

The Lord has built watermarks into the sacred Hebrew text to prove the integrity of the words, no matter what language it is translated into. These are called **chiasms**, based on the Greek letter for X. These are a reversal of the grammatical structure in successive phrases or clauses. There are hundreds, if not thousands, in both Old and New Testaments. Below is a sample from today's lesson. The content of line A matches the content of line A'.

GENESIS 42:18-20

- A. Vs.18 On the third day Joseph said to them, "I am a God-fearing man. If you do as I say,
 B. you will live.
 C.. 19 If you really are honest men,
 D. let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison:
X. The rest of you may go home with grain for your starving families.
 D'. 20 But bring your youngest brother unto me;
 C'. This will prove that you are telling the truth
 B'. and you will not die
 A'. To this they agreed.

GENESIS CHAPTERS 42- 43

42-43 Gen NLT-C

By Charles Dailey © 2014 NLT CPS

Updated 12/28/2020 Printed 12/27/2020

Genesis Previously

Jacob acquired both the family birthright and family blessing.

Then Jacob left Canaan to marry. He saw a stairway to heaven.

Jacob married Leah, then Rachel. He acquired property.

Jacob returns to Canaan, Laban pursues, but makes agreement

Jacob reconciles with his brother Esau.

The Dinah incident, Jacob renamed Israel, Rachel dies.

Joseph sold into Egypt. Tamar outwits Judah.

Joseph imprisoned, interprets dreams for inmates.

Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams and is elevated to be second in charge of Egypt.

We are watching the story as God has moved His key man Joseph to Egypt and elevated him to a key place in the government. God is being active in the affairs of earth.

JACOB SENDS HIS SONS TO EGYPT

(42:1) When Jacob heard that grain was available in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why are you standing around looking at one another? (2) I have heard there is grain in Egypt. Go down there, and buy enough grain to keep us alive. Otherwise we'll die." (3) So Joseph's ten older brothers went down to Egypt to buy grain. (4) But Jacob wouldn't let Joseph's younger brother, Benjamin, go with them, for fear some harm might come to him.

- **Jacob** was very careful to preserve his other **son** by Rachel, believing that he had lost **Joseph**. **Tom Bradford** describes the scene:

"We have now moved from Egypt and Joseph, back to Canaan and Jacob. The great famine having now affected an enormous area, Jacob's clan is in a bad way.

And, the first verse of this chapter we see Jacob, Israel, in a rather sarcastic mood, as he says to his sons: “Why are you STARING at each other?” In other words, you KNOW we’re in dire straits, you KNOW that there is grain available in Egypt, so why are you all sitting here waiting for SOMEBODY else to do something.

Let’s remember, he was not speaking to children. These men were all middle-aged and beyond, most with their own children by now.

So, Jacob, unable to wait any longer for these sons to do (on their own volition) what is right and necessary, orders all of them, except for Benjamin, to go to Egypt, to buy grain. Was Benjamin not old enough to go? Certainly he was. But, Benjamin had taken the place of Joseph in Jacob’s heart, because Benjamin and Joseph were his two sons through the wife Jacob loved the most . . . Rachel, now deceased. He simply wasn’t going to risk Benjamin, after having lost Joseph. As the sons of Israel arrive in Egypt, they join in with many more tribes and peoples from other nations, all in need of being saved from starvation. And, who is it they must go to for their salvation? Joseph.”

(5) So Jacob's sons arrived in Egypt along with others to buy food, for the famine was in Canaan as well. (6) Since Joseph was governor of all Egypt and in charge of selling grain to all the people, it was to him that his brothers came. When they arrived, they bowed before him with their faces to the ground.

- **Bowing** down is what **Joseph** had predicted when he was a youth at home. Then, the **brothers** hated the idea, now it was for their own bread. **Prager** observes: “The Hebrew words repeat those of Joseph’s childhood dreams, in which his brothers’ sheaves in the field gathered around and

his brothers were served at a separate table. The Egyptians who ate with Joseph sat at their own table, because Egyptians despise Hebrews and refuse to eat with them.

- In spite of his high rank, the **Egyptians** would not eat with the **Hebrew Joseph**. **Prager** observes: “The Egyptians regarded themselves as a superior race. Foreigners were viewed as unclean, and therefore Egyptians ate only with fellow Egyptians. This Egyptian particularism probably asserted itself even more strongly in this situation because the Hebrews were shepherds, an occupation viewed by the Egyptians as abhorrent (Genesis 46:34).”

Prager, Dennis. *The Rational Bible: Genesis* (p. 508). Regnery Faith. Kindle Edition.

(33) Joseph told each of his brothers where to sit, and to their amazement, he seated them according to age, from oldest to youngest. (34) And Joseph filled their plates with food from his own table, giving Benjamin five times as much as he gave the others. So they feasted and drank freely with him.

- The ten brothers were overlooking some clues.
 - Joseph was not seated with the Egyptians. Maybe he was not Egyptian!
 - “The man” was a worshiper of God.
 - Joseph’s household manager was either a worshiper of God or knew who God was.
 - The brothers were seated by birth order. How did their host know that?
 - **Five** portions were given to the full brother **Benjamin**.
- The banquet was cordial.

Conclusion:

God is busy mending the fences. In the next chapter, Joseph reveals his identity.

- **The brothers** quickly explained the **money-in-their-sacks** matter because they were afraid of being trapped and arrested. Remember how they had treated Joseph many years ago. This man (Joseph) might jail them and take their many animals.

(23) "Relax. Don't be afraid," the household manager told them. "Your God, the God of your father, must have put this treasure into your sacks. I know I received your payment." Then he released Simeon and brought him out to them. (24) The manager then led the men into Joseph's palace. He gave them water to wash their feet and provided food for their donkeys. (25) They were told they would be eating there, so they prepared their gifts for Joseph's arrival at noon.

- **The household manager** said that he had their **money**. He also knows about their **God**. Was he a worshiper? He says he knows they paid for their grain.

(26) **When Joseph came home, they gave him the gifts they had brought him, then bowed low to the ground before him.** (27) **After greeting them, he asked, "How is your father, the old man you spoke about? Is he still alive?"** (28) **"Yes," they replied. "Our father, your servant, is alive and well." And they bowed low again.**

- All of this was through an interpreter.

JOSEPH SPOTS BENJAMIN

(29) **Then Joseph looked at his brother Benjamin, the son of his own mother. "Is this your youngest brother, the one you told me about?" Joseph asked. "May God be gracious to you, my son."** (30) **Then Joseph hurried from the room because he was overcome with emotion for his brother. He went into his private room, where he broke down and wept.** (31) **After washing his face, he came back out, keeping himself under control. Then he ordered, "Bring out the food!"** (32) **The waiters served Joseph at his own table, and**

bowed down to his sheaf, and the sun, moon, and stars in the sky bowed low to him (Genesis 37:5-11)."

Prager, Dennis. *The Rational Bible: Genesis* (p. 494). Regnery Faith. Kindle Edition.

JOSEPH DOES NOT REVEAL HIS IDENTITY

(7) **Joseph recognized his brothers instantly, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them. "Where are you from?" he demanded. "From the land of Canaan," they replied. "We have come to buy food."** (8) **Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they didn't recognize him. (9) And he remembered the dreams he'd had about them many years before. He said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see how vulnerable our land has become."** (10) **"No, my lord!" they exclaimed. "Your servants have simply come to buy food. (11) We are all brothers—members of the same family. We are honest men, sir! We are not spies!"**

- The **brothers** did not recognize **Joseph**. It had been 20 years and he was still a lad. The boy had become a man, the Hebrew beard was shaved as Egyptians did not wear beards. His hair was Egyptian style. He spoke the language of Egypt. He was now refined and confident.
- **Joseph** was talking through an interpreter, so the **brothers** had no idea that he could understand them. **Joseph** remembered the **dreams** of his youth and saw the story unfolding. The 11 sheaves of grain were bowing down to him. God was in all of this. To test his brothers, he accused them of being **spies**.

(12) **"Yes, you are!" Joseph insisted. "You have come to see how vulnerable our land has become."** (13) **"Sir," they said, "there are actually twelve of us. We, your servants, are all brothers, sons of a man living in the land of Canaan. Our youngest brother is back there with our father right now, and one of our brothers is no longer with us."**

- **Joseph** was actually learning about the rest of his family.

(14) But Joseph insisted, "As I said, you are spies! (15) This is how I will test your story. I swear by the life of Pharaoh that you will never leave Egypt unless your youngest brother comes here! (16) One of you must go and get your brother. I'll keep the rest of you here in prison. Then we'll find out whether or not your story is true. By the life of Pharaoh, if it turns out that you don't have a younger brother, then I'll know you are spies."

- **Joseph** was wanting to see his full **brother**. This was his way to accomplish it. **Burton Coffman** adds another dimension: "Under the rules of that ancient society, every accused was considered guilty until proved innocent, and the burden of proof was always upon the defendant."

JOSEPH IMPRISONS HIS BROTHERS

(17) So Joseph put them all in prison for three days. (18) On the third day Joseph said to them, "I am a God-fearing man. If you do as I say, you will live. (19) If you really are honest men, choose one of your brothers to remain in prison. The rest of you may go home with grain for your starving families. (20) But you must bring your youngest brother back to me. This will prove that you are telling the truth, and you will not die." To this they agreed.

- **Joseph** revealed that he worshiped **God**. **Tom Bradford** describes the scene:

"... they are afraid, for they are totally at this ruler's arbitrary mercy. Truth and justice matter not at all at this point, and they know it. For a ruler of Joseph's stature can decide matters summarily, and order whatever punishment he deems appropriate. They are helpless and powerless to control their fate... just as Joseph found himself helpless, so long ago, lying at the bottom of a dry well; begging and crying for mercy that would not come from these same pitiless brothers, now standing before him hat-in-hand."

and prepare a big feast." (17) So the man did as Joseph told him and took them into Joseph's palace.

- Bringing **Benjamin** was cause for a noon-time feast. But the brothers did not know why they were being brought in at the moment. **C.C. Crawford** pictures this: "On their arrival in Egypt, Joseph ordered his steward to take them to his house and make ready the noonday meal. The brothers were now frightened, and on reaching the house they explained to the steward the restoration of their money, but he replied that he had received it, and must have been their God who restored it; he further reassured them by bringing out Simeon. Joseph soon followed his brethren and the meal was served, but Joseph sat at one table, his brethren at another, and the Egyptians at a third, "as shepherds were an abomination to the Egyptians." The brothers were entertained liberally, but; were surprised at finding themselves placed. at their table exactly in the order of their ages, and that Joseph sent a fivefold portion to Benjamin."

LUNCH AT JOSEPH'S HOUSE

(18) The brothers were terrified when they saw that they were being taken into Joseph's house. "It's because of the money someone put in our sacks last time we were here," they said. "He plans to pretend that we stole it. Then he will seize us, make us slaves, and take our donkeys." (19) The brothers approached the manager of Joseph's household and spoke to him at the entrance to the palace. (20) "Sir," they said, "we came to Egypt once before to buy food. (21) But as we were returning home, we stopped for the night and opened our sacks. Then we discovered that each man's money—the exact amount paid—was in the top of his sack! Here it is; we have brought it back with us. (22) We also have additional money to buy more food. We have no idea who put our money in our sacks."

gifts—balm, honey, gum, aromatic resin, pistachio nuts, and almonds. (12) Also take double the money that was put back in your sacks, as it was probably someone's mistake. (13) Then take your brother, and go back to the man. (14) May God Almighty give you mercy as you go before the man, so that he will release Simeon and let Benjamin return. But if I must lose my children, so be it."

- They were to take along **gifts** of local food as well as the **money** for purchasing grain. Jacob had to give in and allow **Benjamin** to make the trip. He expressed faith in **God** for the outcome.

BACK TO EGYPT



(15) So the men packed Jacob's gifts and double the money and headed off with Benjamin. They finally arrived in Egypt and presented themselves to Joseph. (16) When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the manager of his household, "These men will eat with me this noon. Take them inside the palace. Then go slaughter an animal,

(21) Speaking among themselves, they said, "Clearly we are being punished because of what we did to Joseph long ago. We saw his anguish when he pleaded for his life, but we wouldn't listen. That's why we're in this trouble." (22) "Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy?" Reuben asked. "But you wouldn't listen. And now we have to answer for his blood!" (23) Of course, they didn't know that Joseph understood them, for he had been speaking to them through an interpreter. (24) Now he turned away from them and began to weep. When he regained his composure, he spoke to them again. Then he chose Simeon from among them and had him tied up right before their eyes.

- They were facing their guilt of past years. This discussion takes place in the hearing of Joseph who really understands what they were saying in Hebrew. **Reuben** defends his actions of 20 years before and **Joseph** understood, so instead of jailing **Reuben** the firstborn, he jailed **Simeon**, one step younger than **Reuben**.

THE SONS RETURN TO CANAAN

(25) Joseph then ordered his servants to fill the men's sacks with grain, but he also gave secret instructions to return each brother's payment at the top of his sack. He also gave them supplies for their journey home. (26) So the brothers loaded their donkeys with the grain and headed for home. (27) But when they stopped for the night and one of them opened his sack to get grain for his donkey, he found his money in the top of his sack. (28) "Look!" he exclaimed to his brothers. "My money has been returned; it's here in my sack!" Then their hearts sank. Trembling, they said to each other, "What has God done to us?"

- The very secular **brothers** are seeing the hand of the Lord.

(29) When the brothers came to their father, Jacob, in the land of Canaan, they told him everything that had happened to them. (30) "The man who is governor of the land spoke very harshly to us," they told him. "He accused

us of being spies scouting the land. (31) But we said, 'We are honest men, not spies. (32) We are twelve brothers, sons of one father. One brother is no longer with us, and the youngest is at home with our father in the land of Canaan.' (33) "Then the man who is governor of the land told us, 'This is how I will find out if you are honest men. Leave one of your brothers here with me, and take grain for your starving families and go on home. (34) But you must bring your youngest brother back to me. Then I will know you are honest men and not spies. Then I will give you back your brother, and you may trade freely in the land.'"

- Joseph did not plan to imprison Benjamin. The brothers are invited to **trade** in Egypt. This may imply Joseph's confidence in them.

(35) As they emptied out their sacks, there in each man's sack was the bag of money he had paid for the grain! The brothers and their father were terrified when they saw the bags of money. (36) Jacob exclaimed, "You are robbing me of my children! Joseph is gone! Simeon is gone! And now you want to take Benjamin, too. Everything is going against me!" (37) Then Reuben said to his father, "You may kill my two sons if I don't bring Benjamin back to you. I'll be responsible for him, and I promise to bring him back." (38) But Jacob replied, "My son will not go down with you. His brother Joseph is dead, and he is all I have left. If anything should happen to him on your journey, you would send this grieving, white-haired man to his grave."

- Now the rest opened **their sacks** and found their **money** returned. **Reuben** made an offer that doesn't make much sense. Kill my **two sons** (Jacob's grandsons) if I do not bring **Benjamin** back to you.

OUT OF FOOD AGAIN

(43:1) But the famine continued to ravage the land of Canaan. (2) When the grain they had brought from Egypt

was almost gone, Jacob said to his sons, "Go back and buy us a little more food." (3) But Judah said, "The man was serious when he warned us, 'You won't see my face again unless your brother is with you.' (4) If you send Benjamin with us, we will go down and buy more food. (5) But if you don't let Benjamin go, we won't go either. Remember, the man said, 'You won't see my face again unless your brother is with you.'"

- The pressure (hunger) is driving the brothers back to **Egypt**, but they have to take Benjamin in order to have an audience with "**the man**" whom we know to be Joseph.

(6) "Why were you so cruel to me?" Jacob moaned. "Why did you tell him you had another brother?" (7) "The man kept asking us questions about our family," they replied. "He asked, 'Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother?' So we answered his questions. How could we know he would say, 'Bring your brother down here?'"

- **Jacob** (Israel) asked why they even mentioned Benjamin. They changed the story a bit. Joseph didn't ask about the younger brother. They volunteered the information.

(8) Judah said to his father, "Send the boy with me, and we will be on our way. Otherwise we will all die of starvation—and not only we, but you and our little ones. (9) I personally guarantee his safety. You may hold me responsible if I don't bring him back to you. Then let me bear the blame forever. (10) If we hadn't wasted all this time, we could have gone and returned twice by now."

- **Judah** is now the leader of the brothers. Reuben had lost his post by bedding one of Jacob's (Israel's) wives. Simeon, the next in line, had participated in decimating Shechem. So leadership had devolved on **Judah**.

(11) So their father, Jacob, finally said to them, "If it can't be avoided, then at least do this. Pack your bags with the best products of this land. Take them down to the man as