

## **Genesis 44**

### The Brothers Are Brought Back

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 opening of his sack. <sup>2</sup> And put my cup, the silver cup, in the opening of the sack of the youngest, and his money for the grain." And he did as Joseph had told *him*. <sup>3</sup> As soon as it was light, the men were sent away, they with their donkeys. <sup>4</sup> They had *just* left the city, *and* were not far away, when Joseph said to his house steward, "Up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid evil for good? <sup>5</sup> Is this not *that* from which my lord drinks, and which he indeed uses for divination? You have done wrong in doing this!'"

<sup>6</sup> So he overtook them and spoke these words to them. <sup>7</sup> And they said to him, "Why does my lord say such words as these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing! <sup>8</sup> Behold, the money which we found in the opening 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? <sup>9</sup> With whomever of your servants it is found, he shall die, and we also shall be my lord's slaves." <sup>10</sup> So he said, "Now let it indeed be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, but *the rest of you shall be considered innocent.*"

<sup>11</sup> Then they hurried, each man lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack. <sup>12</sup> And he searched, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. <sup>13</sup> Then they tore their clothes *in grief*, and when each man had loaded his donkey, they returned to the city. <sup>14</sup> When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still there, and they fell down to the ground before him. <sup>15</sup> Joseph said to them, "What is this thing that you have done? Do you not know that a man who is like me can indeed practice divination?" <sup>16</sup> So Judah said, "What can we say to my lord? What *words* can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves? God has found out the guilt of your servants; behold, we are my lord's slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found."

<sup>17</sup> But he 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." <sup>18</sup> 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. <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 an old father and a little boy *born in our father's* old age. Now his brother is dead, so he alone is left of his mother, and his father loves him.'

<sup>21</sup> Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me so that I may set my eyes on him.' <sup>22</sup> But we said to my lord, 'The boy cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' <sup>23</sup> You said to your servants, however, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will not see my face again.' <sup>24</sup> So it came about when we went up to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. <sup>25</sup> And our father said, 'Go back, 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 cannot 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 left me, and I said, “Surely he is torn to pieces,” and I have not seen him since. <sup>29</sup> If you also take this one from me, and harm happens to him, you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow.’ <sup>30</sup> So now, when I come to your servant, my father, and the boy is not with us—since our father’s life is so attached to the boy’s life— <sup>31</sup> when he sees that the boy is not *with us*, he will die. So your servants will bring the gray hair of your servant, our father, down to Sheol in sorrow.

<sup>32</sup> For your servant accepted responsibility for the boy from my father, saying, ‘If I do not bring him *back* to you, then my father can let me take the blame forever.’ <sup>33</sup> So now, please let your servant remain as a slave to my lord instead of the boy, and let the boy go up with his brothers. <sup>34</sup> For how shall I go up to my father if the boy is not with me? *I fear* that I may see the evil that would overtake my father.”

### **We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions**

1. What questions were provoked within you?
  2. Did anything confuse you?
  3. Did anything move you emotionally?
  4. Did God instruct you to do something?
  5. Did you gain any insight into God’s character?
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1. Joseph creates a sting in the tail by setting his brothers up with that old chestnut of ‘possession of stolen goods’.
  2. Why did Joseph choose Benjamin as his ‘fall guy’?
  3. The brothers are well and truly loaded up – perhaps contemplating a lucky escape - and are excited they are going home.
  4. They are outside the city wall when Joseph completes the conspiracy, by sending his men to his brothers with the allegation ‘why have you paid back good with evil?’
  5. They accuse Benjamin of the allegation of stealing the silver cup.
  6. Notice what Joseph says he uses the cup for – the cup of divination. How has he managed to keep God’s blessing upon him?
  7. The brothers deny the allegation as they are unaware of what Joseph’s servants have done with the cup.
  8. So confident are they of their innocence they barter away their freedom. Why did they not let their ‘yes be yes and their no be no’?
  9. Joseph’s servants latch onto this bold foolishness as he knows who has the cup.
  10. On investigation Benjamin is the one who stole the cup, now there’s trouble! Is this revenge served cold?
  11. The brothers re-enter the city and see Joseph, and in humility they bow down in the hope of mercy.
  12. Joseph re-iterates what the servants have found out about the cup. He feels the need to highlight his authority over the land of Egypt.
  13. In doing so he reveals he is involved in divination.
  14. The brothers are speechless as they are well and truly enslaved – what a terrible feeling!

15. The brothers accept their fate as slaves. What a turn-around from sending Joseph to the tar pit.
16. Joseph only wants Benjamin as a slave for he knows this will draw his father to him.
17. Judah remembers the promise he made to his father and offers himself as a substitute for his brother Benjamin. Redemption payment.
18. Judah tries the sympathy approach to release Benjamin from his entrapment. He tells Joseph his brother is dead now, he still does not recognise Joseph as his brother.
19. He pours on the emotional pressure on Joseph regarding his father.
20. Why can't Judah learn the lesson of not revealing too much information.
21. Why do some people think they can talk their way out of trouble with many words?
22. Judah reveals to Joseph the predicament he is in – he can't go back to his father unless he has his brother Benjamin with him.
23. Can you imagine hearing your dad say to you 'my wife and two sons, and you're not one of the sons'?
24. Why do you do when you have a spirit of rejection?
25. What is it to be full of sorrow?
26. All the brothers now Benjamin had become Jacob's favourite son.
27. What does it mean for a life to be bound up in the 'lads life'?
28. The shock of not getting his son back would kill Jacob – 'our actions will send our father to the grave'.
29. What is Judah insinuating when he says 'an evil will overtake my father'.