

# Genesis

## Chapter 44:1-45:28

---

Last week we read of how Joseph's brothers returned to Egypt with their brother Benjamin. By the end of the chapter we had read of how they had dinner with Joseph and with Benjamin receiving five times as much as his brothers. Things seemed to be going good for them, and they may have felt that they would return home with Benjamin and their father would be happy.

But Joseph had other plans for them. Let's get started in this weeks study.

✠ **Gen 44:1-2** <sup>1</sup> *And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack. <sup>2</sup> "Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money." So he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.*

This was all happening while they were having dinner with Joseph.

The steward was the person who oversaw the household. Remember Joseph had the same position as a slave, so he was very familiar as to how loyal his steward was.

✠ **Gen 39:4** *So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority.*

The steward may have wondered what Joseph was doing, but only being a servant he couldn't question his masters actions. He may have thought that Joseph was being kind to these men; after all he did just have dinner with them. So what was Joseph doing? He had their bags filled with food and their money returned just like the last time, but in addition to this, Joseph had the steward put his silver cup in the sack of Benjamin.

What was so important about this silver cup? We will see as we read on.

✠ **Gen 44:3-6** <sup>3</sup> *As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. <sup>4</sup> When they had gone out of the city, and were not yet far off, Joseph said to his steward, "Get up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid evil for good? <sup>5</sup> 'Is not this the one from which my lord drinks, and with which he indeed practices divination? You have done evil in so doing.' "*

<sup>6</sup> *So he overtook them, and he spoke to them these same words.*

Here it is the next morning, and Joseph's brothers are sent home. But as they were leaving, Joseph calls for his steward and tells him to confront his brothers about stealing the cup from him. Even though this wasn't true, the steward doesn't question Joseph and does as he says.

We as Christians should learn to be good stewards with what God has given us. But we don't, every time God asks us to do something we ask God, "why, how, where and what." We want the specifics of what God is doing. If we don't agree with it, then we question God, and maybe even don't do what He asks us to do.

Maybe God has been asking you to do something that sounds crazy and you have been asking God all these questions and maybe even more.

Here is God's answer to your questions.

✠ **Romans 9:20-21** <sup>20</sup> *But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?"*  
<sup>21</sup> *Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?*

We ask God why, but if He doesn't answer, does that mean we don't have to do what He asks us to do? No, we should still do it anyway. Who are we; the ones formed and created by God, think we are? Should we question God? Job and his friends did, and take it from God's answer to them, that you don't really want to question God.

✠ **Job 38:1-3** <sup>1</sup> *Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:*  
<sup>2</sup> *"Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?*  
<sup>3</sup> *Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me.*

✠ **Job 40:1-2 & 6-8** <sup>1</sup> *Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said:*  
<sup>2</sup> *"Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him?*  
*He who rebukes God, let him answer it."*

<sup>6</sup> *Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:*  
<sup>7</sup> *"Now prepare yourself like a man;*  
*I will question you, and you shall answer Me:*  
<sup>8</sup> *"Would you indeed annul My judgment?*  
*Would you condemn Me that you may be justified?"*

These are not words of anger towards Job, but words to really let Job and his friends think about Who they are questioning. I think sometimes we need God to speak to us like this, just to remind us that He is God and we are not!

So Joseph also mentions the cup here again, and gives us more insight as to what this cups means.

✠ <sup>5</sup> *'Is not this the one from which my lord drinks, and with which he indeed practices divination? You have done evil in so doing.'* "

So what does it mean by "practices divination"?

Let's read it from the NLT.

✚ **Gen 44:5 (NLT)** *What do you mean by stealing my master's personal silver drinking cup, which he uses to predict the future? What a wicked thing you have done! "*

A footnote in my bible says this about the cup:

*"Joseph's silver cup was a symbol of his authority. It was thought to have supernatural powers, and to steal it was a serious crime. Such goblets were used in predicting the future. A person poured water into the cup and interpreted the reflection, ripples and bubbles. Joseph wouldn't have needed this cup since God told him everything he needed to know about the future."*

I don't believe that this cup was of any value to Joseph other than for drinking out of. But the Egyptians thought it was a special cup with mystical powers. Joseph knew this and he knew if someone were found with this cup, he would be able to punish him or her to the fullest extent. I don't believe that Joseph was planning on punishing his brothers, but he wanted his father to return, as we discussed last week, and this was Joseph's idea to get his father to Egypt, because he knew that if Benjamin was held captive in Egypt, that his father would return to get him.

✚ **Gen 44:7-9** <sup>7</sup> *And they said to him, "Why does my lord say these words? Far be it from us that your servants should do such a thing. <sup>8</sup> "Look, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? <sup>9</sup> "With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves."*

Joseph's brother reply with, *"Are you crazy, we didn't take anything. Check us out for yourselves and who ever has it will die. But not only that, if any of us had taken it, then the rest of us will be your slaves."* So many words to try and explain their innocence, but no vows were needed here, but they gave them anyway. Why would they do this? Maybe to try and prove with their words that they were honest men, hoping that they would not check their bags and take it on their word alone?

Possibly, but even though they said it, they had forgotten that they had to return with double money, so that they wouldn't be considered thieves.

So what does the steward do?

✚ **Gen 44:10-13** <sup>10</sup> *And he said, "Now also let it be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and you shall be blameless." <sup>11</sup> Then each man speedily let down his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. <sup>12</sup> So he searched. He began with the oldest and left off with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. <sup>13</sup> Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.*

He started with the oldest, which was Reuben, and went to the youngest, which was Benjamin. One thing that is not mentioned in the scriptures here is that, if you will

remember, not only was the cup put in Benjamin's bag, but the money was returned to each of them also. So as the steward was going through each bag and they saw the money, I bet the brothers were shaking in their sandals. With each bag being open and the money being revealed. I bet they were ready to take back their words. Finally when Benjamin's bag is opened, there was the cup. The response of the brothers is that they tore their clothes, which was a sign of agony and humility. Simply put, they were shocked. So they return to the city with Benjamin to plead his case.

✚ **Gen 44:14-15** <sup>14</sup> *So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he was still there; and they fell before him on the ground.* <sup>15</sup> *And Joseph said to them, "What deed is this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination?"*

So they arrive to Joseph's house and fall before his feet, which was something a servant would do. This was telling Joseph that they were his servants and asking for his mercy upon them. Joseph's reply may be easier to understand in the NLT.

✚ **Gen 44:15 (NLT)** *"What were you trying to do?" Joseph demanded. "Didn't you know that a man such as I would know who stole it?"*

Remember divination was being able to see the future. Also notice that Joseph never says that he uses this practice, but rather "**I can**", meaning even though it was a common practice in Egypt, it was one he did not practice or even use. Judah's reply to Joseph is.

✚ **Gen 44:16** <sup>16</sup> *Then Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup was found."*

Judah tells Joseph that they are his slaves and that God Himself had caught them. But Judah was not referring to the fact that the cup was stolen, because it wasn't, but rather he was referring to their sin that they committed against Joseph. They knew they were going to have to pay for the sin they committed against Joseph. Judah may have felt that since they sold Joseph as a slave, then God would punish them in the same way. Joseph replies with.

✚ **Gen 44:17** *But he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so; the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father."*

Joseph pretends like he doesn't know what they are talking about (although he does) and tells them that they are free to go, except for Benjamin.

In the rest of the chapter, Judah now pleads for Benjamin's life, and tells the whole story to Joseph. At least the story of how it started with them in Egypt the first time.

As you read through the rest of the chapter I want you to remember one thing. This is Judah speaking and begging for the life of Benjamin. But if you will remember, Judah was the one who instigated the whole Joseph incident over ten years ago.

† **Gen 37:26-27** <sup>26</sup> *So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? <sup>27</sup> "Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brothers listened.*

We also plead our case before God, hoping that the sentence would not be that severe. God's response is that we are not only pardoned, but that we are forgiven and He forgets about our sins.

Will Joseph be as compassionate as God?

✧ **Gen 44:18-34** <sup>18</sup> *Then Judah came near to him and said: "O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you are even like Pharaoh. <sup>19</sup> "My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?' <sup>20</sup> "And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, who is young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.' <sup>21</sup> "Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.' <sup>22</sup> "And we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' <sup>23</sup> "But you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.' <sup>24</sup> "So it was, when we went up to your servant my father, that we told him the words of my lord. <sup>25</sup> "And our father said, 'Go back and buy us a little food.' <sup>26</sup> "But we said, 'We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' <sup>27</sup> "Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; <sup>28</sup> 'and the one went out from me, and I said, 'Surely he is torn to pieces'; and I have not seen him since. <sup>29</sup> 'But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.' <sup>30</sup> "Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, <sup>31</sup> "it will happen, when he sees that the lad is not with us, that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. <sup>32</sup> "For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.' <sup>33</sup> "Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. <sup>34</sup> "For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?"*

This is the same Judah who said, "What can we gain by killing our brother? That would just give us a guilty conscience. Let's sell Joseph to those Ishmaelite traders. Let's not be responsible for his death; after all, he is our brother!" (NLT)

Judah who cared about no one but himself, was now willing to give his life for his brother, Benjamin. Not only that, Judah remembers how much grief he caused his father by what he did to Joseph, and he knows that if Benjamin were lost that this father just wouldn't be able to take it. This is the heart of a repentant man, willing to give up all for others.

So has Joseph hardened his heart and become uncaring?

✧ **Gen 45:1** *Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers.*

No, Joseph just couldn't put up with the charade any longer. He was hoping to get his father back, but he knew that this was not the right way and that he needed to be honest with his brothers.

✧ **Gen 45:2** *And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it.*

The cats out of the bag, Joseph is not an Egyptian, even though he was living among them for over ten years now. But I think they knew this, but they weren't sure who or what he was.

✧ **Gen 45:3-5** <sup>3</sup> *Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. <sup>4</sup> And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. <sup>5</sup> "But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.*

The key verse to all of Joseph's life and every thing we have read about him is in verse five, ***"for God sent me before you to preserve life."***

Everything Joseph had gone through, and as we read about him, he always knew that God was with him. We have gone over this many times through this study on Joseph, and all the other men in Genesis up to this point.

So I do have to ask you again, have you seen God in your life all these years? I am 60 years old, and as I look back on my life, I can see so many times that the Lord has been with me. Some things stand out very clear, where as other things are very subtle, or things we take God for granted for; like our food everyday, our home and clothes, our jobs and friends and family. God is always with you no matter where you are or what you are going through. Maybe today is the day you really start to acknowledge that, first to yourself, then to others.

Joseph continues to tell his brother how God has used him over the years.

✠ **Gen 45:6-15** <sup>6</sup> *"For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. <sup>7</sup> "And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. <sup>8</sup> "So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup> "Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph: "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry. <sup>10</sup> "You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. <sup>11</sup> "There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for there are still five years of famine." ' <sup>12</sup> "And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you. <sup>13</sup> "So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here." <sup>14</sup> Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. <sup>15</sup> Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.*

After Joseph tells his brothers how God was using him, he tells them to go back and get their father. But notice he doesn't say, "Go back and tell dad what you did to me." No, Joseph has forgiven his brothers for what they did, and was offering them a new home and that he would take care of them.

Does that sound familiar to you as a Christian? It should, because the Lord has done the same thing for us. He has forgiven us for our sins, and when we get to heaven we won't have to ask God's forgiveness. If we tried God might ask what we are talking about since He casts our sins as far as the east is from the west.

✠ **Psalms 103:10-12** <sup>10</sup> *He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities. <sup>11</sup> For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; <sup>12</sup> As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.*

But not only that God will provide for us and take care of us here on the earth and even more so in heaven as we will have our own mansions in heaven.

✠ **John 14:2-3** *In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*

And we will never go hungry again.

† **Rev 7:15-17** *"Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."*

God is called **Jehovah-jireh**, which means, *"the Lord will provide"*.

† **Gen 22:14** *And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-WILL-PROVIDE; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided."*

As we read the rest of Genesis, we will read that Joseph does provide for his family. If a simple man like Joseph does, how much more will our heavenly Father provide for us!

✧ **Gen 45:16-20** <sup>16</sup> *Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, "Joseph's brothers have come." So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well. <sup>17</sup> And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. <sup>18</sup> 'Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. <sup>19</sup> 'Now you are commanded--do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. <sup>20</sup> 'Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.' "*

People run and tell Pharaoh that Joseph is not an Egyptian and wants his family to come and live there in Egypt. These may have been those who didn't like Joseph or wanted his position in Egypt. I bet they were shocked with Pharaoh's response, because, Pharaoh was happy with this and even excited about it. He tells Joseph to go get his family and bring them here, and for them not to worry because he would provide all that they needed. He even offered the transportation and help to get them there.

It would be like having a job in another country with your family here in the USA. Someone tells your boss you want them to come to the country you are in to live with you. His response would be, "Go get them and they can live here. I will even give them homes to live in with the land belonging to them also. In fact, here are some planes and trucks to go get them with.

You may be thinking, *"Wow, that would never happen for me."* If you feel this way I have a question for you, "Is not your God the same God of Joseph?" God hasn't changed, and if He did it 4000 years ago, He can do it today!

✧ **Gen 45:21-24** <sup>21</sup> *Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them carts, according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey. <sup>22</sup> He gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments. <sup>23</sup> And he sent to his father these things: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey. <sup>24</sup> So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, "See that you do not become troubled along the way."*

Joseph sends them on their way and gives them provisions for their journey, and once again gives his brother Benjamin more. He also sends gifts to his father, because he wants his father to believe them and come back.

Right before they leave Joseph tells them one final thing, *"See that you do not become troubled along the way."*

In the NLT it read like this, *"Don't quarrel along the way!"*

Don't argue about what you got or what you didn't get. Be happy and know that the Lord has provided for you.

✧ **Gen 45:25-28** <sup>25</sup> *Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. <sup>26</sup> And they told him, saying, "Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart stood still, because he did not believe them. <sup>27</sup> But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. <sup>28</sup> Then Israel said, "It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."*

After over 12 years of being away from his father, Joseph knows his dad. He didn't believe his sons until he saw the gifts Joseph had given to him.

For over 12 years Israel was very sad and had lost any energy to do anything because of the loss of his son. But now he was revived with new energy knowing that his son was not dead but was alive.

When we walk away from the Lord we affect people the same way. All because of our own covetousness and self desires. When you are doing such things you don't care about others and it really hurts them. But we are blinded by our sins and just don't see it. Just remember that next time you think things are better in the world then with Jesus Christ.

Finally Joseph gets what he wanted, and that's for his father to come to him in Egypt. But this could have happen a long time ago when his brothers first came to Egypt. But Joseph wanted to make sure that his brothers had repented of their sin, which he saw they had by Judah's words.

It also took Joseph's brothers over 12 years to repent of their sin, and as soon as they did they had forgiveness. How long will it take you?

As I read Judah's words to Joseph, explaining the whole ordeal and pleads for Benjamin's life. I have to wonder why they never told their father what they did to go out and try to find Joseph and buy him back if they had to? I think it was out of fear because of what they did, and because they lied to their father. They couldn't face the sin they had committed nor could they do anything to repay their sin. But as soon as they asked for forgiveness, and their hearts were broken over their sin, could they be reconciled to their family.

Maybe you feel the same way about your sin. Like you have messed up too much and you have been living with the guilt of your sin(s) for many years. Today the Lord wants to set you free from your sins and wants you to come back to the family again. Just confess your sins to Him and He will forgive you. Sound too simple? That's what Joseph's brother's thought as they lived with their guilt for over 12 years.

There are only 4 more chapters left in Genesis. This may take up to a month or less to complete (God willing). So what happens after this? Do we go on to Exodus or somewhere else in the Bible?

Any comments or suggestion would be appreciated, as this web site is here to equip you in doing the Lord's work.

May God richly bless you in His love, grace and mercy. To Him be glory forever and ever. AMEN!