

# Chapter Nine

## Benjamin Comes to Egypt

"Forgiveness begins when we seek the truth instead of revenge."

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**T**he famine grew worse. The fields around Jacob's home no longer produced enough food to feed the family. The grain they hauled from Egypt slowly disappeared.

One evening Jacob investigated the nearly empty storage jars. He knew there was only one choice. "We must return to Egypt," he said quietly. "Our families need food."

The brothers looked at one another. Judah finally spoke. "Father, the ruler of Egypt warned us. He said we must not return unless Benjamin comes with us."

Jacob lowered his head. He had hoped never to hear those words again. For years he had mourned Joseph. Now Benjamin was the only son left from his beloved wife Rachel. "I cannot lose him too," Jacob whispered.

Judah stepped closer. "Father," he said earnestly, "I will personally guarantee Benjamin's safety. If I do not bring him home, you may hold me responsible for the rest of my life."

Jacob looked into Judah's eyes. He saw sincerity. At last, he nodded. "If it must be so, then take your brother." Jacob gathered gifts for the powerful Egyptian ruler. The brothers packed fragrant balm, honey, spices, pistachio nuts, almonds, and double the silver, including the money that had mysteriously appeared in their sacks after the first journey.

Then Jacob placed his hands upon Benjamin's shoulders. "May Almighty God watch over you," he prayed.

The brothers began the long journey south. Dust rose behind their donkeys as they crossed hills and deserts toward Egypt once again. Several days later they entered Egypt.

Joseph immediately noticed them. His eyes searched the group. Then he saw Benjamin. Benjamin was no longer the little boy Joseph remembered. He had become

a young man. Joseph's heart raced. His only full brother. The last son of Rachel was standing only a few steps away. Joseph remained calm.

Turning to the steward of his household, he quietly gave instructions. "Take these men to my home. Prepare a meal, for they will eat with me today."

The brothers became frightened. "Why are we being taken to his house?" they whispered. "Perhaps it is because of the silver that was returned to our sacks. They may arrest us and take our donkeys."

When they arrived at Joseph's house, they immediately explained everything to Joseph's steward. "We discovered the silver only after leaving Egypt," they said. "We have brought it back, along with more money to buy grain."

The steward smiled kindly. "Do not be afraid," he replied. "Your God has been gracious to you. I received your payment."

Then Simeon was brought out to them. The brothers rejoiced to see him safe. Soon Joseph arrived. The brothers presented their gifts and bowed before him once again. Joseph greeted them warmly.

"Is your aged father well?" he asked.

"He is well," they answered. "He is still living." Then Joseph looked directly at Benjamin. His voice softened.

"Is this your youngest brother, the one you told me about?"

Benjamin nodded respectfully.

"May God be gracious to you, my son," Joseph said. Overwhelmed with emotion, Joseph quickly left the room. He entered a private chamber. There, with no one watching, he wept. Years of longing poured from his heart. He had dreamed of seeing Benjamin again. Now God had made it possible. After washing his face, Joseph returned. No one guessed what had happened.

The servants prepared the meal. Joseph was seated at one table. The Egyptian officials sat at another. The brothers sat together according to their ages, from the oldest to the youngest.

The brothers stared at one another in amazement. "How could he know our ages?" they whispered.

Joseph smiled quietly. Then he instructed the servants to serve generous portions of food. When Benjamin's plate arrived, it held five times more food than anyone else's.

The brothers looked at Benjamin. Joseph carefully watched their reactions. Years before, they had hated Joseph because their father had shown him special favor. Would jealousy fill their hearts again?





But something had changed. No one complained. No one became angry. Instead, they laughed together and enjoyed the meal.

Joseph saw kindness where once their envy had been. Still, one final test remained. Joseph wanted to know whether his brothers would protect Benjamin or abandon him just as they had abandoned Joseph years before.

Before dawn the next morning, Joseph secretly instructed his steward. "Fill each man's sack with grain. Return every man's silver. Then place my silver cup into Benjamin's sack."

The steward obeyed. As the sun rose, the brothers happily began their journey home. They believed their troubles were finally over. They had no idea that Joseph's greatest test was about to begin.



While Joseph worked, God also blessed his family. Asenath was kind, intelligent, and supportive of Joseph's great responsibilities. In time they were blessed with two sons. Joseph named their first son Manasseh and explained, "The Lord has helped me forget the bitterness of my suffering." Their second son was named Ephraim. Joseph said, "God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."

# Chapter Ten

## Judah's Greatest Sacrifice

"True repentance changes the heart, not just the words."

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Early the next morning, Joseph quietly summoned the steward of his household. "Fill the men's sacks with as much grain as they can carry," he instructed. "Return each man's silver to the top of his sack."

The steward nodded. Then Joseph spoke one final command. "Place my silver cup inside Benjamin's sack."

The steward obeyed exactly. Soon the brothers loaded their donkeys and began the journey toward Canaan. They were relieved. Simeon had been released. Benjamin was safely with them. Their sacks were full of grain. Surely all their troubles were over.

But they had traveled only a short distance before hoofbeats echoed behind them. Joseph's steward and several guards rode quickly toward the brothers. "Halt!" the interpreter shouted.

The brothers stopped in surprise. "What have we done?" Judah asked. The interpreter's face became stern. "Why have you repaid kindness with evil? Our master treated you generously. Why have you stolen his treasured silver cup?"

The brothers stared in disbelief. "We would never steal from your master!" they answered. "You may search every sack. If the cup is found with any one of us, let that man die, and the rest of us will become slaves."



The interpreter calmly replied, "The one who possesses the cup will become our master's servant. The others may go free."

One by one, beginning with the oldest brother, the sacks were opened. Then the next, and the next, until every sack was examined except for Benjamin's sack. Finally, Benjamin's sack was opened. The silver cup appeared. For a long moment, no one spoke. The brothers stood frozen. Then they groaned and screamed in sorrow.

Years earlier, they might have abandoned Benjamin to save themselves, but not now. Without a single argument, without blaming Benjamin, all eleven brothers returned together to Joseph's palace. Joseph was waiting, and the brothers fell to the ground before him. Joseph looked quietly at them. The interpreter, speaking for Joseph said, "What have you done? Did you not know that we would discover such a thing?"

Judah stepped forward. His voice was filled with humility. "What can we say, my lord? God has uncovered our guilt. We are your servants."

Joseph shook his head. Going according to plan, the interpreter said, "No. Only the man in whose sack the cup was found shall remain. The rest of you may return safely to your father."

Silence filled the room as Benjamin's face turned pale. The other brothers looked at one another. This was the test. Would they leave Benjamin or would they stand beside him?

Judah slowly stepped forward. He bowed before Joseph. "My lord," he began, please allow your servant to speak." Although the interpreter was kept busy, Joseph understood perfectly what his brother were saying.

Joseph nodded.

Judah continued. "You asked whether we had a father or another brother. We told you about our aged father. We told you about Benjamin. Our father's life is closely bound to this young man's life."

Judah's voice became emotional. "Our father has already lost one beloved son. He believes that son died many years ago. If Benjamin does not return, our father will die of sorrow."

Then Judah said words no one expected. "My lord, please let me remain here as your slave. Let Benjamin return home to our father. I gave my father my promise. If I do not bring the boy home, I will bear the blame forever. Judah looked directly into Joseph's eyes. "How can I return to my father if Benjamin is not with me? I cannot bear to see my father's grief."

The room became silent. Joseph could hardly breathe. Years earlier, Judah had suggested selling Joseph into slavery. Now, Judah willingly offered himself as a slave to save his younger brother.

Joseph had his answer. His brothers were no longer the same men. Their jealousy, selfishness, and cruelty had been replaced by love and a strong sense of right and wrong.

Joseph felt tears filling his eyes. He knew he could not hide the truth much longer. The moment he had dreamed about for more than twenty years had finally arrived.





A 17-year-old young man was mistreated by his brothers. These brothers were committing a serious crime against Joseph. At one time, they even talked about murdering Joseph. Plus, the brothers let their jealousy of Joseph even hurt their father, Jacob, by taking away Jacob's son. These behaviors could cause a lot of bitterness in anyone who received such treatments.

# Chapter Eleven

## I am Joseph

"Forgiveness has the power to heal deep wounds."

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Joseph could no longer hide his emotions. Judah's words echoed through the room. Judah had offered himself as a slave to save Benjamin. The brothers had passed the final test. Joseph's heart overflowed. For years he had wondered whether they had changed. Now he knew. The jealousy and hatred had disappeared and was replaced with love.

Joseph looked around the room. Egyptian servants stood quietly nearby. Royal officials watched respectfully.

Joseph spoke with unusual urgency. "Everyone, leave the room!"

The servants looked at one another. Then they quietly departed. The doors closed. Only Joseph and his eleven brothers remained. For a moment, no one spoke. Joseph tried to hold back his tears, but he could not.

He began to weep so loudly that people outside the room heard him. The sound echoed through the palace. His brothers stood silently. They had never seen a powerful ruler weep like this.

Joseph finally looked at them. His voice trembled. Speaking in the language they loved, he said, "I am Joseph."

The situation seemed impossible.

Joseph repeated his message with great emphasis. "My brothers, I am Joseph." He took one slow step toward them. "Is my father still alive?"

Joseph continued to look at them. His voice trembled. Speaking in the language they loved, he said, "I am Joseph."

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Joseph repeated his message with great emphasis. "My brothers, I am Joseph." He took one slow step toward them. "Is my father still alive?"



The brothers stared at him. No one answered. Their faces became pale. Their mouths fell open. They were terrified. How could this Egyptian ruler know their language? How could he know their family? How could he possibly be Joseph?

Years earlier they had thrown him into a pit. They had sold him to traders, and they believed they would never see him again. Now he stood before them as the ruler of Egypt.

Joseph gently spoke again. "Please come closer." Slowly, almost fearfully, the brothers stepped forward.

"I am your brother Joseph," he said softly. "The one you sold into Egypt." Several brothers lowered their heads. Some began to tremble. Others could not lift their eyes. Shame filled the room.

Joseph saw the sorrow upon their faces. He immediately spoke words they never expected to hear. "Do not be afraid. Do not be angry with yourselves because you sold me."

The brothers looked up in surprise. Joseph continued. "It was God who sent me here ahead of you to preserve life. The famine has lasted two years. Five more years remain. If God had not brought me here, many people, including our own families, would perish."

Joseph smiled through his tears. "You intended one thing. But God accomplished another. He used even your terrible choice to save countless lives."

The room became quiet. The brothers had expected judgment. Instead, they received mercy.

Joseph stepped toward Benjamin. The two brothers embraced one another tightly. Both wept with joy. For more than twenty years they had been separated. Now they were together again.

Joseph then embraced each of his brothers: Reuben. Simeon. Levi. Judah. Issachar. Zebulun. Dan. Naphtali. Gad. Asher. One by one, Joseph hugged them.

Years of pain disappeared beneath tears of forgiveness. The brothers wept together. At last, they began talking freely. But their laughter still mixed with tears. Old memories returned. Hope filled the room.

Word quickly spread through Pharaoh's palace. "Joseph's family has come!"

Pharaoh was delighted. He called Joseph to him. "Tell your brothers to return home," Pharaoh said. "Bring your father. Bring your wives. Bring your children. Leave nothing behind. I will give your families the best land in all Egypt."

Joseph gratefully thanked Pharaoh. Then Joseph prepared gifts for the journey. He gave each brother new clothing. To Benjamin he gave five beautiful changes of clothing and three hundred pieces of silver.



Joseph also loaded donkeys with food, grain, bread, and supplies for Jacob's long journey. Before the brothers departed, Joseph smiled warmly. Then he gave them one final piece of advice. "Do not quarrel along the way."

The brothers smiled. They understood. Years earlier jealousy had divided them. Now love would carry them home.

As the caravan disappeared into the distance, Joseph stood quietly outside the palace. His heart was filled with gratitude. Soon, very soon, he would see his father again.





Joseph came into Egypt as a slave, not even knowing the language. But he rose to be a major ruler in the land. In Egypt, he gained wealth, wisdom, family, love, and he learned how to forgive others.



# Chapter Twelve

## A Family Reunited

"God's plans are always greater than our greatest disappointments."

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The brothers traveled home as quickly as they could. The wagons carried grain and gifts. But nothing they carried could compare with the wonderful news waiting to be shared. Joseph was alive.



At last, they reached their father's camp. Jacob hurried outside. His sons gathered around him. "Father," Judah said gently, we have wonderful news."

Jacob looked from one son to another. No one spoke for a moment. Then Judah smiled. "Joseph is alive."

Jacob stood perfectly still. He shook his head. "No," he whispered. "It cannot be. You told me he died."

The brothers lowered their eyes. They had lived with that lie for more than twenty years. Now they told their father everything. They described the ruler of Egypt. They explained how Joseph had recognized them. They spoke about the silver cup. They told how Joseph had forgiven them. Finally, they said, "Father, the ruler of Egypt is Joseph."

Jacob could hardly believe it. He started looking at the beautiful wagons Pharaoh had sent. Food. Supplies. Servants. Everything Joseph had promised. Hope slowly returned to Jacob's heart. With tears in his eyes, he smiled. "My son Joseph is alive. I will go and see him before I die."

Soon a great caravan that included 70 household members began traveling toward Egypt with their servants and supplies. Children laughed. Shepherds gathered the flocks. The line of wagons slowly crossed the desert. God had kept His promise.

One day the caravan reached the land of Goshen. Joseph had been waiting. As soon as he saw his father's wagon, he hurried forward. Jacob stepped down. For a long moment neither man spoke. Then Joseph wrapped his arms around his father. With all his strength, Jacob embraced Joseph. Both men wept.





Years of sorrow disappeared. Years of unanswered questions were finally gone. Father and son stood together again. Jacob looked at Joseph's face. "I never believed I would see you again," he whispered. Now God has allowed me to see not only you, but your children as well."

Smiling with joy, Joseph introduced his wife, Asenath. Then Manasseh and Ephraim stepped forward. In his heart, Joseph thanked God for preserving the families.

Pharaoh welcomed Joseph's families with great kindness. "You shall live in the best part of Egypt," Pharaoh declared. "The land of Goshen is yours."

After the completion of the seven-year famine, the Goshen fields recovered and, once again, turned green. Water became plentiful again. These conditions eventually provided pastures for the flocks. Joseph cared for his family just as he cared for all Egypt. During the remaining years of famine, no one in Jacob's family went hungry.

Many happy years passed. Jacob grew very old. Before he died, he gathered his sons around him and blessed each one. He thanked God for the faithfulness and love that existed in his family, and he pronounced blessings for each son.



Joseph remained beside his father until the very end. When Jacob died, Joseph wept once more, but his brothers became frightened. "Now that Father is gone," they whispered, "Perhaps Joseph will finally punish us."

But Joseph gently smiled. "Do not be afraid. Am I in the place of God? No. You intended to harm me. But God intended it for good. He used everything that happened to save many lives. I will continue to care for you. And I will care for your children."

The brothers wept again. This time, not because of fear, but because they had been completely forgiven.

Joseph lived many more years. He watched his grandchildren grow. He saw God's blessings continue from generation to generation. Before Joseph died, he called his family together. "God will surely keep His promises," he said. "One day He will lead our people out of Egypt and back to the land He promised our fathers."

Joseph believed God's promises until his final breath. He never stopped trusting the Lord. His life began with jealousy, passed through slavery, and he endured prison. But then came great honors. Most importantly, his life ended with forgiveness. God



had never abandoned Joseph in the pit, in slavery, in prison, not even during the years of waiting.



Jacob's 12 Sons. Back Row, L to R, Oldest to Youngest.  
Front Row, L to R, Oldest to Youngest





Joseph teaches his family about love and forgiveness.