

The Book of Genesis

Lesson Number 71



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB =Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), EMTV =English Majority Text (2002); ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT =Goodspeed (1923), GWN =God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862)

----- GREEK LEXICON LEGEND -----

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

JUDAH REASON'S WITH JOSEPH

Gen 44:1 "And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth. ² And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. ³ As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses. ⁴ And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? ⁵ Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing. ⁶ And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words. ⁷ And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing. ⁸ Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? ⁹ With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen. ¹⁰ And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless. ¹¹ Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. ¹² And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. ¹³ Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city. ¹⁴ And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground. ¹⁵ And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine? ¹⁶ And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found. ¹⁷ And he said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father. ¹⁸ Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh. ¹⁹ My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? ²⁰ And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. ²¹ And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. ²² And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. ²³ And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. ²⁴ And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. ²⁵ And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. ²⁶ And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. ²⁷ And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons. ²⁸ And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since. ²⁹ And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. ³⁰ Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; ³¹ It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. ³² For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. ³³ Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. ³⁴ For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father." Gen 44:1-34

Joseph has the brother's sacks filled, their money returned, and his silver cup put in Benjamin's sack. He then sends his steward to overtake them – Given O. Blakely

INTRODUCTION

CONTENTS

- ▶ INTRODUCTION
- ▶ INSTRUCTIONS TO THE STEWARD (44:1-2)
- ▶ FOLLOW AFTER THE MEN (44:3-5)
- ▶ HE OVERTOOK THEM (44:6-10)
- ▶ THE CUP WAS FOUND IN BENJAMIN'S SACK (44:11-13)
- ▶ WAT DEED IS THIS THAT THOU HAST DONE (44:14-15)
- ▶ HOW SHALL WE CLEAR OURSELVES? (44:16)
- ▶ GET YOU IN PEACE TO YOUR FATHER (44:17)
- ▶ JUDAH SPEAKS TO JOSEPH, #1 (44:18)
- ▶ JUDAH SPEAKS TO JOSEPH, #2 (44:19-20)
- ▶ JUDAH SPEAKS TO JOSEPH, #3 (44:21-23)
- ▶ JUDAH SPEAKS TO JOSEPH, #4 (44:24-29)
- ▶ JUDAH SPEAKS TO JOSEPH, #5 (44:30-32)
- ▶ JUDAH SPEAKS TO JOSEPH, #6 (44:33-34)
- ▶ CONCLUSION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Joseph instructs his steward to load the sacks of the brothers, returning their money, and placing his silver cup in Benjamin's sack. After sending them away, he tells the steward to pursue them, asking why they have returned the ruler's kindness by stealing his special cup.

The brothers remonstrated, saying they had returned the money that was found in their sacks, why would they now steal the ruler's cup? They vowed that if the steward found the cup, the man would die that had it, and they would be the ruler's servants.

The cup was found in Benjamin's sack. The brothers tore their clothes,

reloaded their asses, and returned with the servant to Joseph's house. There Judah spoke extensively with Joseph, rehearsing what they had done, and how their father would react to the absence of Benjamin. He offered himself in exchange for Benjamin, for, he said, he could not bear to face his father without Benjamin. The stage is now set for Joseph to reveal himself to his brethren. They have had sufficient experience to be able to profit from such a revelation. They had learned some valuable lessons as they have been tested and tried.

DIVINE TESTING

What we are seeing in this entire episode is the testing or trying of God's people. How a person stands up under Divine testing reveals the true attainment and character of the individual. Divine testing or trying can take different forms.

▶ A command from God

1. Adam/Eve – Gen 2:16-17
2. Abraham – Gen 22:1-18
3. Jonah – Jonah 3:2

▶ Temptation

1. Eve – Gen 3:1
2. Joseph – Gen 39:1
3. Achan – Josh 7:20-21
4. Israel – Psa 95:8

2. David – Psa 119:61

▶ Wealth

1. Israel – Deut 8:18
2. Rich young ruler – Lk 18:18-24
3. Solomon's prayer – Prov 30:8-9
4. Paul – Phil 4:12

▶ Poverty

1. Solomon's prayer – Prov 30:8-9
2. Paul – Phil 4:12

▶ Success

1. Joseph – Gen 39:9
2. Moses – Heb 11:24
3. Nebuchadnezzar – Dan 4:30-31

▶ Failure

1. Children of Judah – Josh 15:63
2. Children of Manasseh – Josh 17:12

▶ Persecution

1. Lot – Gen 19:9
2. Joseph – Gen 23-28
3. Moses – Ex 2:15; 17:4

The Divine Manner

It is the manner of God to test and try those with whom He is working. While He knows them that are His (2 Tim 2:19), and knows the end from the beginning (Isa 46:10), yet he tests and tries those identified with Him.

It is the manner of God to test and try those with whom He is working. While He knows them that are His, and knows the end from the beginning, yet he tests and tries those identified with Him.

▶ A blessing or blessings from God

1. Adam – Gen 5:2
2. Abraham – Gen 12:2
3. Israel – Ex 20:24; Deut 2:7

▶ The loss of one's possessions

1. Job – Job 1-2

To the flesh, this makes no sense at all. But consider why God does this.

▶ First, He is working with a gallery of heavenly witnesses who do not know all things, nor do they, on their own, know the end from the beginning. God therefore initiates

tests to confirm the uprightness of His choices, and the reality of His work to these onlookers. This causes praise to erupt in heaven.

- ➔ Second, trials and tests are a facet of His instruction and tutelage of the people being tested. They need to know that any favorable status they enjoy is owing to God. Also, any weaknesses they have must be made known to them so they can address them. Additionally, passing through these trials safely confirms their acceptance by the Lord.
- ➔ Third, those who are tested and

are what they claim to be – or whether or not they meet the criteria of those approved by God. **A test, or a trial, will prove the real caliber of those being tested.** The process is likened to the trying of gold and silver. By comparison, if it is gold that is being “*tried*,” it is passed through a test that only gold can survive. Only what survives the test is really gold (Job 23:10; Zech 13:9; 1 Pet 1:17; Rev 3:18). The same testing is applied to a metal purported to be silver (Psa 12:6; 66:10; Zech 13:9).

the case of Job, that is made quite clear. The test originated heaven, not in the earth, and was for the purpose of silencing Satan (Job 1-2).

For Generations to Come

Additionally, there was a testing that was for the purpose of demonstrating truth to the saints of following ages. Job is also included in this category as affirmed in James’ reference to him (James 5:11). In **Job** God established how much a believer can suffer without denying the Lord. In **Solomon**, God established that the total scope of wisdom pertaining to this world (1 Kgs 4:29-34) is not enough to keep a soul from falling (1 Kgs 11:9-11).

The trying of Abraham (Gen 22), Isaac (Gen 26:20-22), and Jacob (Gen 31:38-42), confirm to believers that those who are called of God, and order their lives around that call, will live a life that finally comes to a satisfactory conclusion. **In other words, God finishes what He starts** (Phil 1:6).

Concerning the Saints Today

There is a reason for the trying or testing of those who are in Christ Jesus. **Their trial is an appointed means to their ultimate perfection.** It is stated this way by Peter: *“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you”* (1 Pet 5:10)

The saints of the Lord have good reason to live with the optimism of faith and hope – even through hard trials. In them, God is finishing His work.

Ponder what you would have known about Joseph if he had never been tested and tried, and how men would explain his sudden promotion to the head over Egypt.

tried, yet faithfully hold on their way, prove to be an encouragement to those who follow them, and often to their peers.

Ponder what you would have known about Joseph if he had never been tested and tried, and how men would explain his sudden promotion to the head over Egypt. Apply the same reasoning to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who were before him, and also had the promises of God.

What Is A Trial?

Trials take different forms, but they are always putting someone to the proof – seeing if the person or persons

So it is with the trying of those who claim identity with God. They are passed through a test that only those possessing such an identity can survive.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

The case with Abraham, Job, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and others during the time of lesser revelation differs slightly. In their case, it was not their profession that was being tried. Their faith was tried basically for **their** benefit, to establish the strength of faith and the surety of the faithfulness of God.

Job

There was a testing, like that of Job, that appears to have been for the purpose of stopping the allegations of Satan, the accuser of the brethren. In

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE STEWARD

Gen 44:1 *“And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men’s sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man’s*

money in his sack’s mouth. ² And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack’s mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the

word that Joseph had spoken.”

FILL THE MEN’S SACKS

“And he commanded the steward

of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry . . . "

Joseph is very particular about how the steward is to go about loading the grain.

- ➔ Fill all of the sacks.
- ➔ Fill them with as much grain as is possible.
- ➔ Put every man's money in the mouth of the sack, or on top of the grain.
- ➔ Put his personal silver cup in the sack of the youngest, Benjamin.

A DIVINE TRAIT IS SEEN

In Joseph we will see a Divine trait – not acquired by nature, but by Divine direction. Joseph not only tells the steward what to do, but how to do it. I approach this matter with caution, knowing that more can be made of this than is appropriate.

Some examples of "how"

Here are several examples of the Lord specifying HOW what He has commanded is to be done.

- ➔ *"And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."* (Deut 6:5)
- ➔ *"Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: **whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass.**"* (Ex 35:5)
- ➔ *"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed **from the heart** that form of doctrine which was delivered you."* (Rom 6:17)
- ➔ *"Now the end of the commandment is charity **out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:**"* (1 Tim 1:5)
- ➔ *"I will therefore that men pray every where, **lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.**"* (1 Tim 2:8)
- ➔ *"Let us draw near **with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our***

One of the blights of modern Christendom is its satisfaction with partial portions, or small measure. There is altogether too much of the "little here and a little there" mentality. The professing church is plagued with smallness of spiritual thought

hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb 10:22)

This necessarily infers that what God commands is not to be carried out perfunctorily, superficially, or carelessly. Empty routine and mindless ceremony have no part in matters pertaining to the Lord.

FILL THE MEN'S SACKS WITH FOOD

Joseph gives the order to fill every man's sack with food.

The word from which "fill" is translated means precisely what one might expect: "TO FILL, BE FULL . . . ABUNDANCE.

The only limitation here was the sacks themselves, and their carrying capacity. Whatever size they were, they were to be filled. The orders were to give them *"as much as they can carry."* Other versions read, *"as much food as they'll hold"* ^{CEB} *"as they are able to bear."* ^{YLT} **It is to be assumed that the sacks were empty – otherwise this instruction is not significant.**

A Kingdom Standard

In the Kingdom of God, there is a single standard for what is given: **fill it full!** Thus we read of:

- ➔ Being *"full of joy"* (Acts 2:23).
- ➔ Being *"full of the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 6:3).
- ➔ Being *"full of faith"* (Acts 6:5).
- ➔ Being *"full of good works"* (Acts 9:36).
- ➔ Being *"full of goodness, filled with all knowledge"* (Rom 15:14).
- ➔ The *"riches of the full assurance of*

understanding" (Col 2:2).

- ➔ *"The full assurance of hope"* (Heb 6:11).
- ➔ Being *"full of mercy"* (James 3:17).
- ➔ A *"joy unspeakable and full of glory"* (2 Pet 1:8).
- ➔ Receiving a *"full reward"* (2 John 1:8).
- ➔ There is *"the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ"* (Rom 15:29).
- ➔ Being *"filled with all the fulness of God"* (Eph 3:19).
- ➔ Being *"fully persuaded"* (Rom 4:21; 14:5).

One of the blights of modern Christendom is its satisfaction with partial portions, or small measure. There is altogether too much of the "little here and a little there" mentality. The professing church is plagued with smallness of spiritual thought, having less of the things of God than can be possessed, and reserving only a part of life for things pertaining to life and godliness.

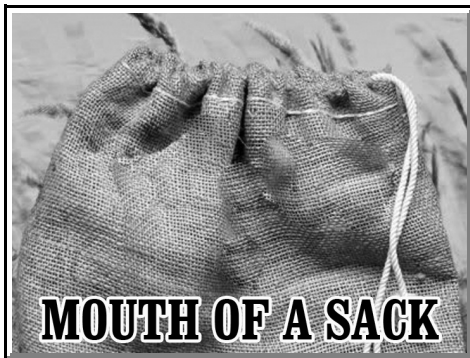
The result of this deficiency is that the people are not able to receive what God has promised to give. Their hearts are filled with other things, other preferences, other ambitions. Bestowing blessings on such people would be like trying to pour a lot of grain into sacks that were half-filled with rocks or sand.

Due to delusions fostered by the devil, some people cannot account for the difficulty they have receiving the things of God. Some might imagine that they are not very intelligent, or that they are slow to learn, and not intellectual. However, all such

assessments are nothing more than imaginations. **The truth of the matter is that they have been made in the image of God, and, as such, have heart and mind that can be filled.** However, if they choose to think primarily of things pertaining to this world, and place an inordinate value on the temporary, they are shut up to spiritual obtuseness.

PUT EVERY MAN'S MONEY IN HIS SACKS MOUTH

, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth. . ."



Orders were given to place each man's money – the payment made for the grain – in the mouth of each sack. That is, it was to be placed on the top of the grain, **so it would be seen at once and not get lost in the grain.** Upon opening his sack, each man would know his money had been returned – just as it was the first time they bought grain in Egypt.

A Type Is Seen Here

There is a type of our salvation that can be seen here. Upon opening their sacks, the brothers were at once impressed with **what they had been given**, not what they had purchased. In reality, their grain was not purchased with silver or gold.

So it is with those who are in Christ Jesus. **When they open the sack of salvation, as it was, they are at once faced with the fact that this great salvation was given, not purchased by us.** It is possible to view salvation according to man's assessment of it rather than according to God's revelation. When this happens, the people never see the silver that is on top.

The purchase was actually made by Christ, then given to us. Therefore Peter wrote, *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"* (1 Pet 1:18-19).

PUT MY SILVER CUP IN THE SACK OF THE YOUNGEST

" . . . And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. . ." Other versions read, *"in the top of the sack,"* NRSV and *"just inside the pack."* CJB

Benjamin's sack was to have both Joseph's silver cup and his money on the top, where it could be seen immediately. Some versions refer to this cup as *"goblet."* CJB We assume it was for drinking.



This was Joseph's *"personal silver cup,"* NLT and therefore was associated with value – not only because it was made of silver, but because it was used by the ruler over all of Egypt.

From Joseph's point of view, this was doubtless another test of the brothers' character, to confirm they were now men of integrity. From the Lord's vantage point this was also a test that, when he was made known, they would be ready to respond correctly to Joseph. They must also be brought to see that they are experiencing some of the things that happened to Joseph because of them: discomfort, fear, misrepresentation, etc.

AND HE DID ACCORDING TO JOSEPH'S WORD

" . . . And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken." Again we see a faithful steward, carrying out all that he was commanded to do.

Another Type

Here we have yet another type of the redeemed. They are intended to be faithful servants – *"good and faithful"* servants (Matt 25:21,23). This depiction, given by the Lord Jesus Himself, is something that will be assessed after Jesus comes again, and when all of the nations are gathered before Him for judgment. Until that time, all believers are to be characterized as *"good stewards of the manifold grace of God"* (1 Pet 4:10). It is written, *"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful"* (1 Cor 4:2). **That faithfulness involves not only doing what the Lord has said, but doing it in a proper spirit and with the eagerness that comes from faith.**

I am persuaded that this matter is not at all clear in the minds of nominal Christians. Where there is a general lack of interest among professing Christians, and a fleshly casualness concerning living soberly and godly (Tit 2:12), a most serious problem exists, and it must be conveniently overlooked.

FOLLOW AFTER THE MEN

"³ As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses. ⁴ And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off,

Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for

good? ⁵ Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing."

This section may sound like nothing more than history, and therefore not relevant today – but nothing could be further from the truth. **This is a record of God working out the background for His eternal purpose** – the environment in which He will work. He is using all manner of people; male and female, Jews and Egyptians, rulers and slaves, city-people and country-people, etc. Every account that is given to this point, from the fall in Eden, to the rule of Joseph over Egypt, is a piece of the puzzle, so to speak. In the end, everything will fit perfectly together as the “*eternal purpose*” of God is brought to its consummation – at least on the earth. At that point, there will be no further need for the earth, and it will therefore “*pass away*” (Matt 24:35; 2 Pet 3:10). **Keeping this in mind will assist us in being more alert when we are exposed to such texts – girding up the loins of our mind.**

THE MEN WERE SENT AWAY

“As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses. . .”

The brothers were not sent away until they had obtained what they came for. Also, they were not sent away until Joseph had set things up as he desired. That also is a mirror of how God deals with us.

If you can see it, in your progress in the matter of being confirmed to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29-30), you do not move to the next stage of glory until what is intended by the current stage is accomplished. No phase of God’s purpose, if I may use that expression, can be ignored.

A rather vivid depiction of this process is seen in Peter’s word concerning spiritual advance. *“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity”* (2 Pet 1:5-7).

FOLLOW AFTER THE MEN



And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men . . .”

The steward must be obedient, not questioning his master. To the flesh it might seem foolish to send the men away, then immediately pursue them. Why not deal with them while they are still there? Simply because that would not serve Joseph’s purpose. **The test required that they leave and make some progress in their journey.** However, they must not go as far as the Inn, where they would open their sacks. This test did not allow their prior knowledge of what had been put into their sacks.

A Kingdom Manner

So it is in the Kingdom of God. When we are carrying out the will of the Lord, “*doing the will of God from the heart*” (Eph 6:6), we must not question that will. If Israel is told to move forward when there is a sea before them, that is what they must do (Ex 14:15-16)). If Naaman is told to dip seven times in the River Jordan, that is

what he must do (2 Kgs 5:10). If Moses sees that the only water available to the Israelites is bitter, and the Lord shows him a tree to cast into them, thereby making them drinkable, that is what he must do (Ex 15:23-25). If Jesus and His disciples are faced with 5,000 men, not counting women and children, and they are hungry, yet there is no bread – if Jesus tells the disciples to make the people sit down by companies, that is what they must do (Mark 6:39).

If the Lord tells us, “*Be strong,*” that is what we must do (1 Cor 16:13; Eph 6:10). **THEN is the time to set out to do something that requires strength. Examples of such things include:**

- Fighting the good fight of faith and laying hold on eternal life (1 Tim 6:12).
- Standing fast (2 Thess 2:15).
- As Jesus said to Thomas, “*Be not faithless, but believing*” (John 20:27).
- As the elect of God, putting off unacceptable behavior (Col 3:12-14).
- Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God (2 Cor 10:3-4).
- Not sinning (1 Cor 15:34; 1 John 2:1).

SAY UNTO THEM

“ . . . and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.” Concerning this cup, other versions read, “*with which he indeed practices divination,*” ^{NKJV} “*which he indeed uses for divination,*” ^{NASB} “*by this that he divines,*” ^{RSV} “*by which he gets knowledge of the future,*” ^{BBE} “*uses to discover God’s plans*” ^{CEB} “*in the which he doeth divine and prophesy*” ^{GENEVA} “*also for reading omens,*” ^{NJB} “*which he uses to predict the future,*” ^{NLT} “*he observeth diligently with it,*” ^{YLT} “*which he uses for fortune telling,*” ^{LIVING} “*he divines augury [divination from auspices or omens] with it,*” ^{BRENTON} “*he uses it to learn secret things,*” ^{ERV} and “*divining he*

divines by it.”^{LITV}

The steward knows the cup is in Benjamin’s bag, for he put it there (44:1-2). Yet, the steward does not question Joseph, inquiring why he should make such a charge. **Good stewards do not ask why their master requires certain things of them.** Neither should the one who has been formed ever say to the One who formed them, “Why hast Thou made me thus?” (Rom 9:20).

The Cup Whereby He Divineth

Joseph tells The steward to say the cup is one by which he divined, or “practiced divination.”^{NASB}

I am chagrined at the manner in which most commentators handle this text. They launch into a lengthy explanation of how divination was practiced in Egypt by the use of cups. Some allege that Joseph actually used this method of foretelling the future, charging him with serious sin. But all of this is nothing more than theological nonsense.

Joseph is testing his brothers, and the reference to him using divination is no more true than the charge that they had stolen his cup. That ought to be clear enough to require no further explanation.

Concerning the fact that this was not true, we ought not to treat it as though it was a deliberate and wicked lie. There are other incidents where the truth was withheld, and something that was not strictly true was said.

➔ **RAHAB.** When Rahab the harlot hid the Jewish spies, the king of Jericho sent a message to her, “Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country” (Josh 2:3). Rahab promptly hid the men, and replied to

the king’s messengers, “**There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were: And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them.**” (Josh 2:4-5).

➔ **SAMUEL.** When Samuel went to Jesse’s house to anoint young David king. The record reads, “**And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. And Samuel said, How can I go? If Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD. And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee**” (1 Sam 16:1-3).

➔ **DAVID.** When David pretended that he was mad, or out of his mind. The record reads: “**And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath. And he changed his behavior before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard. Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore then have ye brought him to me? Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?**” (1 Sam 21:12-15).

➔ **ELISHA.** When an army came down to arrest Elisha, he prayed to God asking Him to smite the men with blindness. Knowing they were seeking him, Elisha said to the blinded army, who were told the prophet was in Dothan, “**This not the way, neither is this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria**” (2 Kgs 6:19).

The children of God must not adopt overly simplistic views of Scripture. Neither is it in order to raise a lot of questions for which there really are no spiritually intelligent answers.

➔ **DAVID.** When David was running from king Saul, he came upon the priest Ahimelech who asked him “Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?” David replied, “**The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place**” (1 Sam 21:2).

The children of God must be knowledgeable of these records, and not adopt overly simplistic views of Scripture. Neither is it in order to raise a lot of questions for which there really are no spiritually intelligent answers. The truth of the matter is that life is not simplistic, and we do need Divine direction. Further, we should not expect that what God requires of us will be perfectly reasonable to the flesh.

HE OVERTOOK THEM

“⁶ And he overtook them, and he | spake unto them these same words. ⁷ | And they said unto him, Wherefore

Joseph has the brother’s sacks filled, their money returned, and his silver cup put in Benjamin’s sack. He then sends his steward to overtake them – Given O. Blakely

saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing: ⁸ Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? ⁹ With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen. ¹⁰ And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless."

HE OVERTOOK THEM

"And he overtook them . . ." Other versions read, "caught up with them," ^{NIV} "found them," ^{SEPTUAGINT} "having found them," ^{ABP} "He rode out to the brothers and stopped them," ^{ERV} and "So he went after them." ^{ISV}

silver cup? Is it not my master's drinking cup with which he divines [the future]? You have done wrong in doing this." ^{AMPLIFIED}

The servant did not ask the brothers ,if they had taken Joseph's cup, but **told** them that they had. They now remonstrate, protesting the charge.

THEY SAID UNTO HIM

And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing: Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? . . ."

servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen. And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless."

Now the brothers speak hastily. Centuries later Solomon would write, "The heart of the righteous studieth to answer" (Prov 15:28). Again Solomon wrote, "Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him" (Prov 29:20). **It is the nature of the flesh to speak without due thought, speaking hastily in the time of dilemma or trouble.**

So, the brothers blurt out a response that was not wise.

- If the cup is found in any of their sacks, the person owning that sack would be put to death.
- The other brothers would all consent to being slaves of the ruler of Egypt.

THE STEWARD RESPONDS

"And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless."

The steward **does not consent** to the brother's word that the one in whose sack the cup is found would die. Neither does he consent to the other brothers being servants to his master. It will be sufficient for the one in whose sack the cup was found to be a servant. That would absolve the brothers of all guilt.

Keep in mind that the Almighty God is governing this whole circumstance. Not a single aspect of it is left up to the decisions of men. It is still true, "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD" (Prov 16:1). And again, "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps" (Prov 16:9). And yet again, "Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?" (Prov 20:24). Texts such as the one with which we are dealing and examples of

However, they had quickly forgotten that the steward had said he had received their money in their prior visit, and that their God had put it in their sacks, rewarding them.

We do not know how long it took the steward to find the brothers, or if they had made known what route they were taking. However, they were moving with a caravan of loaded asses, which simplified the matter of catching up with them. Notwithstanding that comparative ease, we catch a glimpse of the faithfulness of the steward, and his probable resourcefulness in locating the brothers. **This is an example of a servant doing what his master says.** Such obedience requires commitment, determination, and alertness. O, that more professing Christians obeyed Jesus in such a manner.

HE SPAKE UNTO THEM

" . . . and he spake unto them these same words. . ." With exactness and precision, the steward told the brothers what Joseph had instructed him to say. "Why have you rewarded evil for good? [Why have you stolen the

Behold the Money

In order to prove their integrity, they point out that they had brought back the money found in their sacks – even after keeping it in Canaan until they returned. Surely that is enough to arrest the attention of the steward. **However, they had quickly forgotten that the steward had said he had received their money in their prior visit, and that their God had put it in their sacks, rewarding them.** We learn from this how quickly the flesh can forget revelatory sayings. It has no heart for them, so it cannot retain them.

How Then Should We Steal

To the brothers, it was illogical to return money that had inadvertently (as they thought) been given to them, then steal the cup of the one from whom they purchased grain. They did not know this was a test.

HE WITH WHOM IT IS FOUND

" . . . With whomsoever of thy

the preparations of the heart, the answer of the tongue, God directing the steps of men.

THE CUP WAS FOUND IN BENJAMIN'S SACK

"¹¹ Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. ¹² And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. ¹³ Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city."

THEY TOOK DOWN THEIR SACKS AND OPENED THEM

"Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. . ."

Confident that the ruler's cup would not be found in any of their sacks, the brothers each unloaded their sack and opened it for inspection. Apparently none of them looked in their sack to see if the cup was there, for they were absolutely confident this search would be in vain. It is equally obvious that they did not look into their sacks before they loaded them on their beasts of burden.

We see that the level of a person's confidence will determine what he does – even if that confidence is wholly unfounded.

In the Matter of Life

Why do some professing Christians live such sloppy lives – not growing up into Christ in all things, and refusing to set their affection on things above? **It is because, like Joseph's brothers, they are confident in their current status.** They see no need to feed their souls, gather with the saints, and pursue the things of God with vigor. Whatever they may say to the contrary simply is not true. As it is written, *"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he"* (Prov 23:7).

THE SERVANT MADE A METHODOICAL SEARCH

" . . . And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest . . ."

Keep in mind, the steward knew whose sack contained the cup, for he himself had placed it in Benjamin's sack. However, he began searching with the oldest, and worked his way down to the youngest. As he proceeded, I do not doubt that the confidence of the brothers grew as the steward searched each sack.

However, their growing confidence was unfounded. It was not a valid assurance, but a vain one.

Another trait of the Flesh

So it is with the flesh. As life proceeds, the fact that things appear to be going well, no real hardship is endured, and little inconvenience is experienced leads the carnal mind to conclude that all is well, and there is nothing to fear. But there are experiences referred to as *"contending with horses"* and *"the swelling of Jordan"* (Jer 12:5). There is also such a thing as *"the day of adversity"* (Prov 24:10), and *"the evil day"* (Eph 6:13). **Those are times when the frailty of confidence in the flesh is made known** (Phil 3:3-4).

THE CUP WAS FOUND IN BENJAMIN'S SACK

" . . . and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. . ."

The confidence of his brothers continued undisturbed until the steward looked into Benjamin's sack. The brothers probably looked at the examination as a pointless one. However, to their chagrin, that is where the ruler's cup was found – Benjamin's sack.

It is interesting that to this point no reference is made to the money of each one being in their respective sacks (Gen 44:1). Perhaps they did not look into the sacks when they opened them, feeling fully confident that only the grain was there. Their casualness moved them to

ignore the blessing as well as the curse. The penalty for a lack of alertness is rarely mentioned these days. Men are enamored with entertainment.

THEY TORE THEIR CLOTHES AND RETURNED TO THE CITY

" . . . Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city." Other versions read, *"tore their clothes,"* ^{NKJV} *"tore their clothes in grief,"* ^{GWN} *"tore their clothing in despair,"* ^{NLT} *"ripped their clothing in despair,"* ^{LIVING} and *"tearing their clothes in sorrow."* ^{CEV}

From early times, those in great grief, sorrow, or fear are said to have rent, or torn, their clothes:

➔ Jacob (Gen 37:34)

THOUGHTS ON RENDING CLOTHING

To express the concern and uneasiness of his mind, and the apprehensions he entertained of the divine displeasure on account of the people's unlawful marriages, is said to have rent his garments and mantle (Ezra 9:3), that is, both his inner and upper garment. This action was also an expression of indignation and holy zeal; the high-priest rent his clothes, pretending that our Savior had spoken blasphemy (Matthew 26:65), and so did the apostles when the people intended to pay them divine honors (Acts 14:14).

To rend the garments was in Eastern countries and among ancient nations a symbolical action, expressive of sorrow, fear, or contrition. (See the monographs on the subject in Latin by Grunewold [Hafn. 1708]; Hilliger [Wittenb. 1716]; Rohrensee [ibid. 1668]; Schroder, [Jen. 1716]; and Wickmannshausen [Wittenb. 1716].) The passage in Joel 2:13, "Rend your hearts, and not your garments," is in allusion to this practice. But the phrase here is a Hebraism, meaning "Rend your hearts rather than your garments," or "Rend your hearts, and not your garments only;" for the prophet does not forbid the external appearances of mourning, but he cautions them against a merely hypocritical show of sorrow, and exhorts them to cherish that contrite and broken spirit which is acceptable in the sight of God. ^{McCLINTOK}

- ➔ Reuben (Gen 37:29)
- ➔ Joshua and Caleb (Num 14:6)
- ➔ Joshua (Josh 7:6)
- ➔ Jephthah (Judges 11:35)

- ➔ David (2 Sam 13:31)
- ➔ David and the men with him (2 Sam 1:11)
- ➔ Ahab (1 Kgs 21: 27)\
- ➔ Elisha (2 Kgs 2:12; 5:8)

Under the Law, however, the high priest was forbidden to rend his clothes:
"And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is

to go away by strictly human resources. Something had happened that was beyond the circumference of human aptitude – something that was neither good nor pleasant.

The tearing of their garments depicts a person who sees the utter vanity of appearance. What they have experienced makes all personal appearance worthless. From the standpoint of perception, it dissolves beauty, human worth, and human achievement.

In Scripture, the person who tears their garments often realized that something had taken place over which they had no power of themselves. The tearing of their garments depicts a person who sees the utter vanity of appearance. **What they have experienced makes all personal appearance worthless.** From the standpoint of perception, it dissolves beauty, human worth, and human achievement.

- ➔ Hezekiah (2 Kgs 19:1)
- ➔ Isa 37:1)
- ➔ Athaliah (2 Kgs 11:14)
- ➔ Ezra (Ezra 9:3)
- ➔ Eliakim and Shebna and Joah (Isa 36:22)
- ➔ Josiah (2 Kgs 22:11)
- ➔ Mordecai (Esther 4:1)
- ➔ Eighty men from Shechem (Jer 41:5)
- ➔ Caiaphas [in violation of the Law] (Matt 26:65)
- ➔ Barnabas and Paul (Acts 14:14).
- ➔ Under the Law, lepers were required to rend their clothes (Lev 13:45).

consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes" (Lev 21:10).

The rending of the garments was the outward expression of severe grief or sorrow, contrition, profound concern, disappointment, extreme displeasure, and even fear. It depicted outwardly a certain disruption within – likened to the shredding of the soul, so to speak.

This reaction was caused by a circumstance about which the individual could do nothing. The matter of concern could not be undone, or caused

Through the prophet Joel, God admonished the people to bring forth a deeper rending than that of the garments. **"And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil"** (Joel 2:13). This equates to the Apostolic exhortation **"repent!"** (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22). It is a conscious inward activity that is commanded by God (Acts 17:30; 26:20). **We are living in a time when the rending of the heart is sorely needed.**

WHAT DEED IS THIS THAT THOU HAST DONE

"¹⁴ And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground. ¹⁵ And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?"

Although the brothers dreaded it, they had to stand before Joseph. They could not run away, for the steward would have them pursued and apprehended. They could not excuse themselves, affirming they had some important task to fulfill. They would have to stand before Joseph, and there was not a thing they could do to remove or modify that requirement.

The Day of Judgement

There is also an assigned appointment for every person – to appear before the Living God on the day of judgment. It is an appointment that cannot be successfully ignored, modified, or removed. As it is written, *"... it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"* (Heb 9:27). Paul preached with power, *"Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead"* (Acts 17:31). Those in Christ are solemnly reminded, *"we must all appear before the*

judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor 5:10). The only thing to do is be prepared!

HE WAS YET THERE

"And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there..."

The text refers to **"Judah and his brethren"** because Judah would be their spokesman (Gen 44:14,16,18-34) – as Peter was of the twelve apostles (Acts 2:14; Gal 2:8).

They came to Joseph's **"house,"** for he had intentionally remained there,

awaiting their return. He did not go to them, but had them come to him!

Like the Day of Judgment

Once again there is an intentional parallel to the day of judgment. While Jesus will come from heaven (1 Thess 1:10; 4:16; 2 Thess 1:7), to order the gathering of all the wicked together, and the saints to Himself (Matt 13:41-43; 24:31; Mk 13:27), it will **not** be to remain with them in the world. We will be taken to His house, and appear before Him there to be judged in righteousness.

THEY FELL BEFORE HIM

“ . . . and they fell before him on the ground. . . ” Other versions read, *“they threw themselves to the ground before him,”*^{NIV} *“went down on their faces before him,”*^{BBE} *“altogether fell down before him on the ground,”*^{DOUAY} *“Immediately, they bowed with their faces touching the ground,”*^{GWN} *“they flung themselves on the ground before him,”*^{NAB} and *“they fell prostrate before him.”*^{AMPLIFIED}

This is now the fourth time the brothers have bowed down before the ruler, not knowing he was their brother (Gen 42:6; 43:26,28; 44:14). Joseph’s dreams, at the time he was seventeen years old – twenty-two years ago – were certainly being fulfilled in an abundant way.

Again, This Is Like the Day of Judgement

All of Joseph’s brothers bowed before him. On the day of judgment, all men will bow their knee before Jesus. As it is written, *“ . . . we shall **all** stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, **every** knee shall bow to Me, and **every** tongue shall confess to God ”* (Rom 14:10-11).

Again it is written, *“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus **every** knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father ”* (Phil 2:9-11).

I do not believe there is an acceptable persuasion of this within the vast majority of the church of this generation. In fact, this appears to be true of the last three or four generations. If this is true, this is a most serious dilemma. In my judgment there should be a cessation of all “church programs” until the majority of professing believers are fully persuaded they *“must **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that **every one** may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad ”* (2 Cor 5:10). **A failure to perceive this, taints everything the professing church does.** Further, there is nothing about the awareness of the day of judgment that promotes or condones worldliness, carnality, self-centeredness, spiritual dullness, or an ignorance of the things of God. **Leaders within the body of Christ must not allow the coming of the Lord and the day of judgment to fade in the memory of the people.** Whoever is not ready for the coming of the Lord, and prepared to give an account to Him, is wasting their life and living in vain. The ultimate purpose for a “Christian” is to be able to make a clean and safe transition from earth to glory – to be ready to be forever with the Lord.

WHAT DEED IS THIS?

“ . . . And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? ” Other versions read, *“What is this you have done? ”*^{NIV} *“Why would you do so? ”*^{DOUAY} *“What act is this, which ye have done? ”*^{GENEVA} *“How could you do such a thing? ”*^{NAB} *“What did you think you were doing? ”*^{NET} *“What do you mean by doing this? ”*^{NJB} *“What were you trying to do? ”*^{LIVING} and *“How can you have done this? ”*^{MESSAGE}

It is important to remember that this is a test. Thus far, the brothers have not done well before Joseph. Among themselves, they have made an association of their experience before the ruler of Egypt with their conduct toward young Joseph twenty-two years ago (Gen 42:21-22). But they have made no such confession before Joseph. Rather, they have continued to refer to their younger brother Joseph as

dead – *“is not ”* (Gen 42:13,32). They have also perceived this experience as something God was doing to them, although they did not know precisely what was being done (Gen 42:28).

Something to be Learned

Men must learn to ultimately trace their experiences back to God. **He is the Arbiter of humanity.** Job associated his trials with the Lord Himself (Job 2:10; 13:15; 23:3-6). Hosea spoke of Israel’s ills as coming from the Lord, and declared they should return to Him: *“Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for **He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up ”*** (Hos 6:1). God said to Israel, *“See now that **I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand ”*** (Deut 32:39).

Hannah saw this and prayed accordingly, *“The LORD killeth, and **maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and he hath set the world upon them ”*** (1 Sam 2:6-8).

The Spirit sums up the matter in the epistle to Hebrew believers: *“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of **Him with whom we have to do ”*** (Heb 4:12-13). Other versions read, *“to whom we must give an account,”*^{NKJV} *“with whom is our reckoning ”*^{YLT} *“to whom we must explain all that we have done.”*^{LIVING}

Ultimately we will answer to God *“For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen ”* (Rom 11:36). We owe no

response or explanation to anyone else – not the devil, not principalities and powers, not men. What comes to us has to be initiated or authorized by God.

There appears to have been more of an awareness of this during spiritually primitive times, than there is now, in the full-orbed light of the exalted Christ and the powerful Gospel of Christ. **Because of this men are slow to recognize the chastening of the Lord.** They are being taught that any abrasive experience or hardship comes from the devil, not God. This is the epitome of retrogression, backsliding, falling backward, and becoming retarded in one's thinking.

I CAN CERTAINLY DIVINE

" . . . wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?" Other versions read, *"certainly practice divination,"* ^{NKJV} *"find things out by*

divination," ^{NIV} *"would have power to see what is secret,"* ^{BBE} *"can discover God's plans,"* ^{CEB} *"learn the truth by divination,"* ^{CJB} *"can find things out because he knows the future,"* ^{GWN} *"I could discern by divination what happened,"* ^{NAB} *"doth diligently observe,"* ^{YLT} *"I would know who stole it?"* ^{LIVING} *"I can certainly detect and know by divination [everything you do without other knowledge of it]."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Prior to this, there has been only one reference to the matter of divining (Gen 44:5). This was apparently a cultic art that was practiced among the heathen. It is considered in the category of sorcery, which was divination, or foretelling with the aid of evil spirits. Later, in the prophets, reference is made to this practice in Egypt (Isa 19:3,11,12). It was forthrightly condemned nearly five hundred years later under the Law (Deut 18:10). However, it appears that a proper

understanding of it was not prominent at this time.

However, as is characteristic of evil, it tends to grow in the seed-bed of spiritual ignorance. A godly hatred of this practice was more fully developed under the Law, through which the knowledge of sin came (Rom 3:20). It is enough to say that an improper reaction to this Satanic art was because of an ignorance concerning it, and a consequent hatred of it was therefore also absent. That is characteristic of all improper responses to Satanic arts.

As I have said before, I do not believe Joseph practiced divination. This whole episode was a test, and, consequently, this saying is a crafty one, just like the charge that the brothers had stolen his cup. Joseph deliberately misrepresented himself, just as he did his brothers.

HOW SHALL WE CLEAR OURSELVES

"¹⁶ And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found."

WHAT SHALL WE SAY, AND HOW SHALL WE ACQUIT OURSELVES?

"And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? . . ." Other versions read, Other versions read, *"how can we justify ourselves?"* ^{NASB} *"How can we prove our innocence?"* ^{NIV} *"how may we put ourselves right in his eyes?"* ^{BBE} *"There's no way we can clear ourselves!"* ^{CJB} *"what shall we say, or be able justly to allege?"* ^{DOUAY} *"How can we plead or how try to prove our innocence?"* ^{NAB}

Judah sees the futility of trying to say they are not guilty. The ruler's cup has been found with them, and there is no escaping that fact. It appears they thought Benjamin had actually stolen the cup. When the steward first asked

them why they had taken the ruler's cup they responded, *"Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?"* (Gen 44:8). But now, the cup has been found in Benjamin's sack, and they cannot deny it.

GOD HAS FOUND OUT

" . . . God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants . . ." Other versions read, *"God has uncovered your servants' guilt,"* ^{NIV} *"God has made clear the sin of your servants,"* ^{BBE} *"God has revealed your servants' guilt,"* ^{CJB} *"God has exposed your servants' iniquity,"* ^{CSB} *"God is punishing us for our sins"* ^{NLT} *"God has found out and exposed the iniquity of your servants."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

I cannot help thinking they had more in mind than the matter of the cup. Earlier, when the ruler had charged them with being spies and ordered them to bring their younger brother to him, they said among themselves, *"We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in*

that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us" (Gen 42:21). Reuben had added, *"Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required"* (Gen 42:22).

Therefore, they were associating this trouble with their sin against Joseph. It seems to me that this persuasion is couched in their reply, even though it was not specifically confessed.

WE ARE MY LORD'S SERVANTS

" . . . behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found."

This is what they had said they would do, and now they are carrying out that commitment. They will all be the ruler's servants together. Note, they did not say he could take the life of Benjamin, which they had said to his steward – *"With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die,*

and we also will be my lord's bondmen" (Gen 44:9). Further, Joseph had not told the steward that the person with the cup should die. **God was managing this whole situation from heaven.**

Now, for the first time, the brothers were experiencing the

helplessness Joseph felt when they had thrown him in a pit and sold him. Their sin had found them out (Num 32:23).

A Mirror of Salvation

This whole situation is a remarkable mirror of the process through which salvation is realized. **Men are**

convicted of the guilt of sin, and brought to the stark realization that they cannot defend or justify themselves. They are at the mercy of the Lord, and thrust into a position where they must do whatever He says, relying upon His mercy. Every saved person has experienced this. In the experience joy mingled with fear.

GET YOU IN PEACE UNTO YOUR FATHER

"¹⁷ And he said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father."

How will Joseph react to Judah's proposal? They have apparently judged him to be like themselves – when they wreaked revenge on the Shechemites (Gen 34:25-27).

GOD FORBID

"And he said, God forbid that I should do so . . ." Other versions read, *"Far be it from me that I should do so,"* NKJV *"Far be it from, me to do such a thing,"* NIV *"I'd never do such a thing"* CEB *"Heaven forbid that I should act in such a way,"* CJB *"I swear that I will not do this"* CSB *"No,"* LIVING *"Let it not be to me to do such a thing,"* ABP *"I would never punish all of you,"* CEV *"I will not make you all slaves!"* ERV *"Oh, no! I would never do that!"* GNB and *"in no wise should I do so."* JUB

In this particular verse, the expression "God forbid" is used in the following versions: King James, Douay-Rheims, Easy Read, Geneva, Revised Version, Amplified Bible.

The Hebrew word from which "God forbid" is translated is "chaliylah," which has the following lexical meaning: "FAR BE IT (FROM ME), GOD FORBID THAT, LET IT NOT BE." STRONG'S Several commentaries ascribe "God forbid" Joseph's reply– ex: Pulpit Commentary, John Gill, John Calvin.

I prefer the translation "God forbid." It seems to me that this is more appropriate for a person who is God-conscious. I have a difficult time receiving the notion that any man of God would refer to his own nature in swearing to anything. The truth of the matter is that Joseph's fairness and tenderness was owing to his faith and perception of the hand of God in his experiences.

HE SHALL BE MY SERVANT

"...but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant..."

Still testing them, for he knows Benjamin did not steal his cup, Joseph calls God to witness that **they will not experience a lack of fairness or justice at his hand.** How differently these men had treated him! Now their abuse of young Joseph will bear down even more heavily upon their conscience.

GET YOU UP IN PEACE

" . . . and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father." Other versions read, *"go up in peace to your father,"* NKJV *"go back to your father in peace,"* NIV *"go you away free to your father"* DOUAY *"do ye go up with safety to your father,"* SEPTUAGINT *"the rest of you may go back unharmed to your father."* NAB *"go back unhindered to your father"* NJB *"The rest of you can go on home to your father,"* LIVING *"ascend with safety to your father,"* ABP and *"go back safe and sound to your father."* GNB

In this verse, the Hebrew word translated "peace" is "shalowm," and has a variety of possible meanings, depending on the context in which it is used. Possible meanings are "COMPLETENESS, SOUNDNESS, WELFARE . . . SAFETY . . . WELFARE, HEALTH, PROSPERITY . . . PEACE, QUIET, TRANQUILLITY, CONTENTMENT." STRONG'S

Here, I gather that the meaning is "safety," and the contentment that attends that condition. **The point is they will not be punished for the theft of Joseph's cup.** No beatings, imprisonment, or other forms of penalization.

JUDAH SPEAKS TO JOSEPH, #1

"¹⁸ Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh."

JUDAH CAME NEAR

"Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears . . ." Other versions read, *"in my lord's hearing,"* NKJV *"speak a word to*

my lord," NIV *"say something to my master,"* CEB *"say something to you privately,"* CJB *"let me speak openly with you,"* GWN *"let your servant appeal to my lord,"* NAB and *"let your servant say just one word to you."* NLT

As most of the versions confirm, here Judah wanted to tell the ruler something privately – “in my lord’s ears” – not in everyone’s ears. The God’s Word version leaves the wrong impression when it says, “let me speak openly with you.”

LET NOT THINE ANGER BURN

“ . . . and let not thine anger burn against thy servant . . . ” Other versions read, “do not be angry with your

Pharaoh had said to Joseph, “Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. . . ” And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt” (Gen 41:40). Judah knows this by the manner in which grain was being distributed to the surrounding nations. As ruler, Joseph did not have to ask for Pharaoh’s

Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes . . . And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak . . . Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord. . . And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once . . . ” (Gen 18:24-25,27,30,31)

➔ **EZRA** prayed concerning Israel. “And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens” (Ezra 9:6).

➔ **GIDEON**, when asking for a second sign. “And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew.” (Judg 6:39).

➔ **DAVID**, when sorely convicted of sin. “O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.” (Psa 38:1-2).

To me, it is apparent that these saints were acutely aware that earthly trivia is out of order before the Lord. Even though the humble and contrite are welcome in the presence of the living God (Isa 51:17; 57:15; 138:6), this understanding sometimes takes a while to register upon the conscience of men.

Suffice it to say, if Judah exercised godly caution and sensitivity in the presence of the ruler of Egypt. **What ought to be said of those who make requests of the God of heaven.**

Judah knows that in the context of Joseph’s position and duties, he is about to mention something that could be viewed as rather trivial. Yet, he has a cause to present that he is persuaded must be heard.

servant,” ^{NASB} “let not your wrath be burning against your servant” ^{BBE} “without getting angry with your servant,” ^{CEB} “let not thy wrath be kindled against thy servant,” ^{GENEVA} “Be patient with me for a moment, for I know you can doom me in an instant,” ^{LIVING} and “not enraged with your servant.” ^{ABP}

Judah knows that in the context of Joseph’s position and duties, he is about to mention something that could be viewed as rather trivial. Yet, he has a cause to present that he is persuaded must be heard. He will therefore speak with the greatest humility, seeking to avoid stirring up the anger of the ruler before whom he stands.

FOR THOU ART EVEN AS PHARAOH

“ . . . for thou art even as Pharaoh.” Other versions read, “you are equal to Pharaoh,” ^{NASB} “you are equal to Pharaoh himself,” ^{NIV} “you are in the place of Pharaoh to us,” ^{BBE} “for thou art next to Pharaoh,” ^{Brenton} “you have as much power as the king himself,” ^{CEV} and “for you are as Pharaoh [so I will speak as if directly to him].” ^{AMPLIFIED}

permission to do anything. He was made the uncontested ruler of Egypt, without Pharaoh forfeiting his position.

Joseph, therefore, speaks with the utmost thought and sobriety, carefully weighing his words.

Example of Holy Men Speaking with God

Prior to this, holy men pled with God in a most respectful manner.

➔ **ABRAHAM** once spoke to God about the preservation of Lot, doing so carefully, as Judah did. He was asking God if He would destroy the righteous with the wicked, the “righteous” being Lot and, hopefully, his family. Notice how carefully he pleads – with the same spirit as Judah, with sobriety and the utmost respect. “Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? . . . ”

JUDAH SPEAKS TO JOSEPH, #2

“ ¹⁹ My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother?

²⁰ And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old

age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and

Joseph has the brother’s sacks filled, their money returned, and his silver cup put in Benjamin’s sack. He then sends his steward to overtake them – Given O. Blakely

his father loveth him.”

Judah is now going to attempt an explanation that he hopes will neutralize the danger in which he supposed they were presently found. **He did not know that he was standing before Joseph, or that God was in charge of this situation.** Under those circumstances we should not expect a sterling example of strong faith to be revealed by his words and conduct.

MY LORD ASKED HIS SERVANTS

“My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? . . .”

This question is not in the record of the dialog during that first trip. However, this is what the brothers reported to Jacob, confirming that it is what Joseph asked them at that time (Gen 43:7).

Judah apparently does his best to explain their dilemma, and assure the ruler that they have not in any way been dishonest with him. **By Divine intention, however, he and his brothers**

have been put into a situation from which they cannot extricate themselves. He seems to sense that the ruler will be no more receptive to him and his brothers than they were to Joseph when they put him into a pit. The brothers had reasoned, *“We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us”* (Gen 42:21). Now they find themselves reasoning to no avail.

WE SAID UNTO MY LORD

“ . . . And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.”

Notice that in this explanation they say that Benjamin’s brother (by his own mother Rachel) *“is dead”*– and unbeknown to them, they are speaking to Joseph. There is no record of them saying this at any other time. When Jacob saw the blood-soaked coat of Joseph, he had concluded *“It is my*

son’s coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces” (Gen 37:33). To this point the brothers, when referring to Joseph, said, *“one is not”* (Gen 42:13,32). Jacob used the same words to describe Simeon, who was being held by Joseph (Gen 42:36). **You see the ambiguity that the flesh prefers.** It is difficult for the flesh to deal with reality, which is a common human frailty.

A COMMENT ON THIS JUDAH’S WORDS

“Every word in this verse is simplicity and pathos itself. No man of the least sensibility can read it without great emotion. Indeed the whole speech is exquisitely beautiful, and perhaps the most complete pattern of genuine natural eloquence extant in any language. When we read this generous speech, we forgive Judah all the past, and cannot refuse to say, ‘Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise.’” Gen 49:8

THE TREASURY OF SCRIPTURAL KNOWLEDGE

JUDAH SPEAKS TO JOSEPH, #3

“ 21 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. 22 And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. 23 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.”

BRING HIM DOWN TO ME

“And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. . . .”

The record of that demand reads,

“But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die” (Gen 42:20).

THE LAD CANNOT LEAVE HIS FATHER

“ . . . And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. . . .”

This response is not recorded in the record of that first visit (Gen 42:5-26). They did not report to Jacob that they had said these words to the ruler (Gen 43:6-7). However, it should be obvious they would not tell a blatant lie

to Joseph concerning this matter. I conclude, therefore, that they had so reasoned with Joseph in that first visit.

EXCEPT

“ . . . And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.”

Again, this is not reported in the original account (Gen 42). Judah did report this to Jacob also (Gen 43:5). The fact that he repeated it to the ruler substantiates that this is, in fact, what Joseph had said.

JUDAH SPEAKS TO JOSEPH, #4

“ 24 And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we

told him the words of my lord. 25 And our father said, Go again, and buy us a

little food. 26 And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be

Joseph has the brother’s sacks filled, their money returned, and his silver cup put in Benjamin’s sack. He then sends his steward to overtake them – Given O. Blakely

with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. ²⁷ *And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons:* ²⁸ *And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since:* ²⁹ *And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."*

WHEN WE CAME TO MY FATHER

"And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. . ."

This is the exact sequence of events that took place when they returned with the first supply of grain (Gen 42:29-43:8).

GO AGAIN

" . . . And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. . ."

This is a faithful report of what took place (Gen 32:2-5).

IF YE TAKE THIS ALSO FROM ME

" . . . And thy servant my father

said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since: And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

O The record of Jacob's reply does not read exactly like Judah's words. *"And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me . . . And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave"* (Gen 42:36,38).

I choose to believe that Judah's words were precise, and not merely his opinion of what Jacob said. It would have been of no advantage to lie.

Ponder what you would have known about Joseph if he had never been tested and tried, and how men would explain his sudden promotion to the head over Egypt.

JUDAH SPEAKS TO JOSEPH, #5

"³⁰ Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; ³¹ It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. ³² For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever."

Now Judah reasons with the ruler upon the basis of the facts he has reported. Note that he is not pleading for his life, but for the life of Benjamin and the consolation of his father, Jacob.

WHEN I COME TO MY FATHER

"Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be

not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. . ."

The basis of Judah's reasoning is that Jacob's life is "bound up in the lad's life." Other versions read, "closely bound up with the boy's life," ^{NIV} "his life and the boy's life are one," ^{BBE} "whose life is so bound up with his," ^{CEB} "his heart is bound up with the boy's heart," ^{CJB} "whereas his life dependeth upon the life of him," ^{DOUAY} "his soul is bound up with the lad's soul," ^{JPS} "he is the most important thing in our father's life!" ^{ERV} and "his life is bound up in the lad's life and his soul knit with the lad's soul." ^{AMPLIFIED}

This is not how the brothers had regarded Joseph, although Reuben had a smattering of this kind of attachment in regards to Jacob's love for Joseph (Gen 37:22).

This kind of attachment causes one to view life quite differently than a basically selfish person. There is a refusal to consider life with a sense of satisfaction and joy without the presence of the one to whom the person is knit. Jacob, therefore, did not want to consider his own life as dear if Benjamin was not present. While I understand that this can be carried to the extreme, allow me to reason for moment upon the experience of one person being knit to another. There is something of value to be seen here.

Illustrated In Jonathan and David

This is the kind of affection

Jonathan had toward David. As it is written, *"And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul"* (1 Sam 18:1).

The Highest Expression

It seems to me that such a closeness can only be found in those created in the image, and after the likeness of God. **This capacity is within mankind in order that they might realize oneness with the Lord Himself.** Without that sort of attachment, life is actually meaningless. The highest actualization of this kind of unity is realized in Christ Jesus. Therefore it is written, *"But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit"* (1 Cor 6:17). This kind of unity is also expressed in the words, *"partakers of Christ"* (Heb 3:14).

Expressed Under the Law

This is the kind of love the Law commanded: *" . . . thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the LORD."* (Lev 19:18).

Realized in the Body of Christ

It is the kind of affection believers have for one another – *"knit together in love"* – *"For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; That their hearts might be comforted, being*

knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:1-3). And again, *"...the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God"* (Col 2:19). Love is "the bond of perfectness" that "binds" the members of the body together (Col 3:14). It is what constrains them to *"dwell together in unity"* (Psa 133).

I BECAME SURETY

" . . . For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever."

This role was chosen by Judah, who said to his father Jacob precisely what he here reports to the ruler: "I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever" (Gen 43:9).

The Greatest Surety is Jesus Christ

The great example of a Surety is the Lord Jesus Christ. **This is why this concept was introduced in Genesis** – in order that we might have a spiritually

intelligent view of what is involved in being a "Surety." It is said of Jesus, *"By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament"* (Heb 7:22). Other versions read, *"the guarantee of a better covenant."* ^{NASB}

This is the only place in the New Covenant writings that this word is used. Notice, Jesus is not a surety for us, but *"of a better testament."* **That is, as long as we abide in Christ, the better promises of the better covenant will be realized in us** (Heb 8:10-12).

- *"I will put My laws into their mind."*
- *"I will . . . write them in their hearts."*
- *"I will be to them a God."*
- *"They shall be to Me a people."*
- *"And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."*
- *"I will be merciful to their unrighteousness."*
- *"Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."*

Those who are in Christ Jesus, having been placed there by God Himself (1 Cor 1:30), and are abiding in Him, we He requires (John 15:4.7), are guaranteed that these realizes will take place in them. Jesus being at God's right hand is our guarantee.

JUDAH SPEAKS TO JOSEPH, #6

"³³ Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. ³⁴ For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father."

LET THY SERVANT ABIDE INSTEAD

"Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. . ."

Thus Judah requests that he take the place of Benjamin, and that

Benjamin be released to return with his brothers to his father. He is willing to be the surety for Benjamin. Further, he will not merely remain in Egypt, but offers to be the ruler's "bondman," or "slave," ^{NKJV}, or "servant," ^{NIV} or "in the service of my lord," ^{DARBY} or "bond slave." ^{JUB}

As a slave, Judah will no longer be a freeman, to do what he himself desires. He is offering to be one who lives for his master, and does his will – what that may be.

From the higher vantage point, this would not be harmonious with the will

of God, which was to form a nation from the progeny of Jacob's sons, doing so in Canaan, and with the expectation of the coming Messiah coming from that body of people. For that reason, God will not allow this arrangement to take place. He will move upon the heart of Joseph to reject that offer, bringing him into further harmony with His purpose.

A Picture of the Believer's Life

The life of the one who believes on Jesus is precisely prefigured in the idea of a "bondman" or "bondslave." Now, we are not free to do our own

will, and establish our own objectives. Rather, we are at the disposal of the Master, to do His will and fulfill His good pleasure. Therefore we read such expressions of the following:

- ➔ *"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." (Rom 14:7-8)*
- ➔ *"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor 6:19-20).*
- ➔ *"And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." (2 Cor 5:15) "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." (Eph 5:17).*
- ➔ *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (1 Pet 2:9)*

The professed church has not done well in this area–i.e. living solely

If ever today's "Christians" determine to love and serve God with all of their heart, all of their soul, all of their mind, and all of their strength, it would so revolutionize the professed church that it would not be recognized.

for the Lord. Because of this, it has imported among the disciples worldly wisdom – the world's manner of assessing things, making plans, reaching people, handling money, etc. It has brought in music that is after the world's manner, keeping the musical forms they love, but assigning religious words to it. That is like building a golden calf, then shouting out, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (Ex 32:4).

If ever today's "Christians" determine to love and serve God with all of their heart, all of their soul, all of their mind, and all of their strength, it would so revolutionize the professed church that it would not be recognized.

HOW SHALL I GO UP WITHOUT THE LAD

" . . . For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father." Other versions

read, "I see the evil that would overtake my father," NASB "the misery," NIV "the suffering," NRSV "how badly my father would be hurt," CEB "so overwhelmed by anguish" CJB "the grief that would overwhelm," CSB "the calamity that will oppress" DOUAY "the anguish," NAB "my father's pain" NET "the woe that would overtake" TNK and "I cannot bear to see what this would do to him." LIVING

Judah had seen the sorrow of Jacob when he thought Joseph had been killed by a beast (Gen 37:33-34). He had even participated in an attempt to comfort his father on that occasion – but Jacob refused to be comforted (Gen 37:35).

Judah could not bear the thought of seeing such sorrow again. He would rather be a slave to an Egyptian ruler for life, than to see such a thing! A tender scene, indeed! Yet, he does not have the faintest idea at this point of what a blessing will come from all of this!

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 12/13/13. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The seventy-second lesson will cover verses 1 thru 15 of chapter 45: "JOSEPH REVEALS HIMSELF TO HIS BROTHERS." After the brothers returned, bringing Joseph's cup, and Judah had reasoned with Joseph, he could no longer restrain himself. He ordered everyone but his brothers to leave the room. He wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him. He then revealed himself to his brothers, and asked them again if their father was alive. The brothers were troubled at his presence. He told them not to be troubled, and to come close. He then explained what had happened to him, relating how God was in all of the matters, and talked with them. Then wept over each one of them and sent them home to bring Jacob and everyone with him to Egypt. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.