

11.09b Joseph Known (Genesis 44:1–34; 45:1–28)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- (optional) Flash cards from “Joseph,” Genesis Series 5, A Beka Book, Pensacola, FL
- (optional) Herein Is Love Commentary Series; *Genesis, A Commentary for Children*, by Nancy Ganz, Shepherd Press, 2002.

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *Sheol*: the place of the departed dead
- *divination*: foretelling the future in a way condemned by Scripture (Deuteronomy 18:10)
- *to tear one’s clothes*: an act to show extreme grief
- *lad* or *child*: in this story the terms refer to Benjamin, who was probably thirty-two years old and had ten children; these words show the special place Benjamin had in his father’s heart
(<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/genesis-43-8.html>).

Scripture: (NASB)

Genesis 44:1 Then he commanded his house steward, saying, “Fill the men’s sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man’s money in the mouth of his sack. 2 Put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his money for the grain.” And he did as Joseph had told *him*. 3 As soon as it was light, the men were sent away, they with their donkeys. 4 They had *just* gone out of the city, *and* were not far off, when Joseph said to his house steward, “Up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good? 5 Is not this the one from which my lord drinks and which he indeed uses for divination? You have done wrong in doing this.’”

6 So he overtook them and spoke these words to them. 7 They said to him, “Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing. 8 Behold, the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks we have brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord’s house? 9 With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord’s slaves.” 10 So he said, “Now let it also be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and *the rest of* you shall be innocent.” 11 Then they hurried, each man lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack. 12 He searched, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack. 13 Then they tore their clothes, and when each man loaded his donkey, they returned to the city.

14 When Judah and his brothers came to 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? Do you not know that such a man as I can indeed practice divination?” 16 So Judah said, “What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; behold, we are my lord’s slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found.” 17 But he said, “Far be it from me to do this. The man in whose possession the cup has been found, he shall be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your father.”

18 Then Judah approached him, and said, “Oh my lord, may your servant please speak a word in my lord’s ears, and do not be angry with your servant; for you are equal to Pharaoh. 19 My lord asked his servants,

saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?' 20 We said to my lord, 'We have an old father and a little child of *his* old age. Now his brother is dead, so he alone is left of his mother, and his father loves him.' 21 Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me that I may set my eyes on him.' 22 But we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' 23 You said to your servants, however, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will not see my face again.' 24 Thus it came about when we went up to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. 25 Our father said, 'Go back, buy us a little food.' 26 But we said, 'We cannot go down. If our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' 27 Your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; 28 and the one went out from me, and I said, "Surely he is torn in pieces," and I have not seen him since. 29 If you take this one also from me, and harm befalls him, you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow.' 30 Now, therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, 31 when he sees that the lad is not *with us*, he will die. Thus your servants will bring the gray hair of your servant our father down to Sheol in sorrow. 32 For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him *back* to you, then let me bear the blame before my father forever.' 33 Now, therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. 34 For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me—for fear that I see the evil that would overtake my father?"

45:1 Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried, "Have everyone go out from me." So there was no man with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 2 He wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard *it*, and the household of Pharaoh heard *of it*. 3 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence.

4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come closer to me." And they came closer. And he said, "I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. 6 For the famine *has been* in the land these two years, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. 8 Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt. 9 Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. 10 You shall live in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children and your flocks and your herds and all that you have. 11 There I will also provide for you, for there are still five years of famine *to come*, and you and your household and all that you have would be impoverished.'" 12 Behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin *see*, that it is my mouth which is speaking to you. 13 Now you must tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt, and all that you have seen; and you must hurry and bring my father down here." 14 Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. 15 He kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and afterward his brothers talked with him.

16 Now when the news was heard in Pharaoh's house that Joseph's brothers had come, it pleased Pharaoh and his servants. 17 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: load your beasts and go to the land of Canaan, 18 and take your father and your households and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you will eat the fat of the land.' 19 Now you are ordered, 'Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father and come. 20 Do not concern yourselves with your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.'"

21 Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them wagons according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the journey. 22 To each of them he gave changes of garments, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred *pieces* of silver and five changes of garments. 23 To his father he sent as follows: ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and sustenance for his father on the journey.

24 So he sent his brothers away, and as they departed, he said to them, "Do not quarrel on the journey." 25 Then they went up from Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob. 26 They told him, saying,

“Joseph is still alive, and indeed he is ruler over all the land of Egypt.” But he was stunned, for he did not believe them. 27 When they told him all the words of Joseph that he had spoken to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. 28 Then Israel said, “It is enough; my son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”

Introduction/Review:

Two times Jacob’s sons had journeyed to Egypt for food. The first time, they did not take Benjamin. Joseph, ruler over Egypt, had accused them of spying and had kept Simeon in prison until they would come back. The second time, Jacob reluctantly allowed Benjamin to go with his nine other sons. Joseph treated them all with kindness, even inviting them to eat with him.

Story:

Planting evidence

Joseph had another test for these brothers of his. He told his house steward, “Fill the men’s sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man’s money in the mouth of his sack as you did before. As well as his money for the grain, put my silver cup in the mouth of the sack of the youngest brother.”

The house steward did everything as Joseph had instructed.

✓It seems as if the men stayed the night with Joseph, for the Bible states, “As soon as it was light, the men were sent away with their donkeys.” If they didn’t stay with him, Joseph was certainly very aware of the time of their leaving town the next morning.

Finding evidence

They had barely left the city when Joseph gave more instructions to his house steward: “Up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good? Why did you take my silver cup, the one from which my lord drinks and which he indeed uses for divination? You have done wrong in doing this.’”

So the steward went after the men and caught up with them. He said, “Why have you taken my master’s cup from which he drinks. You have rewarded evil for good!”

“What do you mean?” replied the brothers. “Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing. You can tell we are honest men because we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money that we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord’s house?” Then the brothers made a bold statement that showed their belief in their innocence. They said, “Let the one with whom you find the cup die, and the rest of us will be slaves to my lord.”

“Well, we won’t be so harsh as to make the thief die,” said the steward. “However, he shall be my slave. The rest of you shall be innocent and free to go.”

All the men hurried to prove no one had stolen the cup. They lowered their sacks from the donkeys to the ground, and each man opened his sack. The steward, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest, searched, and, horror of horrors, the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack!

✓“Oh! No!” they all might have said as they tore their clothes in grief. The only thing they could do was to return to the Egyptian official. Each man loaded his donkey again, and they returned to the city.

Protesting the evidence

Joseph was still at home when they arrived at his house. Once again they fell to the ground before him.

“What is this deed that you have done?” demanded Joseph. “Do you not know that such a man as I can indeed practice divination?”

Judah said, “What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; behold, we are my lord’s slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found.”

But Joseph declared, “Not so. Far be it from me to do this. The man in whose possession the cup has been found, he shall be my slave. As for the rest of you, go up in peace to your father.”

Then Judah approached Joseph and told him the whole story. This is what he said: “Oh my lord, may your servant please speak a word in my lord’s ears. Please do not be angry with your servant, for you are equal to Pharaoh.

“My lord asked his servants, saying, ‘Have you a father or a brother?’ We said to my lord, ‘We have an old father and a little child of his old age. Now his brother is dead, so he alone is left of his mother, and his father loves him.’

“Then you said to your servants, ‘Bring him down to me that I may set my eyes on him.’

“But we said to my lord, ‘The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.’

“You said to your servants, however, ‘Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will not see my face again.’ Thus it came about when we went up to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.

“Our father said, ‘Go back, buy us a little food.’

“But we said, ‘We cannot go down. If our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we cannot see the man’s face unless our youngest brother is with us.’

“Your servant my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife bore me two sons; and the one went out from me, and I said, “Surely he is torn in pieces,” and I have not seen him since. If you take this one also from me, and harm befalls him, you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow.’

“Now, therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad’s life, when he sees that the lad is not with us, he will die. Thus your servants will bring the gray hair of your servant our father down to Sheol in sorrow. For I, your servant, became surety for the lad to my father, saying, ‘If I do not bring him back to you, then let me bear the blame before my father forever.’

“Now, therefore, please let your servant remain a slave instead of the lad to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me—for fear that I see the evil that would overtake my father?”

Revealing identity

At that point in the story, Joseph could no longer control himself. He cried to all the servants and people attending to him, “Go out from me.” Everyone, except the brothers left. Joseph wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard his weeping, and the household of Pharaoh heard about it.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?”

His brothers could not answer him, for they were distraught at his presence. Perhaps it took a moment for those words, “I am Joseph,” to sink into their ears and minds.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Please come closer to me.”

They came closer, and Joseph in his words and demeanor demonstrated one of the most beautiful of scenes of forgiveness ever known. He said, “I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land only two years, but there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to

keep you alive by a great deliverance. Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God.

“He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, “God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. You shall live in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children and your flocks and your herds and all that you have. There I will also provide for you, for there are still five years of famine to come, and you and your household and all that you have would be impoverished.”’”

“Behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth which is speaking to you. Now you must tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt, and all that you have seen; and you must hurry and bring my father down here.”

Then he fell on his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. He kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and afterward his brothers talked with him.

Sending back to Canaan

When Pharaoh heard the news that Joseph’s brothers had come, he and his servants were pleased. Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Tell your brothers to load their beasts and go back to Canaan. Tell them to bring your father and their households here, and I will give them the best of the land of Egypt. Also, they are to take wagons from Egypt for their little ones and their wives, and bring your father and come. They don’t need to worry about their goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is theirs.”

That’s what the sons of Israel did. Joseph gave them wagons, provisions for the journey, and changes of garments. But to Benjamin Joseph gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments. He also prepared a gift for his father. It was ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and for his father’s journey.

As Joseph sent his brothers away, he said something to them that I find amusing even if it is serious. He said, “Now, do not quarrel on the journey.” ✓ I dare say that admonition was obeyed. After all, the top man in Egypt had commanded it.

Telling Jacob about Joseph

When they got home, they told Jacob, “Father, Joseph is alive. Indeed, he is ruler over all the land of Egypt.”

But Jacob was so stunned that he did not believe them. So they told him all the words Joseph had told them. Finally, when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, Jacob’s spirit revived and he said, “It is enough; my son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”

Oh, this story is turning around. Praise the Lord!

*It is this author’s opinion that Joseph did not use the cup for actual divination. This practice is condemned in Scripture (1 Samuel 15:23), but Joseph was clearly in a right relationship with God. The statement about divination probably was for optics—to intensify Joseph’s identity as an Egyptian.

Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:
Jesus was the ultimate forgiver. He died for the sins of His people so that their sins could be forgiven.
- Joseph saw God’s hand in all his troubles for the purpose of saving life. May we also see, even during trials, that God is working out His purpose in our lives and in the lives of others through us.

Activities:

- Play dough: sacks; cup; wagons; donkeys; clothes
- Snack: Lentils were a typical food in Egypt. The recipe found at the site below can be a salsa for chips. Spicy Lentil Nachos: <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/169573/spicy-lentil-nachos/?internalSource=hub%20recipe&referringContentType=Search&clickId=cardslot%202>.
- Play “Find the Cup”: Cut eleven sacks from felt and prepare a silver cup backed by flannel or paper towel. When students are not looking, place the cup behind one of the “sacks.” Have students guess where the cup is hidden. The one who guesses correctly may hide the cup for the next round of play.
- Sing “Song of Joseph” found with audio and visual at <http://gardenofpraise.com/bibsong3.htm>.
- Review questions: (Game: Cut ten “shirts” out of various colors of felt. A student may place a shirt on the flannel board after answering a question correctly.)
 1. What did Joseph instruct his steward to do? [Put the money back in the brothers’ sacks and put his cup in Benjamin’s sack.]
 2. When accused of stealing Joseph’s cup, what did the brothers say should happen to the thief? [He should die.]
 3. What did the brothers do when the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack? [Tore their clothes and went back to Joseph’s house.]
 4. Rather than death, what was Joseph’s punishment for Benjamin? [To become his slave.]
 5. Who spoke up for saving Benjamin from slavery? [Judah.]
 6. What was Judah’s main argument? [His father would die of grief if Benjamin did not return home.]
 7. What did Joseph do before revealing his identity? [Cleared the room of all but his brothers; wept.]
 8. What reason did Joseph give as to why his brothers should not be angry with themselves for selling him? [Because God had sent him to Egypt ahead of them to preserve life because of the famine.]
 9. List three things Joseph gave his family before they left Egypt? [Wagons; provisions for the journey; changes of garments; to Benjamin, he three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments; to his father, ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and sustenance for the journey.]
 10. When did Jacob believe the news about Joseph? [When he saw the wagons Joseph sent.]

Memory Verse[s]: (NASB)

- Luke 6:37—Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Handwork:

- Copy the clipart of a goblet found below for each student. Have students color the picture and then glue sequins or jewels on the “cup.”

Sheol

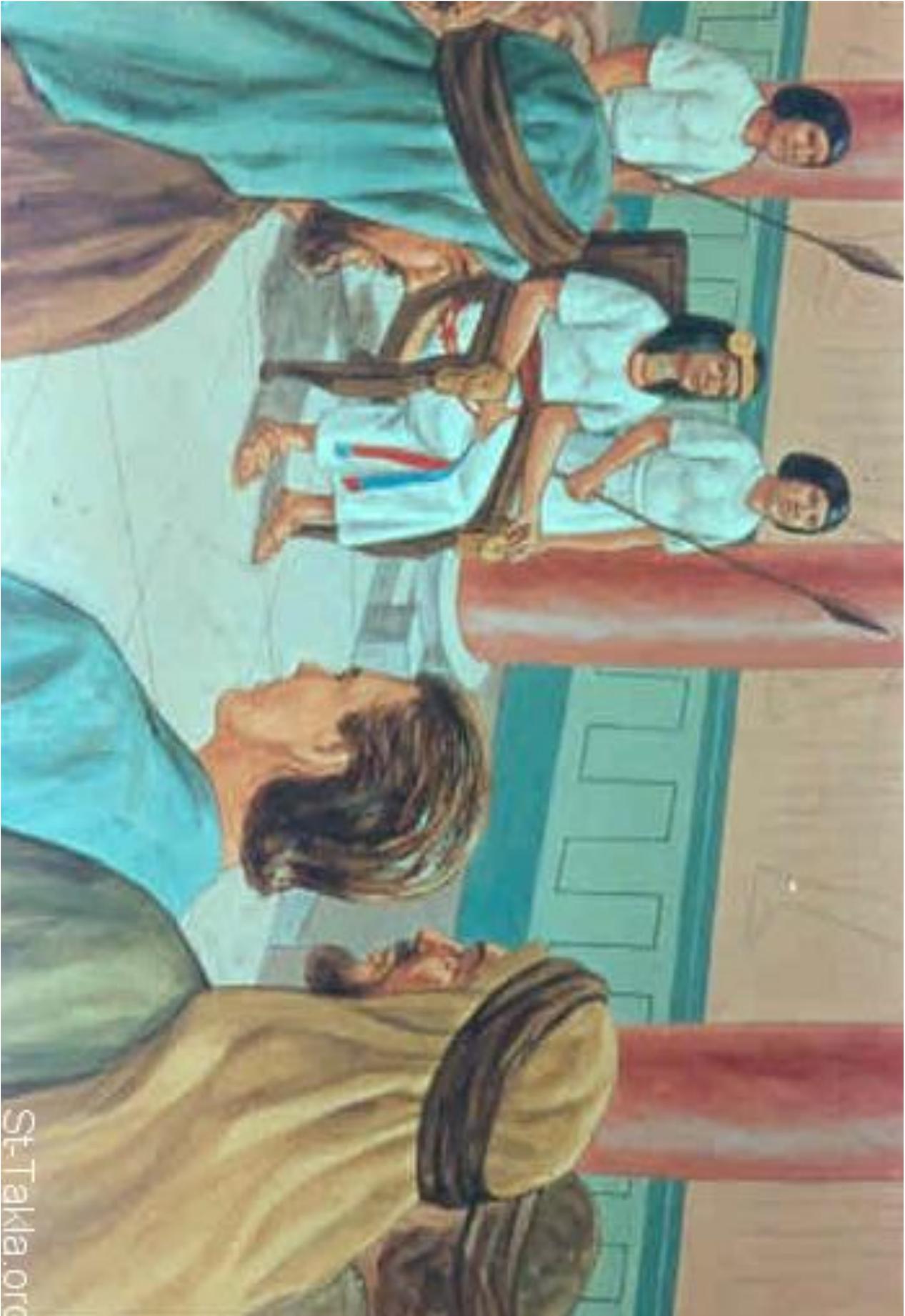
divination

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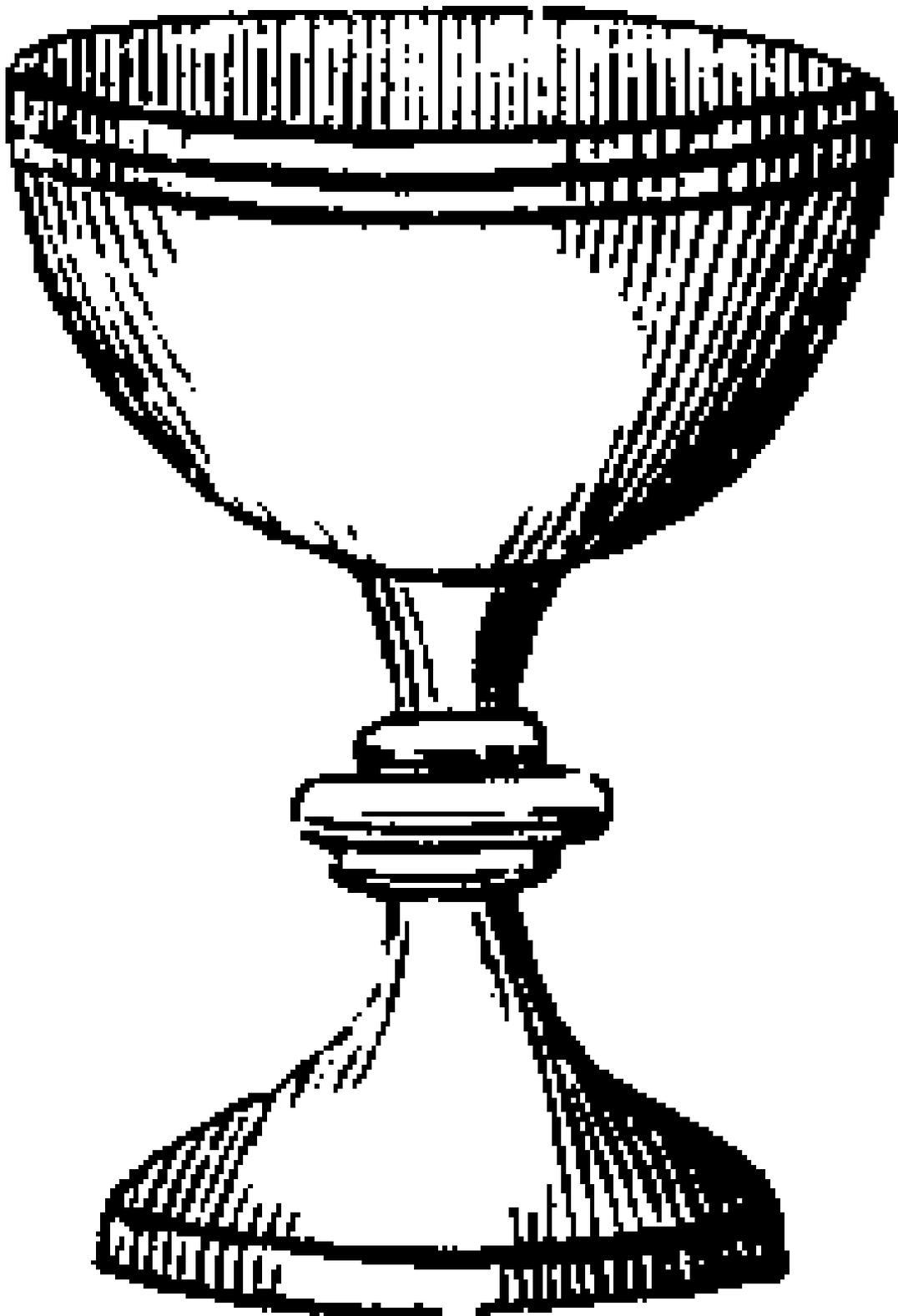
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Joseph said, “God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance” (Genesis 49:7).