

## 11. Joseph and His Brothers

*Introduction: The previous story described how Jacob's beloved son, Joseph, was sold by his brothers to traders going to Egypt. Joseph had God's protection and blessing, and helped the king of Egypt interpret an important dream. The king knew that Joseph was a man of God. He made Joseph the prime minister of Egypt. (Genesis 37:3, 28; 41:16, 39–40)*

Seven good years were over and the seven drought years arrived. Regions all around Egypt also had severe drought. The people came to Egypt to buy food. (Genesis 41:43, 53–57)

Jacob heard that Egypt had food, so he asked his ten older sons to go buy food. But he did not let Joseph's little brother go with the other brothers. Jacob was afraid his youngest son might not come back, just like what had happened to Joseph in the past. (Genesis 42:1–4)

Joseph's brothers arrived in Egypt and went to see Joseph, the prime minister of Egypt. They all bowed down to him on the ground, hoping to buy some food from Egypt. (Genesis 42:6)

Joseph recognized his ten brothers, and remembered the dream he had when he was young. But his brothers did not recognize that Joseph was their brother whom they had sold to traders many years ago. (Genesis 42:7–9)

Joseph accused them that of coming to Egypt with evil intentions. The brothers explained to Joseph, "We are all brothers and we are good men; we have a very old father at home, and a younger brother. Our other younger brother is dead." (Genesis 42:10–13)

Joseph pretended he did not believe them, and arrested one of his brothers. He made them go home to bring back the youngest brother. This is how they would prove they were telling the truth. But he gave them food to take home. (Genesis 42:19–20)

They went home to tell their father Jacob about this matter. Later, after they consumed all the food, they had no choice but to take their younger brother to Egypt. (Genesis 42:29; 43:15)

Back in Egypt, Joseph again thought of a way to test his brothers. Joseph pretended to force the younger brother to stay in Egypt to do hard labor work. But the other brothers would not let him. Everyone was willing to replace their younger brother by staying and doing the hard labor. They were sorry for what they had done to their brother Joseph in the past. (Genesis 42:21–22; 44:17, 32–34)

At that time, Joseph could not hold back his tears any longer and began crying, telling his brothers that he was Joseph. (Genesis 45:1–3)

Joseph told them, “Do not hate yourselves for what you have done in the past. It is God who put me here, not you. God’s purpose is to save our lives. In this land, there has already been drought for two years. There will be another five more years during which we cannot grow food. Please hurry back home and bring our father here. Let me see him and take care of him.” (Genesis 45:5–11)

Jacob heard what his sons told him, that Joseph was alive and had become the prime minister of Egypt. He was very happy and gave thanks to God, because God allowed him to see his beloved son Joseph again in his old age. (Genesis 45:26; 46:3–4)

Jacob and all his family members went to Egypt to live, and their descendants later became a large nation. (Genesis 46:1, 3)