

- Song 130 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Joseph Forgives His Brothers”:** (10 min.)
Ge 44:1, 2—Joseph tested his brothers’ motives (w15 5/1 14-15)
Ge 44:33, 34—Judah pleaded in Benjamin’s behalf
Ge 45:4, 5—Joseph imitated Jehovah’s willingness to forgive
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (10 min.)
Ge 44:13—What was signified by the ripping of garments? (it-2 813)

Ge 45:5-8—What can help us to endure injustice? (w04 8/15 15 ¶15)

What spiritual gems from this week’s Bible reading would you like to share regarding Jehovah God, the field ministry, or something else?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Ge 45:1-15 (10)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Informative to Your Audience*, and then discuss study 18 of the *Teaching* brochure.
- **Talk:** (5 min. or less) w06 2/1 31—Theme: Did Joseph use a special silver cup to read omens, as Genesis 44:5, 15 seems to indicate? (18)

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 58
- **Local Needs:** (10 min.)
- **Organizational Accomplishments:** (5 min.) Play the *Organizational Accomplishments* video for June.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 117
- Concluding Comments (3 min. or less)
- Song 19 and Prayer

GENESIS 44-45 | Joseph Forgives His Brothers



44:1, 2, 33, 34; 45:4, 5

It can be a challenge to forgive, especially when someone has harmed us deliberately. What helped Joseph to forgive his brothers when they wronged him?

- Joseph did not seek revenge but looked for a basis to forgive.—Ps 86:5; Lu 17:3, 4
- He let go of resentment and reflected the disposition of Jehovah, who forgives generously.—Mic 7:18, 19

 **How can I imitate Jehovah’s forgiveness?**



1. Lovingly Jehovah

Made provision through his Son
For our sins to be forgiven
And for death to be undone.

If we truly are repentant,

His forgiveness we can claim
On the basis of Christ's ransom,
Asking pardon in his name.

2. We receive such mercy

When we act like God above
And forgive each other freely,
Showing empathy and love.

Putting up with one another,

Putting hurtfulness away;
Showing honor to our brother,
Showing love's surpassing way.

3. Mercy is a virtue

That we all should cultivate.

It will keep us from resentment,
From the bitterness of hate.

When we imitate Jehovah,

Who is unsurpassed in love,
We will truly be forgiving;
We will be like God above.

Genesis 44-45

44 Later he commanded the man who was over his house: “Fill the bags of the men with as much food as they can carry, and place the money of each one in the mouth of his bag. ² But you must place my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the bag of the youngest, along with the money for his grain.” So he did as Joseph had instructed.

³ In the morning when it had become light, the men were sent away with their donkeys. ⁴ They had not gone far from the city when Joseph said to the man who was over his house: “Get up! Chase after the men! When you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid bad for good? ⁵ Is not this what my master drinks from and uses to read omens expertly? It is a wicked thing you have done.’”

⁶ So he overtook them and spoke these words to them. ⁷ But they said to him: “Why does my lord say such a thing? It is unthinkable that your servants would do anything like this. ⁸ Why, the money that we found in the mouth of our bags we brought back to you from the land of Ca'naan. How, then, could we steal silver or gold from the house of your master? ⁹ If it is found with one of your slaves, let him die, and the rest of us will also become slaves to my master.”

¹⁰ So he said: “Let it be as you say: The one with whom it is found will become my slave, but the rest of you will be innocent.” ¹¹ With that each one quickly lowered his bag to the ground and opened it. ¹² He searched carefully, starting

with the oldest and finishing with the youngest. Finally the cup was found in Benjamin's bag.

¹³ Then they ripped their garments apart, and each of them lifted his load back onto his donkey and returned to the city.

¹⁴ When Judah and his brothers went into Joseph's house, he was still there; and they fell to the ground before him.

¹⁵ Joseph said to them: "What is this deed that you have done? Did you not know that a man like me can expertly read omens?" ¹⁶ At this Judah replied: "What can we say to my master? What can we speak? And how can we prove ourselves righteous? The true God has found out the error of your slaves. We are now slaves to my master, both we and the one in whose hand the cup was found!" ¹⁷ However, he said: "It is unthinkable for me to do this! The man in whose hand the cup was found is the one who will become a slave to me. As for the rest of you, go up in peace to your father."

¹⁸ Judah now approached him and said: "I beg you, my master, please let your slave speak a word in my master's ears, and do not become angry with your slave, for you are like Phar'aoth himself. ¹⁹ My master asked his slaves, 'Do you have a father or a brother?' ²⁰ So we said to my master, 'We do have an aged father and a child of his old age, the youngest. But his brother is dead, so he is the only remaining son of his mother, and his father loves him.'

²¹ After that you said to your slaves, 'Bring him down to me so that I may see him.' ²² But we said to my master, 'The boy is not able to leave his father. If he did leave him, his father would certainly die.' ²³ Then you said to your slaves, 'Unless

your youngest brother comes down with you, you may not see my face anymore.'

²⁴ "So we went up to your slave my father and told him the words of my master. ²⁵ Later our father said, 'Return and buy a little food for us.' ²⁶ But we said, 'We are not able to go down. If our youngest brother is with us we will go down, for we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' ²⁷ Then your slave my father said to us, 'You well know that my wife bore but two sons to me. ²⁸ But one of them left me and I said: "He must surely have been torn to pieces!" and I have not seen him until now. ²⁹ If you were to take this one also out of my sight and a fatal accident were to befall him, you would certainly bring down my gray hairs to the Grave with calamity.'

³⁰ "And now if I return to your slave my father without the boy along with us, since his own life is bound up with this one's life, ³¹ then as soon as he sees that the boy is not there, he will die, and your slaves will indeed bring down the gray hairs of your slave our father to the Grave in grief.

³² Your slave gave a guarantee to my father for the boy, saying, 'If I fail to bring him back to you, then I will have sinned against my father forever.' ³³ So now, please, let your slave stay instead of the boy as my master's slave, in order that the boy may return with his brothers. ³⁴ How can I return to my father without the boy along with me? I could not bear looking on when this calamity befalls my father!"

45 At this Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants. So he cried out: "Have everyone leave me!"

No one else stayed with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers.

² Then he began to weep so loudly that the Egyptians heard it and Phar'aoh's house heard it. ³ Finally Joseph said to his brothers: "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers were unable to answer him at all, because they were astonished on account of him. ⁴ So Joseph said to his brothers: "Come close to me, please." With that they came close to him.

Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵ But now do not be upset and do not reproach one another because you sold me here; because God has sent me ahead of you for the preservation of life. ⁶ This is the second year of the famine in the land, and there are yet five years in which there will be no plowing or harvest. ⁷ But God sent me ahead of you in order to preserve for you a remnant on the earth and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. ⁸ So, then, it was not you who sent me here, but it was the true God, in order to appoint me as chief adviser to Phar'aoh and lord for all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

⁹ "Return quickly to my father, and you must say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph has said: "God has appointed me lord over all Egypt. Come down to me. Do not delay.

¹⁰ You must dwell in the land of Go'shen, where you will be near me—you, your sons, your grandsons, your flocks, your herds, and everything you have. ¹¹ I will supply you with food there, for there are yet five years of famine. Otherwise, you and your house and everything you have will come to

poverty.”¹² You and my brother Benjamin can now see with your own eyes that I am really the one speaking to you.¹³ So you must tell my father about all my glory in Egypt and everything you have seen. Now hurry and bring my father down here.”

¹⁴ Then he embraced his brother Benjamin and gave way to weeping, and Benjamin wept with his arms around his neck.¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers spoke with him.

¹⁶ The news reached the house of Phar'aoh: “Joseph’s brothers have come!” It was good in the eyes of Phar'aoh and his servants.¹⁷ So Phar'aoh said to Joseph: “Tell your brothers, ‘Do this: Load your beasts of burden and go to the land of Ca'naan,¹⁸ and take your father and your households and come here to me. I will give you the good things of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the richest part of the land.’

¹⁹ And you are commanded to tell them: ‘Do this: Take wagons from the land of Egypt for your children and your wives, and you must bring your father on one of them and come here.²⁰ Do not worry about your belongings, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.’”

²¹ And the sons of Israel did so, and Joseph gave them wagons according to Phar'aoh’s orders, and he gave them provisions for the journey.²² To each of them he gave individual changes of clothing, but to Benjamin he gave 300 silver pieces and five changes of clothing.²³ And to his father he sent the following: ten donkeys carrying good things of Egypt and ten female donkeys carrying grain and

bread and sustenance for his father for the journey. ²⁴ So he sent his brothers off, and as they departed, he said to them: “Do not become upset with one another on the way.”

²⁵ Then they went up from Egypt and came into the land of Ca'naan to their father Jacob. ²⁶ Then they reported to him: “Joseph is still alive, and he is the ruler over all the land of Egypt!” But his heart grew numb because he did not believe them. ²⁷ When they went on telling him all the words that Joseph had spoken to them and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob began to revive. ²⁸ Israel exclaimed: “It is enough! My son Joseph is still alive! I must go and see him before I die!”

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- Opening Comments (1 min.)

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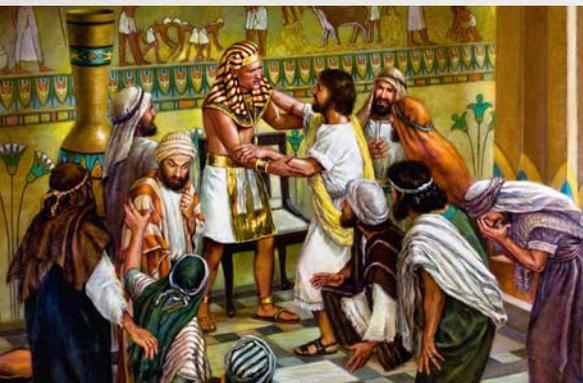
APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Informative to Your Audience*, and then discuss study 18 of the *Teaching* brochure.
- **Talk:** (5 min. or less) w06 2/1 31—Theme: Did Joseph use a special silver cup to read omens, as Genesis 44:5, 15 seems to indicate? (18)

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

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- **Local Needs:** (10 min.)
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- Concluding Comments (3 min. or less)
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GENESIS 44-45 | Joseph Forgives His Brothers



44:1, 2, 33, 34; 45:4, 5

It can be a challenge to forgive, especially when someone has harmed us deliberately. What helped Joseph to forgive his brothers when they wronged him?

- Joseph did not seek revenge but looked for a basis to forgive.—Ps 86:5; Lu 17:3, 4
- He let go of resentment and reflected the disposition of Jehovah, who forgives generously.—Mic 7:18, 19

 How can I imitate Jehovah’s forgiveness?



June 1-7 / Genesis 44-45

- Song 130 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 minute)

Treasures From God's Word

“Joseph Forgives His Brothers”: (10 minutes)

Genesis 44:1, 2, 33, 34; 45:4, 5

It can be a challenge to forgive, especially when someone has harmed us deliberately. What helped Joseph to forgive his brothers when they wronged him?

- Joseph did not seek revenge but looked for a basis to forgive.—Psalm 86:5; Luke 17:3, 4

- He let go of resentment and reflected the disposition of Jehovah, who forgives generously.—Micah 7:18, 19

Picture: [Image:] Joseph revealing his identity to his brothers as they look on with amazement.

How can I imitate Jehovah's forgiveness?

Picture: [Image:] Collage: 1. Two sisters having a conversation at a Kingdom Hall. 2. Two brothers shaking hands.

Genesis 44:1, 2—Joseph tested his brothers' motives

Genesis 44:1, 2: Later he commanded the man who was over his house: "Fill the bags of the men with as much food as they can carry, and place the money of each one in the mouth of his bag. But you must place my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the bag of the youngest, along with the money for his grain." So he did as Joseph had instructed.

w15 5/1 14-15

Joseph then sprang his trap. He had his brothers pursued, arrested, and accused of stealing the cup. When it was found in Benjamin's bag, all of them were brought back to Joseph. Now Joseph had a chance to learn what kind of men his brothers were. Judah acted as their spokesman. He pleaded for mercy, even offering that all 11 of them become slaves in Egypt. Joseph countered that Benjamin alone must remain in Egypt as a slave but that all the rest of them must leave.—

Genesis 44:2-17.

Judah was moved to respond with an impassioned speech. "He is the only remaining son of his mother, and his father loves him," Judah said. Those words must have touched Joseph, for he was the older son of Jacob's beloved wife Rachel, who had died while giving birth to Benjamin. Joseph, like his father, evidently cherished memories of Rachel. Perhaps that connection made Benjamin even dearer to Joseph.—Genesis 35:18-20; 44:20.

Judah went on to implore Joseph not to enslave Benjamin. He even offered to become a slave in Benjamin's place. Then he concluded with this heartrending plea: "How can I return to my father without the boy along with me? I could not bear looking on when this calamity befalls my father!" (Genesis 44:18-34) Here, now, was evidence of a changed man. Not only did he show a repentant spirit but he even showed an admirable degree of empathy, selflessness, and compassion.

Joseph could bear no more. He had to release the emotion that was pent up within him. Dismissing all his servants, he wept so loudly that the sound carried to Pharaoh's palace.

Then he revealed himself at last: "I am Joseph your brother." He embraced his stunned brothers and kindly extended forgiveness for all that they had done to him. (Genesis 45:1-15) He thus reflected the disposition of Jehovah, who forgives generously. (Psalm 86:5) Do we do likewise?

Genesis 44:33, 34—Judah pleaded in Benjamin's behalf

Genesis 44:33, 34: So now, please, let your slave stay instead of the boy as my master's slave, in order that the boy may return with his brothers. How can I return to my father without the boy along with me? I could not bear looking on when this calamity befalls my father!"

Genesis 45:4, 5—Joseph imitated Jehovah's willingness to forgive

Genesis 45:4, 5: So Joseph said to his brothers: "Come close to me, please." With that they came close to him. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.

But now do not be upset and do not reproach one another because you sold me here; because God has sent me ahead of you for the preservation of life.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Genesis 44:13—What was signified by the ripping of garments?

Genesis 44:13: Then they ripped their garments apart, and each of them lifted his load back onto his donkey and returned to the city.

it-2 813

A common sign of grief among the Jews, as well as among other Orientals, particularly upon hearing of the death of a near relative. In many cases such ripping consisted of a rending of the garment in front just sufficient to lay open the breast, thus not necessarily a complete ripping of the garment so as to make it unfit for wearing.

The first instance of this practice recorded in the Bible is that of Reuben, Jacob's eldest son, who, upon returning and not

finding Joseph in the waterpit, ripped his garments apart, saying: "The child is gone! And I—where am I really to go?" As the firstborn, Reuben was particularly responsible for his younger brother. His father Jacob when told of the supposed death of his son likewise ripped his mantles apart and put on sackcloth in mourning (Genesis 37:29, 30, 34), and down in Egypt Joseph's half brothers showed their grief by ripping their garments apart, when Benjamin was made to appear as a thief.—Genesis 44:13.

Genesis 45:5-8—What can help us to endure injustice?

Genesis 45:5-8: But now do not be upset and do not reproach one another because you sold me here; because God has sent me ahead of you for the preservation of life. This is the second year of the famine in the land, and there are yet five years in which there will be no plowing or harvest. But God sent me ahead of you in order to preserve for you a remnant on the earth and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. So, then, it was not you who sent me here, but it was the true God, in order to appoint me as chief

adviser to Pharaoh and lord for all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

w04 8/15 15 paragraph 15

What can help us not to become consumed with bitterness toward those who hate us without cause? Remember that our principal adversaries are Satan and the demons. (Ephesians 6:12) While some humans knowingly and deliberately persecute us, many of those who oppose God's people do so out of ignorance or are manipulated by others. (Daniel 6:4-16; 1 Timothy 1:12, 13) Jehovah desires that "all sorts of men" have the opportunity to "be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Timothy 2:4) Indeed, some former opposers are now our Christian brothers as a result of having observed our blameless conduct. (1 Peter 2:12) In addition, we can draw a lesson from the example of Jacob's son Joseph. Although Joseph suffered greatly on account of his half brothers, he did not harbor animosity toward them. Why not? Because he discerned that Jehovah's hand was in the matter, maneuvering events in order to fulfill His purpose. (Genesis 45:4-8) Jehovah can likewise cause any

unjust suffering we may undergo to work out for the glory of his name.—1 Peter 4:16.

What spiritual gems from this week's Bible reading would you like to share regarding Jehovah God, the field ministry, or something else?

Bible Reading: (4 minutes or less) Genesis 45:1-15
(th study 10)

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- Opening Comments (1 min.)

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APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Informative to Your Audience*, and then discuss study 18 of the *Teaching* brochure.
- **Talk:** (5 min. or less) w06 2/1 31—Theme: Did Joseph use a special silver cup to read omens, as Genesis 44:5, 15 seems to indicate? (18)

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GENESIS 44-45 | Joseph Forgives His Brothers



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Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching

Study 18

Informative to Your Audience

[Raw Transcript]

The apostle Paul presented information that was informative to his audience.

For instance, what he said to Jews in Jerusalem differed from what he said to Greeks in Athens. He wrote, as recorded at 1 Corinthians chapter 9: “To the Jews I became as a Jew “in order to gain Jews . . . “To those without law “I became as without law . . . “I have become all things “to people of all sorts, “so that I might by all possible means “save some. “But I do all things for the sake of the good news.” How can we make *our* *teaching* informative to our audience?

First, we should consider what our listeners already know. For example, if we’re speaking to a congregation of mature Christians, we shouldn’t simply repeat basic Bible truths that they’ve heard before. Instead, we can help them to look at the topic from a fresh perspective. Watch the following example. Is the presentation informative to the audience? At John 13:35, Jesus explained how to identify his followers.

He said: “By this all will know that you are my disciples —if you have love among yourselves.”

That expression, “among yourselves,” shows that all true Christians would be together in one group or organization. And this organization would be identified by the love its members have for one another. Isn't it common during war for people of the same religion but who live in opposing countries to slaughter one another?

Is there any religion in which people truly view fellow worshippers from another neighborhood, city, or country as their brother?

Was that informative? If the speaker was talking to unbelieving relatives or workmates, then, yes, it was informative. But let's say that he was giving a talk to mature Christians.

If he spent a lot of time presenting basic information that the audience already knew, he might quickly lose their attention. How could he discuss the same scripture, John 13:35, in a way that would be informative to an audience of fellow believers?

Here Jesus said that love would identify his true disciples.

Did you notice the setting for Jesus' discussion recorded here in John chapter 13? Jesus had just instituted the Lord's Evening Meal. He knew that he had very little time left before his arrest and execution.

The matter of his own integrity was weighing heavily on his mind. But it was so important to Jesus that his disciples love one another that he included it in his parting words to them. At the time, they didn't know it, but the "one another" would come to include,

not just fellow Jews, but Samaritans and Gentiles too.

What were some obstacles in the first century that Christians needed to overcome? How can their example help us? Even though the speaker was discussing a well-known truth, he made it informative to his audience by including some historical context that his listeners may not have known or remembered. He chose a fresh perspective. When preparing to teach well-known Bible truths, how can we come up with a fresh perspective? Think about the subject, and do research. As we prepare, we can ask questions, such as 'who, what, when, where, why, and how.' And then we can answer some of those questions in our presentation. Perhaps we could include less-familiar facts or current events. However, it's not enough simply to

present interesting information that may not be well-known by your listeners. We must also explain how the information can help them in their daily life. That requires being specific. Perhaps we can consider some realistic situations and then outline how to apply the information. Let's watch a publisher doing this on a Bible study when discussing with his student the picture and caption of the *Remain in God's Love* book. Look at the illustration on page 219. What does the caption say? "Rely on Jehovah when you are sick." Yes. "Rely on Jehovah." What does that mean? Let's say you were diagnosed with a serious illness. How could you rely on Jehovah? Well, the book mentions that some treatments involve spiritism. Even if I was desperate, I wouldn't choose them because they're wrong. Good. What are some other ways to rely on Jehovah when we're sick? Prayer. Yes, that's very important. How would that help you if you were sick? The teacher took a general statement — "Rely on Jehovah when you are sick"— and helped his student to see how it relates to him personally.

If we present information that is informative to our audience, we'll stimulate their thinking and teach them something worthwhile.

Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry

Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching: (10 minutes)

Discussion. Play the video *Informative to Your Audience*, and then discuss study 18 of the *Teaching* brochure.

STUDY 18

Informative to Your Audience

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

SUMMARY: Stimulate the thinking of your listeners, leaving them with the feeling that they learned something worthwhile.

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Consider what your listeners already know.** Rather than simply repeating what they have heard before, help them to look at the topic from a fresh perspective.

Cover familiar points more quickly, but slow down when presenting new ideas.

- **Research and meditate.** When possible, include less-familiar facts or current events to illustrate key ideas. Think deeply about your material and the connection between the material and the facts you intend to cite.

As you examine the material, stimulate your own thinking by asking yourself such questions as ‘*what, why, when, where, who, and how.*’ Enliven your teaching by raising

and answering some of those questions throughout your presentation.

- **Show the usefulness of your message.** Explain how Scriptural points can help your listeners in their daily lives. Discuss specific situations, attitudes, and actions that are relevant to your listeners.

Talk: (5 minutes or less) w06 2/1 31—Theme: Did Joseph use a special silver cup to read omens, as Genesis 44:5, 15 seems to indicate? (th study 18)

Genesis 44:5: Is not this what my master drinks from and uses to read omens expertly? It is a wicked thing you have done.

Genesis 44:15: Joseph said to them: "What is this deed that you have done? Did you not know that a man like me can expertly read omens?"

[w06 2/1 31]

There is no reason to believe that Joseph actually employed any form of divination.

The Bible reveals Joseph's real understanding on the use of magical arts to learn the future. Earlier, when he was asked to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, Joseph repeatedly insisted that only God can "announce" upcoming events. As a result, Pharaoh himself came to believe that the God whom Joseph worshipped—the true God, not occult powers—caused Joseph to know details about the future. (Genesis 41:16, 25, 28, 32, 39) In the Law given to Moses later on, Jehovah prohibited the use of magic or divination, thus confirming that He alone foretells the future.—Deuteronomy 18:10-12.

Why, then, did Joseph indicate through his servant that he used a silver cup to 'read omens expertly'? * (Genesis 44:5) We need to consider the circumstances under which this statement was made.

[Footnote.] * Describing this ancient practice, *The Holy Bible, With an Explanatory and Critical Commentary*, edited by

F. C. Cook, explains: "It was practised either by dropping gold, silver, or jewels, into the water, and then examining their appearance; or simply by looking into the water as into a mirror." Bible commentator Christopher Wordsworth says: "Sometimes the cup was filled with water, and the answer was given by means of imagery, produced by the sun on the water in the cup." [End of Footnote.]

Because of a very severe famine, Joseph's brothers had traveled to Egypt to obtain food. Years earlier, these same brothers had sold Joseph into slavery. Now, unbeknownst to them, they requested assistance from their own brother, who had become Egypt's food administrator. Joseph did not reveal himself to them. Instead, he decided to test them. Fittingly, Joseph wanted to determine the genuineness of their repentance. He also wanted to find out whether—and to what degree—they loved their brother Benjamin and their father, Jacob, who was especially fond of Benjamin. Thus, Joseph resorted to a ruse.—Genesis 41:55–44:3.

Joseph commanded one of his servants to fill his brothers' bags with food supplies, return each one's money in the

mouth of his bag, and put Joseph's silver cup in the mouth of Benjamin's bag. In all of this, Joseph was representing himself as an administrator of a pagan land. He adapted himself, his actions, and his language to the character of such an administrator, as it would appear in the eyes of his unsuspecting brothers.

When Joseph confronted his brothers, he continued with his subterfuge, asking them: "Did you not know that such a man as I am can expertly read omens?" (Genesis 44:15) Thus, the cup was evidently all part of the stratagem. Joseph's use of the cup to read omens was no more real than Benjamin's theft of it.

58 *Searching for Friends of Peace*

(Luke 10:6)

1. Jesus commanded: 'Let the truth be heard.'

In summer heat, on dusty roads,

He let all hear Jehovah's word.

He loved God's sheep and called to ev'ryone.

He searched the land from the sunrise

'til the day was done.

From door to door and in the street,

We share with ev'ryone we meet

The news that soon man's troubles all will be gone.

(CHORUS)

Searching the world

For friends of peace in ev'ry nation,

Searching to find

A heart inclined toward salvation,

Wanting to leave

No stone unturned.

2. Time waits for no one, so the search goes on.

A million hearts, a million lives,

We give our all to save just one.

Love is the force that makes us call again.

A wounded heart can be healed,

and broken lives can mend.

We search the towns and city squares,

And when we find someone who cares,

The joy we feel inspires us to go on.

(Chorus)

- Song 130 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Joseph Forgives His Brothers”:** (10 min.)
Ge 44:1, 2—Joseph tested his brothers’ motives (w15 5/1 14-15)
Ge 44:33, 34—Judah pleaded in Benjamin’s behalf
Ge 45:4, 5—Joseph imitated Jehovah’s willingness to forgive
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (10 min.)
Ge 44:13—What was signified by the ripping of garments? (it-2 813)

Ge 45:5-8—What can help us to endure injustice? (w04 8/15 15 ¶15)

What spiritual gems from this week’s Bible reading would you like to share regarding Jehovah God, the field ministry, or something else?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Ge 45:1-15 (10)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Informative to Your Audience*, and then discuss study 18 of the *Teaching* brochure.
- **Talk:** (5 min. or less) w06 2/1 31—Theme: Did Joseph use a special silver cup to read omens, as Genesis 44:5, 15 seems to indicate? (18)

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 58
- **Local Needs:** (10 min.)
- **Organizational Accomplishments:** (5 min.) Play the *Organizational Accomplishments* video for June.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 117
- Concluding Comments (3 min. or less)
- Song 19 and Prayer

GENESIS 44-45 | Joseph Forgives His Brothers



44:1, 2, 33, 34; 45:4, 5

It can be a challenge to forgive, especially when someone has harmed us deliberately. What helped Joseph to forgive his brothers when they wronged him?

- Joseph did not seek revenge but looked for a basis to forgive.—Ps 86:5; Lu 17:3, 4
- He let go of resentment and reflected the disposition of Jehovah, who forgives generously.—Mic 7:18, 19

 How can I imitate Jehovah’s forgiveness?



THE LORD'S EVENING MEAL

MATTHEW 26:21-29 MARK 14:18-25
LUKE 22:19-23 JOHN 13:18-30

- JUDAS IS IDENTIFIED AS A TRAITOR
 - JESUS INSTITUTES A MEMORIAL MEAL
-

Earlier this evening Jesus taught his apostles a lesson in humility by washing their feet. Now, apparently after the Passover meal, he quotes David's prophetic words: "The man at peace with me, one whom I trusted, who was eating my bread, has lifted his heel against me." Then he explains: "One of you will betray me."—Psalm 41:9; John 13:18, 21.

The apostles look at one another, and each asks: "Lord, it is not I, is it?" Even Judas Iscariot does so. Peter urges John, who is next to Jesus at the table, to find out who it is. So John leans close to Jesus and asks: "Lord, who is it?"—Matthew 26:22; John 13:25.

Jesus answers: "It is the one to whom I will give the piece of bread that I dip." Dipping some bread in a dish on the table, Jesus hands it to Judas, saying:



“The Son of man is going away, just as it is written about him, but woe to that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.” (John 13:26; Matthew 26:24) Satan then enters Judas. This man, already corrupt, now gives himself over to do the Devil’s will and thus becomes “the son of destruction.” —John 6:64, 70; 12:4; 17:12.

Jesus tells Judas: “What you are doing, do it more quickly.” The other apostles imagine that Judas, who is holding the money box, is being told: “‘Buy what we need for the festival,’ or that he should give something to the poor.” (John 13:27-30) Instead, Judas goes off to betray Jesus.

On this same evening as the Passover meal, Jesus introduces an entirely new type of meal. He takes a loaf, says a prayer of thanks, breaks it, and gives it to his apostles to eat. He says: “This means my body, which is to be given in your behalf. Keep doing this in remembrance of me.” (Luke 22:19) The piece of bread is passed around, and the apostles eat of it.

Now Jesus takes a cup of wine, says a prayer of thanks over it, and passes it to them. Each drinks

from the cup, about which Jesus says: “This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be poured out in your behalf.”—Luke 22:20.

Thus Jesus arranges for a memorial of his death that his followers are to hold each year on Nisan 14. It will call to mind what Jesus and his Father have done to enable men of faith to escape from the condemnation of sin and death. Even more so than did the Passover for the Jews, it highlights true liberation for believing mankind.

Jesus says that his blood “is to be poured out in behalf of many for forgiveness of sins.” Among the many to gain such forgiveness are his faithful apostles and others like them. They are the ones who will be with him in the Kingdom of his Father.—Matthew 26:28, 29.

- ◇ What Bible prophecy does Jesus quote about a companion, and how does he apply it?
- ◇ Jesus tells Judas to do what, but how do the other apostles understand Jesus’ direction?
- ◇ What new event does Jesus introduce, and what purpose does it serve?

1. Jehovah, our Father in heaven,
 Oh, this is a most sacred night!
It was then, long ago, you determined to show
 Your love, justice, wisdom, and might.
The Passover lamb gave protection,
 And your favored people were freed.
Cent'ries later our Lord his own lifeblood outpoured
 To fulfill this divine prophecy.
2. The bread and the wine are reminders,
 How great is the price that you paid.
And the good that was done
 through the gift of your Son,
 In life and in death he obeyed.
We gratefully keep this Memorial;
 This night is a time to recall
How the death of your Son
 paid the ransom that won
 The redemption from death for us all.
3. We're gathered together before you.
 At your invitation we've come
To give praise for your love that brought
 Christ from above
 And honor to you and your Son.
The Lord's Ev'ning Meal brings you glory
 And strengthens our heart and our mind.
So we'll walk ev'ry day as Christ showed us the way,
 And then life everlasting we'll find.

APRIL 2020

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



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COVER PICTURE:

Brother J. F. Rutherford and other anointed servants who took the lead boldly proclaimed God’s judgments against this wicked system of things (See study article 14, paragraph 8)

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. To make a donation, please visit donate.jw.org.

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*.

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) April 2020 is published by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; Harold L. Corkern, President; Mark L. Questell, Secretary-Treasurer; 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. © 2020 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Printed in Canada.

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The Light Gets Brighter

(Proverbs 4:18)

1. The prophets of old sought to learn of the Christ,
The hope of all groaning creation.
God's spirit revealed that Messiah would come,
Providing the means of salvation.

The time has arrived, the Messiah now reigns,
The proof of his presence is clear.
How great is the favor of learning such things;
Into these even angels would peer!

(CHORUS)

*Our path now becomes ever brighter;
We walk in the full light of day.
Behold what our God is revealing;
He guides us each step of the way.*

2. Our Lord has appointed a trustworthy slave,
Through whom He gives food in due season.
The light of the truth has grown brighter with time,
Appealing to heart and to reason.

Our path ever clearer, our steps ever firm,
We walk in the brightness of day.
All thanks to Jehovah, the Source of all truth,
We most gratefully walk in his way.

(Chorus)

An Attack Coming From the North!

“A nation has come up into my land.”—JOEL 1:6.

SONG 95

The Light Gets Brighter

PREVIEW

For many years we have believed that the prophecy recorded in Joel chapters 1 and 2 foretells our modern-day preaching activity. However, there are four good reasons why it appears that an adjustment should be made in our understanding of this portion of Joel’s prophecy. What are those reasons?

MORE than a century ago, Brother C. T. Russell and his associates, a small group of other students of God's Word, began to meet together. They wanted to see if they could learn what the Bible really teaches about Jehovah God, Jesus Christ, the condition of the dead, and the ransom. Their method of study was simple. Someone would raise a question, and then the group would examine every scripture text related to the subject. Finally, they would make a record of their findings. With Jehovah's blessing, those sincere Christian men discovered many fundamental Bible truths that we cherish to this day.

² As those Bible students soon found out, however, it can be one thing to learn what the Bible teaches about a certain doctrinal subject but quite another to discern correctly the meaning of a Bible prophecy. Why is that so? For one thing, Bible prophecies are often best understood when they are undergoing fulfillment or after they have been fulfilled. But there is another factor. To understand a prophecy correctly, we generally have to consider its

-
1. What study method was followed by Brother Russell and his associates, and why was it effective?
 2. What might sometimes lead to wrong conclusions when we are trying to understand Bible prophecy?

context. If we focus on only one aspect of the prophecy and ignore the rest, we may draw the wrong conclusion. In hindsight, it seems that this has been the case with a prophecy in the book of Joel. Let us review that prophecy and discuss why an adjustment in our present understanding is needed.

³ **Read Joel 2:7-9.** Joel foretells that a plague of locusts will devastate the land of Israel. With teeth and jaws like those of lions, the greedy insects will devour everything in sight! (Joel 1:4, 6) For many years, we have applied that prophecy symbolically to the way in which Jehovah’s people, like an unstoppable swarm of locusts, engage in their preaching activity. We understood that this activity has devastating effects on the “land,” or the people who are under the control of the religious leaders.*

⁴ If we restricted ourselves to a reading of Joel 2:7-9, a case could be made for that explanation. However, when we consider the prophecy in its context, we see that a different understanding is appropriate. Let us examine four reasons why this is so.

* For example, see the article “Jehovah’s Wisdom Observed in Creation” in *The Watchtower* of April 15, 2009, pars. 14-16.

3-4. Until now, how have we applied the prophecy found at Joel 2:7-9?

FOUR REASONS FOR AN ADJUSTMENT

⁵ First of all, notice Jehovah's promise with regard to the plague of locusts: "I will *drive the northerner* [the locusts] *far away* from you." (Joel 2:20) If the locusts represent Jehovah's Witnesses as they obey Jesus' command to preach and make disciples, why would Jehovah promise to drive them away? (Ezek. 33:7-9; Matt. 28:19, 20) Clearly, Jehovah is driving away, not his faithful servants, but something or someone who is hostile to his people.

⁶ As a second reason, consider what is written at Joel 2:25. There, Jehovah says: "I will *make compensation* to you for the years that the swarming locust, the unwinged locust, the voracious locust, and the devouring locust have eaten, my great army that I sent among you." Notice that Jehovah promises to "make compensation" for the damage the locusts have caused. If the locusts picture Kingdom evangelizers, this would suggest that the message they proclaim causes damage. Yet, that lifesaving message can actually move some of the wicked to repent. (Ezek. 33:8, 19) What a blessing that could be for them!

5-6. What question arises from a consideration of (a) Joel 2:20? (b) Joel 2:25?

7 Read Joel 2:28, 29. Consider a third reason—the sequence of events outlined by the prophecy. Did you notice that Jehovah says: “*After that* I will pour out my spirit”; that is, after the locusts have completed their assigned task? If the locusts are preachers of God’s Kingdom, why would Jehovah pour out his spirit on them *after* they finish their witnessing? The reality is that without the help of God’s powerful holy spirit, they could never have kept preaching for decades despite opposition and even bans on their work.

8 Read Revelation 9:1-11. Now let us look at the fourth reason. We previously connected the plague of locusts described by Joel with our preaching work because of a similar prophecy found in the book of Revelation. This prophecy describes a swarm of locusts that have human faces and ‘what seem to be crowns of gold’ on their heads. (Rev. 9:7) They torment “those people [God’s enemies] who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads” for a period of five months, the average life span of a locust. (Rev. 9:4, 5) This does indeed appear to be a description of Jehovah’s anointed servants. They boldly proclaim

7. At Joel 2:28, 29, what is the significance of the words “after that”?

8. Whom do the locusts described at Revelation 9:1-11 represent? (See cover picture.)

God’s judgments against this wicked system of things and, as a result, make its supporters very uncomfortable.

⁹ Admittedly, there are similarities between the prophecy in Revelation and the one Joel recorded. However, there are significant differences. Consider: In Joel’s prophecy, the locusts devastate the vegetation. (Joel 1:4, 6, 7) In John’s vision, the locusts are “told not to harm the vegetation of the earth.” (Rev. 9:4) The locusts Joel saw came from the north. (Joel 2:20) Those John saw came out of an abyss. (Rev. 9: 2, 3) The locusts Joel described are driven away. In Revelation, the locusts are not driven away but are allowed to finish their work. There is no indication that they deserve Jehovah’s disapproval.—See the box “Prophecies About Locusts—Similar But Different.”

¹⁰ The significant differences between the two prophecies lead us to conclude that they are not connected. Are we saying that the locusts described by Joel are not the same as the locusts presented in the book of Revelation? Yes. In the Bible, it is not unusual for a symbol to convey different meanings in different settings. For example, at Revelation 5:5, Jesus

9. What significant differences are there between the locusts Joel saw and those described by John?

10. Give a Scriptural example showing that the locusts described by Joel and by John can represent different things.



Prophecies About Locusts —Similar But Different

Joel 1:4; 2:7-9, 20

- They come from the north
- They devastate the vegetation
- They are driven away
- They represent the Babylonian army that invaded Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E.

Revelation 9:1-11

- They come out of an abyss
- They are not to harm the vegetation
- They finish their work
- They represent Jehovah's anointed servants, who boldly proclaim his judgments

is called “the Lion of the tribe of Judah,” whereas at 1 Peter 5:8, the Devil is described as “a roaring lion.” In view of the questions raised by our present understanding, we need to look for another explanation of Joel’s prophecy. What could it be?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

¹¹ A closer look at Joel’s prophecy in its context reveals that the prophet was predicting a military attack. (Joel 1:6; 2:1, 8, 11) Jehovah said that he would use his “great army” (Babylonian soldiers) to punish the disobedient Israelites. (Joel 2:25) The invading army is rightly called “the northerner” because the Babylonians would invade Israel from the north. (Joel 2:20) That army is likened to a well-organized swarm of locusts. Of them, Joel says: “Each [soldier] advances in his course. . . . Into the city they rush, on the wall they run. Onto the houses they climb, through the windows they enter like a thief.” (Joel 2: 8, 9) Can you picture the scene? There are soldiers everywhere. There is nowhere to hide. No one can escape the sword of the Babylonians!

¹² Like locusts, the Babylonians (or, Chaldeans) invaded the city of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E. The Bible

11. What clues do Joel 1:6 and 2:1, 8, 11 give us about the identity of the locusts?

12. How was Joel’s prophecy about the locusts fulfilled?

reports: “The king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword . . . , felt no compassion for young man or virgin, old or infirm. God gave everything into his hand. He burned down the house of the true God, tore down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its fortified towers with fire, and *destroyed everything of value.*” (2 Chron. 36:17, 19) When the Babylonians were finished with the land, onlookers could only say: “It is a wasteland without man and beast, and it has been handed over to the Chaldeans.” —Jer. 32:43.

¹³ Some 200 years after Joel’s prophecy, Jehovah used Jeremiah to foretell something else about this attack. He said that a thorough search would be made for those Israelites who engaged in wicked practices—a search that would lead to their capture. “‘Here I am sending for many fishermen,’ declares Jehovah, ‘and they will fish for them. After that I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them down on every mountain and every hill and out of the clefts of the crags. . . . I will repay the full amount due for their error and their sin.’” Neither the oceans nor the forests would be able to conceal the unrepentant Israelites from the Babylonian invaders.—Jer. 16:16, 18.

13. Explain the meaning of Jeremiah 16:16, 18.

RESTORATION

¹⁴ On a positive note, Joel now brings news of restoration. The land will be fruitful again. (Joel 2:23-26) Then at some point in the future, an ample supply of spiritual food will become available. “I will pour out my spirit on every sort of flesh,” says Jehovah, “and your sons and your daughters will prophesy . . . And even on my male slaves and female slaves I will pour out my spirit.” (Joel 2:28, 29) That outpouring of God’s spirit did not occur as soon as the Israelites were brought back from Babylon to their homeland. Rather, it took place centuries later, at Pentecost 33 C.E. How do we know?

¹⁵ Under inspiration, the apostle Peter applied Joel 2:28, 29 to an amazing event that took place on that day of Pentecost. About nine o’clock that morning, there was a miraculous outpouring of holy spirit that moved those who received it to begin speaking “about the magnificent things of God.” (Acts 2:11) Under inspiration, Peter used slightly different wording when quoting Joel’s prophecy. Did you notice what adjustment he made? (Read Acts 2:16, 17.) Instead of beginning the quotation with the words

14. When was Joel 2:28, 29 fulfilled?

15. According to Acts 2:16, 17, what adjustment to the text of Joel 2:28 did Peter make, and what does that indicate?

“after that,” Peter said: “And *in the last days*”—in this context, the last days of the Jewish system of things—God’s spirit would be poured out “on every sort of flesh.” This indicates that considerable time had passed before Joel’s prophecy was fulfilled.

¹⁶ It was after that remarkable outpouring of God’s spirit in the first century that the preaching work began to go forward to the greatest extent. By the time the apostle Paul wrote his letter to the Colossians, about 61 C.E., he could describe the good news as being preached “in all creation under heaven.” (Col. 1: 23) In Paul’s day, “all creation” meant the world as it was then known. With the help of Jehovah’s powerful holy spirit, the preaching work has expanded much more in our day—“to the ends of the earth”!—Acts 13:47; see the box “I Will Pour Out My Spirit.”

WHAT HAS CHANGED?

¹⁷ What has changed? We now have a more accurate understanding of the prophecy found at Joel 2: 7-9. Simply put, these verses refer, not to our zealous preaching work, but to the activity of the Babylonian army that invaded Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E.

16. What effect did God’s spirit have on the preaching work in the first century, and what about today?

17. How has our understanding of Joel’s prophecy about the locusts changed?

“I Will Pour Out My Spirit”

On the day of Pentecost 33 C.E., about 3,000 men and women got baptized as disciples of Jesus Christ. They immediately began sharing the truth about Jesus with others. Did Jehovah bless their zealous activity? Without a doubt! “Many thousands” became obedient to the word about the Christ.—Acts 2:41; 21:20.

How many thousands had become believers? The Bible does not say, but even by the end of the first century, the number of believers must have been far fewer than 144,000. At that time, Jehovah was selecting men and women to be heirs of the heavenly Kingdom, but the majority of the anointed have been chosen in modern times. Still, the remarkable growth in the first century is proof that Jehovah had poured out his spirit on those early disciples.—Acts 2:16-18.

Is there evidence that Jehovah has poured out his spirit on his servants today? Definitely! Consider these facts: According to available records, in 1919 there were fewer than 6,000 publishers of the good news worldwide. Even so, Jehovah blessed the preaching work, and since 1983 far more than 144,000 people have got baptized as Jehovah’s Witnesses **every year!** Surely this is evidence that Jehovah has been fulfilling his promise about his servants: “I will pour out my spirit”—Joel 2:28, 29.

18 What has not changed? Jehovah’s people continue to preach the good news everywhere, using every possible avenue to do so. (Matt. 24:14) No governmental restriction can prevent us from carrying out the commission to preach. And with Jehovah’s blessing, we are more active than ever, courageously preaching the good news of the Kingdom! We humbly continue to look to Jehovah for his guidance in understanding Bible prophecy, confident that when the time is right, he will lead us “into all the truth”! —John 16:13.

18. What has not changed about Jehovah’s people?

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 8: Joel’s prophecy predicted a military attack. The Revelation account foretold zealous preaching activity.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

- Why may adjustments need to be made in our understanding of Bible prophecy?
- What does the prophecy at Joel 2:7-9 foretell?
- Why do you feel that adjustments to our understanding are faith-strengthening?

SONG 97

Life Depends on God’s Word

97 *Life Depends on God's Word*

(Matthew 4:4)

1. Life depends on Jehovah's Word,
All the things he has said.
We must live not on bread alone;
Live by his Word instead.
Even now we have peace and joy,
Future blessings assured.

(CHORUS)

*Man must live not on bread alone;
Life depends on God's Word.
There we find what we daily need;
Life depends on God's Word.*

2. True accounts in God's written Word
Tell about those of old.
Men and women who walked in faith—
They were loyal and bold.
We're encouraged each time we read
All they did and endured.

(Chorus)

3. Day by day as we read God's Word,
He gives comfort and hope.
When the trials of life arise,
He gives wisdom to cope.
May we treasure within our heart
All we've read and we've heard.

(Chorus)