

The encounter between Joseph and his brothers and the retelling to Joseph

42.9-20

He said to them, "You are spies; you have come to see the nakedness of the land!" They said to him, "No, my lord; your servants have come to buy food. We are all sons of one man; we are honest men; your servants have never been spies." But he said to them, "No, you have come to see the nakedness of the land!" They said, "We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; the youngest, however, is now with our father, and one is no more." But Joseph said to them, "It is just as I have said to you; you are spies! Here is how you shall be tested: as Pharaoh lives, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here! Let one of you go and bring your brother, while the rest of you remain in prison, in order that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you; or else, as Pharaoh lives, surely you are spies." And he put them all together in prison for three days. On the third day Joseph said to them, "Do this and you will live, for I fear God: if you are honest, let one of your brothers stay here where you are imprisoned. The rest of you shall go and carry grain for the famine of your households and **bring your youngest brother to me.** Thus your words will be verified, and you shall not die." And they agreed to do so.

44.19-23

" 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 young brother, the child of his old age. His brother is dead; 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**, so that I may set my eyes on him.' We said to my lord, 'The boy cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' Then you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.'

changes:

1. omitting the charge of spying (42:9-14), the three days in prison for all (42:16-18) and the imprisonment of Simeon (42:19)
2. changing the fact of father/brother from a statement of the brothers (42:13) to a question by Joseph (44:19)
3. adding the details of the father's age, the brother's youth and the special love (44:20)
4. changing the command to bring Benjamin down from a test of their honesty to a mere royal demand (42:15, 19-20 vs. 44:21)
5. adding the likely effect on Jacob of bringing Benjamin (44:22)
6. adding 44:23 in place of the test condition, just as they did to Jacob in the telling at 43:3, 5