

# Joseph

Genesis 37, 40-45

**Father Jacob** (also known as **Israel**) lived in the land of **Canaan**.

He had **12 sons**:

- **Rueben** – “Let’s not kill him”
- **Simeon** – Stayed behind in Egyptian prison
- Levi
- **Judah** – “Let’s sell him!” “I will guarantee Benjamin’s safety”
- Dan
- Naphtali
- Gad
- Asher
- Issachar
- Zebulun
- **Joseph** – the favored son; given a coat of many colors
- **Benjamin** – youngest; had the same mother as Joseph

His brothers  
hated him ... envied him ...  
and could not speak a kind word to him.



When Joseph was **17 years old**  
God gave him **dreams** about his future ...

**1<sup>st</sup> Dream:** Sheaves bow before him

**2<sup>nd</sup> Dream:** Sun, Moon & 11 Stars bow down

While the brothers were grazing flocks near **Dothan**, Jacob sent Joseph to check on them. When the brother saw he was coming in the distance, they conspired and plotted to **kill him**. **Rueben** said, “Let’s not to kill him, but instead throw him in an empty pit.” (He was hoping to come back later to rescue Joseph so that he’d be a “hero” and be rewarded by his father.)

Joseph begged for help, but his brothers just **sat down to eat** and ignored him. They noticed Midianite traders passing by and **Judah** suggested that they sell Joseph as a slave and make some money – **20 shekels** of silver! When **Ruben** found out what they had done, he tore his clothes because he was so disappointed (now his plan to get his father’s approval had failed).

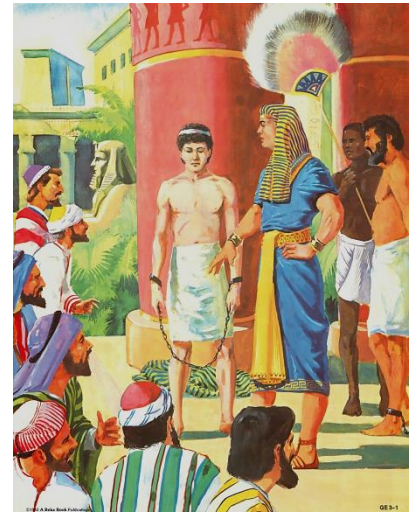
The brothers had taken Joseph’s colorful robe from him and dipped it in **goat’s blood** to make it look like he had been attacked. When they showed it to their father, he was convinced that Joseph had been killed by a **ferocious wild beast**. Jacob mourned for his son many days, and although all his sons and daughters tried to comfort him, he refused to be comforted.

## Potiphar's House

Joseph was taken far from home to **Egypt** – he was sold as a slave to a man named **Potiphar** who was an **officer of Pharaoh** (*king of Egypt*) and a **captain of the guard**.

**The Lord was with Joseph** and gave him success in everything that he did. Potiphar trusted Joseph and put him in charge of all that he owned.

Things were going very well for him, but then Joseph was accused of something he did not do – something that he would not do because it was a sin against God. His **conscience toward God** would not let him sin. Even though he was innocent, Potiphar sent him to prison anyway!



## The Prison

While Joseph was in the prison, **the Lord was with him**. The warden put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners, and he was responsible for all that was done there.

Two new prisoners came – they worked directly for Pharaoh, king of Egypt – but he was angry with them and had them sent to prison.

- **The Chief Butler/Cupbearer**
- **The Chief Baker**

Grape vine with **3 branches** = Released

**3 baskets** on his head = Hanged

Why are you sad?

Interpretations belong to God,  
Tell me your dreams.

We both had dreams, but we  
don't know what they mean.

Mention me to Pharaoh  
when you get out of prison!



**... But the Chief Bulter forgot Joseph**

Two years later ...

Oh yeah!  
I know a guy who can  
interpret dreams!

It's not me – GOD will give  
Pharaoh an answer.

Pharaoh had a troubling Dream:

7 fat cows

7 skinny, sickly cows

7 healthy ears

7 withered ears of corn

Representing:

7 years of abundant, plentiful harvest

7 years of famine

## The Palace

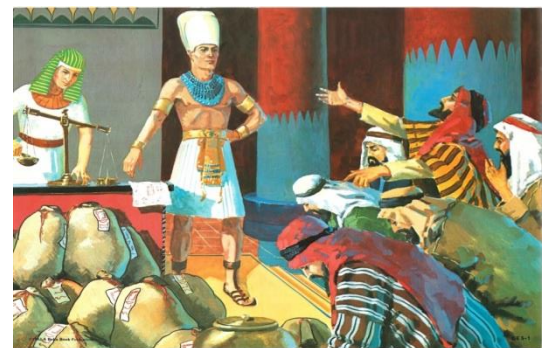
Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so **discerning and wise** as you." Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of the whole land of Egypt – he gave Joseph his **signet ring**, robes of **fine clothes**, and a **gold chain** around his neck to show he was in charge.



Joseph was now **30 years old**. Pharaoh changed his name to **Zaphenath-Paneah** and gave him a wife named **Asenath** and they had two sons **before the famine** began:

- **1<sup>st</sup> born son**      **Manasseh**      God made me **forget** all my trouble
- **2<sup>nd</sup> born son**      **Ephriam**      God made me **fruitful** in the land of my suffering

During the 7 years of abundance Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain – then there came the 7 years of famine in all the lands, but Egypt had plenty of food. Other countries came to buy food from them. This is what brought Joseph and his brothers together again!



## First Journey into Egypt

Jacob sent **10 of his sons** to Egypt to buy food – **Benjamin** stayed at home. Since Joseph was in charge of everything, they had to go to him to buy food – but none of the brothers recognized him. Joseph knew them, but he **treated them as strangers** and **spoke through an interpreter** so they didn't know that he understood what they were saying. He was a very powerful man and the brothers **bowed down with their faces to the ground** when they approached him – just like in his dream!

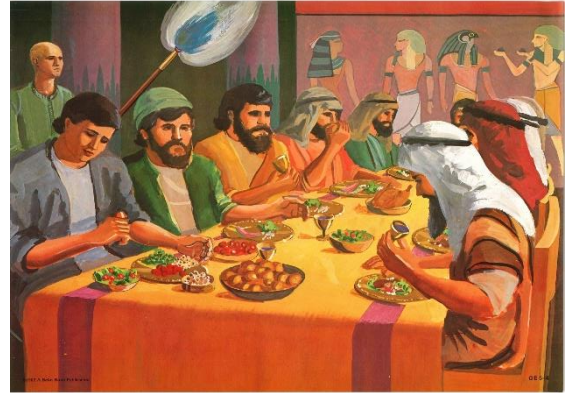
Joseph accused them of being **spies** and kept them in custody for **3 days**. To verify their story, Joseph said they had to bring back their youngest brother – and to make sure they did, Joseph made **Simeon** stay behind in Egypt. They took their sacks of grain home and were terrified to find the **\$\$\$** they had paid was in their sacks – people would think that they had stolen the grain!



## Second Journey into Egypt

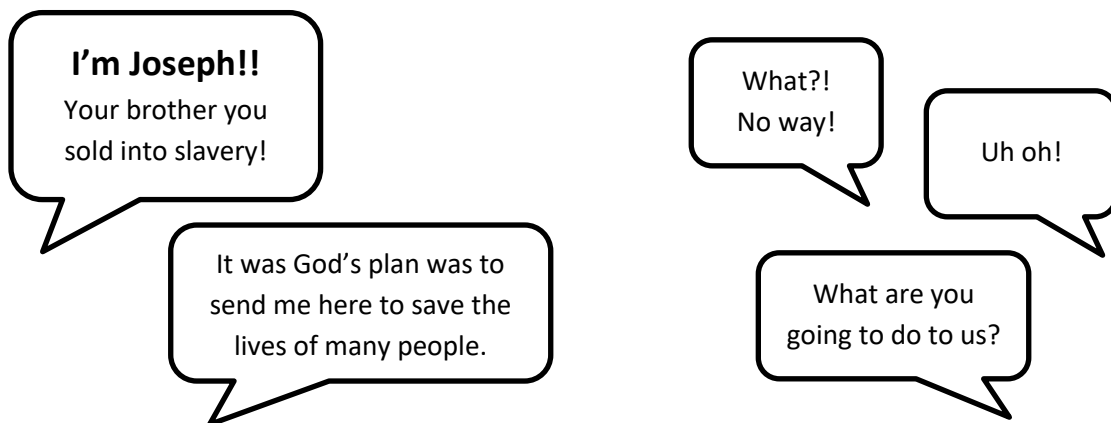
When food was running low and they had to return to Egypt for more, they knew they had to bring Benjamin with them. Jacob (**also known as Israel**) didn't want to send him, but **Judah** promised to take care of him and guarantee his safe return. This time they took **double the \$\$\$**.

When they arrived, Joseph commanded that they all be brought to his house – they became very afraid and wondered what would happen to them. They were seated at a table **in order from oldest to youngest** and when Joseph saw his brother Benjamin, he excused himself to go to **his private chamber to weep**. When he returned, they served the food and Benjamin received a serving that was **5 times larger** than everyone else.



In the morning before they left to go home, Joseph told his servant to put the \$\$\$ back in their sacks of grain along with his personal **silver cup** in Benjamin's sack – the brothers left not knowing about this. In a short while, the servant chased them and accused them of stealing. Since the cup was found with Benjamin's belongings, Joseph threatened to put him in prison, but **Judah** volunteered to be Joseph's slave for life if he would let Benjamin go free. Now Joseph knew that his brothers had changed!

Joseph couldn't hide his secret and longer and he revealed to them who he really was!



## Coming to Live in the Land of Goshen

When the news reached Pharaoh's palace that Joseph's brothers had come, Pharaoh was very pleased. He told Joseph to invite his family to come to live here – "Take carts to pick up your wives and children and your father to bring them back. And don't worry about your belongings because the best of all Egypt will be yours." Joseph warned his brothers that there was still **5 years of famine left**. He gave them each **new clothes** and to Benjamin he gave **300 shekels of silver** and **5 sets of clothes**.

"Joseph is still alive!" – they told their father – "In fact, he is ruler of all Egypt!" Jacob was stunned and didn't believe them at first, but they told him the whole story ... and they all moved to live with Joseph.