Joseph the Ruler

The King of Egypt had heard of Joseph, the dreamer, who was in prison. He called for Joseph one day after he had a strange dream, hoping that Joseph would tell him what his dream meant.

Joseph told the king, "God is telling you what is going to happen so that you can be prepared. There are going to be seven years of good crops when everyone has plenty. But seven years of bad harvest will follow. Those seven years of shortage will use up the surplus from the good years. That is the meaning of your dreams.

The king was horrified when he heard the explanation of the dreams. Joseph has a plan for the seven years of famine. The king was very impressed by Joseph's plan and wise advice. He decided to appoint Joseph as the new Prime Minister of Egypt.

Joseph's plan, to store grain away in large storehouses for the time of famine worked. Soon, people living in nearby countries, who were experiencing a lack of food, heard that there was grain in Egypt. They traveled to joseph to ask if they too could buy grain to take home to their own lands.

Back in the land of Canaan, Jacob, and his sons were hungry too. Ten of Jacob's sons also set off to request grain from Joseph. As soon as the ten strangers were ushered into Joseph's presence, he recognized his brothers. They had no idea who he was. They never expected their brother to be alive much less Prime Minister of all Egypt. Besides he was dressed like an Egyptian.

In the Egyptian language, Joseph asked, "Where did you come from?" The servant translated all that he said to his brothers.

"From Canaan," they answered. "We have come to buy grain."

"I don't believe a word of it!" Joseph said. "I think you are a bunch of spies, come to find out what is going on here."

"There were twelve of us, all brothers," they began. "But one brother is dead and the youngest, Benjamin is so dear to our father that he would not let him come with us."

Joseph felt strange when he heard himself described as dead, but he did not let his feelings show. "Prove that you are innocent by bringing your youngest brother with you the next time you come," he ordered. I am going to keep one of you as hostage until you return."

Simeon was taken away and put in prison. The others were allowed to go back to Canaan, with sacks full of grain. When they arrive home and opened the sacks, they were horrified to find money lying on top of the grain. They had been given back all that they had paid. Now we will be accused of being thieves, as well as spies," they cried.

They did not know that Joseph had told his servants to put the money there. He was trying to find out what kind of men those brothers had turned out to be.

Soon Joseph's brothers supply of Egyptian grain ran out, and they had to return to Egypt for more. This time Benjamin, the youngest son, would accompany them. When they arrived, to their surprise, they were welcomed and shown to Joseph's house.

Joseph was thrilled to see his brother, Benjamin, after so long. He ordered Simeon to be released from prison and invited them all to dinner.

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After several events had taken place, Joseph could no longer keep the secret that he was their long-lost brother. The great Prime Minister of Egypt was the brother they treated so badly many years before.

Instead, of making them pay for their cruelty in the past, Joseph told them to come close to him. He hugged and kissed them all beginning with Benjamin.

"Don't blame yourself for what you did", he said kindly. God had a plan when He brought me here. I have been able to save many lives. Now you must hurry back to fetch our father and all your families. There are still five more years of famine to come. I will see that you settle in Goshen, where the pasture is good for your flocks." Then, at last, there was talking, laughter, and great excitement.

The brothers set off for home with the good news that Joseph was alive and Prime Minister of Egypt. Jacob could not believe them until he saw the wonderful presents that Joseph had sent for him.

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