



A terrible famine had come over all the earth. Jacob sent ten of his sons to Egypt to buy corn. When the ten brothers arrived in Egypt, they did not know that the governor—the man they were buying the corn from—was their own brother Joseph! The brothers bowed to Joseph, as all the people had to do in the presence of the governor. Wasn't that what Joseph's dreams had shown the ten brothers would do?

Joseph's brothers did not recognize him, but Joseph knew them right away. Joseph remembered his dreams and how his brothers had sold him into slavery. Had his brothers changed? Were they sorry for what they had done? Joseph did not know.

Joseph began to test his brothers. First, he accused them of being spies. Then he put them all in prison for three days. When they were released, Joseph said if they were really brothers, then they were to bring their youngest brother to him. After that, he allowed all of them but Simeon to return home. Also, he returned their money by hiding it in their sacks of corn.

The brothers arrived home and told their father everything that had happened to them in Egypt. Then, as they emptied the sacks of corn, they found all of their money was in those sacks. This caused the brothers and their father to be afraid.

When Jacob heard that Benjamin was required to return to Egypt, he was very unhappy. Jacob was still sad over the loss of Joseph; Simeon was in prison; and Jacob did not want to lose Benjamin also.

However, when they needed to buy more grain, the brothers returned to Egypt, taking Benjamin with them.

Church of God Sunday School

JOSEPH CARES FOR HIS FAMILY

Genesis 42:25 — 50:21

They also took twice as much money as before, because they thought their money had been overlooked the first time. They even took a present for the governor.

When the brothers arrived in Egypt and Joseph saw that they had Benjamin with them, he had the ruler of his house take them to his own house. Again, his brothers were very fearful. They thought they might be in trouble because of the money they had found in their sacks.

The brothers spoke with the steward of the house, but he told them not to be afraid; all was well. Then he brought Simeon out to be with his brothers. When Joseph came home, the brothers gave him their present and bowed to the ground before him. Joseph asked if their father was still alive. (Remember, the brothers still did not know who Joseph really was.)

The brothers assured Joseph that their father was well. When Joseph saw his younger brother Benjamin, he went to his chamber and wept. (Benjamin was Rachel's second son, the full brother to Joseph. He would have been a very small child when Joseph was sold as a slave.)

When it was time to eat, the brothers were amazed to find that they were seated by age, from the oldest to the youngest. Food was taken from Joseph's table and given to his brothers, but Benjamin was given five times more to eat than the rest. When it was time for them to leave, Joseph secretly had all their money restored in their bags of corn. Joseph had his steward hide his own silver cup in Benjamin's bag of corn.

The brothers had not traveled very far from the city when Joseph sent his steward after them to accuse them of stealing his cup. They searched their bags and found the cup in Benjamin's bag. The steward said that whoever had taken the cup was to be made a servant to the governor. So back to the city they went. They were all scared!

The brothers returned to Joseph's house and bowed before him. As Joseph questioned them about the cup, Judah spoke up and said they would *all* be his servants, not just Benjamin. He began to tell Joseph how heartbroken their father had been over the loss of their

brother Joseph. He said Jacob would die if Benjamin were taken from him too. Judah then offered to be a slave in Benjamin's place.

Joseph could not keep quiet any longer! He broke down and cried so loudly that the house of Pharaoh heard him. When Joseph could speak, he said: "Come near to me, I pray you. . . . I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt."

What a time of rejoicing followed! Joseph told his brothers that they should not be angry with themselves because they had sold him. It had all been part of God's plan in order to save their families during the famine. Joseph asked his brothers to go get Jacob and the rest of their families and bring them to Egypt, where they would have plenty of food.

When the brothers returned home and told Jacob that Joseph was still alive, he could not believe it. However, when he saw the wagons Joseph sent to bring him to Egypt, Jacob said, "Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." Jacob and all of Joseph's relatives moved from Canaan to Egypt. There they were given the land of Goshen (*GOH-shuhn*) to live in.

Jacob lived in Egypt for seventeen years, then he died, being 147 years old. Before he died, he blessed each of his sons and made Joseph promise not to bury him in Egypt. Jacob wanted to be buried in his own land—Canaan—beside his own kinsmen in a tomb in

the cave in the field of Machpelah (*mak-PEE-lah*). (Before Jacob went down to Egypt, God had promised that He would bring him out of Egypt.)

After Jacob's death, Joseph's brothers feared that Joseph might try to pay them back for what they had done to him. They asked for Joseph's forgiveness again and told him they would be his servants. Joseph wept when he heard this. He told his brothers that although they thought evil against him, "God meant it unto good." Joseph promised to take care of his brothers and their families.

Joseph was a beautiful example of returning good for evil. He never sought to get even with those who had done him wrong. Not only that, but he took care of those same ones who had caused him such grief.

When Joseph was old and about to die, he reminded his brethren of the One who had helped him throughout his life: "I die: [but] God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land" Joseph was so sure of this promise that he commanded the children of Israel to carry his bones with them when they left Egypt.

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*". . . ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good . . . to save much people alive."*

*—Genesis 50:20*

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