



# Jacob's Sons Reunited

**GENESIS 43, 44 & 45**

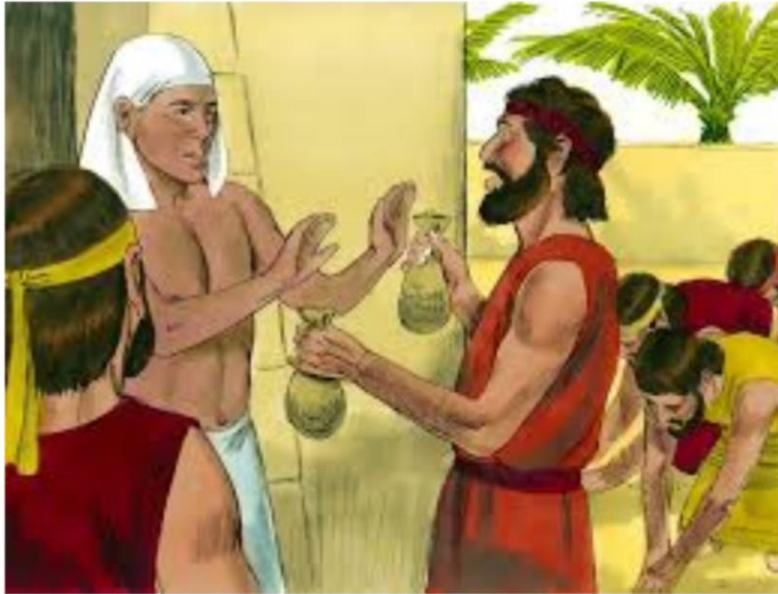
The famine was still very great in all the land. When Jacob's house had eaten almost all the grain they brought from Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Go back to Egypt and buy us more food." Judah reminded him, "The governor warned us not to come back unless our little brother is with us. If you let him come with us, we will go to buy more food but if you will not send him, we will not go."

Israel said, "Why did you tell the governor you had another brother?" They said, "Because the governor asked us about ourselves and our family. He asked us if our father was still alive? If we had another brother? We only answered the questions he asked. How could we possibly have known that he would ask us to bring our brother to him?"

Judah said, "Please send Benjamin with me. We need more food so we all can live. I will be his security. If I do not bring him back and set him before you, then I will bear the blame forever. If we had not waited so long, we would have returned home a second time by now."

Israel said, "We don't have a choice. Take Benjamin with you. Take some of the best fruits we have and make them gifts to the governor. Also give him a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. Take double the money you took last time you went. Also take back the money that was found in your sacks. Perhaps it was an oversight on their part. I pray that God Almighty give you mercy before the governor, so that he may release Simeon and Benjamin back to me. If I am left mourning, I am left mourning!"





So the brothers took the gifts and Benjamin, and double the amount of money back to Egypt. When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he told the steward of his house, "Take these men to my home and slaughter an animal and make ready a meal. These men will dine with me at noon." The steward did as Joseph ordered. He brought the men to Joseph's house.

The brothers were afraid because they did not understand why they were taken to Joseph's house. They said to each other, "It is because of the money that was returned in our sacks the first time. That must be why we have been brought here. The governor must want to make a case against us and seize us and take us as slaves."

When they came close to the steward, they said, "Sir, we came down the first time to buy food but when we got home, we opened our sacks and each of us found the amount of money we had paid was in our sacks. We have brought it back with us. We have also brought money to buy more food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks." The steward said, "Peace be with you. Do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks. I had your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

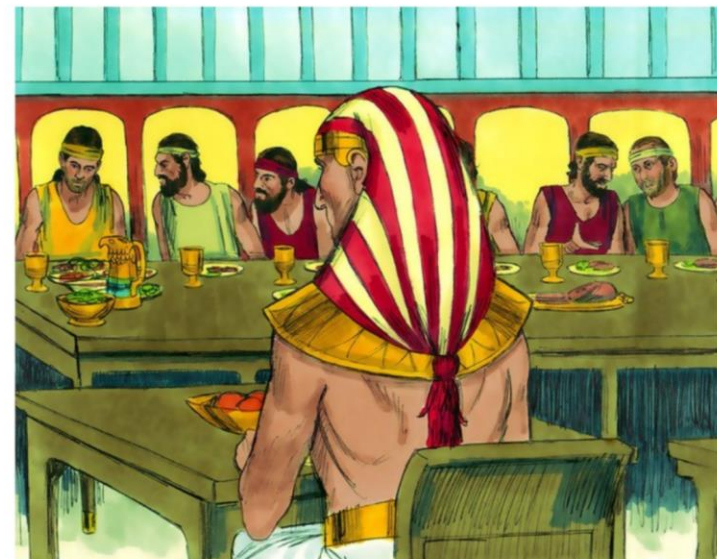
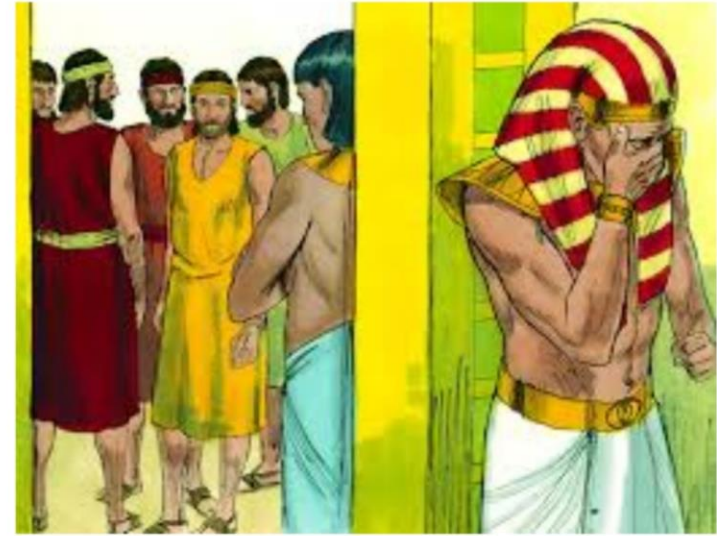


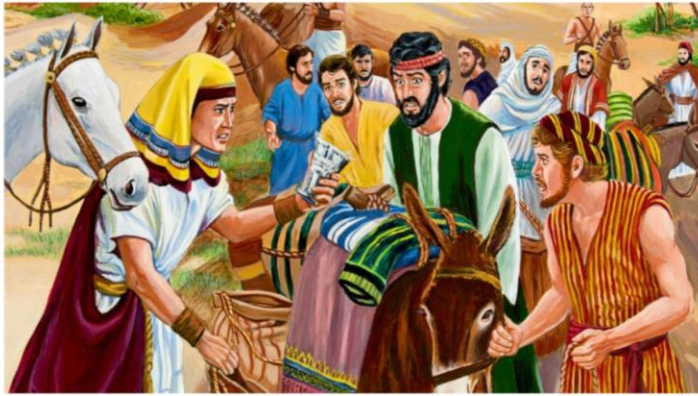
The steward brought the brothers into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet. The steward also fed their donkeys. Then the brothers prepared the gifts for Joseph. They heard that they would eat lunch with him there. When Joseph came home, they gave him the gifts Israel sent. They bowed down before him. Then Joseph asked them about their well-being, and asked, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" The brothers answered, "Our father is in good health. He is still alive." They bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves before Joseph.

Joseph saw his younger brother, Benjamin, his mother's son, and he asked, "Is this your younger brother who you told me about?" Not waiting for an answer, Joseph spoke to Benjamin saying "God be gracious to you my son."

Joseph's heart ached for his brother. So much so that Joseph had to hurry to find somewhere to cry. Joseph went to his chambers and cried there. Then he washed his face and came back out. He calmed himself and told his servants to serve lunch.

So they set Joseph a place by himself, and the brothers by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews. It was considered a disgrace for the Egyptians to eat with Hebrews. The brothers were surprised that they were seated according to their tradition. They sat the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth. Then they were served before Joseph. Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of the other brothers. So they all ate, drank and had a great time until evening. They did not realize this was "the peace before the storm."





That evening, Joseph said to the steward, "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. Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money." The steward did as Joseph said. As soon as the morning came, the men were sent on their way. When they had gone out of the city, but were not too far off, Joseph told his steward, "Get up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid evil for good? One of you has taken the governor's favorite cup, the one from which he drinks and practices divinations. You have done evil.'"



So the steward overtook them and he spoke to them the words Joseph spoke. The brothers asked him, "Why do you say such a thing? We would not ever do anything like that. Look, we even brought you back the money we found in our sacks. Why would we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? He was kind to us. With whomever you find the cup, let him die, and the rest of us will be slaves of the governor."

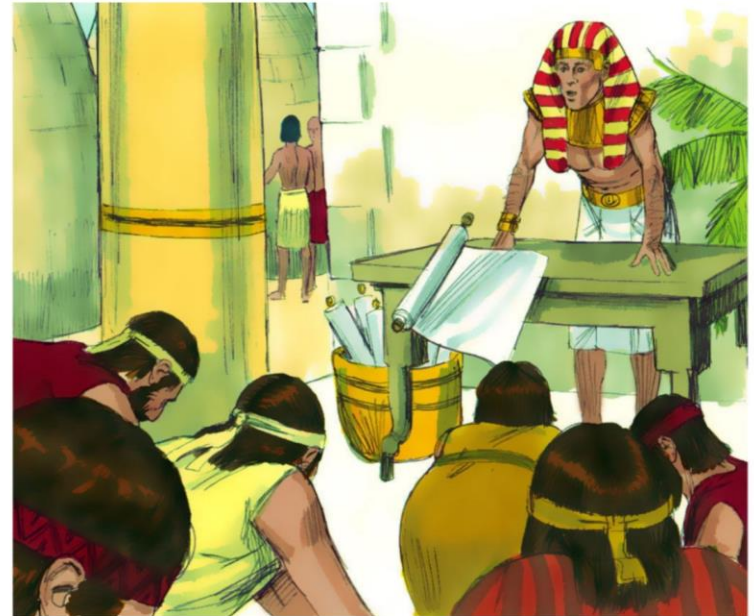
The steward said, "Let it be according to your words. He with whom the cup is found shall be my lord's slave and the rest of you shall be blameless." Then each man let down his sack to the ground and each opened his sack. The steward began to search each one. He began with the oldest and left off with the youngest. The cup was found in Benjamin's sack. The brothers were shocked! They tore their clothes because of the impact this would have on Benjamin... and Israel. Each of the brothers loaded his donkey and returned to the city.



Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he was still there. They fell before him on the ground. Joseph said to them, "What have you done? Did you not know that I can practice divination?" Judah said, "What shall we say to you? How do we clear ourselves? God has found out our crime. Here we are, your slaves, both we and our youngest brother because the cup was found with him." Joseph said, "I will not keep all of you as slaves. Only the man in whose hand the cup was found. As for the rest of you, go in peace to your father."

Judah came near to him and said, "Please let me speak so you really hear me. I'm not trying to anger you. You are almost as powerful as Pharaoh. When you asked about my father and my youngest brother, we told you that our father is an old man. Benjamin is the child of his old age. His older brother is dead. Benjamin is the only one of his mother's children that is left. His father loves him very much. You said to me, 'Bring your youngest brother to me so that I can see him with my own eyes.' We told you that the lad could not leave his father because if anything happened to him, our father would die. You insisted we bring him to you or we could not come to buy more food and we would leave a brother in prison. We told our father exactly what you said to us. It hurt him to allow Benjamin to accompany us. He did so only so we could buy food for our family and to get Simeon back. My father believes Benjamin's brother was torn apart by a wild beast. If the lad does not return to our father, he WILL die. I promised our father that I would keep the lad safe. I couldn't live the rest of my life knowing that I caused my father's death. I beg you, please take me as slave instead of the lad. Let my brothers return home with the food."

Joseph felt his brothers' pain. He could not contain himself any longer. He cried out to his steward, "Make everyone leave me with these men!" When all the servants were gone, Joseph told his brothers who he was. He cried out so loudly that the servants heard it.

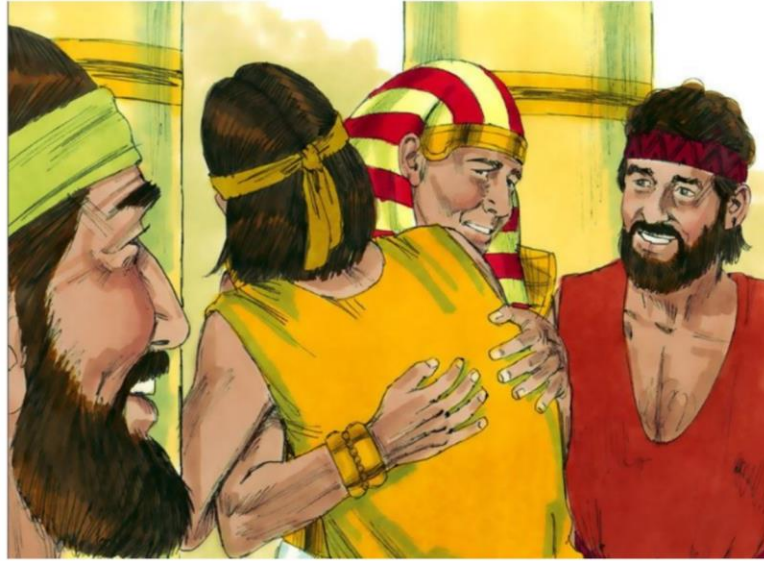


Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Does my father really still live?" His brothers could not answer him. They were all shocked by what they heard. Joseph said, "Please come near me. Look closely." When they did, he said, "I am Joseph, your brother, the one you sold to Egypt. Don't be sad or angry with yourselves because you sold me. I realize now that God sent me here ahead of you to save your lives. We are two years into the famine and there are still five years remaining. There will be no growing of food for the next five years. So I know it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me an advisor to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt."

Joseph said, "Hurry and go to my father. Tell him that God has made me governor of all Egypt. Tell him to come to me quickly. All of you will live in the land of Goshen, and you will be near me. I will see you through this famine. Now that you realize that it is really me, hurry and bring my father here." First, Joseph grabbed his brother Benjamin, hugged him and began to cry. Then he hugged and cried with the rest of his brothers. He spent a long time talking to them all.

Pharaoh was told "Joseph's brothers have come." Pharaoh and his servants were all very happy for Joseph. Pharaoh sent for Joseph and told him, "Tell your brothers to load their animals and go to bring your father and his households to me. I will give them the best of the land of Egypt, and they will eat the fat of the land. Tell them to take carts for their little ones and their wives and your father. Tell them not to be concerned about anything they leave behind because the best of all the land of Egypt is theirs."





Joseph's brothers did as they were told. Joseph gave them carts according to the command of Pharaoh. He also gave them provisions and clothes for the journey. He gave Benjamin money and five changes of clothes. Among the things he sent to his father were ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey. So Joseph saw his brothers off as they departed from Egypt. He wished them a safe and speedy trip.

When the brothers reached the land of Canaan, they told Jacob their father, "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. But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. Then Israel said, "It is enough that Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."