

GENESIS 42 Josephs brothers go to Egypt

We left chapter 41, Joseph was appointed one of the most powerful men of Egypt. He was second only to Pharaoh. He had a wife and two sons. He was greatly blessed and had forgotten about all the hardship of his life, leading to this point. He has seen seven years of plenty, due to the greatest seven years of crop growth, the nation of Egypt had ever seen. Now the seven years of famine has begun. All the nations surrounding Egypt were running out of food, after the first year. The famine was that severe.

1 Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, **Why do ye look one upon another? 2** And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die.

The land of Canaan is running out of food. His sons are all grown and have their own families, except Benjamin, who is in his teens. Jacob keeps Benjamin close to him and takes him everywhere he goes. Jacob sees the food is running out and wonders why his other sons don't go and get food. They have plenty of money and possessions to trade for food. Many in the land of Canaan are going to Egypt, where it is said there is plenty of food. Jacob confronts his sons and ask them why they are standing around looking at each other, waiting for someone to decide. Get a caravan together and go get some food.

3 And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. **4** But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him.

Benjamin was special to Jacob. When Jacob was a young man, he went to the land of his mother to find a new life. He met a girl named Rachel and fell in love. He wanted to marry her, but he had nothing to offer as a bride payment. Her father, Jacob's uncle Laban offered him a deal. If Jacob would work for him seven years, Laban would apply the wages of seven years to the bride payment. Jacob could have Rachel as his wife. Seven years was a high price to pay, but Jacob was in love and agreed to the price. The seven years passed quickly, because he was so in love with Rachel. At the end of seven years Laban gave Jacob a marriage feast. There was laughter and drinking and everybody had a good time. As it got dark, Jacob was brought together with his new bride. The bride wore a veil, over her face, which was the custom. He took his bride into the marriage tent, to consummate the marriage. This sealed the marriage commitment. In the light of the morning, Jacob turned to his wife. To his shock he discovered it was not Rachel, but her older sister Leah.

Jacob realizes he has consummated the marriage to the wrong woman. He has been tricked by Laban and has married Rachel sister, and not Rachel. In his anger he confronts Laban. Laban simply tells him it was custom, in his land, to have the oldest daughter married first. Jacob, who still has no money or possessions and works for Laban can't do anything about it. Laban offers Jacob another deal. Jacob is suspicious of Laban's deals, but listens. Laban offers to give Jacob Rachel as a second wife. All Jacob has to do is agree, in front of witnesses, to work for Laban an additional seven years. To make the deal better, Laban ask that Jacob finish out the custom of spending the first week, seven days, alone with Leah. This is the custom of the land. If Jacob will do this, Laban will give him Rachel, at the end of the seven days. He will work for seven years, after he has received Rachel. So Jacob works for Laban, fourteen years to his two wives.

Another problem arises, because Laban gave each of his daughters a servant. Each servant was a young and healthy woman. This did not bother Jacob, who was true to his two wives. Leah, then gave birth to

Jacob's first-born son. This was followed by three more sons. Rachel was upset, because she had given Jacob no sons. In the land of that day, it was very important for a woman to give her husband children.

Rachel was so upset, about not having children, she devised a plan. Jacob would go into her servant girl and give Rachel a child through her. The servant girl gave birth to two sons. Rachel treated the boys as though they were her sons. Leah had stopped having children and told Jacob to go into her servant girl to give him more children. She gave Jacob two more sons. At this point, Leah had four sons, her servant girl had two sons, Rachel's servant girl two sons. Jacob now has four wives and eight sons. The problem is he only wanted one wife, Rachel, and only wanted children from her. Rachel had not given birth to any children. Leah has two more sons and a daughter. Finally, Rachel has a son and names him Joseph. Now Jacob has the woman he loves and a child by her. This is the family he always wanted. A few years later, Rachel has another son named Benjamin. There was a problem and the love of his life, Rachel, dies giving him birth. At the age of seventeen, Jacob is told Joseph is killed by a wild animal. The family he longed for, Rachel and their two sons, last only for a moment. All he has left of that family is Benjamin, whom he keeps close to him, to help him hold the memories of his family with Rachel. He is not willing to allow Benjamin to leave, with his brother, for fear he will lose him, like Joseph.

5 And the sons of Israel came to buy *corn* among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

6 And Joseph *was* the governor over the land, *and* he *it was* that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him *with* their faces to the earth. **7** And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food.

8 And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. **9** And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye *are* spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

When his brothers bow down to him, it is the fulfilment of his first dream. He not only remembers the dream, but he remembers how they treated him. He remembers how they talked harshly with him. He confronts them and calls them spies. The food in Egypt is not controlled and stored in one place, it is stored in many locations. Some of the locations are not heavily guarded. Joseph says they are spies and are looking for the locations that are weak and could be easily overtaken.

10 And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. **11** We *are* all one man's sons; we *are* true *men*, thy servants are no spies. **12** And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. **13** And they said, Thy servants *are* twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest *is* this day with our father, and one *is* not. **14** And Joseph said unto them, That *is it* that I spake unto you, saying, Ye *are* spies: **15** Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. **16** Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether *there be any*

truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye *are* spies. [17](#)And he put them all together into ward three days.

[18](#)And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; *for* I fear God: [19](#)If ye *be* true *men*, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses: [20](#)But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so. [21](#)And they said one to another, We *are* verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. [22](#)And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required. [23](#)And they knew not that Joseph understood *them*; for he spake unto them by an interpreter. [24](#)And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

Joseph's Brothers Return to Canaan

[25](#)Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them.

[26](#)And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence. [27](#)And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it *was* in his sack's mouth. [28](#)And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, *it is* even in my sack: and their heart failed *them*, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What *is* this *that* God hath done unto us?

[29](#)And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them; saying, [30](#)The man, *who is* the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. [31](#)And we said unto him, We *are* true *men*; we are no spies: [32](#)We *be* twelve brethren, sons of our father; one *is* not, and the youngest *is* this day with our father in the land of Canaan. [33](#)And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye *are* true *men*; leave one of your brethren *here* with me, and take *food for* the famine of your households, and be gone: [34](#)And bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye *are* no spies, but *that ye are* true *men*: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffick in the land.

[35](#)And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money *was* in his sack: and when *both* they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. [36](#)And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of *my children*: Joseph *is* not, and Simeon *is* not, and ye will take Benjamin *away*: all these things are against me. [37](#)And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again. [38](#)And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.