

## Bibles???

### The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

#### Let's pray...

Two weeks ago, our study was on chapter 42 and 43.

The famine was over the region of Canaan and Jacob sends ten of his sons down to Egypt to get grain so that they will not starve.

When they get to Egypt, they don't realize that Joseph their brother, the one that they sold to the Ishmaelite's has become prime minister.

Joseph recognizes them but they cannot recognize Joseph because 12 years had passed and also Joseph is speaking to them through an interpreter.

So Joseph tests them – by calling them spies and imprisons them for a few days. He allows them to leave Egypt with food and with

the money that they came to purchase the food – however, they had to leave one of the brothers behind and that was Simeon.

The only way that Joseph was going to allow Simeon to be released was if the brothers brought Benjamin along with them.

In chapter 43, Jacob's family runs out of food again and this time Jacob allows the remaining brothers to take Benjamin with them on the trip so that they may get more food and also bring back Simeon.

However, when they get back to Egypt – Joseph orders his steward to take them to his house – and the brothers do not know what to expect.

They thought they were in trouble because of the money in their sacks.

Not only were they not in trouble, they were given water and their feet were washed and their donkeys were fed.

And at the end of chapter 43, the brothers are treated to a meal – and during the meal, Benjamin was given five times as much food as the other brothers – because Joseph wanted to see how the brothers would react to Benjamin getting a bigger portion.

So far, Joseph's brothers have been tested regarding their **honesty** – that is why Joseph kept Simeon because he wanted to make sure that Benjamin was still alive.

They have been tested regarding **envy** – that is why Joseph showed favoritism toward Benjamin at the dinner table. He wanted to see the brothers reaction.

And now in chapter 44, the brothers have to go through one more test - Joseph is going to test their **loyalty**.

**[Gen 44:1-34 NKJV] 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 each man's money in the mouth of his sack.**

Not only are Joseph's brothers going to return to Canaan with food, Joseph is ordering the steward to once again put the money that they came with - back in their sacks. And as an added bonus, they are taking Simeon back with them.

Things are looking very promising right now for the brothers.

It is a much better trip than the last one.

**2 "Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money." So he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.**

This silver cup is not just any silver cup.

This isn't simply Joseph's favorite coffee mug.

Egyptian rulers had silver divination cups which spoke not only of their authority but were used to determine the will of their gods.

It's likely that Joseph didn't actually practice divination. The point was to make this cup out to be something worthy of an extra harsh penalty if it was stolen.

**3 As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. 4 When they had gone out of the city, [and] were not [yet] far off, Joseph said to his steward, "Get 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 with which he indeed practices divination? You have done evil in so doing.' " 6 So he overtook them, and he spoke to them these same words. 7 And they said to him, "Why does my lord say these words? Far be it from us that your servants should do such a thing. 8 "Look, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money which**

**we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house?**

So Joseph gives his brothers a head start, and then orders his steward to catch up to them and accuse them of stealing his silver cup.

Now, remember, the steward knows exactly where Joseph's cup is because he placed it there in the first place.

The brothers respond with disbelief – “How can you accuse us of this – we came back with the money that was placed in our sacks the first time”

Why would we steal???

**9 "With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves." 10 And he said, "Now also [let] it [be] according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and you shall be blameless."**

The brothers were so sure of their innocence that they tell the steward that he can kill whoever stole the cup and the rest will be their slaves

But the steward tells them that only the one who has the cup will become a slave and the rest are free to go home.

**11 Then each man speedily let down his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. 12 So he searched. He began with the oldest and left off with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.**

Again, the servant knows the sack that contains the silver cup because he is the one that placed the cup in Benjamin's bag.

He is simply making it more dramatic as he goes from sack to sack until he gets to Benjamin's sack and the cup is found there.

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

Notice two things here:

First, all the brothers tore their clothing, as a sign of their heartfelt grief and remorse. Yes, outward appearances of remorse is not proof of real repentance, but a true hatred for sin ought to include a heart-felt bitterness about our sin, and we see that here.

Second, notice that **all** the brothers returned to the city, even though Joseph's steward had told them that only the man who stole the silver cup would have to come back and become a slave.

And here we see a decision of their collective will, not to abandon Benjamin and take the easy way out, but to share in the blame and the guilt.

Here was the first phase of the final test of Joseph's brothers. Had they acted only in self-interest, they would have renounced Benjamin as a thief, deserted him, and fled from Egypt as quickly as possible.

But something different was taking place. These were not the same men that had determined to do away with Joseph, 22 years ago. They were really repenting. They were bearing the fruit of real repentance.

**14 So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he [was] still there; and they fell before him on the ground.**

Once again, we see the brothers bowing before Joseph – a fulfillment of his dreams.

**15 And Joseph said to them, "What deed [is] this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination?" 16 Then Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and [he] also with whom the cup was found."**

With these words, Judah revealed God's work among the brothers.

In Judah's mind, the brothers were now destined to live the rest of their lives as slaves in Egypt because they sold Joseph as a slave, some 20 years before this.

**17 But he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so; the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father."**

Joseph is giving the brothers a way out – but the brothers will not abandon Benjamin.

**18 Then Judah came near to him and said: "O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you [are] even like Pharaoh. 19 "My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?' 20 "And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of [his] old age, [who is]**

young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.' 21 "Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.' 22 "And we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for [if] he should leave his father, [his father] would die.' 23 "But you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.' 24 "So it was, when we went up to your servant my father, that we told him the words of my lord. 25 "And our father said, 'Go back [and] buy us a little food.' 26 "But we said, 'We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man's face unless our youngest brother [is] with us.' 27 "Then 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 to pieces"; and I have not seen him since. 29 'But if you take this one also

from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.' 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, 31 "it will happen, when he sees that the lad [is] not [with us], that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. 32 "For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him [back] to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.' 33 "Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as 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, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?"

Many have called these words spoken by Judah – the most moving in all of scripture.

He is sincere; he is humble as he speaks to Joseph.

And Judah pleads with the ruler of the land that he may be allowed to take the place of his younger brother.

Judah is interceding on behalf of Benjamin.

In the same way that Jesus, from the line of Judah, intercedes for you and me.

You see, the judgment we face is due to the things we are guilty of, the sins we've committed, the offenses we've committed against God.

The Bible says that the penalty for our sin is death.

And Jesus took our place.

**[Gen 45:1-28 NKJV] 1 Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while**

**Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 2 And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard [it].**

You see, it was Judah confession combined with intercession that caused Joseph's heart to be moved with compassion and resulted in revelation.

Joseph is now ready to let his brothers know that he is alive.

**3 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I [am] Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. 4 And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I [am] Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 "But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; **for God sent me before you to preserve life.** 6 "For these two years the famine [has been] in the land, and [there are] still five years in which [there**

will be] neither plowing nor harvesting. 7 " **And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.** 8 "So now [it was] not you [who] sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. 9 "Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph: "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry. 10 "You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. 11 "There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for [there are] still five years of famine." ' 12 "And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that [it is] my mouth that speaks to you. 13 "So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of

**all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here." 14 Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. 15 Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.**

After revealing himself to his brothers,

Look at what Joseph does, he pardons them – he tells them to not be angry with themselves over what they had done to him 20 years earlier.

The fact that they sold Joseph to Egypt **was all part of God's big plan.**

Joseph saw that God's purpose in it all was greater than the evil of the brothers.

**And we can say the same thing applies to the death of Jesus Christ.**

Turn with me to the book of Acts 2

We are going to look at a portion of Peter's sermon.

**[Act 2:22-24 NKJV] 22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know-- 23 "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24 "whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.**

Peter is declaring that it was God's plan all along that Jesus would die for the sins of every man.

And Joseph goes on to declare that it was God alone who placed him in Egypt and made him a ruler of the land.

And it was all done to provide for them.

**16 Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, "Joseph's brothers have come." So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well. 17 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. 18 'Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. 19 'Now you are commanded--do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. 20 'Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt [is] yours.' "** 21 Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them carts, according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey. 22 He gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three **hundred [pieces] of silver** and five changes of garments.

The brothers are so blown away by the Joseph's forgiveness that there was no room for envy or jealousy.

**23 And he sent to his father these [things]: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey. 24 So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, "See that you do not become troubled along the way."**

Joseph knew as soon as his brothers left his presence, they would be tempted to act in selfish, unspiritual ways. They had to anticipate and guard against this.

**25 Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. 26 And they told him, saying, "Joseph [is] still alive, and he [is] governor over all the land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart stood still, because he did not believe them. 27 But when they told him all the words which**

**Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. 28 Then Israel said, "[It is] enough. Joseph my son [is] still alive. I will go and see him before I die."**

In verse 28, notice that this testimony of faith came from Israel and not Jacob.

When Jacob was in charge, we saw a whining, self-pitying, complaining, unbelieving type of man.

In fact, we saw this last week when the sons bring the bad news about losing Simeon - **[Gen 42:36 NKJV] 36 And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me: Joseph is no [more], Simeon is no [more], and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me."**

In contrast Israel, the man God had conquered, the man governed by God, had a testimony of faith.

And starting next week, we will see Jacob and his family moving down to Egypt and we will see the wonders that God does in their lives.

Let's pray...

