

## August 20, 2017 - Gen. 43:14–44:17 - Joseph's cup Found in Benjamin's bag

**Torah Reading: Genesis 43:14–44:17 - Joseph's cup Found in Benjamin's bag**

**Psalm 36**

**Haftorah - (1) Jeremiah 42:12-20 + 43:12**

**(2) 1 Kings 8:50-58 + 66**

**(3) Isaiah 49:14-23**

**Genesis 43:29** - "And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, 'God be gracious unto thee, my son.'"

Speaking to Benjamin unleashes a flood of emotions in Joseph.

Genesis 43:30 - "And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there."

### Jesus wept

Isaiah prophetically speaks of the Lord Jesus as "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (**Isaiah 53:3**) At the death of Lazarus, **John 11:35** poignantly states: "Jesus wept."

"When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping who came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have you laid him?" (**John 11:33-34**).

**Hebrews 2:17** - "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

Later, he would weep over Jerusalem (**Luke 19:41**)

**Hebrews 5:7** (NET) - "During his earthly life Christ offered both requests and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death and he was heard because of his devotion."

The Talmud in Tractate Sotah (36b) expands on this first meeting of Joseph and Benjamin:

He (Joseph) asked him (Benjamin), "Have you a brother from your mother?" He replied, "I had a brother, but I do not know where he is." "Have you any sons?" He replied, "I have ten." He asked, "And what are their names?" He replied, "Bela and Becher, etc." He asked, "What is the significance of these names?" He replied, "All of them are connected to my brother and the troubles that befell him.

- [My first son was named] Bela because he (my brother) was swallowed up (נִבְלַע)

among the nations.

- [My second son was named] Becher because he (my brother) was the firstborn (בְּכוֹר) of my mother.
- [My third son was named] Ashbel because God put him (my brother) into captivity (שָׁבְאוֹ אֶל).
- [My fourth son was named] Gera because he (my brother) was a stranger (נִתְגִּיר) in a lodging place.
- And [my fifth son was named] Na'aman because he (my brother) was very pleasant [to look upon] (נָעִים).
- [My sixth and seventh sons were named] Ehi and Rosh because he was my brother (אָחִי), and he was my superior (רֵאשִׁי).
- [My eighth son was named] Muppim because he (my brother) learned from the mouth of (מִפִּי) my father.
- [My ninth son was named] Huppim because he (my brother) did not see my wedding (חֻפּוֹתִי), neither did I see his wedding (חֻפּוֹתוֹ).
- And [my tenth son was named] Ard because he (my brother) descended (יָרַד) among the nations.”

**Genesis 43:32** - “And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians.”

(Targum Onkelos explains why: The Egyptians worship a sheep or ram-headed god, and the Hebrews, as shepherds, eat sheep.)

**Genesis 43:33** - “And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marveled one at another.”

[from Gen. Rabbah 93:7] - He [Joseph] knocked his goblet and announced, “Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, sons of one mother, sit in this order, which is the order of your births,” and so [did he order] all of them. When he reached Benjamin, he said, “This one has no mother, and I have no mother. Let him sit beside me.”

**Genesis 43:34** - “And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.”

His portion with his brothers, Joseph's portion, and those of Asenath, Manasseh, and Ephraim. — [from Gen. Rabbah 92:5, Targum Jonathan]

Joseph secretly places a silver goblet in Benjamin's grain sack. Joseph send his overseer to stop hem, find the goblet and bring them back.

**Genesis 44:15** - “And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot

ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?"

**Divination** - Joseph's overseer had said he used the cup for divination in verse 5. Divining by cups was a common custom in Egypt (Herodotus ii. 83) Joseph was renown for his dream interpretations for Pharaoh. But the Targum Onkelos isn't comfortable with Joseph being linked to divination, a pagan practice (Deuteronomy 18:10), so he has it: "Don't you know that a person as esteemed as I knows how to test and ascertain through knowledge, reason, and discernment that you stole the goblet?"

**Genesis 44:16** - "And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found."

**"God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants"**

We know that we have not sinned, but this has come from the Omnipresent to bring this upon us. The Creditor has found a place to collect His debt. — [from Gen. Rabbah 92:9]

**Genesis 44:17** - "And he (Joseph) said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father."

The remarkable plea by Judah to Joseph that follows (next week) is interpreted in rabbinical thought as confessing all of the brothers' previous sins, including their betrayal of Joseph.

## Redemption

Joseph was sold into Egyptian bondage for twenty shekels of silver. Supposedly, 20 silver pieces would have bought him back out of slavery.

Silver is often a type of "redemption" in the Bible, looking toward Jesus' redemption through his blood. In the trespass offering (**Lev. 5:15-16**), the silver sockets that kept the Tabernacle boards from touching the ground (**Ex. 26:19-32**), the "ransom" redemption price for newborn children (**Num. 18:15-16**), the price of a slave (and of Jesus's betrayal, **Matthew 26:15**) was in pieces of silver. It was literally "blood money."

The silver was a type, a foreshadowing of Jesus' redemptive blood shed on the cross.

**1 Peter 1:18** - "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;"

**Ephesians 1:7** - "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;"

The brothers were innocent of the sin of stealing the cup.

Yet, Judah confesses to Joseph, “How shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants.” Judah knew they were all guilty of far greater sins, most prominently the betrayal of Joseph.

The silver cup is linked to “divination,” a hint, perhaps, that it represents a supernatural look into the hearts of the brothers. Benjamin was most innocent of all, yet he still needed to be purged of all self-confidence and brought low (as we all do).

In the same way, we might take pride because we are innocent of some sin or another, yet forget that we are guilty of far greater ones.

When God “discovers” the silver cup in our “bag” it reveals that we are foolishly trusting in our own redemption - i.e. any of a number of things, pursuits, ideas that we think give us life.

Our consciousness of that “discovery” seems like a shocking, terrible twist of fate. We feel only the impending doom. But as with Judah, it can be an opportunity for full confession and repentance that will result in forgiveness, and faith in His redemption alone.