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5-4-2021

THE LIFE OF JOSEPH – LESSON 15

THE TEST OF THE CUP

Jacob's eleven sons had feasted with the ruler of Egypt, had their sacks filled with grain, and spent the night. Now it was time to return to Canaan to Jacob.

In Genesis 44:3 it says, ***"As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and asses."*** But they had scarcely gotten "out of town" when Joseph instructed his steward to overtake them and accuse them of stealing his ornate silver cup, (v. 5) ***"whereby he divineth."*** This was not just any silver cup; it was sacred unto the Egyptian gods for the revealing (divining) of their god's will.

The brothers claimed innocence but said (my paraphrase of v. 9), "Search us and if you find such a cup on one of us let that man be put to death, and the rest of us will become his servants." The steward replied, "No, whoever is found with it shall be my servant, and the others will be held blameless."

The steward searched all the sacks starting from the eldest on down. When the silver chalice was found in Benjamin's sack, verse 13 says the ***brothers "rent (tore off) their clothes, and laded (loaded up) every man his ass (donkey) and returned to the city"*** to face their consequences.

They then fell down prostrate before Joseph as he firmly rebuked them at his house. Judah earnestly pled their case and spoke of the great harm (evil) that would befall their father over this. He recounted the story of presenting Jacob with the bloody "coat of colors" and the value of Benjamin as Jacob's last vestige of his beloved wife. He said such sorrow as this would take down their father with sorrow to his grave (sheol, hell).

This touched Joseph very deeply as we shall see tomorrow in chapter 45. It is a story of redemption.

Joseph has often been seen by some scholars as a prototype of Christ. They were both persecuted, then ministered in power, then became the redeemer for God's chosen people. Joseph's love for his brothers in spite of their betrayal and Jesus' love for his brothers (us) in spite of our sin, is also a common denominator.

God is love. Love brings us together.