

**God's Prevailing Grace:
Heart Transformation in Preparation for Reconciliation
Genesis 43-44
September 20, 2023**

Conflict is one of the major themes in this 10th and last narrative of Genesis that began in Gen. 37:2 and has been seen throughout all the previous nine narratives of Genesis as well. Despite the conflict seen throughout Genesis we know that God has a good, grand purpose that He will accomplish through those we've previously studied in Genesis and through Jacob's family.

I. Heart Transformation Provoked by Desperation (43:1-14)

Verses 1-2 tell us that the severe famine continued in the land and that just as would be expected the grain that the brothers brought back from Egypt eventually would run out.

What characteristics are seen in Jacob and Judah in verses 43:1-14? How do the characteristics displayed compare to what we know of Jacob and Judah from previous chapters of Genesis?

II. Heart Transformation Tested by Confrontation (43:15-34)

As the brothers arrive in Egypt Joseph sees them and sets them apart.

Their being brought into Joseph's house awakens their consciences to the point that they confess what they perceived as their latest sin – leaving Egypt with the grain and the money.

Instead of putting them in prison for what they believed could be seen as their theft, verses 23-24 indicates the steward's response which may have been shocking to them.

Remember much was made of this present that Israel had the brothers prepare - a little balm and a little honey, gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds. These items may have brought

back memories for Joseph as these were the same items that we read in Gen. 37:25 were the wares of the Ishmaelite traders to whom Joseph was sold were bringing down to Egypt.

In verse 26, as all 11 brothers bow to the ground Joseph's first dream is fulfilled.

Verse 32 indicates that Joseph is served separately, likely because of his position. Verse 32 also provides a window into God's providence in eventually bringing Israel and his family into Egypt. Where the Canaanites were cultures that did not mind assimilation with the people around them, the Egyptians' sense of superiority to other cultures shown here in their not even eating with others previewed how the nation of Israel would be able to live in Egypt and be kept as a separate nation throughout their generations in Egypt.

What are the differences between the brothers' first interaction with Joseph and the indication indicated in verses 26-34? What is Joseph testing the brothers for in these verses?

III. Heart Transformation Confirmed by Demonstration (44:1-34)

As the brothers are sent off to travel back to Canaan, Joseph once again has the money unknowingly returned to the brothers and has his silver cup placed in Benjamin's sack.

In response to the steward's accusation, they pronounce their innocence and declare that whoever is found with the cup will die and that the other brothers will become Joseph's servants. The steward modifies what will happen to the one found with the cup by saying in verse 10, "...he who is found with it shall be my servant, and the rest of you shall be innocent."

The steward searches each brother's sack in their birth order. When he comes to Benjamin's sack the cup is found and all the brothers tear their clothes, load their donkeys and return to the city.

After Joseph initially questions the brothers Judah who is now the unquestionable leader of the brothers steps forward to respond to Joseph. Judah's initial response indicates Judah's understanding that what these brothers are experiencing goes far beyond the immediate situation and is connected to the evil that they had done to Joseph.

In what ways are Judah's heart's transformation demonstrated in 44:18-34?

As chapter 44 ends with Judah's plea we are left to see what Joseph's response will be.

Application

- We should allow trials and difficult circumstances to do their work. 1 Pet. 1:3-7.
- We should consider how easily we become jealous or envious of our brothers and sisters and even unbelievers when God blesses them in ways that we may desire to be blessed by God. 1 Tim. 6:6-10.
- If we are in conflict with someone we should seek to understand if there are any ways that our hearts should be transformed in preparation for reconciliation. Ps. 139:23-24.
- We should praise God for sending Christ who became sin so that we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Cor. 5:21.