

Genesis 44:18-34 and 45:1-24

When Joseph looked out of the window and saw his steward and his entire family coming up the road, he had reason to hope.

Yesterday, when he deliberately favoured his brother Benjamin, he had noticed their lack of animosity, but this was the first real sign of their solidarity.

Genesis 44:14-15 **"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?"

In answer to the Governor's demands, Judah stepped forward on the behalf of 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."**

This was quite an admission, and apparently all of his brothers agreed with him.

They could have pleaded their innocence, for none of them had stolen the cup.

However, they simply resigned themselves to their just punishment.

Right then and there, Judah admitted the sin that had been plaguing them for 20 years--**"God hath found out the iniquity**

**of thy servants: behold, we are my
lord's servants."**

In like manner, Christ's brethren, in the
midst of great tribulation, will admit
the sin of rejecting their Messiah.

**"And they shall look upon me whom they
have pierced, and they shall mourn for
him, as one mourneth for his only son,
and shall be in bitterness for him, as
one that is in bitterness for his
firstborn."**

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I'm sure Joseph was touched by their
complete repentance, for he knew
exactly what Judah was talking about,
even though he had neglected to tell
him what it was.

Yes, it was a big step forward, the silver and gold were beginning to appear, but it wasn't over yet.

He must give them another opportunity to escape.

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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It was then that Judah rose to his highest point spiritually, taking full and personal responsibility for his brother's welfare.

He had assured his father of Benjamin's safety---"**I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him"**.

And because of his oath, he would accept the full responsibility for his deliverance.

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Some day, far into the future, the Son of God would come from the tribe of Judah. And here, in this single chapter, Judah, not Joseph, would portray the Lion of Judah.

He would become a type of our Lord Jesus Christ in His substitutionary work on the cross.

Listen to his words:

V 18-34 **"Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh.**

19: My lord asked his servants, saying,
Have ye a father, or a brother?

20: And we said unto my lord, We have a
father, an old man, and a child of his
old age, a little one; and his brother
is dead, and he alone is left of his
mother, and his father loveth him.

21: And thou saidst unto thy servants,
Bring him down unto me, that I may set
mine eyes upon him.

22: And we said unto my lord, The lad
cannot leave his father: for if he
should leave his father, his father
would die.

23: And thou saidst unto thy servants,
Except your youngest brother come down
with you, ye shall see my face no more.

24: And it came to pass when we came up
unto thy servant my father, we told him

the words of my lord.

25: And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food.

26: And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us.

27: And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons:

28: And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since:

29: And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

30: Now therefore when I come to thy

servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life;

31: It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave.

32: For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever.

33: Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.

34: For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest

**peradventure I see the evil that shall
come on my father."**

This brings us to the end of Chapter 44, and to the end of Judah's appeal, but before we go on, I would like to take a closer look at the important aspects of his petition.

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His words were spoken out of a full heart, and I'm sure they affected Joseph greatly.

First of all, he recognized Joseph's authority and his right of judgment--
"Thou art even as Pharaoh."

Secondly, he makes no attempt to clear Benjamin of his charge, for he knew the evidence was insurmountable.

And then, in a very respectful manner, he points out the fact that it was the

Governor's command that had been instrumental in bringing Benjamin to Egypt.

V 21 **"And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him."**

Then he describes, in great detail, his father's inseparable attachment to Benjamin---V 29 **"And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."**

Certainly Judah wanted to touch a responsive chord in the Governor's heart, but he had no idea what the full impact of his words would be.

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And now we come to the part in Judah's appeal that so closely pictures the work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He didn't plead the sinner's innocence, for indeed that was useless.

Certainly we are aware that Benjamin was innocent, but as far as Judah was concerned, and as far as our type is concerned, Benjamin had been found guilty, and was under the Governor's judgment: **"The man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant."**

So in this particular situation, Benjamin is a picture of the poor lost sinner, who indeed is beloved of Jacob, but at the same time is condemned under the law.

Therefore Judah made his appeal, not on the basis of Benjamin's innocence, but on the fact of his father's love.

It was Benjamin's only hope, and indeed it is the sinner's only hope.

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved.)" Ephesians 2:4-5

It was unthinkable that Benjamin should spend his life as a slave in Egypt, for he was beloved of his father.

But his father's love couldn't clear him of his charge.

He was bound under the law.

But then we have the oath, that blessed oath.

Not only was Benjamin the recipient of his father's love, but he was protected by Judah's oath.

V 32 **"For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever."**

And that's the whole basis of man's salvation.

The Father's love and the Son's commitment to His Father are his solid foundation.

And that's what Christ was about when He came to this earth.

He was fulfilling His promise to the Father.

John 6:38-39 **"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.**

39: And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

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So that was the prevailing situation as
Judah stood before the Governor.

The only answer to this dilemma was
substitution, and for his oath's sake,
Judah was willing to pay the price.

V 33-34 **"Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy
servant abide instead of the lad a
bondman to my lord; and let the lad go
up with his brethren.**

**34: For how shall I go up to my father,
and the lad be not with me? lest
peradventure I see the evil that shall
come on my father."**

Because of the father's love for Benjamin,
Judah was willing to sacrifice the
innocent for the guilty.

And Christ is the willing and sufficient
substitute.

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

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And it was enough!

Judah's willingness to give his all on the behalf of his brother had opened the floodgates of blessing.

Benjamin was free, indeed they were all free, and most importantly, Joseph was free to reveal himself to his brethren.

Genesis 45:1 **"Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren."**

The Egyptians must have wondered whether it was safe to leave Joseph alone.

After all, he was outnumbered 11 to 1, but orders were orders.

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And when they all left, Joseph's brothers must have wondered what would happen next.

And certainly what did happen next was frightening, and most unexpected.

V 2 **"And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard."**

Can you imagine their total shock?

This powerful, austere Governor suddenly started to weep uncontrollably.

In fact, his emotional outburst was so violent that the Egyptians could even hear him.

And then, through his tears, he blurted out
in their native Hebrew, no less, "**I am
Joseph; doth my father yet live?**"

You could have knocked them over with a
feather!

No wonder "-- **his brethren could not answer
him;**" and no wonder "--**they were
troubled at his presence.**"

V 4 "**And Joseph said unto his brethren,
Come near to me, I pray you. And they
came near.**"

I'm sure their legs were like rubber as they
moved slowly closer.

If this man was their brother, then he knew
everything, and he had the power to do
something about it.

**"And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom
ye sold into Egypt."**

Now that wasn't too comforting, was it, but
it certainly was the clincher!

Only Joseph could have known that!

However, there wasn't any malice in his
voice. He only wanted to establish the
fact that he was their brother.

Joseph wasn't hungry for revenge. He was
hungry for fellowship!

But at this point, fellowship was
impossible.

His eyes were full of love, but theirs were
full of fear.

They couldn't hide their sin any longer,
but, fortunately for them, they would
face it at the seat of mercy and at the
place reconciliation.

No, Joseph wasn't contemplating vengeance.

He had been aware of God's plan long ago,
and his only desire was to help them
understand it also.

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But as yet they understood nothing.

Joseph's heart was full of love when he

said, **"Come near to me, I pray you."**

And Jesus' heart is full of love when

He says, **"Come unto me, all ye that
labour and are heavy laden, and I will
give you rest."**

But all too often the poor lost sinner is

"troubled at his presence."

He wants to flee from the very One, and the
only One Who can help them.

No, there could be no fellowship for Joseph,
or his brethren, so long as fear
controlled their lives.

Just as Adam hid among the trees of the garden when God called "**Where art thou?**", so Joseph's brethren would rather be anywhere else than in his presence.

No, there was no joy in this revelation. They knew what their sins were, and now they knew that *he* knew, so "**they were troubled at his presence.**"

He was simply their judge.

And so it is with the sinner, at least until someone tells them that "**God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.**"

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However, seeing the dread in their eyes, Joseph quickly explained God's plan.

V 5 **"Now therefore be not grieved, nor
angry with yourselves, that ye sold me
hither: for God did send me before you
to preserve life."**

Only a few minutes ago they had resigned themselves to a life of slavery, but now they were forgiven by the very one who had borne the burden of slavery himself.

**"God did send me before you to preserve
life."**

And that has been God's plan for the nation of Israel all along, and that is God's plan for the bride of Christ.

Christ is their Messiah, and Christ is our Saviour.

And at this very moment, there is a man in the glory, a real man in the glory, and

**"God did send" Him "before you to
preserve life."**

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But in the primary sense, Joseph portrays
Israel's Messiah.

And not only that, but his brethren, because
of their family relationship and their
personal experiences, portray the
nation of Israel.

As they recognized their deliverer, who by
the way was also their brother, so
Israel will recognize their Messiah,
their Kinsman Redeemer, and be saved.

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I would like to backtrack for a minute and
look at a verse in Psalms.

We have already quoted Psalm 76:10 that says

**"Surely the wrath of man shall praise
thee,"** and we considered these words in

connection with the unique way in which Joseph's brethren started him off on his pathway to exultation.

But we should also look at the end of this verse, which says "--**the remainder of**

wrath shalt thou restrain."

And again we will consider it in connection with Joseph's sale into slavery.

Joseph's brethren had made definite plans to kill him.

In Genesis 37:18, we read, "**And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him--**" but God restrained them.

Reuben suggested that they throw him into a pit.

Actually, he planned to rescue him, but his brothers fully expected that he would die of starvation.

Then God restrained them again by sending a company of Ishmeelites to carry him to his destiny.

Oh, he didn't travel first-class, but his destination was assured.

They *sold* him, but God *sent* him, or as Joseph so aptly put it, "**It was not you that sent me hither, but God.**"

So this whole affair was an example of God's overruling providence, only to be surpassed by Calvary.

At the cross, Satan, and of course mankind, tried to get rid of Jesus, but their efforts only contributed to God's great plan of salvation, and to the exultation of our resurrected Lord.

So the bottom line has always been, **"Surely
the wrath of man shall praise thee: the
remainder of wrath shalt thou
restrain."**

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Joseph understood it all now, and he was
anxious that his brothers would
understand this great plan of salvation
also.

In this case, it wasn't their spiritual
salvation that was in question, but
rather their physical salvation.

V 6 **"For these two years hath the famine
been in the land: and yet there are
five years, in the which there shall
neither be earing nor harvest."**

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That morning they had set out on their journey in the vain hope that they could beat the famine.

They had purchased (or thought they had purchased) a goodly supply of corn.

Surely it would be enough to carry them through until the rains returned, but they had no idea that the famine wasn't even half over yet.

No, they just couldn't wait to get away from that fearful Governor, while all the time they were fleeing their only hope of deliverance.

V 6-8 **"For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.**

7: And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth,

and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8: So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt."

As they listened to their brother's explanation, they suddenly saw everything in a new light.

Oh, they couldn't excuse their sin, but at the same time, they didn't need to fear God's judgment any more.

Joseph had put the tragedy of their lives into a new perspective.

"So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God."

And their tribulations had brought them to true repentance, and to the blessed place of forgiveness.

No longer were they jealous of their brother, and, wonder of wonders, Joseph held no hard feelings against them.

They had done their worst, and God had worked all things together for their good.

They had deserved His judgment, but they had received His salvation.

What a blessed example this is of the grace of God, and the grace of Joseph.

And for the first time in their lives, the whole family was united in sweet fellowship.

And most importantly, *they* were united with Joseph.

♪♪ *Nothing between my soul and the Saviour,
So that His blessed face may be seen;
Nothing preventing the least of His favour,
Keep the way clear! Let nothing between.*

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This new relationship had opened up a
completely new life.

No longer would they carry their burden of
sin.

No longer would they try to pay for the
abundance that had always been theirs.

Yes, they were feasting in the midst of
famine, and all because they knew
Joseph.

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However, they must be diligent to
appropriate the blessing that was
theirs, and they must share it with
others.

Their families would continue to live in
want until they brought them to Joseph.

V 9-11 **"Haste ye, and go up to my father,
and say unto him, Thus saith thy son
Joseph, God hath made me lord of all
Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not:
10: And thou shalt dwell in the land of
Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me,
thou, and thy children, and thy
children's children, and thy flocks,
and thy herds, and all that thou hast:
11: And there will I nourish thee; for
yet there are five years of famine;
lest thou, and thy household, and all
that thou hast, come to poverty."**

----**"thou shalt be near unto me"** and **"there
will I nourish thee."** That's what the
Christian's life is all about, isn't
it?

Jesus said, **"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."**

Joseph was their salvation and their abundant life.

If they were to leave the famine behind, they must all come to Joseph.

Not only could he preserve them, but, in fact, it was his specific calling.

He had been made the Governor of Egypt for the express purpose of saving them.

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And now that Joseph had revealed God's plan to them, they needed to apply themselves to it.

Their minds should no longer to be taken up with the foreboding thoughts of God's judgment, as they had been before.

No, Joseph's commandments and Joseph's agenda should be the motivating force of this new life.

V 12-13 **"And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you.**

13: And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither."

They had seen Joseph.

They were his witnesses, and the bearers of good news.

They must return to the father they had lied to, the father that had been estranged from them for so many years, and they must tell him that they had seen Joseph.

They had seen Joseph, and he had sent them back forgiven, restored, and with a message of hope.

Yes, they had a message of hope for a man who had lived too many years without hope.

And what was this message?

Simply the realization that he could be with Joseph!

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V 14-15 **"And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.
15: Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him."**

During Joseph's startling announcement and throughout his instructions, they had been silent.

But when Joseph embraced each of them, their tongues were loosed.

There was no favouritism now. It was quite evident that he loved them all.

And their conversation wasn't a long list of wants either, but rather a sweet time of fellowship.

What a reunion that must have been as they brought their brother up to date on the family news.

There were nephews and nieces that he had never seen, sisters and sister-in-laws that lived only in his memory, and, of course, he wanted to know *everything* about his father.

And then they talked about Joseph's 20-odd years in Egypt.

I'm sure there were tears in their eyes as he told them about Potiphar and his

time in prison, and he quickly passed on to the glorious life God had given him, a life that had made him forget all his troubles.

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V 16-20 **"And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants.**

17: And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan;

18: And take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land.

19: Now thou art commanded, this do ye;

take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come.

20: Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours."

---"come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt."

Immediately they were beloved of Pharaoh for Joseph's sake, as we are beloved of our Heavenly Father for Jesus' sake.

As far as we know, Joseph never told Pharaoh what his brothers had done to him. It was all forgiven and forgotten.

And what Joseph had promised them by grace, Pharaoh confirmed by decree.

V 19-20 **"Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of**

Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come.

20: Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours."

Pharaoh would take care of the details when they arrived, for "**the good of all the land of Egypt**" was at their disposal. Their only responsibility was to obey his commandment and not get burdened down with things.

How often stuff can get in the way of serving God, when it is perfectly clear that He owns "**the cattle upon a thousand hills!**"

V 21-24 "**And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave**

them provision for the way.

22: To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment.

23: And to his father he sent after this manner; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way."

24: So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way."

There was no more talk of buying corn. They left with a string of wagons and ample provisions for the way.

And they left with new clothes for a new life.

V 22 **"To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment."**

Of course Benjamin got more, much more, but there didn't seem to be any sign of jealousy among his brothers.

And old Jacob was to get much more than he had given.

He had sent a gift to the Governor, **"a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds,"** and Joseph had sent him **"ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way."**

You really can't outgive the Lord, can you?

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As they were about to leave, Joseph gave them a little warning.

"See that ye fall not out by the way."

Only here is the Hebrew word "ragaz" translated "fall out."

In all other cases, it is translated "be troubled."

So no doubt Joseph was admonishing them to go forth in the strength of his words, in the full assurance of his amazing promises, and not let doubts and fears slow their progress.

So often, with God's promises ringing in our ears, we drag our feet.

We get caught up with the "what ifs" of life, and our progress slows down, or even stops altogether.

Of course, we shouldn't be presumptuous, but
neither should be timid in stepping out
in the power of the Lord.

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No longer were their lives consumed by their
sin. Old things had passed away, and
behold, all things had become new.

They had been sent off with provision and
purpose to proclaim the glories of
Joseph.

And they had been commanded to carry their
father, and, indeed, all of their loved
ones, back to his protection.

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That is the church's commission also, isn't
it?

Oh, our mission field includes more than our
relatives, but the message is much the
same.

Our only safety, and our fullness of joy, is
found in our heavenly Joseph.

Come with us, to the land of Goshen!