

022 Joseph's Brothers Go to Egypt

MEMORY VERSE: Godly sorrow brings repentance. 2 Corinthians 7:10

SCRIPTURES: Genesis 42 and 43

AIM: To teach that God's grace has the power to transform wicked hearts.

Just as God had revealed through Joseph, there was a famine in the land. Not only in Egypt, but also in Canaan where Joseph's family lived. When Jacob learned there was grain in Egypt he said to his sons, "Why do you just keep looking at each other, I have heard there is grain in Egypt. Go and buy some for us so that we may live!"

So Joseph's brothers went to Egypt to buy grain. All but one made the journey; Jacob kept his youngest, Benjamin at home, because he was afraid to lose him.

Like everyone else who came to buy food, the brothers had to appear before Joseph who was in charge of selling the food in the storehouses. It had been twenty years since they had sold their little brother as a slave, and the brothers had no idea this man sitting on a throne dressed like an Egyptian prince was their brother Joseph. But Joseph knew his brothers at once!

As they bowed before him, Joseph remembered how he had dreamed many years before that his brothers would one day bow down to him. Joseph was so glad to see his brothers he wanted to shout, "I'm your brother! Can't you see I'm your brother?" But Joseph first wanted to know if his brothers had changed. Were they still jealous and hateful?

So in a stern voice he said, "You are spies!" "Oh no, kind sir," they said. "We only came to buy food. We are ten sons of our father Jacob. One other brother, the youngest, is still at home. If we don't get some grain, we will all starve." Joseph was overjoyed to hear his father and younger brother were still alive!

"I won't believe anything you say unless you bring me your younger brother," said Joseph.

Joseph put all ten brothers in prison for three days. While in prison they did a lot of thinking about how they had treated Joseph when they had sold him as a slave. After three long days Joseph sent for the brothers. He found them greatly distressed, and heard them saying to each other that they were sorry for what they had done to Joseph.

Joseph pretended he didn't know what they were saying but he heard every word. Now he knew that they were truly sorry for what they had done. He was so happy he had to quickly brush away tears of relief.

Once again Joseph spoke like an Egyptian. "I'll take Simeon and keep him in prison. The rest of you may go home, but bring Benjamin back with you." Then Joseph gave the brothers grain to take home with them. He also secretly had the silver and money put in with the grain.

The brothers returned to their father Jacob, and told him all that happened, including Joseph's demand to bring Benjamin to Egypt. Initially Jacob refused, but when the food ran out, and he knew that his sons couldn't return to Egypt without Benjamin, he reluctantly agreed. Judah promised to take personal responsibility for Benjamin. "Take the governor some presents," he said. "Whatever little we have, take the best. Take honey, nuts, spices. And take double the money, for you must give back the money that was with your grain.

"And take your brother Benjamin. May God Almighty be with you so you may all come back."

The brothers did as Jacob had told them. They went down to Egypt and came before Joseph.

When Joseph saw his younger brother Benjamin, he was very happy. He invited them all to have dinner with him. His servant even brought water to wash his brothers' feet before they were served. Joseph sat at one table because he was the ruler of the land. Other Egyptian officers sat at a second table, and the brothers all sat at a third table.

"I'll give the most food to Benjamin," thought Joseph. I want to see if they are still jealous like they were of me when I was still at home.

And he gave Benjamin five times as much food. But the brothers were kind to Benjamin and seemed happy he had the most food to eat. The brothers still did not recognize Joseph.

Joseph knew that God had been working on his heart to be forgiving, and through these tests, he saw that God had also been at work in his brothers as well!

But Joseph had one more test for his brothers. Do you think they passed the test?