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**After Dinner (Gen. 44:1-5)**

*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. 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. 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.’”*

- Joseph continues on with his ruse and his testing of the brothers.
- Silver is a picture in the Bible of redemption: a sign that God is at work?
- Many ancient peoples practiced divination by liquids in a cup. Of course, we do not believe that Joseph practiced fortunetelling, but his brothers wouldn’t have found it odd.

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### **Caught! (Gen. 44:6-13)**

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

- The brothers protest because they were honest enough to have brought back the extra silver that they ended up with on the first trip.
- They make a dramatic bargain to emphasize their innocence. Joseph’s steward is quick to calm things down, perhaps so as not to frighten Benjamin too much.
- Benjamin being taken as a thief is perhaps also part of the test. Would the brothers simply leave? Would they begin to accuse and get furious at Benjamin?
- They react with genuine grief.

### **Standing Before Joseph (Gen. 44:14-17)**

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

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*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.” 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 maintains his ruse, pretending to be a high government official who is also an occult practitioner.
- Notice that once again the brothers are bowing before him. Joseph can see that they are not faulting Benjamin, but willing to share in his fate.
- Again, Judah is the spokesperson for the brothers. He now steps up and offers that they will all become Joseph’s slaves.
- Judah refers again to God finding out their iniquity.
- Joseph will not punish an entire family for the wrong of one man. He tells them they are free to go. How will they respond?

**Judah’s Intercession (Gen. 44:18-34)**

*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.’*

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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?”

- This is the longest speech in Genesis, and it’s one of the most powerful speeches in all of Scripture. For some time now we have been watching Judah grow.
- As we saw in the episode of Tamar, his daughter-in-law, Judah begins to acquire true spiritual sight, and true understanding.
- The part of the passage dealing with Judah’s intercession before Joseph is the most spiritually impressive and emotionally moving portion of the story.

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- I don't think it's a stretch to say that this act of intercession sealed Judah's leadership among the tribes of Israel.
- There was a nobility of character that eventually developed in Judah's life which Reuben, Simeon, and Levi did not possess. Jacob will prophesy, "Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's children shall bow down before you." (Gen. 49:8)
- Notice the elements of Judah's intercession.
  - First, there was great boldness.
  - Second, there was great compassion.
  - Third, there was great willingness to sacrifice. We think of Paul's praying for the people of Israel, how he said, "For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren..." (Romans 9:3)

**Revelation (Gen. 45:1-8)**

*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.*

*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.*

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*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.*

- Joseph shows his spiritual maturity. His immediate concern is for his father. Perhaps, he reasoned, the brothers were deceiving him about Jacob.
- He also seeks to console them, anticipating their fear, self-condemnation, and guilt. He sees his troubles as the direct work of God, done for a higher purpose.
- They are in the midst of the second year of famine, and five years remain.
  - Five is the number of grace. The people of Israel will have five years of being cared for in famine.
  - Joseph is now 40, or in his 40<sup>th</sup> year. This speaks of his having passed all his tests!
  - Twenty-two years have passed since he was sold by his brothers. Twenty-two is a highly significant number for the Jewish people, speaking of completion, and of the perfect work of God having been accomplished. God has caused his dreams to come to pass, has saved his family, and has also prepared the kingly tribe of Judah, in a period of 22 years.
- Once again, Joseph is a type of Christ. God led him through his trials in order that the people of Israel and even all the world could be preserved.

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