

“The Cup Was Found In Benjamin's Sack” (Gen. 44:12)

By: Glenn I. Hitchcock

This unusual story of Joseph and his brothers is one that Christians can examine to draw strength and encouragement. Joseph arranged a plot to test his brothers by ordering his steward to place a silver goblet in the sack of his favorite brother Benjamin. Joseph wanted to test the hearts of his brothers using Benjamin as part of his plot. Joseph sought to learn if his brothers might sacrifice Benjamin for their own safety. They had, with callous hearts, beheld the sale of Joseph into Egyptian bondage, why not with little Benjamin? (Genesis 37:ff).

After departing from the generosity of Governor Joseph, the brothers sought to return to their own land. As they were traveling for home, Joseph's steward, according to his plot, overtook his brothers and abruptly charged the men with ingratitude and theft of the silver goblet. So conscious were they of their innocence that the culprit, if found would agree to death and the others to a voluntary captivity. Taking them at their word, and modifying their proposal to the extent that only the guilty one would be taken as a servant, their sacks were searched and the cup was in the sack of Benjamin.

Note the result of this plot upon these brothers; it was of utter consternation and grief. This is demonstrated in their renting of clothing (Genesis 44:13). Why should sorrow and grief so often strike us in the most sensitive place? Or, to take up the parable of the text, (1) **Why should the cup be in Benjamin's sack?** “Just because it is Benjamin's”, we reply. The very thing that leads God to smite at all leads Him to strike you here. God takes things close to us at times for the purpose of helping us to remember things that may be amiss in our lives. David had to learn this in his loss of the child born to Bathsheba because of sin (2 Samuel 12:14), (2) **The cup of sorrow can be placed in our lives as an instrument of blessing** (James 1:12; I Corinthians 10:13). If Joseph's brothers had not grieved over their sin (v.v. 13-16), surely they would not have received the blessings of forgiveness and substance! Even when sin is not the cause of sorrow; innocence, like in Benjamin's case, can be a channel for sorrow. God has an ultimate purpose for sorrow, and it is up to us to pass the testing (I Peter 1: 3-9).

As Christians it is good to remember that God can send the cup of grief and sorrow on the sinful, the innocent, and the most precious of souls. It is in our REACTION TO GRIEF that can and will, determine future blessings of God.

FOUR REACTIONS TO GRIEF THAT PEOPLE HAVE TAKEN IN THE BIBLE:

1. Upon hearing *that* the Hivite prince defiled Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, the Sons of Jacob became very wroth (Genesis 34:1-7).
2. David, being in trouble with man, sin, and self was consumed with grief (Psa. 31:9-10).
3. Judas, in an effort to return the blood money he had received for betraying Christ, went a step beyond that of David's and committed suicide. (Matthew 27:3-5).
4. Job, a man who was innocent, lost everything one might hold dear. Yet, in his grief and sorrow--he worshipped and blessed God.

Christian friend, you can react to God's cup of consternation and grief by; getting upset and striking back, by allowing it to consume you to sickness, take the cowardly way out without really escaping--like Judas, or be a Job and bless God. Every grace must be exercised in order to grow, and trial is the opportunity for exercise. Without trial, there could be no real victory, no real submission to the will of God. Joseph's brothers passed the test, will YOU?