

Genesis 44-46

I. Chapter 44 – 45 – The Final Test

The party having ended, Joseph ordered the men's sacks to be filled with grain and released them to head back to their father and their homes. Unbeknownst to them, Joseph had also ordered one of his silver goblets to be put in Benjamin's bag. This was done as part of the testing process that began on their first journey to Egypt.

Genesis 42:15

In this manner you shall be **tested**: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here.

Genesis 42:7

Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he **acted as a stranger** to them and **spoke roughly** to them. Then he said to them, "Where do you come from?"
And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food."

Genesis 42:9

Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them, and said to them, "**You are spies!** You have come to see the nakedness of the land!"

Genesis 42:24

And he turned himself away from them and wept. Then he returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took **Simeon** from them and **bound him** before their eyes.

Genesis 42:25

Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man's money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. Thus he did for them.

And now here in chapter 44 we read:

Genesis 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 each man's money in the mouth of his sack.

All the testing seems to build toward this.

Joseph would find out whether his brothers would once again sacrifice the youngest to save their own skin

A company of soldiers led by Joseph's steward soon overtook Jacob's 11 sons. He immediately accused them of theft, an accusation they immediately denied.

Genesis 44:4

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?**'"

Even in a pagan culture it was considered unacceptable to return evil for good. The New Testament exhorts us as believers

Romans 12:17

Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.

Romans 12:21

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

1 Thessalonians 5:15

See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

And the NT goes a step beyond and explains that it is the word of God that is the dividing line between evil and good

Hebrews 5:14

But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

The Soldiers explained that whoever's bag the stolen goblet was found in would become the slave of Egypt.

Genesis 44:10

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."

Genesis 44:12-13

So he searched. He began with the oldest and left off with the

youngest; and **the cup was found in Benjamin's sack**. Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.

All the testing has come to an end and Joseph finally gets the response he was looking for.

First Judah recounts the events that had transpired - Genesis 44:18-29

Then in 44:33- asks to take the place of Benjamin in the Egyptian prison.

Genesis 44:33

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.

Judah who led the charge against Joseph was willing to take the punishment intended for Ben

He makes it clear that guilt over his sin was the driving force behind the decision

Genesis 44:16

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."

Guilt is a valuable emotion if it leads us to confess our wrong, seek The Lord and change our ways

But even guilt is removed at the cross

II. Chapter 45 - Revelation

It seems that the reaction of Judah to the threat on Benjamin's life was enough to prove to Joseph that his brothers had changed and thus passed the intricate test he put them through.

Joseph sent his Egyptian colleagues from the room and revealed his true identity to his brothers

Genesis 45:3

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.

This chapter focuses upon Joseph revealing his true identity to his brothers. Moses is careful to express the emotions of Joseph and his brothers but it is impossible to capture all the pathos involved in the story.

We read of weeping, dismay, grief and anger. Perhaps verse fourteen captures it best

Genesis 45:14-15

Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

Joseph not only revealed his identity, but he went on to reveal that all these events had been directed by God as a means to save the children of Israel from certain death.

Joseph then expresses the ultimate reason for all that had transpired in the past 20 years

Genesis 45:5

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.

Genesis 45:7

And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

One of the most important themes from the life of Joseph is the importance of salvation.

We value things like personal pleasure, comfort and family above all else.

God values human life and salvation of souls above all else

He saw the experiences of Joseph, not as the hardships of life but as necessary to provide salvation for the family of Jacob and ultimately for the salvation of mankind.

Other ways we see the high value God places upon salvation include

- The counsels of heaven
- Sending his son

- Commissioning his servants
- Giving us his word
- Changing the lives and desires of his people to care for and reach out to those who don't know Christ

We can measure Gods love for us by he fact that he has brought us into a setting where we can hear the message of Christ

Joseph was able to see the hand of God in all of this because of his worldview

Too often we go through life with the wrong perspective. We see hardship only as it effects us and our comforts and fail to see it as a small piece of a much larger puzzle. God is looking down at a world that he loves and wants to save and He sees each of us as playing a role in this great deliverance. Instead of complaining at the difficult hand we have been dealt we should be looking at life from the perspective of preservation and deliverance. How does God want to use our current situation to bring others to Christ?

Joseph was able to see all he went through as part of God's plan of salvation. Do you see your life that way? Are you using your current sphere of influence for preservation and deliverance?

The plan Joseph explained included Israel coming to Egypt,

Word was sent to Pharaoh who donated carts to carry their belongings and a promise that the best of the land would be given to Israel. They were given Goshen

Goshen is located in the eastern Nile delta

Goshen is described as the best land in Egypt, suitable for both crops and livestock.

Goshen was an ideal location for a number of reasons...

- It was close to where Joseph lived and worked (including nearby large-scale food storage).
- It was ideal land for raising flocks and herds

- It kept them closer to a border area nearest Canaan

Israel settled in Goshen

Genesis 47:27

Now the Israelites settled in Egypt in the region of Goshen. They acquired property there and were fruitful and increased greatly in number.

It was here in Goshen that things would drastically change and Israel would become enslaved to Egypt.

During Israel's enslavement in Goshen their primary occupations centered on the building projects commissioned by Pharaoh. While the strong may have been used for the actual building, even the young and weak could be utilized for making bricks. Remnants of mud bricks, made with straw, are commonly found throughout the area of Goshen.

And Israel remained in Goshen until the time of Moses

Exodus 9:26

The only place it did not hail was the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were. (NIV)

The chapter closes explaining that the boys were sent home with a caravan of wagons and goods. Upon arriving the news of Joseph was shared with Jacob. His reaction is expected

Genesis 45:26

And they told him, saying, "Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart stood still, because he did not believe them.

III. Chapter 46 – Down to Egypt

Genesis 46:1

So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

Beersheba - Literally Well of the Oath or Well of the Seven

This is an important location within the land of Israel due to the abundance of water acquired through the digging of wells

Today Beersheba is the 7th largest city in Israel and considered to be the capital of the Negev

Beersheba is located in southern, central Israel

- Because of its location in the south it became known as a measurement from Dan to Beersheba

1 Samuel 3:20

And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the Lord.

Most references in the historical writings use Beersheba in this sense

- Under Joshua it became part of Judah's inheritance
- According to Gen 21:14, this is where Hagar fled when she was sent away with Ishmael from Abraham.
- According to Gen 21:30 -This is where Abraham purchased a well from Abimelech
- Gen 22:19 - This is where Abraham lived after Isaac had grown
- Gen 26:23- This is where The Lord appeared to Isaac and passed on the covenant
- Gen 28:10- This is where Isaac and the family were living when Jacob fled from Esau and made his way to Haran

Beersheba now becomes the first stop in Jacob's journey to Egypt. He probably stopped for many reasons not the least of which was his need to hear from God.

Heading to Egypt would be a frightening thing for Jacob for many reasons:

- He was old and the journey difficult
- He was leaving the home he had spent some many years settling
- He knew the history of Egypt in the stories of his grandfather and the consequent dangers

Jacob needed to hear from God and he went to Beersheba where he had met Him once before

Genesis 28:10

Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran.

It was nearby Beersheba where Jacob saw the ladder and was given the covenant of Abe

Genesis 46:3

So He said, "I *am* God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there.

This is the fulfillment of the prophetic dream Abraham had in Genesis 15

God promised to bring them to Egypt and after the sin of the Canaanites was complete to restore them to the land he promised to Abraham

Genesis 15:12-15

Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age.

It was prophesied that:

- After the death of Abraham
- The children of Israel would be taken to a foreign land where they would become slaves
- This would last 400 years
- Until the sin of the Amorites is complete
- Israel will be released with great possessions

Jacob's departure from Beersheba to Egypt was the starting gun for this prophecy. 430 years later Israel will be released from slavery en route back to Canaan

Genesis 46:5

Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives, in the carts which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.

After meeting with and hearing from God his fears were held in check by his desire to obey The Lord.

"Fear can come in but it will not stay because it will have to live with faith and hope" Ernie Johnson

46:8 -27

A list of family members is given, according to verse 27 there were a total of 70 people distributed between 12 families

Genesis 46:27

And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt *were* two persons. All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy.

The chapter closes recording the miraculous encounter between Jacob and his long lost son

They wept a good while before Joseph explained the rest of the plan. They would be presented to Pharaoh and explain that their occupation was to care for livestock.

They were to avoid the word shepherd because the Egyptians despise shepherds. Even then they had a bad rap because of their nomadic lifestyles

Genesis 46:34

that you shall say, "Your servants' occupation has been with livestock from our youth even till now, both we and also our fathers,' that you may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians."

This is still true today in a spiritual sense.

Shepherding the flock of God after the pattern described in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Acts 20, 1 Thes, 1 Pet 5 and elsewhere in scripture is looked down upon.

I wonder how many seminars about ministry reject these concepts entirely focusing instead upon leadership qualities developed by industry and government

Plurality of elders and congregational vote has more in common with business and government that will NT leadership