READ **REFLECT** **APPLY**

Genesis 42:1-24

IGNORANT HUMILITY

The famine that was being felt so severely throughout Egypt and the surrounding nations, included Canaan where Jacob and his eleven sons were living. Despite their fallen characters, the Lord still had His hand upon them, because they were His people, formed from His miraculous intervention to reveal the power of God and His salvation. God would use the famine to restore their relationship both with Him and Joseph, whom they had despised and rejected in their youth.

Joseph's brothers had a hunger that could not be satisfied. What does it mean to be spiritually hungry, and how are people in the world satisfying that need?

HUNGER v 1-5 – Jacob and his sons had not had the benefit of God's prophetic dreams regarding the famine. They had not stored up any grain. Therefore, it was not long after the years of famine began, before they were wondering how they were going to feed themselves and their animals. Their lives were in danger and they did not know what to do. Jacob heard there was corn in Egypt and directed his sons to travel there and buy grain. This would be time consuming and expensive, but nevertheless, Jacob insisted that it was the only way for them to survive. Despite the fact that by now the elder sons were around fifty years old, their father had not forgotten what had happened to Joseph. He was not willing to entrust his youngest and only remaining link with his beloved wife Rachel to their care. Benjamin was to stay at home where he would not face the peril of the journey.

IGNORANT HUMILITY v 6-8 – so ten brothers, the same ten that had carried out murderous plans against Joseph years before, eventually arrived in Egypt and bowed down before him as governor of the land, unwittingly fulfilling the dreams they had mocked long ago. Joseph recognised his brothers immediately. Perhaps he had been looking out for them, knowing the famine stretched to all the lands around. They had come at last, but did not recognise him. Their memories were of a young lad, mocked, beaten and bound in the hands of ruthless slave traders. Joseph, dressed as an Egyptian and named 'Zaphnathpaaneah' `spoke through an interpreter thus hiding his knowledge of their native language. They thought they were bowing down to the mighty ruler of Pharaoh's land. This man, in his glorious and powerful position, who questioned their identity and motives, was a stranger to them.

The world has rejected the Lord Jesus in His humble identity as the Son of Man. What will happen when they meet Him in His position of power and authority? (Phil.2:5-11, Rev.19:11-16)

TESTING CONVERSATION v 9-17 – seeing his ten brothers bowing down to him, Joseph remembered his dream. However, it had been eleven stars that had bowed down as well as the sun and the moon. This was only a partial fulfilment. Hiding his identity and testing the attitude of his brothers, he questioned them closely about their home circumstances, accusing them of being spies. This brought a half confession from his desperate brothers, as they acknowledged the existence of their twelfth brother, and pretended he had been taken from them through death. Claiming all the might of Pharaoh's power, Joseph demanded their story be verified, by proving their youngest brother's existence. He put them all in prison for three days while he apparently decided what to do with them.

ADMISSION OF GUILT v 18-24 – on the third day, Joseph in his disguise, revealed his plan. He insisted that one brother would be bound and kept in prison, whilst the others went to fetch Benjamin. This awakened their conscience as they remembered the time when they heard the anguished cries of Joseph as he was imprisoned in binding ropes, dumped in a well and later sold to slaves. Listening to their agitated confessions, Joseph was overcome with emotion and had to leave the room to regain his composure. He knew that if his brothers were acknowledging their wrong doing and burdened by it, there was hope of eventual forgiveness and reconciliation. Having regained his composure, Joseph returned to them, bound up Simeon while they watched and sent him back to prison.

What will you say when the Lord Jesus asks you who you are, where you have come from and what your motives have been behind all that you have done? (1 Cor.4:5, Heb.4:12)

'Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.'
Matthew 5:17