

## Genesis 43-44 – The Transformation Of Judah

### I. Judah Takes Leadership and Responsibility to Provide For Family (43:1-14)

#### A. Judah refuses to return to Egypt without Benjamin (1-5)

##### 1. When food is gone, Jacob desires brothers return to Egypt (1-2)

###### a. How much time has passed?

- i. They had eaten all they had brought back
- ii. v. 10 – Judah says if they had not delayed they could have been twice
- iii. What about Simeon?
- iv. Jacob stalling? Hoping famine would end? What brothers thinking?

###### b. Jacob tells them to buy more food

- i. very casually – as if going to the store

##### 2. Judah reminds Jacob of Egyptians demand (3-4)

###### a. From this point on Judah will take the leadership role

###### b. Knowing how his father feels – Judah reminds him what the man in Egypt said

- i. They cannot go without Benjamin
- ii. The man from Egypt is in control

##### 3. Judah refuses to go unless Benjamin comes (5)

###### a. Judah makes a decision for the brothers

###### b. Judah knows that they cannot go without Benjamin

- i. He knows that only Jacob can allow Benjamin to go
- ii. Unless Jacob relents they will all die of starvation
- iii. Judah has drawn a line in the sand

###### c. The brothers want to return to Egypt to buy food and clear their names, but only if Benjamin accompanies them

#### B. Judah Takes Responsibility For Benjamin's Safety (6-10)

##### 1. Jacob Laments the situation (6-7)

###### a. Jacob is still self focused

- i. He blames the brothers for telling the Egyptian they had another brother.
- ii. Jacob sees this as doing evil to him – because Benjamin is his world

###### b. The brothers either lie about how the subject came up – or they report something not previously reported in Genesis

- i. there is no way we could have known this would happen

##### 2. Judah offers to be Benjamin's pledge of safety (8-10)

###### a. This is now a matter of life and death because of the famine (8)

- i. In Jacob's drive to protect Benjamin, he is now putting him at risk (along with everyone else in the family)
- ii. Everyone of our family will die if we don't go

###### b. Judah offers himself as a pledge for Benjamin's safety (9)

- i. He takes personal responsibility for the boy's safe return
- ii. This is different than Reuben's proposal – he put other people's lives on the line – Judah puts himself on the line

- willing to accept responsibility and blame

###### c. Judah shows that time has been wasted and there is no alternative

### C. Jacob Reluctantly Agrees to Send The Brothers (11-14)

1. Jacob instructs them to take gifts (11)
  - a. Though they are in a famine, they have some valuable products of the land
  - b. gum, balm, myrrh were things carried by Ishmaelites to whom Joseph was sold.
  - c. Joseph uses same tactic he did with Esau to curry favor
2. Jacob instructs them to take double money (12)
  - a. Hopefully they can explain the situation and not be charged as thieves
3. Jacob entrusts their mission to God (13-14)
  - a. Finally Jacob agrees to send Benjamin – he knows there is no other choice
  - b. Jacob invokes the name El Shaddai in hopes he will be merciful to them
    - i. Expected Mercy is explained: “may he send back your other brother and Benjamin.
    - ii. “your other brother” – how loving of Jacob
  - c. If I am bereaved... - statement of resignation to worst possible outcome. He believes God is the decider, but he doesn't hold out much hope

### II. The Brothers Are Tested In Egypt (43:15-44:13)

#### A. The Brothers Experience Mercy In Egypt (15-25)

1. The brothers are afraid when singled out for a meal (15-18)
  - a. The Brothers go to Egypt (15)
  - b. The brothers are to have a meal with Joseph (16-17)
    - i. Joseph commands they be brought to his house for a meal
  - c. The brothers fear Joseph intends to harm them (18)
    - i. they think it is a trap where they will be at his mercy
    - ii. Once again, they seeing things through lens of guilt – think about missing money
    - iii. They think he wants to enslave us and take donkeys
2. The brothers minds are set at ease (19-23)
  - a. The brothers explain their situation to the steward (19-22)
    - i. They explain the situation with the money to the steward before going in
    - ii. They seek to talk their way out of what they believe is a trap
  - b. The brothers are assured that God has blessed them (23)
    - i. Peace (Shalom) to you – no need to be afraid
      - your God has given you treasure
      - How did this Egyptian steward know about Hebrew God?
    - ii. this would have set their mind at ease regarding the Egyptian
    - iii. But it would awaken their conscience to God's hand among them – and their guilt regarding Joseph and Jacob
    - iv. Simeon is even brought out to them – finally released
3. The reunited brothers prepare for Joseph's arrival (24-25)
  - a. treated as royal guests

#### B. The Brothers Are Tested Regarding Favoritism (26-34)

1. Joseph's offers them pleasant conversation and blessing (26-29)
  - a. The brothers bow and present Joseph with gifts (26)
  - b. The brothers are asked about the family's well-being (27-28)

- i. Joseph cares more about their family than their gift
      - ii. Joseph asks about their father's peace (shalom) – has the famine affected him
    - c. Joseph offers blessing to Benjamin (29)
      - NOTICE: his mother's son – he fixes his eyes upon him (22 y/o)
      - i. God be gracious to you my son – pronouncing a blessing upon him
        - don't seem to be able to contain himself
      - ii. He had never offered such a blessing to any other brothers
      - iii. Already showing favoritism to Benjamin
  - 2. Joseph is overcome with mercy for Benjamin (30)
    - a. The word "compassion" is same word Jacob used "May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man" (v.14) – Is God doing so?
  - 3. The Brothers accept that Benjamin is Favored (31-34)
    - a. They begin to eat at Joseph's house (31-32)
    - b. They are seated by age (33)
      - i. Astonished: How would the Egyptians know their ages?
    - c. They were merry though Benjamin receives a greater portion (34)
      - i. Benjamin is given much bigger portions than the rest
      - ii. While the world is in famine, they are feasting
      - iii. They enjoy and are merry – there is not a single hint that they are jealous or upset that Benjamin is favored
        - the brothers pass the test of responding to Benjamin's favored status
    - d. Wonder what Joseph thinking as sees their joyful behavior and love for one another
    - e. A final test is about to come
- C. The Brothers Are Tested Regarding Loyalty (44:1-13)
- 1. Joseph plans an elaborate test of their loyalty (1-5) – the Ultimate test
    - a. Joseph returns their money and puts his cup in Benjamin's sack (1-2)
    - b. Joseph commands the brothers be captured for theft (3-5)
      - i. The Steward catches them and accuses them of theft
      - ii. cup is supposedly used for divination making it more valuable
      - iii. oil and water poured together – watch movement -
  - 2. The brothers deny theft and vow slavery and death if cup is found (6-9)
    - a. The brothers deny stealing anything (6-8)
      - i. no logical reason they would – they brought money back
    - b. The brothers offer to all be slaves if one is guilty (9)
      - i. They declare that whoever is found with it will die
      - ii. And regardless of who has it – all will be slaves
      - iii. they are absolutely convinced that none of them have done this
    - c. The Steward refuses- only the one with the cup will be enslaved (10)
  - 3. The cup is found in Benjamin's possession (11-12)
    - a. Once again, they are searched according to age
    - b. Cup was found in Benjamin's sack
  - 4. The brothers grieve and return together (13)
    - a. All the brothers tore their clothes – in their grief

- b. Benjamin whom they swore to protect is now in jeopardy
  - c. They are able to leave if they wish – only Ben must go
    - i. This could be blamed on Benjamin
    - ii. They could tell Jacob the truth and save themselves – Benjamin stole
  - d. They all without discussion return to Egypt to share the fate
    - i. Shows a change in hearts – not a word – they know what they must do
    - ii. They all act as one
    - iii. they love Benjamin and Jacob – concerned for his well-being
    - iv. They will not let Benjamin go into slavery alone – (even if guilty)
  - 5. What did Joseph think when saw all his brothers coming back with Benjamin
- III. Judah Sacrifices Himself For Benjamin and His Family (14-34)
- A. Joseph Singles out Benjamin For Slavery (14-17)
- 1. Judah gives them all into Joseph’s hands (14-16)
    - a. Joseph accuses them of theft (14-15)
      - i. Notice the emphasis upon Judah here – “Judah and his brothers...”
      - ii. Judah is the speaker for the brothers – not Reuben
      - iii. This time they don’t just bow – they fall to the ground before him
        - they are desperate –
      - iv. Joseph asks them what they have done in accusing fashion
    - b. Judah makes clear that they will all submit to slavery (16)
      - i. He doesn’t even try to clear their name regarding the theft
      - ii. He knows God is holding them guilty for their concealed sin
        - Whether Benjamin really took it is immaterial
        - God has found out all their guilt – speaking of sin against Joseph
      - iii. Here they admit they deserve punishment and offer themselves as slaves
        - a lot less punishment for Benjamin than they previously said – death
        - they offer themselves – as brothers all together
        - no excuses, no gifts, no trying to defend themselves
  - 2. Joseph only wants Benjamin Enslaved (17)
    - a. Here is the test – only Benjamin will be enslaved
    - b. What will the brothers do?
    - c. Here is an opportunity for them to see punishment upon Jacob’s favorite
      - i. Did they feel the same about Benjamin’s favored status as they did about Joseph’s long ago?
      - ii. Would they take the opportunity to save themselves and sacrifice him?
      - iii. They all stay – they have all been changed

All of Joseph’s story has led up to this moment. Providence that transforms line of God’s seed  
 - longest speech in Genesis

B. Judah Explains Benjamin’s Worth To Their Father (18-32)

- 1. Judah presents himself to speak to Joseph (18)
  - a. One who’s idea was to sell Joseph speaks to him face to face
- 2. Judah recounts the events that led to this (19-29)
  - a. Judah uses Jacob’s language – “two sons”
  - b. Judah accepts the favoritism of his father

- c. Judah is only concerned with saving his family
- 3. Judah says Jacob will die if Benjamin is not returned (30-31)
  - a. Jacob been agonizing for 20 years over loss of his brother
  - b. I can't put him through that again
- 4. Judah pledged himself responsible before his father (32)
- C. Judah Offers Himself as A Substitute For Benjamin (33-34)
  - 1. Judah will take Benjamin's place – Judah will pay for his sin
  - 2. Judah will become a permanent slave
    - a. Jacob's sin becomes the grounds for Judah's sacrifice
    - b. Judah loves his father and Benjamin more than own life
  - 3. Judah has been transformed through all this
    - a. He is the one who engineered the selling of Joseph
    - b. Now he is willing to sacrifice his own life for Jacob's favored son

Now the tests are complete and Joseph knows the character and heart of his brothers. They are repentant. They accept that they deserve punishment. They are haunted by what they did and their change in attitude about Jacob's favoring Rachael's sons proves it. Judah most of all has been changed and elevated to the leadership status among the family. It is he who offers himself as a sacrifice for another who will be the forefather of the ultimate sacrifice of God. Judah's salvation points us to the lion from His tribe.