

Genesis

Creation, Covenants, All Grace – study 29



REDEEMER REVEALED

REFINED BY FIRE (43:26 - 44:13)

43:26-34 *Why are the brothers doubly astonished?*

44:1-13 Is this torment **REALLY necessary?**

(1) But the question arises, how does Joseph allow himself to resort to such an expedient? For besides that it was sinful for him to profess augury; he vainly and unworthily transfers to imaginary deities the honour due only to divine grace. On a former occasion, he had declared that he was unable to interpret dreams, except so far as God should suggest the truth to him; now he obscures this entire ascription of praise to divine grace; and what is worst, by boasting that he is a magician rather than proclaiming himself a prophet of God, he impiously profanes the gift of the Holy Spirit. Doubtless, in this dissimulation, it is not to be denied, that he sinned grievously. -- **John Calvin**, *Genesis* Vol.2 p.368

(2) Some readers blame him [Joseph] on this account. A foreign writer says, 'He is hard-hearted enough systematically and in cold blood to punish them for the suffering they inflicted on him,' and 'to put them to the torture,' when he should have instantly fallen upon their necks and kissed them. If Joseph had been a weaker man he would have done as is here suggested. If his amiability had been untempered by principle, he would have done it. But Joseph's conscience was as sound as his heart was tender. He had serious work to do before he indulged in emotion. He avoided the sentiment which blurs the distinctions between good and evil. Forgiveness was not his only duty to his brothers. He had to test the reality of their repentance, to drive the arrow of conviction deeper into their hearts, keeping his own lips sealed till the right moment came for divulging to them his secret. He could endure the pain of

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seeing them suffer, in the hope that suffering would bring them to a better mind. Providence was making him their judge, as nature had made him their brother, and he loved them with that exacting love which has often been an erring brother's salvation. He would rejoice to have them reconciled to himself, but still more to see them reconciled to God. Love does not always caress and soothe and say kind things. Sometimes it scourges. Its mingled goodness and severity are the reflection of the perfect love of God, who leads His children along rough ways to repentance, that He may at last have the joy of giving them the kiss of forgiveness. -- **James Strahan**, *Hebrew Ideals in Genesis* p.311

CONTRITION and CONFESSION (44:14-34)

44:14-17 How does Judah's confession (v.16) reveal he has changed? (Joseph's generosity is calculated to test the genuineness of this change)

(3) Judah's plea to Joseph was in marked contrast to his earlier bitterness (37:26,27). As spokesman for the brothers, he interceded before this unknown vizier. The discovery of the incriminating evidence had made this ruler's mercy the brothers' only hope. It is possible that Joseph's schemes had been intended to probe his brothers' attitude toward each other and toward their father. He also wanted to test the sincerity of their repentance. Were they willing to break the heart of Jacob again as they had many years ago when they showed him Joseph's bloodstained robe? -- **J.J. Davis**, *Paradise to Prison* p.282

(4) The narrative shows great moral change in all the brothers, but especially in Judah. At birth, he was named Judah, *Praise* (29:35). His early life showed no evidence of living up to his name; nor was there any indication that he would be the tribal ancestor of the Messiah. But God used the vicissitudes of life to transform him. Even though it appeared that Benjamin was a thief, Judah lived up to his name and revealed God's transforming power. *Lord, make us worthy of our new name*. -- **Donald Grey Barnhouse**, *Genesis* Vol.2 p.200

Judah – "God used the vicissitudes of life to transform him" ...
Lord, make us worthy of our new name

(5) Joseph's fear of the LORD, the holy reverence which is the beginning of wisdom, is a noble, beautiful, honourable sentiment, issuing in a good conscience and a tranquil mind. His brothers' fear of God is an anxious, restless, troubled feeling, issuing in the pain of remorse and the dread of punishment. Their trials turn their eyes into their very souls. Memory does its stern work in them. Their past life rises before them with awful clearness. They confess that they are verily guilty (literally 'guilty, guilty') concerning their brother. Joseph profoundly pities them as they stand before him with the abject mien of culprits. It is their religion -- true religion as far as it goes -- that terrifies them; their belief in God that alarms and torments them. Their imagination conjures up spectral forms and voices out of the past. -- **J. Strahan**, *op. cit.*, p.313

44:18-34 What is the definition of contrition? (Isa. 66:2)

(6) Truly has Luther said: "What would I not give to be able to pray before the Lord as Judah here interceded for Benjamin, for it is a perfect model of prayer, nay, of the strong feeling which must underlie all prayer." And, blessed be God, One has so interceded for us, Who has given Himself as our surety, and become a bondsman for us. -- **Alfred Edersheim, Bible History: Genesis** p.171

(7) Joseph has hitherto suppressed his feelings, for the sake of carrying out the plan of simulation which he has devised. His object is now attained. He has convinced himself that Benjamin is still alive, and has not become like himself a victim of his brothers' envy. He has taken a deep look into his brothers' hearts and has found them changed for the better. He has heard them, and above all Reuben (the comparatively least guilty, yet still as an accessory not innocent),

repent and bewail the crime committed against himself, which is now visited upon them. Their tender affection for their aged father, and their loyalty towards the only remaining son of Rachel, have been made manifest by Judah's speech. They cannot but regard Benjamin as the guilty one, who has by theft plunged them all into misery; but they do not load him with reproaches, they do not regard themselves as released from the promise given concerning him to their father, they take the blame upon themselves as for their common act. Their conduct under this last test is the clear reflection of their wakeful conscience, of their converted heart. -- **F. Delitzsch, Genesis** p.328



MARTIN LUTHER

history of the past. He distinctly declared to them, "It was not you that sent me hither, but God." This capacity for ignoring secondary causes is one of the surest signs of greatness, but it is only possible to men of faith. Yet how great it enables a man to be! Recognising the Divine over-ruling, Joseph was able to forget the action of his brethren, when they sold him into slavery. The same power was manifest long after in Paul who, speaking after the manner of men, was a prisoner of Nero, never referred to himself as such, but always described himself as a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Superlatively and finally was this manifested in Christ, when He said to Pilate, "Thou wouldest have no power against Me, except it were given thee from above." It is a consciousness only possible in the life of habitual communion. The condition of such communion is purity of heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," overruling all circumstances. -- **G. C. Morgan, The Analysed Bible: Genesis** p.262

45:9-28 Is Joseph (and his antitype) too good to be true?

(11) On the day that the heavenly Joseph, the Lord Jesus Christ, reconciles the tribes of Israel to Himself, the fame thereof will be known to all the Gentiles. Although men will not believe it, there can be no peace except through God's Man returning and restoring God's people the Jews to governmental authority. Treaties, agreements, conferences, councils, leagues of nations, general assemblies of United Nations or any other human device will never alleviate the miseries of the world. Only the coming of the Son of God will bring peace, and He has sworn that He will take His brethren to His heart and reign through them. Already we rejoice at the prospect. -- **Donald Grey Barnhouse, op. cit.**, p.205

Joseph –
too good to be true?

(12) Very significant was the word Joseph addressed to them as they departed, "See that ye fall not out by the way." He evidently knew them well. With what peculiar joy old Jacob must have heard the news that his son was alive! Though at first his heart fainted, yet his spirit revived, and there is a beautiful tenderness in his words, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." Thus he was beginning to discover that the things which he had declared to be against him, were really for him, under the government of his covenant-keeping God. How good a thing it is for all of us that when our faith wavers, God does not change His mind or purpose concerning us, but moves right on in infinite Love toward the final good. How much of feverish unrest should we be spared if these stories of the past might only teach us to repose our confidence in God, rather than in circumstances, and quietly to wait His time! -- **G. Campbell Morgan, op. cit.**, p.264

REPENTANCE and RECONCILIATION (45:1-28)

45:1-8 Identify the great doctrine which is underlined by the story of Joseph and his brethren. (Isa. 40:21-24; Dan. 2:20,21; 4:28-35)

(8) He commands all men to depart, not because he was ashamed of his kindred, (for he does not afterwards dissemble the fact that they were his brethren, and he freely permits the report of it to be carried to the king's palace,) but because he is considerate for their feelings, that he might not make known their detestable crime to many witnesses. -- **John Calvin, op. cit.**, p.376

(9) He could not have 'refrained himself' any longer even if it had been necessary, and, happily, the need is now past. His doubts and fears are dispelled. He is convinced that his brothers are changed men. Gentler, kinder, truer, they have proved themselves loyal to their brother in his hour of trial and danger, and one of them had shown himself a pattern of heroic manhood. ... At his words their hearts leap and pause; their faces are a picture of terror and dismay; a stupor of amazement holds them dumb. When he begins to speak to them, they cannot answer him. Shall all guilty men one day be thus appalled before the innocent whom they have persecuted? 'They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn.' -- **J. Strahan, op. cit.**, p.324

(10) In this account of Joseph's revelation of himself to his brothers, the chief value for us is to be found in his recognition of the government of God in the

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