

TruthInScripture
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Genesis 44.

We continue our study of how the Israelites came to be, how the Nation of Israel came to be. As a part of our study of the beginnings Genesis.

Ch 43, a brief summary.

After obtaining the needed grain from Yosef the brothers return to their father minus, Simeon. The deal to return with Benjamin is rejected by the father, Yakob.

However, after some time, the grain is gone, and the famine continues. Yehudah reminds Yakob that there's no use in

returning to Egypt, and that is where the grain is, unless they bring the youngest son Benjamin, as they were told by the authority, Yosef...

If anything happens to Benjamin, he offers to bear the blame himself.

Finally, Yakob relents, and he makes them take a gift of Canaan's best produce and also return the money they found in their bags upon their return from the last trip.

Eventually, another trip to Egypt can no longer be avoided, so he does everything they can to ensure a successful appeal to Egypt's overseer (Yosef).

When the brothers reach Egypt again and Yosef sees Benjamin among them, he orders a feast to be prepared. The brothers fear it's all a plan to enslave them, or worse.

They approach Yosef's steward and explain about the returned money.

The steward reassures them that they are in no danger, and releases Simeon from jail.

At the noon feast, Yosef asks about his father, and greets Benjamin.

Overwhelmed with love for his youngest brother, he leaves the room briefly to weep. He is a

weeper 3 times at least... he gets ahold of himself and returns to the feast, sending the biggest portions of food to Benjamin.

Let's see the last part of CH 43, no breaks in the original. And this is a terrible break actually.

24 Then the man (servant...) brought the men into Yosef's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys food and care.

/25 So they prepared the present for Yosef's coming at noon; for they had heard that they were to eat a meal there.

This is all the well the meager gifts
outline before, nuts, balm etc,
minha = tribute, offering, present,

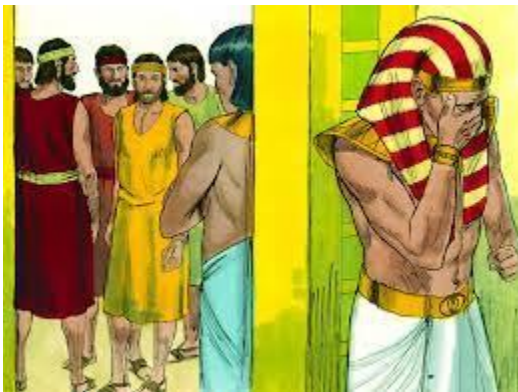
**26 When Yosef came home, they
brought into the house to him
the present which was in their
hand and bowed to the ground
before him.**

Now there was 11 brothers
bowing, one still left to complete
the dream and that is the father,
Yakob.

How would that come about, well
we will see as we continue.

**27 Then he asked them about
their welfare, and said, “Is your
father well, the old man of whom
you spoke? Is he still alive?”**

**28 They said, “Your servant our father is well; he is still alive.”
They bowed down in homage.**



/29 As he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother’s son, he said, “Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me?” And he said, “May GOD be gracious to you, my son.”

30 Yosef hurried out for he was deeply stirred over his brother, and he sought a place to weep;

and he entered his chamber and wept there.

31 Then he washed his face and came out; and he controlled himself and said, “Serve the meal.”

32 So, they served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is loathsome to the Egyptians.

Don't miss that, the Egyptians would not eat with the Hebrews. The others would not even eat in a person in Yosef's position presence unless invited....

Look at Vs 33

/33 Now they were seated before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth, and the men looked at one another in astonishment.

Now they had to be wondering I think, how does he know the order of the ages of us. That is a part of their astonishment.

/34 He took portions to them from his own table, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. So, they feasted and drank freely with him.

This means that Yosef had food taken from his plate so to speak and given to his brothers and in particular the plate of Benjamin.

All is well, but there is still one problem, Yakob. How will Yosef get Yakob there. Well, let's go to CH 44.

44:1 Then Yosef commanded his house steward, 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.

/2 “Put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his money for the

grain.” And he did as Yosef had told him. Kehsep...

Oh oh, what’s going on here?
Yosef has just tested his brothers on the issue of jealousy.

By giving Benjamin five times as much, he has sought to see if their attitude toward Benjamin was like their attitude toward him, years ago.

But the brothers do not get jealous. At least they have learned one lesson. The 11 brothers are in great spirits. They were not accused of being thieves, they got a good meal, they had their donkeys refreshed. And now they have all the grain they could carry, plus

Simeon and Benjamin. So, things could not be better.

So, with a great spirit of happiness, they start their journey back home, mission accomplished.

The one thing we don't read regarding these brothers is prayer, we don't hear of them praying. Not saying they did not pray, just that we don't read of it.

The silver cup is believed to be used for divination, well we will see that it was, but the text doesn't say that Yosef used it for that. Some assume he did, I don't think so.

Divination cups or bowls were common in Egypt, so it is

understandable why such a cup would have been in Yosef's household.

The bowl or cup would be mixed with water and different oils and a diviner would interpret the results.

Some say that is what Yosef used to impress the Pharaoh, again that is highly disputed as it was Yahweh that provided the interpretation.

In any event these cups were of great value in several ways.

So, what appears at first to be a gift will turn out to be, instead, the very trap Yosef's brothers were originally afraid of after their first encounter.

Twenty years before, they responded to favoritism with hatred and deception.

Now the newest favorite is under threat, has the family of brothers matured spiritually, or stayed the same?

The silver cup would be a large cup and given the events following the last trip, one might well wonder why they were not curious to look inside their bags. Just to make sure they knew where they stood.

1 Then he commanded his house steward, 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.

2 “Put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his money for the grain.” And he did as Yosef had told him.

BTW, that conversation was not heard by the brothers. And this is an underlying truth here.

The brothers are under the covenant that GOD made with their father and grandfather and great grandfather. However, they have never really lived under the obedience to GOD. They did things their own way, for the most part. That is what I meant by not

hearing of them praying, praising
GOD.

After all they were the sons of a
Hebrew named Yakob, the brother
of Esau. Their father was Yitzak
and his father was Abraham.

So, this custom of divination was
practiced by many nations at that
time, and in fact still is.

Palm readers, tarot cards, psychics,
astrology, all the same...

**3 As soon as it was light, the men
were sent away, they with their
donkeys.**

Shah lach = they were sent off,
they were made to leave. Seems
they were having a good time.

4 They had just gone out of the city, and were not far off, when Yosef said to his house steward, “Up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good?’

5 ‘Is not this the one from which my lord drinks and which he indeed uses for divination? You have done wrong in doing this.’”

The climax of this story this drama is coming.

/Yosef carefully contrives a desperate situation in which the brothers are compelled to show, once and for all, whether they have

reformed since the day they so brutally sold him into slavery.

Benjamin is accused of stealing Yosef's divining cup or bowl. This would have been considered very sacred, which would have made the crime all the more serious.

Again Yosef was not diving with this cup.

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5 'Is not this the one from which my lord drinks and which he

indeed uses for divination? You have done wrong in doing this.”

Remember the steward was in on this plan. Yosef has commanded his steward to chase down his 11 brothers, already on their way back to Canaan. When the steward catches up to them, he is to accuse them of the crime. The evidence has been planted.

The servant was told to specifically ask about a silver cup. They are unaware it has been placed in Benjamin's sack by the steward himself, on the orders of Yosef.

The steward must emphasize that they have done evil in stealing the cup.

Yosef **did not practice** divination. The One, true GOD HIMself revealed things to Yosef. Yosef told the steward to mention divination to further his brothers' assumption that he was an Egyptian lord.

Thus it was all an elaborate setup to see whether the brothers would abandon their youngest brother like they did Yosef?

6 So he overtook them and spoke these words to them.

7 They said to him, “Why does my lord speak such words as

these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing.

8 “Behold, the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks we have brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord’s house?”

9 “With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord’s slaves.”

Yakob’s sons are defending themselves from accusations they have stolen this valuable silver cup.

But they go too far. Without fully understanding what is happening,

they vow that if anyone is found with the cup, he can be executed, and the rest of the men made slaves. What the brothers don't know, of course, is that the steward himself has placed the cup in the sack of the youngest brother Benjamin. Again I find it strange they didn't check their bags first, but...

10 So, he said, “Now let it also be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and the rest of you shall be innocent.”

/We're so sure of our innocence that if the cup was stolen by anyone here, he's a dead man! And the rest of us will be your slaves.”

Yosef's servant softened the penalty here by saying: There would be no death sentences. Rather, the one who had the cup would be consigned to servanthood. The rest could go free.

11 Quickly each man lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack.

12 He (the servant) searched, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

Beginning with the oldest, each bag of each brother was searched, oldest brother to the youngest.

Going in this order served as a clue that someone among the Egyptians had inside knowledge about the proper order of family members. It is the second time this was done...the first was at the feast or meal.

/The cup was found in Benjamin's sack... and the brothers tore their clothes as an open expression of grief.

They had an opportunity here to turn on Benjamin just as they had turned on Yosef years ago. They could have singled out Benjamin for punishment, went on their way with the explanation to their father Yakob that the kid stole this cup

and we were powerless to do anything.

But they did not. They were brothers in this together, and there would be no betrayal this time.

They could have, after all this was the new favorite of their father, and if they turned on him who could the father blame after all the kid had the cup...

13 Then they tore their clothes, and when each man loaded his donkey, they returned to the city.

To the brothers' horror, the cup is found in Benjamin's sack. As they see it, their father's worst nightmare has come true.

Yakob was terrified to send Benjamin after already losing Yosef.

It appears his beloved son has just been sentenced to a lifetime of slavery in Egypt. An agreement sent forth by his sons the brothers of Benjamin.

Judah must have felt especially heartbroken. He had pledged himself for Benjamin's safe return to Yakob, promising to carry the guilt forever if he failed to bring the boy back.

The steward had said that only the man who was found with the silver cup would be made a servant of his master. The rest would be free to

go. Yosef's brothers, however, do not leave. Not only do they grieve for their brother, they also refuse to abandon him in Egypt.

From Yosef's perspective, this will help demonstrate they have truly changed in the years since they sold him into Egyptian slavery.

14 When Judah and his brothers came to Yosef's house, he was still there, and they fell to the ground before him.

15 Yosef said to them, "What is this deed that you have done? Do you not know that such a man as I can indeed practice divination?" Simply another point to continue the test.

/16 So Judah said, “What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves? GOD has found out the iniquity of your servants; behold, we are my lord’s slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found.”

17 But Yosef said, “Far be it from me to do this. The man in whose possession the cup has been found, he shall be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your father.”

Yosef continues to test his brothers and he speaks of his ability to practice divination. Again, this should not be taken to mean that

Josef actually practices divination. Yosef is playing the role of an Egyptian governor. I know I have made that point several times but there is some debate unfounded I believe.

Judah at this point is the spokesman for the group. And he next admits to Yosef, **GOD has found out the guilt of your servants.** Seems in Judah's mind the kid was guilty...or at least a way of seeking mercy.

And they would now be slaves to Yosef. Through it all, however, the brothers never mistreated Benjamin or spoke to each other about selling him out. In fact in the Book of Yasher...war.

Yosef said that only Benjamin needed to stay with him. It is interesting isn't it: Yosef plainly frames his brothers. They have not done evil against him as they are accused here (they once did, but not here) they have not done evil.

When the steward and his armed guard finally catch the eleven brothers, they are shocked, to say the least.

/They are shocked and hurt. They have done right (like Yosef in the house of Potiphar) and have been falsely accused (like Yosef!) and now are about to be arrested (just like Yosef was) for something they didn't do (again like Yosef).

17 But Yosef said, “Far be it from me to do this. The man in whose possession the cup has been found, he shall be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your father.”

In response to Yosef’s test, in the form of what looks to be theft of his silver cup, now Judah will ask for mercy.

Yosef has not yet been recognized by his brothers. He seems determined to learn if his older ten brothers, who sold him into slavery with no remorse 20 years earlier, would allow the same to happen to Benjamin. Or had they truly repented and changed?

18 Then Judah approached him, and said, “Oh my lord, may your servant please speak a word in my lord’s ears, and do not be angry with your servant; for you are equal to Pharaoh.

The brothers had not spoken evil of Benjamin, and now Judah offered a special plea on his behalf.

/Judah will describe his father’s great love for Benjamin, his great love for the lost son (Yosef) so great that his father would die if he didn’t see his beloved Benjamin again. Judah therefore appealed to Joseph’s mercy.

19 “My lord asked his servants, saying, ‘Have you a father or a brother?’

20 And we told my lord, we have an aged father, and the youngest (son) is the son of his old age; his brother is dead; and he only remains of his mother, and his father loves him.

21 And thou said to thy servants, Bring him down to me, and let me set mine eyes upon him.

22 And we told my lord, His father cannot part with the youth; for if our father should part with him, he would die.

Judah makes an appeal to the Egyptian official who is his

brother Yosef. He does so by really saying look we were just coming for bread, if that would have been the deal then all this wouldn't have happened but you were asking all these questions...

Everything looked bad; the evidence against them (which was planted) seemed to seal their fate. Yet he makes an appeal. His impassioned speech to Yosef is an honest heartfelt desperate appeal. Some commentators or preachers call this a pathetic speech. Luther, FB Meyer (1900) didn't think much of this speech, this part of the text.

Others call it the manliest, most straightforward speeches ever

delivered. Barnhouse (1900) called it “one of the most moving addresses in all the Word of GOD.”

/I don't know about that, but it certainly seems to be a heartfelt honest plea. One worth looking at to be sure.

My LORD asked his servants: Judah reminded the Egyptian official that all this began with the questions he himself Yosef had asked. All they wanted to do was to buy some grain.

A father, an old man, and a child of his old age, who is young; his brother is dead: Judah presents his case to Yosef. Yosef must have

had a little smirk when Judah said, his brother is dead.

21 “Then you said to your servants, ‘Bring him down to me that I may set my eyes on him.’

22 “But we said to my lord, ‘The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.’

23 “You said to your servants, however, ‘Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will not see my face again.’

24 “Thus it came about when we went up to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.

25 “Our father said, ‘Go back, buy us a little food.’

Lots of you said he said we said going on.

Although this was quite a while. In a moment of desperation, Judah is attempting to soften an Egyptian ruler’s heart.

/It is interesting that what Judah leaves out of his otherwise accurate detailed story is that their father initially refused to send Benjamin. He jumps forward to the moment when Yakob told them to go and buy more food.

26 “But we said, ‘We cannot go down. If our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down;

for we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.'

27 "Your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons;

28 and the one went out from me, and I said, "Surely he is torn in pieces," and I have not seen him since.

29 'If you take this one also from me, and harm befalls him, you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow.'

30 "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,
(his favorite)**

**31 when he sees that the lad is
not with us, he will die. Thus
your servants will bring the gray
hair of your servant our father
down to Sheol in sorrow.**

/Now Judah puts it even more
plainly: Yakob's life is bound up
in the life of Benjamin. The two
are connected by a powerful love.
Judah describes the imagined
moment of arriving back home in
Canaan without Benjamin. Their
old father will simply die of
sorrow.

**32 "For your servant became
surety for the lad to my father,**

saying, ‘If I do not bring him back to you, then let me bear the blame before my father forever.’

33 “Now, therefore, please let your servant (me Judah) remain instead of the lad a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers.

34 “For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me for fear that I see the evil that would overtake my father?”

Well Yosef has to get Yakob and all his brothers to Egypt. That will happen and we will see how when we continue in CH 45.

