

QUESTION 6

- a) You can imagine the tension as each sack is searched; especially after what had happened last time when they returned home and found their money.
- b) The fact that the search starts with the eldest only increases the tension. Remember that the steward knows exactly where the cup is. He put it there!
- c) Here, the brothers are completely stripped of their self-confidence.
- d) They don't allow Benjamin to be taken off alone, but all accompany him back to the city.
- e) Before, they had abandoned their brother (Joseph); but not this time.
- f) Their minds must have been in turmoil. But they are ready to do the right thing; regardless of personal cost.
- g) Back in **37:34** it had just been their father Jacob who had torn his clothes with grief (a sign of great personal distress). Now they all do it.
- h) This demonstrates a significant change in the heart and attitude of Joseph's brothers.
- i) They would also have realised what it would do to their father. On the previous occasion that concern was not there (**37:31-33**).

GROUP LEADER'S NOTES – STUDY 14

QUESTION 1

- a) Firstly, it tells us of the affection Joseph has for his brothers in giving them as much food as they can; and returning their money.
- b) It is also a test of the sincerity of their hearts. Have they really changed?
- c) This may seem a strange way for Joseph to treat his brothers. However, God uses Joseph as an instrument to draw the brothers to repentance and restoration.
- d) When Joseph had been treated in such a way, the brothers had conspired to bring him harm (**37:19-35**).
- e) Now, the tables are turned and Joseph conspires against them. However, Joseph is not conspiring to harm them; but to do them good.
- f) God is good to us; provides for us; despite us! That is grace!
- g) He also disciplines us for our good; in order to produce righteousness within us (see **Hebrews 12:7-11**).

QUESTION 2

- a) Over time, grace is doing its work.
- b) God is working in this family.
- c) How will the brothers react to preferential treatment given to Rachel's second son? We have seen something of this in **43:34**.
- d) They are now given the chance to treat Benjamin in the same way they had treated Joseph. What will they do. How have they changed?

QUESTION 3

- a) The brothers must have felt that their mission had been successful.
- b) The money they had, in effect, 'stolen' was not considered important.
- c) Simeon had been safely returned to them.
- d) Benjamin was safe; and they had the food they needed to support the family back home.
- e) Those feelings of guilt and foreboding as they returned to Egypt had been unfounded. They were not being punished for their wrongdoing with Joseph.

QUESTION 4

- a) The cup was one of the instruments associated with Joseph's royal office.
- b) Being silver; it would have been very valuable.
- c) We are told that this cup that was used for 'divination' (**verse 5**). In other words, it was used for finding out the truth and predicting the future; and was pagan witchcraft.
- d) This doesn't mean that Joseph used it in this way (see **Deuteronomy 18:10** where divination is forbidden among God's people).
- e) Notice that it is not Joseph who says that he uses the cup; but his servant.
- f) Joseph's understanding of the truth comes directly from God (e.g. **40:8; 41:16**).
- g) Joseph is using the cup in a very different way. He wants to establish the truth about his brothers.

QUESTION 5

- a) The significance of the cup emphasises the graveness of the offence that has been committed.
- b) The brothers protest their innocence and refer in verse 8 to the return of the money from the previous trip. This surely demonstrates their honesty!
- c) So confident are they of their innocence that they make a solemn declaration that the guilty person will be killed. The rest will become Joseph's slaves.
- d) Perhaps this is a rash statement; bearing in mind what they had found in their sacks when they got home on the previous occasion (**42:35**).
- e) They clearly trust one another. Otherwise they would have immediately wondered who had stolen the cup. That demonstrates some progress in their character.
- f) Notice in verse 10, that the steward declares that the guilty person will become the slave and the others released.
- g) This isn't so severe as the punishment the brothers had conceded.
- h) But, what Joseph has clearly decreed to his steward, parallels what had happened back in chapter 37 when Joseph was sold into slavery and the rest of the brothers had gone on with their lives.
- i) The question is; would they be willing to let another brother become a slave? Or would they stand with him?