrepresentation or evil surmising, by slander or tale-bearing. Even the intentional suppression of truth, by which injury may result to others, is a violation of the ninth commandment. Sons and Daughters of God 64.3

Does this comment then mean that Joseph was wrong to mislead his brothers, or the various prophets we read about were sinning because they purposely presented things in a light that was designed to mislead?

No—the issue is one of motive, purpose, and emphasis. Notice the comments by EGW are twice connected to anything that is about another person's character, specifically she says, "The ninth commandment requires of us an inviolable regard for exact truth in every declaration by which the character of our fellow men may be affected."

Thus, we are not to bear false testimony in anyway about another person, in any deceptive way that injures another's reputation or impugns their character.

All the examples from Scripture, including Joseph's, was not about injuring another or misrepresenting another, but it was about having others declare themselves, reveal themselves, or have



opportunity to overcome and improve themselves, or to protect another. In other words, all the examples given from Scripture were redemptive acts, not selfish acts.

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, “Joseph then declares...” Is this correct? Was their evil against Joseph necessary for God to deliver them?

It is very much the argument some of the legalistic Jews were making and which Paul refutes in Romans 3:5-8:

But if our unrighteousness brings out God’s righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.) 6 Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world? 7 Someone might argue, “If my falsehood enhances God’s truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?” 8 Why not say—as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say—“Let us do evil that good may result”? Their condemnation is deserved. Romans 3:5-8 NIV84

Here is how I rendered this in the Remedy:

But if our sickness and selfishness make God's enduring, healing love easier to see and understand, how do we interpret that? Do we say that since our wickedness makes God's goodness easier to see, since our selfishness makes God's love easier to comprehend, since our sickness makes God's Remedy easier to understand, that we are therefore helping God win his case? Is God unjust if he doesn't give us a free pass? (I am using a human argument that fails to understand the basic principles upon which the universe operates.) Absolutely not! If that were the case, how could God allow anyone to experience the consequences of the persistent refusal of his life-giving Remedy? Some who see sin as a legal problem might argue, "If I were to lie in order to help God reveal what truthfulness is and thus increase his glory, I am actually on his side helping him, so why should I suffer the fate of a sinner?" They might as well try claiming—as we are being falsely accused of saying—"It is by doing wrong that the right occurs. It is by doing evil that good results. It is by acting selfishly that love grows." Those who teach such things deserve the consequence of a depraved and destroyed mind, which is the only result of practicing methods at variance with God's. They fail to understand that violations of God's law of love actually damage the sinner and destroy God's image, methods and principles within them.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

July 15-16, 2022: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the United Healthcare Summit in Grand Rapids MI. His talk will be entitled COVID and the Manipulation of Your Mind. More details at <https://unitedhealthcaresummit.com/>

September 8-10, 2022: Dr. Jennings and Dr. Curt Thompson will be presenting an Intensive together at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Conference in Dallas, TX. You can find more details about the event at <https://nationalaacc.com/>