

EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

Message #89

Genesis 44:1-34

The careful exegetical eye will accurately notice that “finding out” something is what this chapter is all about. In fact, at least seven times, in this one chapter, the word “found” or “found out” occurs (44:8, 9, 10, 11, 16 (twice), 17). The word means to find out the existence of something (*Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 499-500). This chapter is about finding out for certain whether or not there has been true repentance on Joseph’s brother’s part for their sin against him.

GOD WILL TEST HIS FAMILY TO FIND OUT WHETHER OR NOT THEY HAVE TRULY REPENTED OF THEIR SIN AND IF THEY HAVE, HE WILL LEAD THEM INTO A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM AND NEW BLESSINGS.

Dr. S. L. Johnson said: “God will always find out our iniquity. Tens of years may pass over your life and like these brethren you may be congratulating yourself that the sin is forgotten, and you are safe; and then a train of circumstances, little suspected, but manipulated by a Divine hand will suddenly bring the truth to light, and write God’s sentence in flaming characters upon the walls of the house in which you riot in careless ease. The unforgiven sinner is never safe” (*Genesis*, Study #60, p. 2)

If we have truly confessed our sin and have truly repented, we can expect new wonderful blessings. Chapter 44 is a bitter/ sweet chapter. For those covering sin, it is bitter, for it guarantees God’s discovery. For those confessing sin, it is sweet, for it guarantees God’s blessings.

THEME #1 - After a member of God’s family has sinned, God will put him through a major final test to prove whether he has truly repented before He gives His blessings.
44:1-17

The question Joseph is trying to resolve from this test is how would these brothers react if they thought they were going to lose Rachel’s other son, Benjamin. He had already seen that they were not jealous when Benjamin was more favored (43:34), now he was going to see how they would react if they thought they had to turn him over to the Egyptians like Joseph had been.

Joseph’s plan was masterful - he ordered his house manager to fill their sacks with food and money (44:1). Putting Joseph’s cup in Benjamin’s sack with his grain and money would present a problem because this was Joseph’s special cup, which apparently had some religious significance to the Egyptians, although certainly not with Joseph (44:2,5). If this cup were found in Benjamin’s sack, it would present a major threat to the brothers.

Joseph’s house steward did exactly what Joseph requested: he put the things in his sack (44:2), he let them go (44:3), he followed them and accused them of rewarding evil for good by stealing the cup (44:4-6).

The brothers were so sure of their innocence that they reminded the steward of their honesty in bringing back the money from the first trip (44:7-8) and they offered to have any who stole the cup executed, plus volunteered to be slaves forever in Egypt (44:9).

What irony this is - for in the scenario with Joseph, the only son blameless is Benjamin, who wasn't even with the other brothers, and in this scenario the only one guilty is Benjamin, who was with his other brothers. Benjamin was the blameless one who is guilty and his brothers are the guilty ones who are blameless. Here is a marvelous picture of the Grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Verse 11 informs us that the men quickly opened their sack in chronological order and when they came to the last sack of Benjamin, the cup was found (44:12). Verse 13 is critical for it shows us that ALL the brothers had repented, they ALL tore their clothes and they ALL headed back to see Joseph.

As soon as they returned to Joseph's house, they, for the fourth time (42:6; 43:26,28; 44:14), fulfilled Biblical prophecy and bowed down before Joseph. These brothers, at one time, had scoffed at the idea of bowing down before him and now it had become a regular part of their lives. When Joseph asks if they thought they could get away with their sin (44:15), Judah responded that God had found them out (44:16).

A true mark of repentance is that one will be willing to payback exactly what he did to another. Verse 17 informs us that Joseph dismissed all charges against the guilty brothers.

THEME #2 - After a member of God's family has repented, his speech and life will demonstrate it before God gives His blessings. 44:18-34

Here is a beautiful passage of true repentance. At one time these brothers thought about executing a brother and they were willing to sell him as a slave, but now Judah is willing to sacrifice his own life so that Benjamin might be spared (44:32-33).

Judah had dramatically changed. He humbled himself before Joseph (44:18). Judah informed Joseph that Israel so loved Benjamin that if he did not return, it would kill him (44:27-31). Judah cared more about his father's life and Benjamin's life than his own, and he offered himself as a substitute (44:33).

It is no wonder that Jesus Christ came through the line of Judah (Micah 5:2 / Matthew 1:2-3). Substitutionary sacrifices are not foreign to this tribe of Israel.

For many years, this family thought their sin had gone unnoticed, but God had kept the records and even though it took 27 plus years, He tracked them all down. Truth is, this family had changed, they had honestly repented and God was about to bless them for it.