

From PRISON to Palace

A Study of the Life of Joseph

Class 5 • Joseph Revealed • Genesis 44 - 45

- Joseph continues to shower his Brothers with overflowing kindness, giving more grain once again than they purchased, plus their purchase money, and he includes his own silver cup - Verse 2
- But why, if this is a set-up, should Joseph return every man's money?
- Maybe so that early in their journey they would not even suspect wrong should they discover the cup in Benjamin's sack
- It would simply appear as further evidence of the particular favor given to the lad
- Joseph wants Benjamin to appear relatively innocent so that the reaction of the brethren might be fairly judged

APPLICATION:

- **The return of all of the purchase money shows that in no way did they EARN their gift. It was by GRACE. What signs are there of this in our lives?**
- To steal from the table of the one who had offered hospitality would be the height of insult and injury
- Even the house steward must have been amazed at this frame-up
- How could his master be so friendly and then so devious?
- Is this method, however good the end might be, a blot on Joseph's character?
- What then is Joseph's real reason for contriving such a scheme?
- Again the brethren, sinners through they are, are yet to experience unjust accusation, with slavery as a possible consequence
- Primarily, Joseph wants to see how the brethren will react to Benjamin
- Will they selfishly ditch him, or courageously stand by him, especially for Jacob's sake?
- The brethren argue plausibly and soundly, "If we would steal, why should we have earlier brought back the money found in our sacks?"

- So absolutely confident were they of their innocence that they proposed the death penalty for the thief and slavery for the rest - Verse 9
- But is not their claim to innocence selective?
- Did you ever notice how vocal we are when innocent of a charge, but silent when we are guilty?
- The steward's reply may indicate that he knows what is behind the ploy, for he is careful to secure Benjamin's slavery, but not his death
- Hence, he adjusts the desire of the brethren for harsh punishment - Verse 10
- The brethren confidently, speedily declare all of their belongings
- The search from eldest down heightens the excitement and drama
- Benjamin is discovered as the guilty "thief," yet he remains silent
- How indescribable the grief that is now experienced; what a transport from the heights to the depths; how their longstanding sin now rushes before them again
- Probably they think that God is punishing them on account of their original crime
- Perhaps the Egyptian prime minister, in having taken a fancy to Benjamin, is now plotting to keep him
- But why has the steward not taken any notice of the money that was once again returned to their sacks?
- Further, Benjamin has been constantly under the supervision of the brethren; he could hardly have stolen the cup unnoticed
- "And they fell to the ground before him," (Verse 14), just like in the dream
- Joseph declares his power to know secrets, and thus injects into the hearts of the brethren the suggestion that he knows of their unconfessed sin, quite apart from this recent supposed act of larceny
- When Judah confesses, "God has found out the iniquity of your servants" (Verse 16), he is not confessing this current charge of theft in the main, but principally their crime of long ago - Otherwise, why include all of them?
- "And how can we clear ourselves?" is a good question that demands an answer, for it is God who justifies the ungodly

- This is the essence of the brethren's trial
- Would they accept their freedom and forget about Benjamin or would they care enough, on account of the lessons of time, to confess and plead for mercy?
- How glad Joseph must have been to perceive some evidence of a change of heart
- Thus Judah makes this eloquent and moving plea
- Clearly Judah's concern is for his aged father and not for himself (Verse 31)
- Judah offers himself in place of Benjamin
- The true picture of repentance

APPLICATION:

• It is better to be in bondage because of the truth than to have liberty through dishonesty. How have you learned this in your life?

- 1st Kings 22:14

14) And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak.

- This "Prophet's Principle" also applies to us
- In Chapter 45 Joseph reveals himself to his brethren
- He is overwhelmed as uncontrollable tears stream down his face, so he clears the audience chamber of his house
- But why? He was the boss.
- Maybe he doesn't wish to share his family problems in public, especially the sin of his brethren - This is itself an act of tender consideration
- This was such an extraordinary outburst that the news spread to Pharaoh's household and ultimately to Pharaoh himself (Verse 16)
- But it appears that Pharaoh only learned that these visitors were Joseph's brothers, and not of their sinful past
- Joseph reveals himself - Verse 3
- His first explanation is received with dumbstruck disbelief, even terror and quivering fear, drained faces and weak legs

- Joseph's chief concern is his father, and in effect he asks, "Is it really true that Jacob is still alive, after over twenty years?"
- His call to come closer breaks the electric silence as they peer at his clean shaven face, and recognize features that time has not erased
- Suddenly every detail of their crime flashes before their eyes - Time alone does not blot out etchings of guilt!
- Fear continues to chill their hearts as Joseph says the sentence that they will hear at night for the rest of their lives, "I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt"
- Joseph's tenderness is quick to comfort
- There is no word of reproach since his appreciation of God's sovereignty gives him a larger perspective than mere self-vindication
- True, he sought contrition, but now that it is evident, his greater concern is that his brothers discern God's dominion and wisdom in this whole affair
- God overrules bad events for good when "the called according to His purpose," are involved
- Focus your attention on the goodness and glory of God which prevails in spite of men
- The brethren intended death, but God desired life, and His will prevails
- It is now 22 years since Joseph was sold into slavery by the Midianites to Potiphar at the age of seventeen
- 13 years were spent in captivity, and the last nine have been spent as prime minister of Egypt
- He is presently thirty nine years of age, and there are yet five more years of famine to come
- The brethren here are not excused, but they are forgiven
- His command to bring Jacob down to Egypt comes from a longing heart
- The brethren are to tell Jacob how God has exalted Joseph way above what his father had earlier designed with the tribal coat
- Try to imagine how Jacob would even process this news
- "And you shall be near me" (Verse 10), would be music to Jacob's ears

APPLICATION:

• Read Romans 5:8-10: Discuss how Joseph's life is similar to how God deals with us?

- Just like Joseph made the first move to call his Brethren to repentance, Jesus Christ has made strong overtures toward sinners; even though they have not made genuine and appropriate overtures toward Jesus Christ
- Jesus is the grossly offended party, yet Christ moves with determination and strong moves of peace toward his enemies as the Mediator, the reconciler
- Joseph understands that speed is important lest Jacob die, so he tells the brethren to quickly get going and not worry about household goods lest they slow them down
- He does not go himself, being needed by Pharaoh so as to supervise the famine relief
- Notice how Benjamin receives money and five times the clothing
- Is this partiality right?
- To His own children, God gives gifts and talents that vary in quality
- Some are given the office of apostleship, while others appear as insignificant members of the Body of Christ
- God determines who get's what talents, our responsibility is to submit to His ordering
- His final word is "Do not quarrel on the journey" (Verse 24) since while they are justified yet they are not fully converted
- They arrive home and tell Jacob and his heart as it were stops beating, and unbelief is quick to set in
- *Can you imagine if the news killed him?*
- But finally Jacob believes the truth, and learns that Joseph is risen from the dead, so to speak, and as a result a great reconciliation has taken place