

Joseph--Genesis 44

Joseph's Cup Found in Benjamin's Sack

I. Additional Scriptures...

1. Joseph himself did not use divination, but simply spoke that which God revealed to him (Gen 40:8; 41:16).
2. Divination as defined--*attempts to discover the unknown or the future by supernatural means, involving communication with the spirit world*--was not what Joseph did and is condemned in Scripture (Lev 19:31; Ex 22:18; Deut 18:9-14; Mal 3:5; Gal 5:20).
3. It is God's divine privilege to reveal or conceal things (Deut 29:29; Prov 25:2).
4. Divination is clearly forbidden, but casting lots seems to have been an acceptable way of discovering God's will in certain instances (1 Chr 26:13-16; Neh 11:1; Acts 1:26).

II. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: **Patriarchy.**

In this chapter Joseph finally gets to see Benjamin. We are coming closer to the time when all of the family will dwell together in Egypt.

III. Summary.

Joseph prepares to send his brothers back home, but he has a plan to further "test their mettle." He commands that the sacks of his brothers be filled with grain and with the money they had used to purchase it. In addition, into Benjamin's sack would be placed Joseph's silver cup. After the brothers depart for home, Joseph sends his steward out after them to "discover" what they had done. Being perfectly innocent, they pointed out to the steward that they had just returned the money that had been mistakenly placed in their bags from the last trip. Why would they take money from their lord's house--let the man die in whose sack the cup is found. After examining each bag, the silver cup was found in Benjamin's sack. The caravan returns to Joseph's house. Joseph rebukes them sharply and says the one with whom the cup was found will become his servant.

Judah approaches Joseph in a kind a respectful tone asking for mercy. He details that which has happened up to this moment and seeks to paint the woeful picture of the father back home who would literally die if they should return without Benjamin. Judah had become surety for the lad and says that he simply could not bear to watch his father grieve himself to death.

IV. Outline.

1. Joseph has his steward load up the brothers' sacks and place their money in the mouth of each sack along with his silver cup in Benjamin's sack (1-2).
2. The men left at daybreak but Joseph sends his steward after them to catch up with them and accuse them of stealing (3-6).
3. The brothers protest against the accusation (7-9).
4. The steward said the one with the silver cup will be his servant (10).
5. The search took place and the cup was in Benjamin's sack, which led to great anguish for the brothers (11-13).
6. Upon return to Joseph's house the brothers bow before Joseph knowing not what to say (14-16).
7. Joseph says the man with the cup will be his servant and the rest should leave (17).

8. Judah respectfully approaches Joseph and pleads for mercy (18-32).
9. Judah asks to be enslaved in the place of Benjamin (33).
10. Judah says he couldn't bear to see how grieved his father would be without Benjamin (34).

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ The expression, "the lad" is found seven times in this chapter and refers to Benjamin each time.
02. _____ Joseph's brothers were accused of rewarding evil for good.
03. _____ The search conducted by Joseph's steward began with the youngest brother.
04. _____ Reuben asked Joseph, "How shall we clear ourselves?"
05. _____ Joseph learns about what Jacob had thought happened to him in this chapter.

Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. _____ Judah told Joseph that if their father should see them return to Canaan without Benjamin he would: (a) hang them all; (b) bring forth an army to attack Egypt; (c) die.
07. _____ How much food was the steward directed to place into the sacks of Joseph's brothers: (a) 2 sacks full; (b) as much as they could carry; (c) no instructions were given about amount.
08. _____ According to Judah, the brothers told their father they would come to Egypt if: (a) he would send expensive gifts with them; (b) he would come with them; (c) our youngest brother be with us.
09. _____ Which of the following happened after the silver cup was found in Benjamin's sack: (a) they rent their clothes; (b) they laded every man his ass; (c) they returned to the city; (d) none of these; (e) a, b, and c.
10. _____ "Let not thine anger burn against thy servant" was a statement from: (a) Judah; (b) Reuben; (c) Simeon.

Fill in the Blanks

11. "And if ye take this also from me, and _____ befall him, ye shall bring down my _____ with sorrow to the grave."
12. Acts ____:26 And they gave forth their _____; and the _____ fell upon _____; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.
13. The word WOT, as used in Genesis 44, means _____.
14. "...let not thine _____ burn against thy servant: for thou art even as _____."
15. Judah said, "let thy servant abide _____ of the lad a _____ to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren."

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be given on next week's handout

ANSWERS: 01-07... [01—False, 2; 02—False, 37; 03—True, 8; 04—True, 21; 05—False, 35; 06—c, 6; 07—b, 38; 08—a, 17-18; 09—b, 29; 10—c, 36; 11—Pharaoh, youngest, 15; 12—convicted, alone; 13—anguish, besought, hear, Gen 42:21; 14—12:13, Nathan, sinned; 15—Simeon, 24, 36].

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. *And he commanded the steward of his house, ... put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest...* (Gen 44:1-2). For what reason this action is taken is not revealed to us in the text. Speculation abounds, but we simply are not told the reason.

J.W. McGarvey preached a sermon about Joseph and says that his aim was to get Benjamin in Egypt and forget about the rest of the family. He further says that this plan was gutted when he heard Judah mention that his father had thought Joseph had been torn in pieces. McGarvey postulated that Joseph had wondered why Jacob had not sent an army searching for him and was hurt by the lack of a search. According to his theory, after Joseph heard what Judah said he suddenly developed a great longing for his family and when the brothers were willing to be put in prison instead of or with Benjamin (v. 16), he changed his feelings toward the other brothers. However, it seems to me that this deceptive scheme is not likely the best explanation of this situation. It seems to me to be just “play acting” to see what more he could find out about his brothers’ character. Joseph knew the importance of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Joseph and gave instructions later about taking his bones with them when they were “visited by God” to bring them out of Egypt to the promised land (Gen 50:24-25).

2. *Is not this it in which my lord drinketh and, whereby indeed he divineth?... (Gen 44:5).* I do not believe at all that the kind of “divining” which is condemned and warned against in the law of Moses and in the New Testament (cf., Additional Scriptures above) is the kind that Joseph did in interpreting dreams of the Butler and Baker and Pharaoh. Perhaps his use of this language is more designed to scare his brothers as he continues his “play acting” with them than it is to state a fact. Joseph was sure to point out in both of these instances of dream interpretation that it was God Who was the source of the interpretation (Gen 40:8; 41:16).
3. *With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord’s bondmen (Gen 44:9).* Here is the calm confident statement of an honest man. The very idea of such a thing was preposterous in their minds and they spoke out against it with utmost confidence. This is similar to the reaction of Hannah when she was unjustly accused by Eli (1 Sam 1:14-16). When unjustly accused of wrongdoing, this would be the first step--express outrage regarding it. These brothers were truly innocent, but had been set up.
4. *...How shall we clear ourselves? (Gen 44:16).* In this circumstance, the greatest penalty these brothers would suffer was physical death or perpetual slavery. Yet the desire was to be clear. We are mindful of the plea from the Jews at Pentecost (Acts 2:37). After hearing a powerful sermon they were cut to the heart and wanted to be saved from their sins. All men everywhere need to have an interest in clearing themselves. The marvelous scheme of redemption about which we are reading has made it possible to be clear of sin through the blood of Jesus (Acts 2:38; 1 Pet 1:18-19).
5. *...Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord’s ears,... (Gen 44:18).* Here is surely one of the most powerfully moving appeals to be found in Scripture. The very courteous, sincere, respectful, and gentle words had to make a good impression on Joseph. Let us learn in our own communication that disrespect and unkindness of speech has no place in the life of a Christian (Eph 4:32; Col 4:6; 1 Pet 3:8). Consider the courteous appeal Paul made to Philemon.
6. *Surely he is torn in pieces... (Gen 44:28).* Here Joseph learns that his father thought he was dead. What emotions must have stirred in his heart!
7. *For how shall I go up to my father... lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father (Gen 44:34).* We can understand why Judah would lay bare his heart. He had already observed the reaction of his father to the supposed death of Joseph and he is totally unprepared to go through that terrible experience once again. He will do anything and pay any price to avoid it.

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

W L I T T L E W E R T Y P U I O P P O I
 U Y T R E B U R N W Q L H K D E A D J H
 L K L H P I E C E S G F A D S A M N B V
 B L V O C X Z P O I U Y R T R E A S K D
 F E G H R J K L M N B V A C X Z P A O L
 K F J H G D F D S A P T O I O U E T R E
 E T W Q L K J H G F N D H S A P M A N B
 V C X Z P R O I U A Y T R E S E W Q R M
 N B V C E X Z L V J H G N F D S A P O S
 I U Y G T R E R W A S O D F G H J K L P
 M N N B V C E X Z W L E R T Y U B I O P
 L A J H G S F D S A A P Z X C V R B N T
 M L K J H G F D S A O P R O I U O R E O
 M O L D N B V C X Z P O I A U Y T T R R
 E R W Q A F A T H E R A S D Y F H G H N
 Z X S W C E D C V R F Y O U N G E S T G
 B G T Y H H N M K I O L P L O I R K M U
 J M N H Y T I G B R F V E D C W S X Z A
 Z A W E D C V L O V E T H G B T Y H N M
 P O L I K M J U D T G B V F R E D C W S

[The words below are taken from Judah's delicate and passionate plea to Joseph on behalf of Benjamin. See if you can find them up above.]

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| 01. lord | 02. servant |
| 03. pray | 04. speak |
| 05. ears | 06. anger |
| 07. burn | 08. Pharaoh |
| 09. father | 10. brother |
| 11. old | 12. child |
| 13. little | 14. dead |
| 15. alone | 16. left |
| 17. loveth | 18. youngest |
| 19. torn | 20. pieces |