

The Cup Of Testing

Genesis 44:1-34

Introduction

I The Accusation

- A. Joseph instructed his steward:
 - 1. To fill the men's sacks with food
 - 2. To return their silver in the mouths of their sacks
 - 3. To put Joseph's silver cup in Benjamin's sack - Lev 19:26
 - 4. To send them on their way
 - 5. To pursue them and accuse them of stealing - Prov 17:13
- B. The brothers responded to the accusation:
 - 1. They responded with surprise
 - 2. They responded with logic - Ex 20:15; Lev 19:11
 - 3. They responded with an oath - Eccl 5:2; James 1:19-20
 - a. "The one who stole it will die"
 - b. "The rest of us will be slaves"
- C. The steward recommended a more judicious sentence
 - 1. Whoever had the cup would become a slave - Ezek 18:20

II The Incriminating Evidence

- A. Each man lowered his sack
- B. The steward searched each man's sack - Heb 4:13; Num 32:23
 - 1. Beginning with the oldest to youngest
- C. The cup was found in Benjamin's sack

III The Admission Of Guilt

- A. They tore their clothes - Gen 37:29
- B. They returned to the city
- C. They threw themselves before Joseph - Prov 28:13
- D. They resigned themselves to destiny
 - 1. "How can we prove our innocence?"
 - 2. "God has uncovered our guilt" - Gen 42:21; Ps 38:1-4
 - 3. "We are your slaves"
 - a. Joseph only wanted Benjamin

IV The Substitutionary Offer

- A. Judah appealed to Joseph - Gen 49:8-10

B. Judah recounted the events

C. Judah explained the consequences

- 1. He communicated that Jacob would die - Gen 37:31-33
- 2. He would be held personally responsible - Gen 43:8-10

D. Judah offered himself as a substitute for Benjamin

- 1. He volunteered to take Benjamin's place - 1 Pet 3:18
- 2. He petitioned Joseph for Benjamin's return
- 3. He pled for mercy for the sake of Jacob

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Take some time this week to consider the following:

- 1. Share a funny event from your childhood that you kept hidden from your parents until you were an adult. What was the response of your parents when you finally told them?
- 2. What is your "silver cup" – some material thing that you highly prize? Do you possess it or does it possess you? How is the Holy Spirit speaking to you? What should you do?
- 3. Compare the attitudes and actions of the brothers of Genesis 37 with their attitudes and actions here in Genesis 44. What character changes have taken place? What positive spiritual changes have occurred in your life over the last 5 years?
- 4. Judah's remarkable offer to lay down his life for his brother, Benjamin, indicates a radical change from a carnal heart to a Christ-like heart. Read 1 Jn 3:16. Is there a situation in your life where you could put into practice the selflessness of Judah?
- 5. How are you like the various characters in this story?
 - Jacob: Living in fear of what "might" happen in the future?
 - Joseph: Living with the pain of unreconciled offense?
 - The brothers: Living with guilt over an unconfessed sin?What does the Holy Spirit want you to do? Are you willing?
- 6. Take a few minutes to thank God for the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ (who was entirely innocent) for your sins that you might be reconciled to your Heavenly Father.

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

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