



Genesis 44

LOVE ACCORDING TO GOD

Judah's entire speech is motivated by the deepest empathy for his father, by a real understanding of what it means for the old man's very life to be bound up with that of the lad. He can even bring himself to quote sympathetically Jacob's typically extravagant statement that his wife bore him two sons—as though Leah were not also his wife and the other ten were not also his sons. Twenty-two years earlier, Judah engineered the selling of Joseph into slavery; now he is prepared to offer himself as a slave so that the other son of Rachel can be set free. Twenty-two years earlier, he stood with his brothers and silently watched when the bloodied tunic they had brought to Jacob sent their father into a fit of anguish; now he is willing to do anything in order not to have to see his father suffer that way again.

—Robert Alter

A The brother's envy and hatred toward Joseph (37:1-28)

B Jacob mourns the "death" of Joseph (37:29-36)

C Interlude: The birth of Judah's sons (38:1-30)

D Unexpected reversal: the righteous Joseph in prison (39:1-23)

E Joseph: the savior of Egypt (40:1-41:57)

F Journey of the brothers to Egypt (42:1-43:34)

G Joseph tests his brothers (44:1-34)

H Joseph reveals his identity (45:1-15)

G Joseph provides for his brothers (45:16-28)

F Journey of the family to Egypt (46:1-27)

E Joseph: the savior of Israel (46:28-47:21)

D Unexpected reversal: the younger blessed over older (48:1-22)

C Interlude: The blessing of Jacob's sons (49:1-28)

B Joseph mourns the death of Jacob (49:29-50:14)

A Joseph's forgiveness and grace toward his brothers (50:15-26)

THE ULTIMATE TEST (44:1-13)

• The Set-Up of the Test

Joseph's highly valued silver cup is placed in Benjamin's bag.

• The Purpose of the Test

To see how the brothers will respond when Benjamin is faced with an unjust sentence of slavery. Will they abandon him?

• The Multiple-Choice Options on the Test

- A. Go home cheerfully without Benjamin
- B. Go home sorrowfully without Benjamin
- C. Some go home; some stay with Benjamin
- D. All return back to Egypt with Benjamin

In the crucible of crisis the brothers respond with compassion and self-sacrifice. —Bruce K. Waltke

The test consists in turning back the wheel of time to the original crime against Joseph, with the circumstances reproduced and the ten placed against Benjamin.

—Meir Sternberg

Cup. Heb., *gabia*, "a goblet; large bowl." Probably large enough for lecanomancy, divining the future from observing liquids.

The repeated references to silver in 44:1-8 contribute to the twenty appearances of the term in chaps. 42-45, recalling for us the twenty pieces of silver for the purchase of Joseph. —Kenneth A. Mathews

They, no doubt, all thought that Benjamin had actually stolen the cup; and the probability of his guilt might be heightened by the circumstance of his having that very cup to drink from at dinner; for as he had the most honorable serving, so it is likely he had the most honorable cup to drink from.

—Adam Clarke (1762-1832)

- **The Result of the Test**

The test exposes the true change in the brothers' hearts.

From _____ to _____.

From _____ to _____.

THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE (44:14-34)

- Judah confesses their _____ guilt.
- Joseph offers them freedom _____ their brother.
- Judah intercedes on behalf of his brother.
 - He speaks with _____.
 - He speaks with _____.
 - He speaks with _____.
 - He speaks with _____.
 - He speaks with great _____.



Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. —John 15:13

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. —Romans 5:8

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. —1 John 3:16

Love desires the best for another despite the cost to myself.

That all the brothers suffered such distress is a telling sign of the new sense of unity they had developed. The brothers are of one accord without any grumbling or dissent.

—Kenneth Mathews

God has found out your servants' crime. *In this case, the double meaning expresses a buried psychological dimension in Judah's plea to Joseph. He speaks out of the consciousness of a real guilt incurred by him and his brothers more than two decades earlier.*

—Robert Alter

Judah acknowledged that all were equally involved. If Benjamin was guilty, so were they all.

—Henry Morris

Judah did not make his plea without many tears and sobs... Every word came from the very depths of his heart. I would give much to be able to pray before our Lord as well as Judah prays here before Joseph. For this is a perfect pattern of prayer, yes, of the feeling which should be in a prayer.

—Martin Luther

Judah so feels for his father that he begs to sacrifice himself for a brother more loved than himself.

—Meir Sternberg

There is a path that leads from the Joseph story right up to the very threshold of community; the healing of a breach is possible only when there is one who is ready to take the suffering upon oneself.

—Claus Westermann

Believers are never told to become one; we already are one and are expected to act like it.

—Joni Eareckson Tada