

# Genesis 44

## THE FINAL TEST

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## Opening Thoughts

- \* Chapter 44 completes the brothers testing
- \* What is the purpose of this final test?
  - ◆ To “definitively” expose the condition of the brothers hearts, namely —
  - ◆ Will they sacrifice the one or be sacrificial, and ...
  - ◆ Will they fully confess and repent of their sin

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## Opening Thoughts

- \* As we will see — God, via Joseph, will set up the perfect test ...
- \* He will thoroughly “corner” the brothers to fully reveal their hearts
- \* But that is not all ...

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## Opening Thoughts

- \* From a “bigger picture” perspective, what has God been orchestrating?
  - ◆ Fulfillment of Gen 15:12ff [\[READ\]](#)
- \* In addition to “getting them to Egypt” there must be family solidarity from the outset, otherwise ...

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## Opening Thoughts

- \* They might “drift” into the Egyptian culture as they have done in Canaan
- \* [Side Note](#): While we are urged to persevere — it is interesting to see how God perseveres in His purposes

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## Structure

- \* The Plot — vv. 1-5
- \* The Proceedings — vv. 6-13
- \* The Prosecution — vv. 14-17
- \* The Plea — vv. 18-34

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## The Plot

- \* As is typical in Genesis, the readers, are “clued-in” from the outset
- \* In vv. 1-2, Joseph “sets a trap”
- \* **What does he do?**
  - ◆ OK — too easy a question ...

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## The Plot

- ◆ He again returns their money, and ...
- ◆ He places his “cup” in Benjamin’s sack
- \* Note the steward’s complicity in the plot — this will be important later
- \* At first light, the brothers are “sent off”

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## The Plot

- \* One thing troubles me at the outset — anything come to mind for you?
- ◆ Why don't the brothers check their sacks as they set out!!
- ◆ Of course it is "divinely intended" — But what other options come to mind?

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## The Plot

- ◆ Maybe they were just hungover, or ...
- ◆ More likely they had been lulled into false confidence from the prior day's treatment
- \* I suspect Joseph knew this — thus this final test!

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## The Plot

- \* No sooner than they've left the city limits, Joseph "springs the trap"
- \* He arms his steward with 2 questions
  - ◆ Why do you return evil for good?
  - ◆ Why have you stolen "my cup?"

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## The Plot

- \* Does Joseph's use of divination seem strange?
  - ◆ I'd say yes — so why does he say this?
  - ◆ I think to maintain his cover
- \* Water divination was a known Egyptian practice

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## The Plot

- \* It involved dropping contaminants into pure clear water and “reading the results”
- \* What is interesting about the charge?
  - ◆ NO MENTION OF THE MONEY!!

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## The Proceedings

- \* Move along in 5-quick stages
  - ◆ The Pursuit - v. 6
  - ◆ The Protest - vv. 7-8
  - ◆ The Proclamation - v. 9
  - ◆ The Penalty - v. 10

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## The Proceedings

- ◆ The Perpetrator - vv. 11-13
- \* As instructed, the steward sets out and confronts the brothers
- \* How do the brothers go about protesting the charge in vv. 7-8?

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## The Proceedings

- ◆ First incredulity in v. 7 — “Far be it from us to do such a thing!” ...
- ◆ Which I believe is probably genuine
- ◆ Second in v. 8 they offer a logical defense
- \* What do they do next?

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## The Proceedings

- \* They make a rash vow! — Can you think of another OT example?
  - ◆ Jephthah — Judges 11:29ff [\[READ\]](#)
- \* Now, from here it starts to get really interesting ...

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## The Proceedings

- \* Verse 10 seem to be contradictory — what is happening?
  - ◆ A little unfair question — tricky Hebrew
  - ◆ An understandable paraphrase would be ...
  - ◆ Yes, as you say, there will be consequences

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## The Proceedings

- \* Which must have felt like a dagger in their hearts
- \* Now what is interesting about their collective response(s) in v. 13?
- ◆ Primarily genuine grief — “they tore their clothes”

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## The Proceedings

- \* But what else about their response?
- ◆ Total resignation: No push back at all — even from Benjamin!
- ◆ And — family “solidarity” ...
- \* And one more thing — What?

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## The Proceedings

- ◆ They neither blame, nor question Benjamin
- \* All of which suggests what?
- ◆ The beginnings of the fruit of real heart change and repentance from the “bros”

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## The Prosecution

- \* Now the brothers “appear in court”
- \* In today’s terminology — How would we express their action upon appearing before the judge?
- ◆ He throws himself “on the mercy of the court” — offering no defense for their actions

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## The Prosecution

- \* Joseph begins with two questions
  - ◆ What have you DONE!
  - ◆ Don't you know I can practice divination?
- \* The first question is straight forward
- \* What is the point of the second one?

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## The Prosecution

- \* I don't think Joseph is saying he actually practices divination — Why?
  - ◆ Because he seems to have a pretty good "pipeline" to God already!
- \* Rather — again concealing himself he is saying ...

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## The Prosecution

- \* Do you actually think you could get away with this with a man who can “divine” things like myself!
- \* In other words, it is an emphatic question
- \* What does Judah’s response in v. 16 tell us about his heart condition?

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## The Prosecution

- ◆ He has FINALLY been brought to and IS at the “end of himself”
- ◆ Note the three questions of complete resignation ...
- ◆ In the vernacular of today he says — “I got nothin’!”

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## The Prosecution

- \* Judah is demonstrating genuine penitence vs. remorse, marked by ...
- \* True sorrow and contrition over his sin
- \* What iniquity does he refer to in v. 16?

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## The Prosecution

- ◆ I believe he is referring to their prior sin against Joseph
- \* What are my textual clues?
- ◆ First — Note again that God (“The God” in the Hebrew) has found them out ... God certainly was not needed to expose their present guilt!

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## The Prosecution

- ◆ Second, note the plural — “[Your servants](#)”  
... including all of the prior perpetrators
- ◆ Though likely at this point excluding Benjamin — **How can I assert this?**
- ◆ Because of the final clause in v. 16 — note what it says ...

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## The Prosecution

- \* “[We and the one](#)” — A very specific grammatical construction in the Hebrew
- ◆ Judah distinguishes the “10” from Benjamin
- ◆ The “10” will become slaves for their prior iniquity against Joseph, while ...
- ◆ Benjamin will be accountable for the “present” iniquity — [the cup](#)

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## The Prosecution

- \* Reminding us of an important implication
- 📖 There is none righteous — not even one ...  
Ps 14:1-3 [READ] and Rom 3:10-12 [READ]
- \* NOW — what is Joseph doing in v. 17?
  - ◆ Firstly honoring the penalty set forth in v. 10 —  
But I think something more ... What?

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## The Prosecution

- \* He is tightening the noose — How?
  - ◆ By giving them a chance to throw Benjamin under the bus ...
  - ◆ The conditions for betrayal are right before them!
- \* Joseph knows where Judah stands — but not yet definitively where the others stand

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## The Prosecution

- \* Divinely orchestrated for sure — and brilliantly executed by Joseph!
- \* Verse 17 is the hinge of the chapter
- \* Now we proceed to Judah's "impassioned plea" in vv. 18-34

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## The Plea

- \* Verses 18-34 are the "heart" of the chapter
- \* They capture a dramatic and extended plea voiced by Judah — an appeal for mercy made to the "supreme ruler" of the land
- \* What "precipitates" the appeal?

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## The Plea

- \* His father's love for Benjamin and the impact of his incarceration ...
  - ◆ In effect — Don't "hasten" my father's death
- \* **What do we see in the appeal?**
  - ◆ Judah's love for his father and genuine care for the needs of someone other than himself!

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## The Plea

- \* **What is absent in the appeal?**
  - ◆ Any claims of innocence or attempt to escape punishment
- \* The plea is a masterful and heartfelt oratory, proceeding in five-stages ...
  - ◆ Permission to speak: [An appeal for favor](#) - v. 18

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## The Plea

- ◆ He has pledged his life — and eternal damnation — as “surety” for Benjamin’s return
- \* Which leads us to the final two verses ...

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## The Plea

- \* Body of the plea complete, Judah concludes with his appeal in vv. 33-34
- \* **What theological principle does it foreshadow?**
- ◆ Vicarious penal substitution — the offering of one for the offense of another!

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