

God Preserved a Remnant

Key Verse: “*God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.*”
—Genesis 45:7

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 43:1-45:15

After the famine began, all who wished to secure grain had to purchase it in Egypt. Jacob sent ten of his sons to buy food while Benjamin remained at home. Joseph was in charge of distributing provisions. When they appeared before Joseph, his brethren did not recognize him. Joseph treated them harshly and demanded their youngest brother, Benjamin, be brought to him. Simeon, another brother, remained in Egypt as a hostage and the others returned to Jacob well supplied with food.

The famine continued to be severe. Jacob again sent his sons including Benjamin to purchase food in Egypt. Joseph arranged for all his brethren to join him for a banquet. When Joseph entered the room, his brethren, still unaware of who he was, bowed before him as predicted in one of his dreams. (Gen. 43:1-26) He then inquired of their welfare as well as Jacob's and wept after seeing Benjamin, upon whom he subsequently lavished special attention as they dined.—vss. 27-34

Joseph then had his brethren's sacks filled with food. Additionally, he had his own silver cup placed secretly in

Benjamin's bag and sent his brothers back to their father. Shortly, thereafter, Joseph's steward overtook his brothers and charged them with stealing Joseph's cup. (Gen. 44:1-7) Despite protestations that none of them would do that, the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. In great anguish, Joseph's brothers returned to his house where they again fell prostrate before him.—vss. 44:8-13

Joseph indicated he would keep Benjamin as his servant in Egypt but Judah acted as spokesman. He explained the circumstances of Benjamin's being in Egypt with them on this occasion. He described the grief Jacob would experience if Benjamin did not return to his father. Judah even volunteered to become Joseph's servant to insure Benjamin's release.—vss. 14-34

"Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence."—Gen. 45:1-3

Our Key Verse reveals God's purpose in Joseph's elevation as Egypt's prime minister. Amidst an emotional and loving reunion with his brothers, Joseph instructed them to bring his father and all of their households to Goshen in Egypt. There they would thrive under his protective care, thus ensuring the continuation of Jacob's lineage from whom the Messiah ultimately would emerge.—vss. 8-15

A major lesson which all Christians should derive from Joseph's attitude towards his brethren is the importance of having the spirit of forgiveness, without which none can be acceptable to the Lord. "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"—Rom. 8:31 ■