

Gen. 44:1 And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks *with* food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth.

Gen. 44:2 And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.

Gen. 44:3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses.

Joseph then instructed the steward to fill the men's sacks with as much food as they could carry and to put their silver back in their sacks. He was also to put Joseph's silver cup in Benjamin's bag with his bag of silver. The men were then sent on their way with their donkeys at daybreak. (Joseph was human after all. He knew that God was in control, but he gave in to the temptation to cause his brothers a bit of suffering.)

Gen. 44:4 And when they were gone out of the city, *and not yet far off*, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?

Gen. 44:5 Is not this *it* in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.

Gen. 44:6 And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words.

Gen. 44:7 And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing:

Gen. 44:8 Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?

Gen. 44:9 With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.

After they had gone a little way, the steward was sent by Joseph to ask them why they had repaid good for evil and stolen his master's silver cup which he drinks from and uses for divination. The brothers told him that they would never do such a thing. Didn't he remember that they had brought back the silver from the first trip. They assured him that if any of them had the cup, the guilty person would die and the others would become their slaves.

Gen. 44:10 And he said, Now also *let it be* according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless.

Gen. 44:11 Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack.

Gen. 44:12 And he searched, *and* began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

Gen. 44:13 Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.

The steward then agreed that whoever had the cup would become his slave, and the rest would be free of blame. They all lowered their sacks to the ground and opened them. The steward proceeded with his search—from oldest to youngest—and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. They were all distraught and tore their clothes. Then they loaded their donkeys and returned to the city.

Gen. 44:14 And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he *was* yet there: and they fell before him on the ground.

Gen. 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?

Gen. 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.

Joseph was still at home when Judah and his brothers came and threw themselves to the ground before him. Joseph mocked them for thinking that they could get away with this theft since he had the power of divination. Judah couldn't find the words he needed. He knew they could not prove their innocence. He just figured God had fully uncovered their guilt. They were now ALL his slaves.

Gen. 44:17 And he 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.

Joseph was indignant! He assured them that only the one found with the cup would be his slave. The rest could go back to their father in peace.

Gen. 44:18 Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou *art* even as Pharaoh.

Gen. 44:19 My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother?

Gen. 44:20 And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.

Gen. 44:21 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him.

Gen. 44:22 And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for *if* he should leave his father, *his father* would die.

Gen. 44:23 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.

Gen. 44:24 And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.

Gen. 44:25 And our father said, Go again, *and* buy us a little food.

Gen. 44:26 And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother *be* with us.

Gen. 44:27 And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two *sons*:

Gen. 44:28 And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since:

Gen. 44:29 And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

Gen. 44:30 Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad *be* not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life;

Gen. 44:31 It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad *is not with us*, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave.

Gen. 44:32 For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever.

Gen. 44:33 Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.

Gen. 44:34 For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad *be not with me*? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

Judah spoke up and begged Joseph not to be offended; he asserted his knowledge that he knew that talking to Joseph was like talking to the Pharaoh. He reminded Joseph of their conversation on their first trip (which is now given in a little more detail). They had explained why Benjamin was so special to his father and how hard it had been to convince his father to let Benjamin come. Their father finally agreed to let him go after reminding them that he was the only son of Rachel (his beloved) left alive. If they returned without Benjamin, they were sure their father would die of misery. Judah had promised his father that he would ensure the boy's safe return. Would he please let Judah take the boy's place since he could not bear to face his father without him.

I'm sure they were remembering how inconsolable Jacob was when he knew he had lost Joseph. They knew they were totally to blame for his grief. They had never really considered the effect on Jacob when they sold Joseph. They were only thinking of themselves. At least they had grown to the point of caring about their father first this time. Remember, it had been Judah's idea to sell Joseph; now it was Judah who was offering himself to spare his father.