

## **Genesis 43:15-34 and 44:1-17**

Slowly but surely the famine was doing its work.

Joseph's brothers, who thought they could hide their sin, had received a wakeup call.

Yes, their dramatic experience in Egypt had awakened their sleeping conscience.

And even Jacob had been awakened from years of spiritual lethargy.

Israel, (a prince with God) and the inheritor of the Abrahamic Covenant, had been living below the poverty line spiritually.

When he lost Joseph, his whole world had fallen apart.

His life had been wrapped up in Joseph, and now that he was gone, it was wrapped up in Benjamin.

Granted, he didn't have much to encourage him as far as the rest of his family were concerned, but he still had God's promises, and he still had God Himself.

Certainly our loved ones are a gift from God, and we should treasure them, but even so, the gift should never supplant the Giver.

However, that seems to have been Jacob's problem. **"Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me."**

The thought of losing Benjamin had filled him with despair. **"If mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then**

**shall ye bring down my gray hairs with  
sorrow to the grave."**

Jacob wasn't holding onto God, no, he was  
holding onto Benjamin.

And now it seemed he couldn't even hold onto  
him!

The Governor's demand and the dwindling food  
supply were dragging Benjamin away  
also.

Surely this would be the final blow.

But this time, tribulation brought him back  
to God, and this wasn't the first time  
that this had happened.

In his extremity, Israel laid his dearest  
possession on the altar, and just  
trusted God: **"If I be bereaved of my  
children, I am bereaved."**

He finally committed his children into the  
Lord's hands, and you know what?

That's exactly where they had been all the time.

Not only would he get Simeon and Benjamin back, but he would soon be embracing his dear Joseph.

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Now, God didn't enjoy putting Jacob through this dilemma any more than Joseph enjoyed the process he was engaged in, but they were both necessary.

Jacob's sons needed to repent of their sin, and Jacob himself needed to repent of his unbelief.

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*♪♪ When thru fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,*

*My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;*

*The flame shall not hurt thee - I only  
designed  
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.*

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Well, Jacob, or Israel, as the Holy Spirit was now calling him, had decided to listen to reason.

He would commit Benjamin into the Lord's hands, but he would put his best foot forward.

Just as he had sent a present on ahead before confronting Esau and his 400 armed men, so he sent a gift to the Governor of Egypt to solicit his favour.

Was that a lack of faith?

No, I don't think so. He was simply using common sense.

And sometimes I think there is nothing as uncommon as common sense, so I'm glad Israel was using it.

V 11-14 **"And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds:**

**12: And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight:**

**13: Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man:**

**14: And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away**

**your other brother, and Benjamin. If I  
be bereaved of my children, I am  
bereaved."**

One wonders where Israel got such a present  
in a land that had been ravaged by  
famine for two years now.

Probably he was taking them from his  
carefully preserved stores, with no  
idea how he was going to replace them.

Yes, I'm sure it was a great sacrifice on  
his part, and you will notice that the  
operative word here is *a little--*

**"carry down the man a present, a little  
balm, and a little honey, spices, and  
myrrh, nuts, and almonds."**

However, although this present was small, it  
was quite valuable.

In fact, three of the items, that is, balm,  
myrrh, and spices, were the very same

products that the Ishmeelites had been carrying when Joseph was spirited away.

We see that back in Genesis 37:25 "--**and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.**"

So at least three of these items, if not all six, would have been desirable imports, valuable commodities not grown in Egypt.

Also, because Gilead was experiencing famine, these commodities would no longer be available to Egypt.

Yes, it had cost Jacob dearly to provide such a gift, but he was quite sure it would be appreciated by any Egyptian.



However, he had no idea just *how much* it would be appreciated, or how much this gift would remind the Governor of home.

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V 15 **"And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph."**

Isn't it amazing how God causes **"the wrath of man"** to praise Him?

Here they stood in complete subjection before the mighty Governor of Egypt. And yet they were the very ones that had put him there.

And they started him on his rise to power with the words, **"and we shall see what will become of his dreams."**

Oh, yes, God was working "all things after  
the counsel of his own will."

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V 16-18 "And when Joseph saw Benjamin with  
them, he said to the ruler of his  
house, Bring these men home, and slay,  
and make ready; for these men shall  
dine with me at noon.

17: And the man did as Joseph bade; and  
the man brought the men into Joseph's  
house.

18: And the men were afraid, because  
they were brought into Joseph's house;  
and they said, Because of the money  
that was returned in our sacks at the  
first time are we brought in; that he  
may seek occasion against us, and fall  
upon us, and take us for bondmen, and  
our asses."

Had Joseph planned to invite them to dinner,  
or was it simply a snap decision?

It almost seems that the sight of his  
brother Benjamin had prompted a  
spontaneous response.

After all, it had been over 20 years since  
he had seen his brother.

That morning when he left home to seek his  
brethren, little Benjamin was just a  
toddler, and now he was a strapping  
young man.

So Joseph **"said to the ruler of his house,  
Bring these men home, and slay, and  
make ready; for these men shall dine  
with me at noon."**

He had provided the meal freely, and out of  
a heart of love, but his generosity had  
only produced fear.

Certainly it would be unusual for shepherds and mere strangers to be invited to a Governor's house.

Yes, it looked very suspicious, and besides that, they were suspected of spying, and perhaps thievery.

No, you can't blame them for being fearful, but, in fact, they were completely wrong.

Joseph's invitation had been prompted by love, but he was suspected of treachery.

**"Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses."**

Their situation is not unlike the sinner's sad dilemma.

Because of fear, their sin continues to weigh them down in spite of God's love and provision.

They are afraid that Jesus will take away their joy and put them into bondage, while all the time there is nothing but a feast ahead.

In His "**--presence is fullness of joy,**" and at His "**right hand there are pleasures for evermore,**" but they continue to shrink back.

What a cruel master fear is!

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Joseph longed to forgive his brethren and to make himself known unto them, but they simply weren't ready yet.

No, they knew not Joseph, and they knew nothing of his grace.

V 19-22 "And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they communed with him at the door of the house, 20: And said, O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food: 21: And it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand. 22: And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks."

Then the steward said something that was very unusual, at least coming from an Egyptian.

V 23 **"And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them."**

I'm sure they were puzzled by his words, not only by the statement, **"I had your money,"** but by his reference to their God.

Why would an Egyptian give credit to the God of Israel?

Perhaps Joseph had been sharing his faith with him.

And being his steward, he couldn't help but notice the way Joseph conducted his life.

Yes, Joseph's life *did* affect those around him.

And in a certain sense, the steward's words were true, even though we all know how the money got there.

Under the hand of God, His chosen deliverer was already providing for their needs freely.

And not only were they to receive free corn, but they were to be treated as honoured guests.

V 24 **"And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender."**

They had expected to be taken as bond men and their animals confiscated; instead they were given water to wash their feet, and their animals were fed.

And because of Jesus Christ, that's how God's provision has always been.



Yes, we are the recipient's of free grace.

Though we provide double money, we cannot

buy His favour, for it is freely given.

V 25-30 **"And they made ready the present**

(that is the spices etc.) **against**

**Joseph came at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there.**

**26: And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth.**

**27: And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?**

**28: And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.**

**29: And he lifted up his eyes, and saw**

his brother Benjamin, his mother's son,  
and said, Is this your younger brother,  
of whom ye spake unto me? And he said,  
God be gracious unto thee, my son.

**30:** And Joseph made haste; for his  
bowels did yearn upon his brother: and  
he sought where to weep; and he entered  
into his chamber, and wept there."

Again his brothers had fulfilled Joseph's  
dream.

However, his thoughts weren't taken up with  
his own glory, but the welfare of his  
father.

**"Is your father well"?**

At this point, his heart was almost  
breaking, a mirror of the Lord's heart  
that day when He looked down on  
Jerusalem.

I'm sure the tears were streaming down His face when He cried--"**O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!**"

Alas, their stony hearts had cut them off from the Lord's heart of compassion.

And Joseph was greatly moved also.

His brothers' anxiety must have affected him greatly, but it was Benjamin that nearly did him in.

How he longed to throw his arms around his brother and cry, *I'm your brother, Benjamin!*--but he could not!

No, he couldn't reveal himself, and he  
couldn't refrain himself, so he left in  
hast.

He could control a nation, but he couldn't  
always control his emotions.

Hard times often produce bitterness and  
hatred in men, but that wasn't true of  
Joseph.

His heart was still tender, and his love was  
still strong.

More than anything, he wanted to help his  
family, but he must refrain himself  
until they repented.

Certainly fear would have driven them to  
repentance immediately.

If he revealed himself as the brother they  
had sold into slavery, they would  
certainly repent.

But that wouldn't do.

He must wait upon God to work true  
repentance in their hearts.

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And Christ walked the pathway of God's will  
in spite of the longings in His heart.  
At the beginning of His ministry, and having  
the natural desire to be recognized by  
Israel, He spurned Satan's suggestion  
to cast Himself down from a pinnacle of  
the temple and prove once and for all  
that He was the Messiah.

Likewise, when He wept over Jerusalem's  
rejection, He never considered the fact  
that He could overwhelm them by His  
Majesty.

He could have overpowered the Romans, and by  
the sheer magnificence of His glory,  
compel Israel to repent of their  
unbelief.

And when He was in the Garden, He could have called **"more than twelve legions of angels?"**

**54: But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"**

No, that was not God's way, so it would not be Christ's way.

Israel had already rejected His words, His miracles, His Father's testimony, and the testimony of John the Baptist, and that's as far as He would go.

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So Joseph must wait and weep.

V 31-33 **"And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread.**

**32: And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by**

themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians.

33: And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another."

And well might they marvel!

If you multiply all the numbers from 1 through 11, you'll find that there are no less than 39,917,000 different ways that 11 individuals can be seated, and only one of them will be in the correct order by age.

But, you know, it never occurred to them that this Governor might be their brother.

It was simply impossible!

And it was just too scary to consider.

No, he couldn't possibly know, and they  
certainly weren't going to tell him!

But Proverbs 28:13 says, **"He that covereth  
his sins shall not prosper: but whoso  
confesseth and forsaketh them shall  
have mercy."**

Yes, they could still enjoy their privacy,  
or at least they thought they could,  
but as long as they covered their sin,  
they could not enjoy his blessing, his  
fellowship, or his salvation.

They must continue to trudge back and forth  
with a few bags of corn, living in fear  
and want, and plagued by a guilty  
conscience, while all the time they  
could have been living in Goshen.

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And then Joseph did something that showed a great deal of favouritism.

V 34 **"And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him."**

I don't think Benjamin's meal was actually five times as big as the others.

If that were true, he would have been asking for a doggie bag!

Actually V 34 tells us **"he took and sent messes unto them from before him."**

So that would indicate that Joseph sent portions from his own table, rather than a full meal, and Benjamin got five times as much.

However, Joseph was showing favouritism. And actually that wasn't too surprising.

Benjamin was his full brother, while the rest of them were only half brothers. And not only that, but Benjamin was the only one among them that had no part in selling him into slavery.

However, Joseph was showing the same kind of favouritism that his father had.

And as we all know, this was the very thing that had turned his brothers against him.

So what was he doing?

Well, I'm sure Joseph had his own reasons, and I'm doubly sure he was watching his brothers very carefully.

Would their reactions, however subtle, show that they were jealous of Benjamin?

Well, scripture doesn't indicate that there was any hint of animosity.

Perhaps they had learned their lesson.

But what would they do when the rubber  
really met the road?

What would they do if they had to choose  
between their own personal safety and  
Benjamin's welfare?

Yes, more testing was absolutely necessary.

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Well, the meal was over, and they were still  
free men.

They left the dining room with a sigh of  
relief, but they were certainly not at  
ease.

Too many strange things had happened during  
that meal.

No, they just couldn't understand what was  
going on.

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I don't know where they slept that night,  
but I'm sure they didn't sleep very  
well.

Indeed, if they had known what was going on  
in the granary, they wouldn't have  
slept at all.

Genesis 44:1-5 **"And he commanded the steward  
of his house, saying, Fill the men's  
sacks with food, as much as they can  
carry, and put every man's money in his  
sack's mouth.**

**2: And put my cup, the silver cup, in  
the sack's mouth of the youngest, and  
his corn money. And he did according to  
the word that Joseph had spoken.**

**3: As soon as the morning was light,  
the men were sent away, they and their  
asses."**

The further away they got, the better they felt.

It was so good to be on the road again!

V 4-5 **"And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?**

**5: Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing."**

Knowing Joseph, I'm sure he never used that cup for divining.

No, this little story was just another way of reinforcing his disguise.

Apparently it was very common among the magicians of Egypt to use a goblet to communicate with the spirits.

They looked at the reflections in the water, or sometimes they would sprinkle small particles of gold and silver into a cup of water and look at the patterns that formed.

It was a little more expensive than reading tea leaves, but about the same thing, and, of course, it was of the devil.

These magicians, with their supposed powers, were much looked up to, and probably many Egyptians had incorrectly attributed Joseph's ability to interpret Pharaoh's dreams to these mystic powers.

And even Joseph's brethren, although they believed in the one true God, were

quite unnerved by the Governor's  
uncommon knowledge.

Yes, there was something really scary about  
this man.

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So Joseph's steward, no doubt with a band of  
armed men, headed out the gate in hot  
pursuit.

V 6 **"And he overtook them, and he spake unto  
them these same words."**

They had great respect for the Governor's  
ability and discernment, but this time  
his accusations seemed absolutely  
ridiculous.

V 7-9 **"And they said unto him, Wherefore  
saith my lord these words? God forbid  
that thy servants should do according  
to this thing:  
8: Behold, the money, which we found in**

our sacks' mouths, we brought again  
unto thee out of the land of Canaan:  
how then should we steal out of thy  
lord's house silver or gold?

**9: With whomsoever of thy servants it  
be found, both let him die, and we also  
will be my lord's bondmen."**

They were upset all right, but they should  
have never made such a deal.

However, once it was out of their mouth, the  
steward latched onto their words.

V 10-11 **"And he said, Now also let it be  
according unto your words; he with whom  
it is found shall be my servant; and ye  
shall be blameless.**

**11: Then they speedily took down every  
man his sack to the ground, and opened  
every man his sack."**



Probably it was with a certain amount of self-righteousness that they took down their sacks.

They put on a brave front, but at the same time, they must have been shaking in their boots.

And the steward, who knew exactly where the cup was, dragged out the suspense as long as possible.

V 12 **"And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack."**

Now, this is as bad as it gets!

V 13 **"Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city."**

V 13 reveals a lot about these men.

The fact that they rent their clothes  
certainly showed that they were at  
their wits' end.

Yes, their whole world had fallen apart, but  
the situation wasn't completely  
hopeless.

Remember the deal?

Before the steward opened the sacks, he had  
said, "**He with whom it is found shall  
be my servant; and ye shall be  
blameless.**"

So most of them were free to go, and I'm  
sure they would like nothing better.  
However, in spite of their desire to just  
get out of there, they "**laded every man  
his ass, and returned to the city.**"

None of them would forsake their half-  
brother Benjamin.

Not one of them would abandon this brother  
that was obviously their father's  
favourite.

No, these weren't the same men that had  
delivered Joseph's bloodied coat to  
their father and said, "**This have we  
found: know now whether it be thy son's  
coat or no.**"

They had been tested, and had remained loyal  
to Benjamin, but it wasn't over yet.

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Joseph didn't go to work that day.

No, he spent his time looking out the window  
for the first glimpse of his steward.

What a joy it was when he saw him returning,  
not with Benjamin alone, but with the  
whole family.

Oh, how he longed to fling the door open and  
cry, *Don't worry, fellows. I'm your  
brother!*

But he must keep up the pretence.

Joseph was refining the men who would become  
the heads of the tribes of Israel.

And God will refine the remnant of Israel in  
preparation for their Messiah.

Zechariah 13:9 **"And I will bring the third  
part through the fire, and will refine  
them as silver is refined, and will try  
them as gold is tried: they shall call  
on my name, and I will hear them: I  
will say, It is my people: and they  
shall say, The LORD is my God."**

So in spite of their extreme anxiety, Joseph  
must keep the heat on a little longer.

He must **"refine them as silver is refined,"**  
and **"try them as gold is tried."**

V 14-15 **"And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground. 15: And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?"**

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Judah had taken the leadership when they convinced their father to send Benjamin.

Even at that time he had shown definite signs of spiritual maturity.

Here again, at the time of their greatest extremity, it was Judah who stepped forward to represent his brothers.

V 16 **"And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath**

**found out the iniquity of thy servants:  
behold, we are my lord's servants, both  
we, and he also with whom the cup is  
found."**

Probably they were all nodding their heads  
in agreement.

But at the same time, every one of them knew  
they were innocent of the charge.

And, in spite of the steward's assurance  
that **"ye shall be blameless,"** Joseph  
had condemned them all.

As soon as they entered his house, he said

**"What deed is this that ye have done?"**

So Judah could have pointed out that the cup  
had been found in Benjamin's sack, and  
that his steward assured them that they  
would be blameless.

However, not one of them said, *It's not my  
fault.*

And Judah even admitted, on behalf of them all, that **"God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants."**

And then he formally aligned himself and his brethren with the accused: **"We are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found."**

It didn't seem to concern them that they were innocent of Joseph's charge. They all knew they were guilty of a much greater crime, and they were willing to accept God's judgment.

Now, that's genuine repentance, but it isn't genuine confession.

Judah didn't actually tell the Governor what their sin was.

No, he wouldn't go that far. It would always be their secret.

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However, Joseph wasn't finished yet.

He must give them one more opportunity to forsake their brother, and this would be the acid test.

V 17 **"And he said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father."**

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In the verses just ahead, Judah rises to his highest point spirituality.

Actually, in his appeal on behalf of his brother Benjamin, Judah becomes a type of Christ.

No, I didn't say *Joseph*, I said *Judah*, that man who had sunk so low.

Here Judah portrays our Lord Jesus Christ at the culmination of His ministry.



Here Judah portrays Christ when He was made  
**"sin for us, who knew no sin; that we  
might be made the righteousness of God  
in him."**

He had already admitted his own sin and the  
sin of his brothers.

And he also admitted that all of them  
deserved God's judgment, but Joseph had  
refused to punish them.

Benjamin was guilty, and he it was that  
would pay for his crime.

But then, and completely on his own, Judah  
appealed to the Governor on an entirely  
different basis.

What could it possibly be?

How could he possibly deliver his brother  
from the Governor's judgment?

We will find out next week, when Judah puts  
his all on the line.