

1 And the famine [was] sore in the land. **2** And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food.

You can only carry so much food on a caravan of donkeys. The food soon ran out. They need to buy more food.

3 And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother [be] with you. **4** If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food: **5** But if thou wilt not send [him], we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother [be] with you. **6** And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye [so] ill with me, [as] to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother? **7** And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, [Is] your father yet alive? have ye [another] brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down?

The brothers wanted their father to know they had not intended to give out information about the family. The governor asked about the family and they answered the truth. The governor then charged them of being soldiers or mercenaries who came to spy out the land. If they had not told him the truth, they wouldn't have been able to keep their story straight?

8 And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, [and] also our little ones. **9** I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever: **10** For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time.

Judah makes an offer that he will be surety for Benjamin. His offer is sincere and reasonable, unlike Ruben's. Judah tells his father they can't wait any longer, we're running out of food. If you had sent Benjamin earlier, we could have left and already returned with a caravan of more food.

11 And their father Israel said unto them, If [it must be] so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds:

They still have some food items in Canaan, but not anything you could live on. They had balm to rub on sores. They had honey. They had spices such as salt, pepper even mustard. They had nuts such as pistachios, walnuts and almonds. These were used to spice up a meal but were not a meal on their own. They were more like condiments. They had myrrh, a special oil or perfume. Israel had plenty of gold and silver. What they needed was food.

12 And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry [it] again in your hand; peradventure it [was] an oversight: 13 Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man: 14 And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved [of my children], I am bereaved.

Jacob still loved all his children, but he loved Benjamin more. Jacob realizes the only thing that will save his sons is if God Almighty, the God of his father and grandfather, has mercy on his sons and touches the heart of the great man in Egypt.

15 And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

They stood in fear, before the governor. Even though they brought their younger brother, to prove they weren't spies, he could charge them with theft for not paying for the food on their last trip. They must have felt great fear. Just as Joseph felt, when he was sold into slavery.

16 And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring [these] men home, and slay, and make ready; for [these] men shall dine with me at noon. 17 And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house. 18 And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses. 19 And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they communed with him at the door of the house,

Before they entered the governor's house, where they would be trapped, they stopped to talk with the servant, who was over the house. He was the servant who spoke Hebrew and interpreted for the governor, who spoke Egyptian.

20 And said, O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food: 21 And it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, [every] man's money [was] in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand. 22 And other money have we brought

down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks. 23 And he said, Peace [be] to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them.

The brothers, probably Judah being the main speaker, stopped to speak with the steward of the house. He was probably the interpreter Joseph used to translate Joseph's Egyptian language into Hebrew. They explained how their money mysteriously turned up in their food sacks and wasn't used to pay for the food they had purchased on the first trip. The steward told them he put the money in their sacks.

Simeon was brought out to them, but he didn't look like a prisoner. Joseph had taken good care of him. His clothes were probably clean, and he had probably put on some weight.

24 And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave [them] water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender.

This was not how you treated condemned men.

25 And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there.

26 And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which [was] in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. 27 And he asked them of [their] welfare, and said, [Is] your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? [Is] he yet alive? 28 And they answered, Thy servant our father [is] in good health, he [is] yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance. 29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, [Is] this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son. 30 And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought [where] to weep; and he entered into [his] chamber, and wept there.

Joseph identified the youngest brother, who was not a child but was at least in his twenties. All the brothers knew was the governor of the land suddenly turned and left the room. They didn't know why and I'm sure it concerned them.

31 And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread. 32 And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the

Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that [is] an abomination unto the Egyptians.

While Egyptians love Joseph, for feeding them, they didn't like Hebrews. Joseph ate by himself; he was a Hebrew. The Egyptians ate together, near, but not with Joseph. The brothers were set at a separate table, because the only thing worse than a Hebrew was a herdsman or a shepherd.

33 And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another. 34 And he took [and sent] messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

The steward, of the house, called the brothers to sit. First, he called out Ruben, to set at the head of the table. Next to Ruben, the steward sat Simeon, then Levi, then Judah and on down, in order to Benjamin. The brothers wondered how could the steward know each one's age?

They celebrated and drank until they were merry (intoxicated).

CHAPTER 44

1 And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks [with] food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth. 2 And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. 3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses. 4 [And] when they were gone out of the city, [and] not [yet] far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? 5 [Is] not this [it] in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.

The text doesn't say if God was sending dreams to Joseph on how to handle his brothers or if it was just his way of putting them through some testing without harming them. The brothers left the governor's home but didn't get far.

6 And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words. 7 And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing: 8 Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of

Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? 9 With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.

Good thing the governor's man didn't take them literal and kill Benjamin.

10 And he said, Now also [let] it [be] according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless. 11 Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. 12 And he searched, [and] began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. 13 Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.

Nothing could be worse; they had sold Joseph into slavery and now Rachel's other son Benjamin was about to go into slavery. I believe Joseph was testing his brothers. They knew Jacob was partial to Joseph and they hated him and wanted him dead. Joseph was going to see how they felt about his brother Benjamin. They had told him, on the first trip, their father was very partial to the youngest son. Would they gladly abandon their youngest to slavery and go on home or would they stand up for Benjamin? Had they changed over the years.

In that day, when a man tore his clothes it was serious. All clothing was hand made and was expensive. This was the worst thing that could have happened. They could have left freely and went home, but they would not return without Benjamin. Before Benjamin would be a slave they would all become slaves, he was their brother.

14 And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he [was] yet there: and they fell before him on the ground. 15 And Joseph said unto them, What deed [is] this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?

This doesn't mean Joseph used the cup to communicate with a god, but they didn't know that.

16 And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants:

This is the verse which brings the central meaning to this story. For years, the ten sons of Jacob thought they got away with sending their own brother into slavery. Currently they didn't even know if he was alive or dead. They all remembered the horror, in Joseph's face as he was sold into slavery. Judah knew God was punishing them for the way they treated Joseph and the way they deceived their father Jacob to receive the word of the death of his son Joseph. Not only did they believe this was why they were going through this terrible time, but they believed they

deserved to be treated this way. They had never confessed their sin to God and asked for forgiveness.

When they sold Joseph into slavery, they sinned against God.

This is what most people don't realize, when one of God's people sin, they sin against God.

When Eve was tempted by the serpent, in the garden of Eden, she didn't sin against God, she sinned against her husband. God didn't tell Eve not to eat of the forbidden fruit, Adam did. When Eve offered the fruit to Adam, he had to make a choice. Would he listen to his wife Eve or would he obey God. When Adam bit the fruit, he sinned against God.

From that day men had to offer a blood offering to God, because of Adam's sin. God gave the first blood offering when he slew an animal to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve. Adam continued to offer sacrifices and taught his sons to offer sacrifices to God.

Abel offered a blood offering to God. Abel and his brother Cain had been taught, by their father, how to make an offering to God. Cain was a gardener; he offered the best produce from his garden. Cain did it his way and not God's way. God didn't accept it, because without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob offered blood sacrifices to God. The blood sacrifice didn't take away their sin, it pointed to a future time when God would offer a sacrifice for His people. God would offer up his only begotten son as a sacrifice for the sin of the world. God's offering Jesus on the cross of Calvary alone would not cleanse away a man's sin. The offering for forgiveness is there, Jesus paid it all, but a man must come to God repenting of his sins for the blood of Jesus to cleanse him. The man must come by faith.

Only by confessing your sins to God and by faith receiving the cleansing blood of Jesus, to pay for all your sins, can a man be saved from all unrighteousness. Once you have put your faith, in the gospel, the death on the cross of Calvary for your sins, the burial of Jesus, because he died and was buried for your sins and the resurrection, because the payment was made for your sins, you are saved.

There are some who believe they have sinned too much for Jesus to pay for their sin. They may have committed fornication, lied, stole or murdered. They may believe, they have done so many sins and done them for so long, God can't forgive them. The only thing that will send a person to hell is knowing Jesus died for all their sins and they reject him.

Some will say, preacher, what about when you sin after believing on Jesus? If you sin again aren't you in fear of losing your salvation and dying lost, because you forgot or didn't have time to confess your last sin? That would mean your salvation is dependent on how good a confessor you are and not on the power of Jesus blood to cover your sins. That's foolish.

Some will say, then aren't you teaching once you receive salvation from Jesus, you have a license to sin? That's not what the bible teaches. The letter to the Corinthians speaks of them

believing they have a license to sin. Paul called them down, because they were so liberal, they accepted a man in their church who was living with his stepmother like she was his wife. Paul called the man out and said he should be put out of the church and turned over to Satan. He was turned over and his protection was removed so Satan could attack his body, but not his spirit. Paul said to the Corinthian church, this is why some of you are sick and some of you sleep. When Paul says they sleep, he means they died. Dying is not eternal punishment for a believer. It's when God says to His child; if you are going to play like that, in the world, it's time to come home. If a believer lives in a way that will hurt the preaching of the gospel, God can and will call them home. The bible says, the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

Judah and his brothers had planned on murdering their brother Joseph. They had committed murder in their hearts. They had settled on selling him into slavery, not because they loved him and didn't want him dead, but because they could get rid of him and make some money, at the same time. As bad as their sin was, it was not more than could be forgiven by God.

Judah and his brothers had taken part of blood sacrifices, but none of them had ever repented to God about selling their own brother as a slave and causing their father to believe his son died a horrible death, being torn apart by some wild animal.

Judah and his brothers believed they were being judged by God. Judah now confesses to their sin. He didn't realize it, but he was confessing to the man he had sold into slavery and the man was the governor of the land.

behold, we [are] my lord's servants, both we, and [he] also with whom the cup is found. 17 And he said, God forbid that I should do so: [but] the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

Judah admits God is punishing them and if Benjamin is being punished, they all should be punished. They knew Benjamin wasn't even part of the sin against Joseph. The governor tells Judah, he and his brothers may leave in peace. Only the one who stole from him would be punished and the one found with the cup was Benjamin.

Genesis 43:18

18 Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou [art] even as Pharaoh. 19 My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? 20 And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. 21 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. 22

And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for [if] he should leave his father, [his father] would die. 23 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.

24 And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. 25 And our father said, Go again, [and] buy us a little food. 26 And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother [be] with us. 27 And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two [sons]: 28 And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since: 29 And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. 30 Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad [be] not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; 31 It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad [is] not [with us], that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. 32 For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. 33 Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. 34 For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad [be] not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

One of the things Joseph wanted to see, was how the brothers treated Benjamin. Joseph knew his father treated him different, because he was the son of Rachel. To Jacob, Rachel was the love of his life, his one true wife of his youth. Due to circumstances he had three other wives, but Rachel was the only one he married for love and her children were special. The brothers had been so jealous they had hated Joseph. It seems, due to the way they treated Joseph, they never hated Benjamin. There was no anger in their hearts against Benjamin, because they had so much guilt over the anguish their father felt at the loss of Joseph. Joseph saw that they were willing to give up their freedom and even their very lives to return Benjamin to their father. There is no greater love than a man willing to give his life for another. Joseph was touched.