

Genesis Chapter 44 - Commentary By Mike Wells

Chapter 44 Overview:

Joseph continues to toy with his brothers. Though he did them no harm and intended them no harm, he certainly made them squirm.

Genesis 44 : 1-6 – *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. 6 And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words.*

- Joseph continued to conceal his identity from his brothers.
- He ordered their sacks to be filled with as much food as they could carry and to return their money to them once again.
- He also ordered that his personal cup be placed in the Benjamin's sack.
- The next morning, the eleven brothers departed.
- As soon as they had left the city, Joseph sent his steward (no doubt with armed men) and overtook them.
- He charged the brothers with theft.

Genesis 44 : 7-11 - *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. 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.*

- The brothers in complete disbelief volunteered, “*with whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.*”
- So, the eleven brothers unloaded their sacks of grain.

Genesis 44 : 12-17 - *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. 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? 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: 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.

- To the disbelief of the brothers, the cup was found in Benjamin's sack right where it was planted.
- So, they "*rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.*"
- They came to Joseph and bowed themselves prostrate before him.
- Joseph continued the saga by telling them he could *divine* (had supernatural powers).
- Judah, in speaking for the group, could only say '*what can we say.*'
- Their consciences were still full of guilt for how they had treated Joseph years earlier and they believed correctly that these events were payback for how they had treated Joseph years earlier.
- They were wrong about who was the source of the payback though, as they assumed God was punishing them for their sins, when in fact it was the very brother that they had done wrong that was getting some revenge (innocent revenge), but still revenge.
- "*God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants.*"
- So Judah offered all of them to become servants (slaves) to Joseph.
- Joseph declined and ordered only Benjamin become his servant.
- He ordered the rest of them to go home.

Genesis 44 : 18-34 - *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.*

- Judah continued to serve as spokesman.
- He had agreed with his father to be responsible for Benjamin.
- He proceeded to tell Joseph the story of what had happened at home in pleading with his father to allow them to return with Benjamin.
- Joseph perhaps for the first time heard the story his brothers had made up about his disappearance.
- Judah pled with Joseph telling him that if he did not bring Benjamin back, their father would die of grief.
- He then asked that Joseph would accept him instead as the bondman in place of Benjamin.