

Genesis 44:1-34 **Benjamin and the Silver Cup**

¹ And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack. ² Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money." So he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. ³ As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. ⁴ And when they had gone out of the city, and were not yet far off, Joseph said to his steward, "Get up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid evil for good?' ⁵ Is not this the one from which my lord drinks, and with which he indeed practices divination? You have done evil in so doing.' "

⁶ So he overtook them, and he spoke to them these same words. ⁷ And they said to him, "Why does my lord say these words? Far be it from us that your servants should do such a thing. ⁸ Look, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? ⁹ With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves." ¹⁰ And he said, "Now also let it be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and you shall be blameless." ¹¹ Then each man speedily let down his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. ¹² So he searched. He began with the oldest and left off with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. ¹³ Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.

¹⁴ So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he was still there; and they fell before him on the ground. ¹⁵ And Joseph said to them, "What deed is this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination?" ¹⁶ Then Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup was found." ¹⁷ But he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so; the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father."

¹⁸ Then Judah came near to him and said: "O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you are even like Pharaoh. ¹⁹ My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?'" ²⁰ "And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, who is young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.' ²¹ "Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.' ²² "And we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' ²³ "But you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.' ²⁴ "So it was, when we went up to your servant my father, that we told him the words of my lord. ²⁵ And our father said, 'Go back and buy us a little food.' ²⁶ "But we said, 'We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' ²⁷ "Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; ²⁸ and the one went out from me, and I said, "Surely he is torn to pieces"; and I have not seen him since. ²⁹ But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.' ³⁰ "Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, ³¹ it will happen, when he sees that the lad is not with us, that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. ³² For your servant became surety

for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.' ³³ "Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. ³⁴ For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?" NKJV

Facts revealed:

- ✧ Joseph commanded his steward to fill the men's sacks with all they could carry.
- ✧ Joseph had his silver cup placed in Benjamin's sack along with his money, and each man's money returned in the mouth of his sack.
- ✧ They were sent away at dawn.
- ✧ When they had left the city, Joseph sent his men to capture them and search for his silver cup which he claimed he used for divination.
- ✧ In innocence of conscience they denied that they had taken anything but had even brought back the original money with them and they had no motive to steal anything, and they said, "With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves."
- ✧ The steward 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."
- ✧ Starting with the eldest and down to the youngest, in the search they overlooked the money that had been placed in the mouth of their sacks, and the silver cup was found in the mouth of Benjamin's sack where Joseph had commanded it to be placed.
- ✧ They tore their cloths as a sign of mourning, loaded their donkeys, and returned to the city, even though the steward had said the rest were blameless. So they all were taking responsibility for the consequence and no one attempted to run away from it.
- ✧ Judah began his defense by acknowledging that God was holding them responsible for what they had done, so he placed all of them in the hands of Joseph to be his slaves.
- ✧ Joseph said, "Far be it from me that I should do so, but the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father."
- ✧ Judah had made himself surety to his father for the safe return of Benjamin, and so he is the one who pleaded the case for Benjamin, and volunteered to take his place if he would be allowed to return to his father, lest he should witness the agonizing death of Jacob because Benjamin did not arrive home from the trip.
- ✧ In his plea for Benjamin, Judah demonstrated that they had done everything in honor to Joseph's demand, that he had made himself surety for the safe return of Benjamin, and that the life of Jacob was tied up in Benjamin since his only brother from his mother was no longer with them, and that Jacob believed Joseph had been devoured by wild beasts.
- ✧ Thus Judah demonstrated his love for his father and honored his pledge to his father in self sacrifice to redeem his brother from the consequence of the situation at hand, this was an honorable act of selflessness.
- ✧ It was also Judah who had saved Joseph from death and had suggested they sell him into slavery in the first place. [[Genesis 37:26-27](#)]