

The Book of Genesis

Chapter Forty Four

Final Test

Lesson Verse:

I. Lesson Introduction

- A. As Gen. 43 closed, the fear that the brothers had for Joseph has been replaced with joy, laughter, and feasting. Joseph's brothers believed all is well. Simeon is free. The man (Joseph) accepted the money that was 'accidentally' returned from their previous trip. There was a grand banquet held in their honour at the man's house that was second to Pharaoh. No one else had such a privilege as to dine with the ruler save these eleven brothers. There they were just a few days ago starving and arguing with their father in a land ravaged by want. Now look at them! Dining with the vice president. They have grain for the family back home. They would leave in the morning. Life is great.
- B. Joseph filled his siblings with a false sense of security. They have again failed to confess those past desires to kill him. Would it be wrong to assume that perhaps, just perhaps, Joseph asked the brothers what happened to their other brother? In this chapter is recorded the brothers admitting for the third time Joseph's absence, but the brothers do not communicate their part in his disappearance, *Gen. 42:13, 44:20, 28.*
- C. It would be wrong to teach such an assumption as a biblical truth that Joseph questioned his siblings about their brother's absence. However, in our daily contacts with friends and strangers, we often hear of one who lost a sibling. When such comes up in a conversation, the next question normally is, "What happened to him or her" or "Would you like to talk about it?" It would not be too much of an assumption to think that Joseph inquired the same from his brothers.

II. Study Lesson

A. LEAVING FOR CANAAN.

1. After the feast and the party, the brothers prepare to leave. What made this departure so great was they did not even have to pack their provisions. The steward of Joseph did it all for them. Early in the morning, after the feast the night before, they set out for Canaan.
2. Joseph Gave His Steward Instructions.
 - a. Once again Joseph had his steward place the money the brothers used to buy grain in the mouths of their feed sacks. Joseph kept the brothers occupied while his steward followed his instruction. It is amazing how trustworthy some folks are. Had I been one of the brothers, I believe I would have looked in my sack. I do not like to believe that someone could get something on me twice. However, this is just what Joseph did to his brothers. They must have been very assured that nothing would befall them now.
 - b. The plot (1-7).
 - 1) The plot is rather simple. The money is placed back into the grain sacks along with Joseph's favourite cup. Upon overtaking the brothers the steward was instructed that he was to accuse the men of rewarding evil for good by stealing Joseph's favourite cup
 - c. The willing subjects.
 - 1) The brothers are willing subjects for this plot. Their pride is so great that the spokesman of the group, Judah, makes a foolish vow that whomsoever it is that stole the cup must die, and the rest must be a bondservants (9). Judah is partially right in his thinking and answer for they did not pack nor load the grain.
 - 2) These brothers are doing their best to escape without admitting their sin. Their desire is so great that, even though Benjamin was not involved in their devious plot years ago, he is caught in the net spread for them, *Psa 9:15.*
 - d. What is in my grain sack?
 - 1) The simplicity of the brothers to not look in their grain sacks is a picture of each of us on our journey to the Promised Land as well. The big difference is our Promised Land is heaven.

Joseph the great provider gave grain to sustain life. The fact that he included something personal was to bring about conviction in his brothers.

- 2) Jesus is our great provider. He supplies us with the bread and water of life. In His words are also desserts. All that we need for our journey to the Promised Land is supplied by Him. The devil comes along and inserts in our grain sacks items that he uses as a means of distraction or as burden. Satan does not waste time whining because someone accepted Jesus as Saviour. He immediately begins to load us down with worries and distractions.
 - 3) Just as these sons of Israel did not consider what was in their sacks or who packed and loaded them, we are often the same. They, as we, pay little attention to the very things that are most essential. These key things should be given our up most attention. Every once in a while we need to check out the grain sack. Someone might have sown some tares among the wheat.
- e. What are my provisions?
- 1) How easily beguiled we are! Jesus saved us from our sins. He provided us with provisions. We set out on our journey through life headed for the Promised land and many days we walk across a barren land tiring more and more with every step. Often we get tired right after the journey begins. What we need to consider is we could be carry things we do not need. These useless objects, these extra burdens hamper our progress. Because we are too prideful, we do not cast them aside as useless and unnecessary.
 - 2) What are some of these extra burdens we lug through life? How about a besetting sin, that we have had so long it has become a part of us? Whereas in times past it was a minor irritation, it has now become part of our personality and character. An example would be a church member with an unclean mouth, mind, social drinking, etc.
 - 3) Another item that hinders progress is guilt for past sins that even though we were forgiven by those we offended, and we believe God forgave, we faithful cling to guilt with a death grip?
 - 4) Another unnecessary item we carry with us is the opportunity for making provisions for the flesh so that the flesh can enjoy some private sin time, *Rom 13:14*.
 - 5) Another load we burden self down with is ill will towards a brother or sister within the local church body. The Holy Ghost has convicted us to go to that one an apologize, but we refuse to do so. Those are just some things that come to mind about things that we might have in our grain sacks.
 - 6) What are some of the things we ought to have in our grain sacks? How about the fruit of the spirit: *Gal. 5:22-23*, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance? How about a forgiving spirit? How about determination that we will follow the Lord and be obedient as long as breath is in our bodies? For every useless item we cast out of our grain sacks, we must replace it with a fruit of the spirit.
- f. Who did the packing?
- 1) Now that we realize we have some dead weight that hinders or forward progress, what we need to do now is determine who did our packing. With the sons of Israel it was the steward of Joseph. He loaded them with things that did not belong to them. He did it at his master's request.
 - 2) Some of the questions each of us must ask and answer are: Have I allowed someone to load me down with foolish vain burdens that hinder my Christian walk? Have I loaded myself so much with worries that I am stagnant in my journey? Instead of looking up, I am constantly looking down? Have we allow someone else to think for us, fill our heads with foolish and evil doubts?
- g. Self examination.
- 1) Each of us ought to examine what we have in our grain sacks. That sack contains provisions for this life allows us to work for rewards in the life hereafter. What is in my sack?
 - 2) One thing we must remember: Our grain sack is large enough to carry enough provision for our personal journey. I cannot carry your provisions. You cannot carry mine. Every time we place one or some of these unnecessary items in our sack, every time we allow someone else to put useless items in our sack, there is less room for the provisions provided by God. It is no wonder that we tire on our journey. Each step of our journey is made through the

power of the flesh. We feed the flesh, but fail to feed our spirit. It is no wonder we are unfruitful Christians. It is no wonder we wander around in the wilderness.

- 3) For every bad habit we give up, we must replace it with a good one. For example if we give up the evil habit of complaining, we ought to replace it with a thankful spirit. Jesus gave up the illustration in *Mat 12:43-45* where a man cleaned his body of evil spirits. The evil spirit left the man and soon returned with several more. Why was this? It was because the man did not fill that void in his life with good habits.
- h. Destination's end.
- 1) Joseph's brothers did not get far on their journey with those items that they did not need and that were not theirs to begin with. They ended up right where they started from facing Joseph.
 - 2) We will not get far on our journey either. Carrying unnecessary items will bring us right back to where we started from as well facing Jesus. Jesus expects us to make our journey with the things He has provided. We should not carry around things that encumber our progress.
3. The Accusations.
- a. The steward overtook the caravan and proceeded to make the accusations against the men. He told them that someone stole the favourite cup of his lord. This cup in question, according to the steward, was not an ordinary cup. It was used by his master to discern. As they were the ones that dined with his lord the night before they were the most likely suspects. He needed to search their belonging. We can only wonder why the brothers were so gullible when they did not pack or load the grain, the steward did.
- b. The cup.
- 1) The truth of the matter is Joseph did not use the cup to discern. This is evident by his statements about interpreting dreams and giving the credit to God, *Gen. 40:8, 41:16*. Joseph did not tell the steward to say that the cup was used for discerning. The steward was probably superstitious and knowing the story behind Joseph's promotion believed that Joseph possessed some magic somewhere.
 - 2) The above thought has much merit when we consider the way of the world when it comes to dealing with scriptural and spiritual matters. For example all of us have known of folks who at one time were lost and these had a particular sin that made them outstanding lost souls. Once the power of the Holy Ghost begins to reside in them, that sin nature changed without any help from any programs devised by man. The world cannot understand such transitions and believes there must be some magic or a trick to it. Jesus changes a person for free, while the world charges a fee. I believe that is how the steward thought about Joseph and his cup.
- c. Guilt.
- 1) This was a simple ploy to get the brothers to thinking and asking questions about this man. If he did indeed use the cup to discern, what else was it he knew about them that they thought was a secret between the ten brothers? What if this man sent word to their father telling him the truth about the disappearance of his beloved son 20 years ago?
 - 2) There is nothing like having a sin hidden in your life and then be called in question about something else. The conscience immediately begins to play 'what if or what have I done now' games and often we speak and act in fear in situations as these. Sometimes the burden is so great we confess just so we can get that burden removed from our lives.
 - 3) Joseph has a two-fold plan:
 - a) Bring the brothers to a point where they confess their sins;
 - b) Determine if Benjamin is treated well. Joseph wants to know their heart's before he makes his identity known.

B. BACK TO EGYPT (11-34).

1. Judah Intercedes For Benjamin (18-34).
 - a. Judah's defence (16).
 - 1) When the servant first approached the men, Judah said that the one who had the cup must die (9). He was so sure none of them had the cup that he would be so bold and audacious to make such a remark. However, after the steward found the cup in the sack of Benjamin, and

after arriving back in Egypt and facing Joseph, Judah changed his vow and simply said that the one that had the cup would be a servant along with the others (11).

- b. Joseph's reply (17).
 - 1) Joseph had no intentions of putting Benjamin to death and then send the brothers away. Knowing the heart's of his brothers, Joseph probably assumed that if he had Benjamin killed, the brothers would just lie and say that he died accidentally. After all it is not the first time they lied about someone's disappearance. Their nature has not change. They will continue to lie when the lies best fits their goals.
 - 2) It would be far worse for the brothers to go back home and face Israel and be forced to tell the story that Benjamin must remain in Egypt. By forcing Benjamin to remain with him the brothers would then be forced to tell the truth to their father. This time when one of the brothers is removed from the life of Jacob, there is a witness that cares. There is no way short of God intervening that the 10 brothers could ransom Benjamin. The crafty were caught in their own devices. The wicked are caught in their net, *Prov 29:5 A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet.*
- c. Judah Repeats His Vow Of Surety (28-32).
 - 1) Here in his speech that Judah made to Joseph about the relation between Benjamin and Israel, the reader is presented with several pictures. One of the most vivid pictures is when we allow Jacob to represent God the Father, Benjamin represents mankind, Joseph is a type of the Holy Ghost, and Judah a type of Christ. One we visualize these men in these roles we understand a little more of what Jesus did for us.
 - 2) Benjamin, as a type mankind, is trapped in a country (Egypt) that is a type of the world. He must play by the rules of Egypt even though he was afforded no opportunity to make the rules.
- d. The substitution (33).
 - 1) Judah beseeches Joseph to permit him to take Benjamin's place. Benjamin has been found guilty through no fault of his own. He did not steal the cup. It was not Benjamin that sold Joseph into slavery and wanted him dead. It was not Benjamin lying to Jacob. Those points do not matter. What does matter is he must bear the brunt of the consequences for the sins of his brothers.
 - 2) Looking at Benjamin in this manner we really get a view of self. It is not my fault I was born with a sin nature. I did not ask to be born as such. I did not even ask to be born. Never-the-less, here I am. Now that I am, and furthermore, I cannot return to where or what I once was, *John 3:4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?* I also find there are some rules that no one asked me about prior to my birth. No one inquired of me if I would be willing to live and die by rules that I had no choice in making but am forced to honour and obey.
 - 3) For that matter, no one asked Benjamin's opinion about the situation wherein he finds himself. If someone had made him known what was to befall him, he might have chosen to remain in Canaan. The same can be said for all of us if we had known of what we were to endure just for being born, we might have said with Job, *Job 3:11-12.*
 - 4) Now that we find self in a dire straight, what do we do about it? We cannot change the rules, for that would be unfair to the untold millions before us that played by the rules. We are powerless to change the rules for the one that made the rules is the Creator. He has never gone back on His words or lowered His standards for anyone. We must therefore resign self to pay the ultimate price for violating the rules. We must hang our heads in shame under the convicting power of the Holy Ghost and remain a bondservant to sin and its punishment.
- e. How shall I face my father (34)?
 - 1) Judah stood before Joseph and asked some very valid questions: How shall I face my father without Benjamin by my side? My father's life is bound up in the lad's life (30), do you want to see me send my father to his grave?
 - 2) Judah pleaded with Joseph to not permit evil to come upon his father (34). Have you ever thought about the evil that would have come upon our heavenly Father if Jesus had failed? How much evil would rise up on us?

- 3) God bound Himself into our lives. He breathed life into a body of clay and Adam became a living soul. After Adam failed to obey his Father, he was ashamed to commune face to face with his Father. That was why he hid in the Garden of Eden and tried to cover his sins with works of his own devices.
 - 4) The grandson of Adam, Judah, would also have been ashamed to face his father for the same reasons of Adam. He failed to honour his vows. (Remember how Judah vowed to be surety for Benjamin, *Gen. 43*?) The beloved son was left behind in the world to face judgment.
 - 5) The great grand son of Adam several times removed also faced this same question: How can I face my Father if I fail? Praise be to our Father He did not fail, but ascended up to the throne of God, ***John 20:17***, and presented Himself as surety for all those that would accept it, ***Heb. 10:5-10***.
 - 6) If Jesus had failed in all the work appointed unto Him, He could not face the Father. Jesus avoided such a rendezvous because He chose to do good and not evil, *Isa 7:15 Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good*. Furthermore, He had an all night meeting (prayer meeting) with His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane, ***Mat 26:36***, before He ascended up to the cross and before He ascended up to His Father, (and Judah said he would go up to face his father (34)
 - 7) Matthew does not record in detail the contents of the prayer made by our Saviour that night in the garden. However, John went into great detail and thus we are aware of what Jesus prayed, *John 17*. How did Jesus face His Father? He faced Him by submitting to His Father's will.
 - 8) What would Jacob do should Judah fail but go down to his grave in grief with evil upon him. What would God the Father have done if His Son failed? That is a hypothetical question, for God cannot fail. However, considering the humanity of Jesus, the possibility was there. If such had been the case, then Satan would have won. God would have abdicated the throne. Remember that every thing that Satan offered the Lord was Satan's to give, *Luke 4:6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it*.
- f. Judah asked to take the punishment instead of Benjamin, ***1 John 2:2, 4:10***.
 - g. Judah was determined that Benjamin would go back and be with his father, Jacob, even it meant that he remained in Benjamin's place. If Joseph wanted justice, then Judah was determine it would fall on him.
 - h. Before the foundations of the world were laid, the righteous justice of God demanded that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission for sin. The obstacle to overcome was what or whom would be an acceptable sacrifice? God our Holy Father would not accept an unholy sacrifice, something less than perfection. Something or someone must be equal to or better than the justice of God, ***Luke 1:35***.
 - i. Man could not atone for himself. Most men would not, even if they could. If the Father was going to implement His plan and create, if His creation was going to love Him willingly, justice demanded that God Himself be the sacrifice, ***Rom 8:3***.
 - j. This sacrifice of God and by God is beautifully illustrated in the word propitiation. Propitiation means acceptable, appease or conciliate, pacify, or placate. That is just what Jesus did for us. Man was doomed to die for his sins. Man was doomed to die by rules he did not make and could not change. There was no hope for him in the world. That was when the Saviour came out of this world and down to this world to die for the world. Jesus Christ took our place and paid the penalty.
 - k. Here in *Genesis 44* the great-grand father of Jesus stood before the second in command of all Egypt and willingly made himself the sacrifice instead of his younger brother. Will his offer be accepted? Did God the Father accept the offer made by Jesus? *Heb 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*
 - l. A few hundred years later Jesus stood before the throne of God the Father and presented Himself a sacrifice for sin. He was our great substitution. *John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

III. Conclusion and Study Questions