

Genesis 44

Read Genesis 44:1-13: I am sure that Joseph was curious about being thrown into a pit and then sold as a slave by his brothers' years previous. He probably had a good idea which brothers hated him the most. He and Benjamin were from the same mother, Rachel. Rachel was Jacob's chosen and favorite wife. Joseph and Benjamin were his favorite sons. The other brothers had different mothers, and they were competitive against the sons of Jacob's other wives.

Joseph wants to see if his brothers have repented, or if Benjamin might face the same envy and hatred. Joseph was 17 years old when he was sold by his brothers as a slave. Benjamin is now 22 years old.

The whole chapter is like an old-fashioned sting operation. The brothers were forced to come to Joseph to obtain food. Joseph maintained his false Egyptian identity. He did not break character or let on that he was their long-lost brother. They were set up to appear to have stolen his divination cup. The brothers were taken back by the insinuation; but they told the servant of Joseph to kill whoever stole it. Unbeknownst to them, the cup was secretly put into Benjamin's sack. Now the brothers, who were guilty of selling Joseph to traders were going to be responsible for the death of Benjamin! Their father Jacob told them that would kill him, if he lost the only remaining son of Rachel. It seemed like unbelievable misfortune, wrapped in guilt. They could see God's hands all over these circumstances. I think Joseph was looking for a confession of past guilt.

Read Genesis 44:14-34: Joseph gets a partial confession as the judgement falls on brother Benjamin. Judah explains that this boy is their father's last reason for living. Losing him would literally kill their dad. All said, it is obvious now to Joseph that his enslavement brought judgement from God on his family, much like a curse. Additionally, Judah is showing a willingness to become the atonement or substitute for Benjamin. That is worth its weight in gold.