

Genesis Chapters 37–50: JOSEPH

- ◆ Joseph: a picture of Christ
- ◆ From servant to saviour
- ◆ Family jealousies
- ◆ Planning for famine
- ◆ Hope whilst in prison
- ◆ Sin, tears and forgiveness

THIS BOOK teaches about the work of God in the life of Joseph. He was the great-grandson of Abraham. He was one of the sons of Jacob (Israel). Joseph followed God's plan for saving the children of Israel. His faith in God never grew weak in times of trouble. He was a picture of Christ who suffered much in doing God's will to save others.

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WE PRAY that you may have a new peace and purpose in life as you read the Bible and use these commentaries.

Manna Publications

FOUNDATIONAL BIBLE TEACHING COMMENTARIES

'The secret of God's Kingdom has been given to you' (Mark 4:11)



JOSEPH

The Son who was Servant and Saviour

A Bible Teaching Commentary in
easy-to-read Worldwide English
for personal or group study

by Fred Morris



Genesis Part 4 Chapters 37 to 50



To the reader or leader

These Bible commentaries explain the truth about God's Word in a way that is easy to read and understand. You can use these books to study the Bible on your own or with others in a group. In a group study, each person should have his or her own book and a Bible if possible.

There is a lot of information in this book. Please study it slowly and thoughtfully. Ask God to help you apply the things you learn to your own life and situation.



Now Read: Where you see this, it means you or your group leader should always read the Bible passage first before reading the words in this book.



Talk about: Where you see this, there are questions that can be asked in a group study. They also help the reader to understand the Bible verses.



Multiple choice questions. Where you see this, there are questions with three possible answers; some are right answers, some are wrong answers. These questions help you to think carefully about what you are reading. The answers to these questions are given at the back of the book. You can use the questions as a personal test.



Where you see **ruled boxes**, the information inside is mainly for Bible students, teachers and preachers.

Additional Bible readings are there to give you important information. God will use them to speak to you. This is why you should check all readings now or later and use them for study at home. Some readings are from the Old Testament (OT), which we call 'the holy writings'. That is the part of the Bible written before Jesus Christ lived on this earth. Some readings are from the New Testament (NT), the part of the Bible which was written after Jesus Christ lived on this earth.

Manna Bible commentaries give God's truth as a foundation for all believers. The people leading the study should add applications and experiences from their own Christian life and culture.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Chapters 37–39

1 = (c); 2 = (a); 3 = (b); 4 = (c); 5 = (c); 6 = (b).

Chapters 40–42

1 = (a); 2 = (c); 3 = (a) and (b); 4 = (b); 5 = (b); 6 = (a).

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The long history of Joseph shows how God was in control, working out his plans.

It also tells the story of Judah, how he repented and God used him in his plan for a Saviour to be born into the world through his family.

God wants all sorts of people to know Him and to trust Him to make us part of His plan for the world. But he needs to change us to become more like Him, and more like the patriarchs, the great men of faith. It is the sin in our lives which stops us from being like God wants us to be. Repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God brings forgiveness.

When we repent and receive forgiveness of past sins, then it is like being born again. We can start a new life. With the help of the Holy Spirit we will begin to understand more about **the origin and purpose of life**. God's Spirit will give birth to a new spirit of truth within you. This is why Jesus said "You must be born again" (John 3:6,7,21).

Note: You can read some of the stories of Genesis 12–50 in the New Testament. In Acts 7:2–16, Stephen tells them in a shorter way.

Also read Psalm 105:1–23 and Hebrews 11:17–22 which remind us about the Patriarchs.



The Names of God

The God of the Christian faith is One God in three forms or Persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Christians call this the Trinity. The Patriarchs knew God the Father by the letters of His Name, YHWH. This Hebrew name for God is usually written today as Yahweh. The Jews call God 'Adonai' when they read these letters. (They say that God's name is too holy to speak it.) Yahweh is the God of the Hebrews. He is the Holy God of Israel and the God of the Christians.

Yahweh sent His Son to earth as a human being to die upon the cross as a substitute for our sins. God's Hebrew name for His Son is Yeshua, which means Salvation. He is known today as Jesus. He is the second Person of the Trinity.

The Third Person of the Trinity is God the Holy Spirit who is known in Hebrew as Ruach Hakodesh.

The Old Testament gives other names for God:

- Yahweh or Elohim: God of Power, the Creator God
- Yahweh Jireh: God who provides
- Yahweh Rophe: God who heals
- Yahweh Shalom: God of Peace
- Yahweh Nissi: God my Banner (Protector)
- Yahweh Sabaoth: God of Hosts
- Yahweh Roi: God, my Shepherd
- Yahweh Tsedkenu: God our Righteousness
- El Shaddai: The All Sufficient God, Almighty, All Powerful

Dear Reader. This is the fourth commentary on the first book of the Bible. It talks mainly about the work of God in the life of Joseph. He was one of the sons of Jacob (Israel). He was the great-grandson of Abraham. We also read about Judah and the other children of Israel.

JOSEPH AND JESUS

It is important to read your Bible and learn about great people like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph (the Patriarchs). In the people of the Bible we often see pictures of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The life of Joseph was like the life of Jesus Christ who came to live on earth 1600 years later. Like Jesus, Joseph was rejected by his own tribe but later became the saviour of many people.

Joseph's faith in God never grew weak. He did not complain when things were difficult for him. Nor did he become proud when things went well for him. He was a picture of Christ who suffered much in doing God's will. We do well if we copy Joseph's faith in God. We see in Joseph a pattern for us to follow. But the life of Jesus was the perfect pattern of how to live and to do what God wants us to do. And if we live as Jesus lived and believe Him to be God's Son, then God promises to give us everlasting life and salvation.

JUDAH AND JESUS

Joseph had a brother called Judah. It was through Judah that God chose to keep his promise of a special line of people from Abraham down to Jesus. Jesus was God's promised Messiah, the Saviour of the world. So God blessed Joseph but his brother Judah was also an important person to God.

Yet it was Judah who turned his brother Joseph into a slave (Genesis 37:26,27). Judah was cruel and did a bad thing to Joseph, but after this God changed Judah. And God worked out his plans for the people of Israel and for the birth of the Messiah, through Judah, as well as through Joseph. This shows us that God chooses who He wants to choose in His plan to save the world – great men of faith like Abraham, Isaac and Joseph but also cheats like Jacob and cruel people like Judah. In His grace and mercy, God calls and uses sinners like them and like you and like me.



The birth line of Jesus

The list of names given in Matthew 1:2–16 gives 42 generations of people between Abraham and Jesus. It begins with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Judah and passes through King David and his son Solomon and then down to Joseph, the husband of Mary who was the mother of Jesus.

Another list of names in Luke 3:23–38 gives 55 generations of people between Abraham and Jesus. This list begins with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Judah and passes through King David and his son Nathan and then down to Joseph. (See box on page 2)

JOSEPH AND ISRAEL

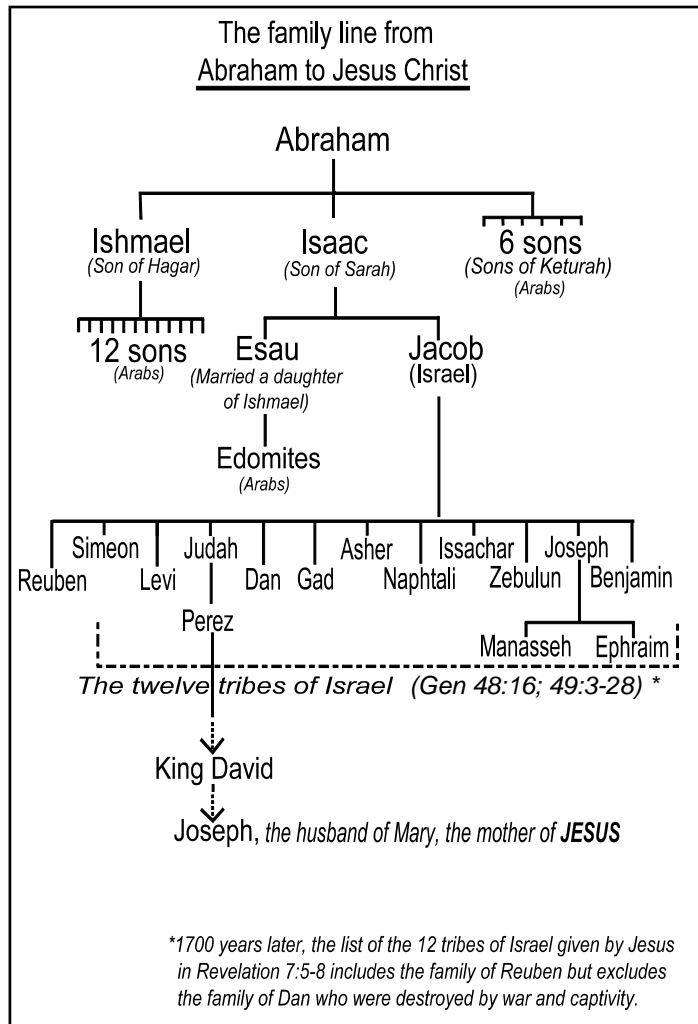
Joseph's story begins a new part of the history of God's people, the Jews. They lived for a long time in Egypt and ended up as slaves.

Two hundred and fifty years before Joseph lived, God had promised Abraham that his family would become a great people. This promise, called a covenant, was given to Abraham's son Isaac and then to his grandson Jacob.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are called 'the patriarchs' or family-heads of the Hebrew people. The Hebrews were also called the 'Israelites' because God gave Jacob a new name 'Israel'. Later they were called 'Jews'. It was the 12 sons of Jacob who formed the nation of Israel. They and their families were known as 'the Children of Israel' or the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jacob's sons were as different as brothers are in any family. Because they were born to four mothers, they had very different natures (Gen. 35:23–26).

Judah was the fourth son in Jacob's large family. Joseph was the eleventh son. Benjamin, the baby of the family, was born after Joseph. Joseph loved Benjamin



Then Joseph died as he had lived, a humble servant of the Lord God. He did not ask for any honours, just that his body be carried to Canaan, the land of his fathers, and buried there.

Many years later, Joseph's family carried his body all the way through the wilderness and buried him in the land God had promised them (Exodus 13:19; Joshua 24:32).



Talk about:

1. What happened when Jacob died?
2. Why were Joseph's brothers afraid of him?
3. What happened before Joseph died (50:25)?
4. Did the sons of Israel do what Joseph asked them before he died? (Ex. 13:19)?
5. What can we learn from Joseph's life?



QUESTIONS ON GENESIS CHAPTERS 48 TO 50

(Answers are given at the end)

Which sentences are correct?

1. When Jacob was dying —
 - a) he blessed the eldest son of Joseph first.
 - b) he did not know which boy he was blessing.
 - c) he gave Ephraim the first blessing.
2. Jacob prophesied that —
 - a) from Reuben, there would be many famous people.
 - b) from Judah, Christ would come.
 - c) the tribe of Benjamin would love peace.
3. Jacob was buried in —
 - a) Egypt.
 - b) Canaan.
 - c) Goshen.
4. Joseph's brothers were afraid of —
 - a) the Egyptian people.
 - b) Joseph taking revenge.
 - c) being made slaves.

SUMMARY

God told Abraham that his family would become slaves in a foreign land (Gen. 15:13) until the land of Canaan was ready for God to punish its people for their wicked ways (15:16). Then God would punish the Egyptians. Abraham's descendants, the Israelites, would come out of Egypt and invade the land of the Canaanites and live there (Gen. 15:13–16).

2. Where did Jacob ask to be buried (49:29–32)?
3. Why did Jacob not want to be buried in Egypt?
4. Which tribe did Israel's Messiah come from?



Genesis 50:1–21

JACOB IS BURIED IN CANAAN

Joseph mourned for his father and told the Egyptians to preserve his father's body. We do not preserve bodies today. Jesus told his followers that we would have new bodies when we were raised from death to be with Him.

Many of Pharaoh's officials went with Joseph and his brothers to bury their father in Canaan (50:7–8). The whole party stopped at Atad near the Jordan river and mourned for Jacob seven days.

Jacob had kept his large family together. Now that he was dead, the brothers started to worry.

'What if Joseph still hates us?' the brothers asked each other (50:15). Had Joseph really forgiven them?

They sent a message to Joseph . . . 'Before your father died, he told us to ask you to forgive your brothers the wrong things they did to you . . .' (50:17).

When Joseph got this message, he wept.

His brothers came to him and threw themselves on the ground. 'We are your slaves,' they said. But Joseph said to them, 'Don't be afraid . . . You meant to hurt me, but God turned it to good . . . So then, don't be afraid. I will care for you and your children' (50:18–21).

Many seek to pay people back for the bad things they have done, but Joseph spoke these kind words to them and forgave them.



Genesis 50:22–26

THE DEATH OF JOSEPH

God let Joseph live for many years in Egypt. He lived to see the children and grandchildren of his two sons. (50:22–23).

When Joseph was very old he called his brothers and said to them, 'I am about to die. But God will be with you and help you and take you out of this land back to the land He promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob' (50:24; Ex. 32:13).

Joseph made the children of Israel (Jacob's family) promise that when they went they would take his body with them to the Promised Land. (50:25). Twice he said 'God will be with you and help you.' Joseph believed that God would go on with the work He had started with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Like them, he was a great man of faith.



Talk about:

1. Why is suffering sometimes part of God's plan?
2. Joseph was not the eldest son, so why did God choose Joseph?



Genesis 37:1–11

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

Joseph lived with his father in Canaan until he was seventeen. This was the land God had promised to give to Abraham's family. In the years after this Joseph learned that God can be trusted for all he has promised.

God showed Joseph His plans for him in dreams, and when he told his brothers they were not pleased.

Joseph was the first son of the wife that his father loved best, Rachel. He was born when she was getting old. Though he was one of Jacob's youngest children, his father loved Joseph more than the others. To show his great love for his son Joseph, Jacob made him a special coat with cloth of many colours. Joseph's brothers hated to see him wearing it and 'could not even speak one kind word to him' (37:4). Joseph gave Jacob news about his older brothers. It wasn't good news (37:2). Joseph may have meant well, but he made trouble for his brothers.

The older brothers were jealous of Joseph. They saw the coat as a sign. They believed that Jacob would give his special blessing to Joseph because Reuben, the eldest son, had made his father angry (35:22).

Joseph later had a gift from God – he was able to understand dreams of others. In his own dreams we see that Joseph was always the important one and his brothers had to bow down to him (37:5–11). This made his brothers even more jealous.

It was because of Jacob too that there was trouble between Joseph and his brothers. It was not all Joseph's fault. Parents can help their children to be friends but if they have favourites they make their children jealous of each other.



The Birthright

In Bible times, this was a right or blessing given to the eldest son. When the father died, the eldest son was given twice as much money and property as the other sons in the family and a special blessing (Genesis 25:31–33; 27:27). The eldest son could lose his birthright by being careless (as Esau, Hebrews 12:16), or by doing wrong (as Reuben, who sinned against his father and against God, 1 Chronicles. 5:1–2).



Joseph's dreams

Some people often have dreams that have a special meaning.

1. Joseph dreamed that his brothers all bowed down to him. This dream looked forward to the time when Joseph was in charge of all the food in Egypt. Then his brothers would bow low before him and ask to buy food (42:6).
2. In Joseph's second dream, the sun and the moon and eleven stars worshipped him. If the sun and moon were his parents, the eleven stars were Joseph's brothers. This dream looked forward to the time when Joseph was in charge of the whole family of Israel (47:11,12).



Talk about:

1. Joseph's dreams told him that God would bless him. True or false?
2. Why did Joseph's dreams make his brothers hate him (37:8)?



Genesis 37:12–36

GOD'S SPECIAL WORK FOR JOSEPH

God has a special work for every Christian to do. But we all need God to prepare us and to train us. God gave Joseph the gift of interpreting dreams. This was similar to 'a word of wisdom' (1 Corinthians 12:8). Through Joseph, God showed people what was yet to happen when he gave Joseph the meaning of the dreams. God used Joseph in this strange and wonderful way. But Joseph had to suffer and be trained before God would use that gift. Joseph had to change and he had to learn the wisdom of God. When we want to do God's work we may have a hard time, because God wants to change us and to make us ready. God made Joseph ready for the work he wanted him to do in a surprising way.

Jacob, too, had changed a lot. He had stopped travelling from place to place. He began to settle down. He let his grown-up sons care for his family. One day Jacob's sons had taken the sheep far to the north, near Shechem. Jacob sent Joseph to see that all was well (37:14).

Joseph found them at Dothan in the far north, and they saw him coming. They treated Joseph like a spy and planned to kill him (37:18,20). But then we see how God took control: (1) through Reuben, the eldest son of Jacob, and (2) through some of the family of Abraham's son Ish-ma-el.



Men of **Is-sa-char** were strong and willing to work hard (49:15). In later years they were made to suffer forced labour and heavy taxes. But they also understood the purposes of God. They were not deceived.

Dan was a small tribe, but it ruled itself. Danites were like 'a serpent by the roadside.' They sprang at their enemies and defeated them (Judges 18:27). Samson was from the tribe of Dan. He kept the Philistines out of their lands for many years (Judges 16:30).

Gad means 'a troop of soldiers'. The Gadites were men of war (1 Chronicles 12:8). They settled in Transjordan, to the east of the Jordan river and were often attacked by Moabite and Ammonite raiders. Jacob assured them that they would overcome their attackers. When Saul and David were king, these invaders were defeated (1 Chronicles 5:18–20).

Asher became a very rich tribe and sold its produce to the other tribes.

The name **Naphtali** means 'to struggle.' This tribe settled in the hill country north of the Sea of Galilee (Joshua 19:32–38). Jacob prophesied that the tribe of Naphtali would be like an animal set free to give birth to a beautiful family.

Last of all Jacob blessed his youngest and most loved sons, Joseph and Benjamin. Both sons were born to his wife Rachel (49:22–27).

From his youth, **Joseph** had a strong trust in the God of his father. Joseph had many enemies, but God protected him. When hard things happened to him, his faith in God held firm.

Jacob now knew that everything that had happened to Joseph was because God allowed it in order to bless his people. He used several names for 'the God who blesses you' (49:24–25). 'Let all these (blessings) rest on the head of Joseph,' he prayed.

Jacob loved **Benjamin** but spoke this prophecy of his future: 'Benjamin is a hungry wolf . . .' he said. Years later, Jacob's words proved true. The men of Benjamin were strong and fearless and made themselves rich with war (Judges 19–21). King Saul came from the tribe of Benjamin (1 Sam. 9:21), and so did the apostle Paul (Acts 13:21, Phil. 3:5).

These words from Jacob form part of how God kept his promises to Abraham and to Isaac and to himself in the Promised Land. The prophecy for Judah was the most important. From the family of Judah would come King David and finally Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah.

After Jacob blessed his sons, he spoke of his death and gave orders for his body to be taken back to Canaan. 'Bury me with my fathers,' he said, 'in the cave in the field of Mach-pe-lah'. This was where his father and grandfather were buried (49:29–32).



Talk about:

1. Did all of Jacob's sons live godly lives?

tribes of Israel. Jacob showed the same great faith in God as Abraham and Isaac. He believed in the promise of God to make a great nation from the family of Abraham and Sarah. Now Joseph understood fully why God had used him to unite his family and to save them from dying of starvation.



Genesis 49:1–33

JACOB'S LAST BLESSINGS

Jacob called all his sons to his bed and blessed them. 'Gather around me so I can tell you what will happen to you in the days to come,' he said. 'Listen to your father Israel' (49:1–2).

Father Jacob gave each of the 12 sons a blessing and told them what would happen to that son's family and their families in the Promised Land. We believe these are words from God that Jacob spoke to his sons. These words are called a 'prophecy' which tell what God has planned for the future. Jacob spoke these words in faith believing they were from God.

Reuben, Jacob's firstborn lost his birthright because he had shamed his family. Reuben 'was great in power' but was weak in his character. No judge, prophet or prince came from Reuben's tribe.

Next Jacob spoke to **Simeon** and **Levi**. They were two angry and violent men. Because of their wickedness 'I will scatter them in . . . Israel.' Simeon did not receive land in Canaan but was scattered amongst the tribe of Judah (Josh. 19:1). Levi was the tribe of priests. So God did not give them land of their own either. They lived in towns among the other tribes (Numbers 35:2–8; Joshua 14:4; 21:41). God was the provider.

Jacob prophesied as he looked at **Judah**: 'Judah, your brothers will praise you . . . your father's sons will bow down to you' (49:8). Jacob gave Judah the greatest praise and the most wonderful prophecy. Judah's tribe would:

- Win wars (49:8).
- Be the leader and ruler over others (Judges 1:1–2; Ps. 60:7).
- Be like a lion in courage and strength (49:9).
- Be the kingly tribe from which the Messiah, Christ would come to rule (49:10).
- Become a very prosperous tribe, with plenty of vines and wine (49:11–12).

Zeb-u-lun would live toward the sea and become a tribe of fishermen and traders. This prophecy came true when Joshua divided the land. Zebulun's part in the Promised Land went up toward the coast (Deuteronomy 33:19).

REUBEN TRIES TO HELP JOSEPH

Reuben said, 'Let's not kill him. Let's just throw him alive into this pit here.' He wanted to come back later and take Joseph back to his father. (37:22)

But while Reuben was away, Judah saw camels coming. It was a group of Ish-ma-el-ites taking spices to sell in Egypt. So he and his brothers sold Joseph to these traders for 20 pieces of silver (shekels), the price of a slave.

So that their father would not know what they had done, Joseph's brothers killed a goat and dipped Joseph's coat in the blood. When they went home, they showed the coat to his father. Jacob thought his son had been killed by a wild animal, and mourned for him many days. 'I will be full of sorrow for my son,' he said (37:35).

Jacob was deceived (tricked) by his sons. He believed that Joseph died by accident. When he was young, Jacob tricked his father Isaac. So Isaac gave his blessing to Jacob instead of to his brother Esau (Genesis 27). The Bible says that a man reaps what he sows (Galatians 6:7). Jacob had deceived his father. Now he was deceived by his own sons.

The holy writings say about Jesus 'There was no deceit in his mouth' (Isaiah 53:9). He offers us a new nature. We must get rid of deceit (1 Peter 2:1). Do not deceive people in order to get your own way.

Reuben lost the blessing of the firstborn son when he sinned with Bilhah (35:22). He tried to save Joseph, but he did not succeed. So Judah became the leader of his brothers (37:26–27; 43:3–5, 8–10; 49:10)

The special work that God wanted Joseph to do began by him going to Egypt – as a slave! Joseph was a picture of Jesus. Like Joseph, Jesus was hated by his brothers in the nation of Israel. 'We do not want this man to rule over us' (Luke 19:14). Like Joseph, Jesus was threatened with death. 'Herod wants to kill him' (Matthew 2:13). Like Joseph, Jesus was kept safe by God in the Land of Egypt (Matt. 2:14,15).



The Suffering Servant

Joseph was sold for 20 pieces of silver (Genesis 37:28). He was sold as a slave or servant. Joseph suffered much trouble but later saved his family from death. This was God's plan for Israel.

Judas, one of the disciples of Jesus, betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14–16). Judas sold Jesus to the Jews. Jesus suffered much trouble. But later, through His suffering, crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus saved people from death. (All His believers receive everlasting life.) This was God's plan for Israel and the whole world. This is why Jesus is called the suffering servant by God in the holy writings. Read Isaiah 53 and Philippians 2:6-8.



Talk about:

1. Why were Joseph's brothers jealous of him? Give two reasons (37:5–11)
2. What did Jacob do that made things worse for Joseph (37:3)?
3. What did Jacob think of Joseph's dreams (37:10)?
4. What did Reuben want to do with Joseph (37:21–22)?
5. What did the brothers do with Joseph while Reuben was away (37:28)?



Egypt in the History of God's people

Egypt played an important part in God's plan for the Jews including the Lord Jesus Christ.

A place of safety for the Jews, planned by God

- A place of training and power for Joseph, the son of Jacob (Israel).
- A place of plenty for the children of Israel (Genesis 45:18) in the best of Pharaoh's land (Genesis 47:6) where they became a great nation (Genesis 46:3; Deuteronomy 10:22).
- A place where the children of Israel were made slaves, which made them long for freedom and hope in God to deliver them (Exodus 2:23; Acts 7:34).
- The place where Moses, Israel's deliverer, was born and trained in the king's palace (Exodus 2:2,10; Hebrews 11:27).
- Egypt is the place that reminds us of how God cared for the Children of Israel (Deuteronomy 4:20; 6:12).
- Egypt is the place where the angel told Mary and Joseph to take the baby Jesus when King Herod wanted to kill him (Matthew 2:13).

A false refuge for the Jews and a place forbidden by God

- God stopped the king of Egypt from taking Abraham's wife (to stop her having his children) (Genesis 12:19).
- God warned Isaac not to live in the land of Egypt (Genesis 26:2).
- God warned Moses not to allow the people to worship the gods of the Egyptians (Exodus 32:7–8; Leviticus 18:3; Joshua 24:14).
- God would not let anyone enter the Promised Land who had wanted to go back to Egypt (Numbers 14:23).
- God warned Israel not to return to Egypt (Deuteronomy 17:16; Jeremiah 42:15; 44:12; Isaiah 30:3; 31:1).



Genesis 48:1–22

JACOB BLESSES JOSEPH'S SONS

When Joseph heard his father was ill, he went quickly to Goshen.

When he saw Joseph with his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh he asked 'Who are these?'

'They are the sons God has given me here,' Joseph answered (48:9).

Jacob told Joseph how the Lord had blessed him. He told Joseph that many years before God had promised, 'I will make you a nation of many peoples, and I will give this land (Canaan) . . . to the families after you. Now then your two sons – Ephraim and Manasseh – will be counted as mine' (48:5).

The old man said, 'Bring them to me so that I can bless them.'

In the Hebrew way, eldest sons always have the greater blessing. It was called a birthright. Always, before he died, the father gave this blessing to his eldest son by putting his right hand on his son's head and praying over him.

Joseph wanted his father to bless Manasseh his firstborn son. So he stood Manasseh by his father's right and Ephraim by his father's left hand. But Jacob crossed his arms so that his right hand was on Ephraim's head and his left hand on Manasseh's head (48:13–14).

Joseph thought his father did not know which boy was Manasseh and which boy was Ephraim, and so he took his father's hand to move it.

'No, my father, this is the firstborn,' he said, 'put your right hand on his head' (48:18).

But Jacob said, 'I know, my son, I know. He too will become great . . . but his younger brother will be greater than he.' So Jacob blessed Ephraim before his older brother and called them both 'sons of Israel'. Later they became two of the twelve tribes of Israel (Joshua 14:4). (See box on page 2)

The family of Ephraim settled in a rich and secure part of the Promised Land. Later still their numbers became the largest of all the tribes that formed the kingdom of Israel.

Jacob said to Joseph, 'I am about to die, but God will be with you (and your brothers). He will take you back to the land of your fathers' (48:21). He was speaking words of prophecy, looking far into the future of the twelve



'When the crop comes in, give a fifth of it to Pharaoh,' he told them. 'The other four-fifths you may keep as seed . . . and as food for yourselves . . .'

So Joseph made it a law in Egypt, that a fifth of the food belongs to Pharaoh. This may have been when Egypt became a powerful nation.



Talk about:

1. How many brothers did Joseph take to meet Pharaoh (47:2)?
2. What part of Egypt did Joseph give to his family (47:11)?
3. After the people used up all the money and animals, what did they have left to trade for food (48:18)?
4. What law did Joseph make about the crops that grew in Egypt (47:26)?



QUESTIONS ON GENESIS CHAPTERS 43 TO 47

(Answers are given at the end)

Which sentences are correct?

1. Joseph . . .
 - a) wanted revenge on his brothers.
 - b) wanted his brothers to leave Egypt.
 - c) wanted to forgive his brothers.
2. Joseph explained all that had happened to him saying . . .
 - a) 'It was my fault.'
 - b) 'It was my brother's fault.'
 - c) 'God planned it.'
3. Joseph presented to Pharaoh . . .
 - a) all his family.
 - b) only his father.
 - c) five of his brothers and Jacob.
4. At the end of the famine, Joseph . . .
 - a) asked the people to give four-fifths of their crop to Pharaoh.
 - b) gave the people seed to plant.
 - c) gave the land back to the people.



Genesis 38:1–11

JUDAH LEAVES HOME

While God is making Joseph ready for his future plans, the Bible story moves to Judah, the fourth son of Jacob born to Leah.

Judah left home. In Bible times men normally stayed with their family until they married. They did not leave home to look for work or to get away from their parents. They only left home to take a wife and start a new family (Gen. 2:24).

But Judah left his home and his brothers and went to live in another part of the country. Years later it became the home for the tribe of Judah.

Adullam was an old Canaanite city. Judah saw the daughter of one of the Canaanite families and he married her. He did not speak to his father or family about this. Perhaps he thought 'I am a man now. I don't need their advice!' Judah lived with Hirah, the Canaanite. Hirah was a follower of local religions and did not worship the God of Abraham.

Today, before men choose a wife, they need to ask God, 'Is this girl a Christian? Am I able to lead her to live a holy life? Is this the one God wants me to marry?'

JUDAH AND HIS FAMILY

Judah had three boys. He let their mother give names to two of them. Judah was not leading his family as a godly husband should and he was not teaching them the things of God (Deut 6:7).

The firstborn, Er, was given a wife called Tamar. (38:6). Because Er was wicked, God killed him and Tamar was left a widow (38:7).

Judah gave her as a wife to his second son, Onan, so that she could have a son 'for his dead brother'. This was the custom of the day known as 'Levirate marriage' (38:8; Deut. 25:5–10). It was a way for the widow to have a son who would carry on her first husband's name and title and receive his inheritance, the inheritance of the firstborn.

Judah didn't know that the family line of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was to go through the line of Judah right down through King David to the birth of King Jesus (Gen. 49:10). God's plan could not be changed.

But Onan refused to give children to Tamar (38:9). So God was angry with Onan. What he did was wicked in God's sight and God judged him and he too died. (38:10).

1. We note his selfishness. We need God's Holy Spirit to control us.
2. Onan mocked God . . . 'No one will know I'm not doing what God wants



me to do. They will think it's my wife's fault!' The Bible says, 'Do not be deceived, God is not mocked . . .' (Gal. 6:7).

3. He resented the fact that his dead brother's rights would pass to any of his children by Tamar. He wanted to have his dead brother's blessing and birthright.
4. We also learn from this that having children is a holy gift from God. Now Judah had only one son left (Shelah). He was too young to marry. Judah promised to give him to Tamar, but she knew she could not trust his promise. Judah was afraid that Shelah might die too, just like his brothers (38:11). So he asked Tamar to return to her father's house and wait for the third son to grow up (38:11).



Talk about:

1. Why did Judah leave home?
2. What was wrong in marrying the Canaanite girl?
3. Marriage and having children are gifts from God: True or False?



Genesis 38:12–30

JUDAH IS DECEIVED

A long time passed and Judah was now a widower (38:12). He could have married again. Instead he went around with his Canaanite friend from Adullam.

Meanwhile Shelah, the third son, had grown up, but Judah had not given Tamar to Shelah as his wife as he had promised (38:3).

Tamar heard that Judah was going to the sheep shearing sheds at Timnah. She knew that her father-in-law would soon be coming that way, so she took off her widow's clothes and covered her head. She dressed so that she looked like one of the temple prostitutes, who give their bodies for sex (38:14,21).

What she did was part of that wicked pagan religion. But Tamar was a desperate woman. She wanted a son with Judah's family name.

When Judah saw her he did not recognise her. She offered to have sex and demanded payment. This was the custom in that foreign land. He willingly gave Tamar his personal seal and its cord as a promise that he would pay her.

Judah did not let anyone know what he had done. He tried to protect himself from the shame. When he sent a goat to pay her, they could not find the temple prostitute so he could not get back his seal and cord (38:20–22).



Genesis 47:1–12

PATRIARCH MEETS KING: JACOB BLESSES PHARAOH

Joseph chose five of his brothers and took them to the king. When Pharaoh asked them about their work, they told him they were shepherds. (The Egyptians did not keep sheep – they had cattle.)

Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'The land of Egypt is before you; let your father and brothers live in the best part of the land' (47:6). So the Children of Israel (Jacob's family) went to live in the land of Goshen in the region of Rameses to the north of Egypt. In this way the Hebrews were far away from the Egyptians. God wanted his people to be separate from other nations.

Then Pharaoh asked Jacob, 'How old are you?' In his answer to Pharaoh, Jacob thanked God for his 130 years of life.

Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh. This shows that Jacob's faith in God was now very strong. After meeting God at Beersheba Jacob was encouraged. So he knew that he had God's authority to bless the great king of Egypt. He knew that his God (Yahweh) was greater than the king of Egypt (Hebrews 7:7). But he was also humble. God had really changed him. In spite of all his bad ways and everything he had suffered in his long life, Jacob now knew that God, in His grace and mercy, would fulfil His promise to Abraham to raise up a special people. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had spoken and would remain true to His covenant promise. The children of Jacob (Israel) would do well in the land of Egypt.



Genesis 47:13–31

HOW JOSEPH MANAGED THE FAMINE

The people in Egypt and in Canaan were suffering because of the famine, but Joseph went on selling food. He took payment for it and brought the money to Pharaoh. When the people had no more money they came to Joseph and said, 'Give us food . . . our money is used up' (47:15).

'Then bring your cattle'. Joseph told them.

The following year they came to Joseph and said, 'There is nothing left for our lord except our bodies and our land . . . Buy us and our land in exchange for food . . . and we will belong to Pharaoh' (47:18,19).

So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh.

'You have saved our lives,' they said to Joseph.

As the famine came to an end, Joseph gave the people seed to plant.





Genesis 46:1–34

GOD SPEAKS TO JOSEPH

Jacob's sons put their wives and children into the carts and set out with all their animals for Egypt – 70 persons in all (46:27). Their names are in 46:8–24.

So Jacob went down to Egypt. When he reached Beersheba, he worshipped and sacrificed to God. There God spoke a wonderful promise to Jacob (46:3). At Beersheba, God called to him, 'Jacob! Jacob!'

'Here I am,' Jacob answered.

God said to Jacob, 'I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you and I will surely bring you back again' (46:3–4).

Compare this with what God said to Abraham (22:17–19) and Isaac (26:23,24) at Beersheba.

When the children of Israel came to the borders of Egypt, Jacob sent Judah ahead to tell Joseph they had arrived and to ask where they should live.

Joseph got into his chariot and went to Goshen to meet his father. As soon as he saw Jacob, he threw his arms around him and wept a long time.

Then Joseph told his family how to greet Pharaoh and what to say to him about their move to Egypt. This was very important if they were to have Pharaoh's blessing.

Joseph told them, 'When Pharaoh calls you in and asks, 'What is your work?' you should answer, 'We look after sheep just as our fathers did' (46:33–34).



Talk about:

1. What did Jacob do when he reached Beersheba (46:1)?
2. What did God say to him (46:3)?
3. What did Joseph tell his brothers to say to Pharaoh (46:34)?
4. Why was this important for the future of Israel (46:34)?



God's word to Jacob

God renewed his covenant with Jacob (also called Israel) as he did with Abraham and Isaac. He also told Jacob not to fear to go to Egypt. God gave Jacob special promises. He was an old man and may have feared the long journey and the people.

God promised that Israel's family would grow great while they were in Egypt and become a nation of many people. God had promised to make Abraham's family into a great nation (12:2). But the part of Abraham's family that remained faithful to the one true God, (Yahweh) had only grown to seventy men (46:27). These were the children of Jacob (Israel), the grandchildren of Isaac. God promised He would bring the people of Israel back to Canaan in great numbers, and Joseph would be a comfort to Jacob before he died.

Three months later, news came to Judah that Tamar was pregnant. Judah wanted to have her punished (38:24).

Judah shouted, 'Burn her.' This was a cruel punishment suffered only by priest's daughters under the law (Leviticus 21:9).

Oh the deceit (trickery) in Judah's heart! (Jeremiah 17:9).

But Tamar was smarter than Judah. She brought out Judah's own seal and cord! Now everyone knew whose child Tamar was carrying.

JUDAH CONFESSES HIS SIN

Judah had been very wicked, but now he confessed his sin (38:26). This made a great change in his life. He had been a hard man and a cheat. He had not cared for his father, his brother Joseph or his daughter-in-law, Tamar. But after he had admitted his sin, he shows Christ-like love towards his father and his brother (Genesis 44). Christians should not use schemes and trickery, but God can make good come out of bad things (Romans. 8:28).

God was pleased that this savage man became a kind man. Tamar gave birth to twin sons, Perez and Zerah. God chose to bless Perez and the family line of Judah. We find his name in the list of the family names of Jesus (Matthew 1:3). (See box on page 2.)

Meanwhile, Jacob was still mourning for the loss of his son Joseph, the firstborn of his favourite wife Rachel (37:35).



Talk about:

1. Do you think that God knows about all sin (Numbers 32:23)?
2. Is there such a thing as 'sin done in ignorance'?
3. Can God make good come out of wrong things that we do (Romans 8:28)?
4. What lessons can we learn from Judah's life?
5. Why must we choose good friends?
6. If we sin, will God still love us?



Genesis 39:1–23

JOSEPH IN EGYPT

Now the Bible story moves back to Joseph. As soon as they arrived in Egypt, the Ishmaelite traders sold Joseph to Potiphar, captain of the king's guard.

Joseph served Potiphar well for many years. 'The Lord was with Joseph, and gave him success in everything he did' (39:3). Potiphar noticed how everything was going well in his household, so he put Joseph in charge of everything.

Potiphar's wife liked having this handsome young Hebrew man around the house. She often tried to get Joseph alone, but he stayed away from her. But one day, Joseph was alone in the house. She saw her chance and grabbed him. 'Make love to me,' she demanded.



'How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?' Joseph answered as he pulled himself away from her (39:9).

As he pulled away, she grabbed his cloak. Then she began to scream for help.

She told her husband that Joseph had tried to rape her. Potiphar was angry and put Joseph in prison. Normally the punishment for a slave would be death. But God kept Joseph safe. And Joseph kept on trusting in God.

Joseph was in prison many years, but God was with him. The chief jailer saw that Joseph could be trusted and put him in charge of everything in the prison. There 'the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in everything he did' (39:23).



QUESTIONS ON GENESIS CHAPTERS 37 TO 39

(Answers are given at the end)

Which sentences are correct?

1. Joseph was .—
 - a) only loved by his mother Rachel.
 - b) hated by his father Jacob and his brothers.
 - c) hated by his brothers.
2. Joseph's dreams showed that —
 - a) he would become an important man.
 - b) his brothers would be slaves.
 - c) he would have an easy life.
3. Jacob thought that Joseph had been —
 - a) captured by slave traders.
 - b) killed by a wild animal.
 - c) killed by his brothers.
4. Judah —
 - a) was the eldest son of Jacob.
 - b) was a type of Christ.
 - c) was an ancestor of King David.



Talk about:

1. What did Joseph tell his manager to do (44:1–2)?
2. What question did Joseph ask his brothers (45:3)?
3. How did Joseph explain the things that had happened to him (45:7)?
4. What had made Joseph's faith in God so strong? (45:8)?
5. Why do we say that Joseph is a type of Christ?



Genesis 45:9–28

THE KING INVITES THE FAMILY OF ISRAEL TO EGYPT

Things happen quickly now. Joseph sends his brothers home to fetch his father Jacob (Israel) and all his family to come and stay in Egypt. King Pharaoh agrees and sends carts and men to bring everything and everyone to Egypt. He promises them the best of everything (45:18–20).

As they were leaving, Joseph said to them, 'Don't quarrel on the way!' Again, Joseph is like Jesus in the way he cares for his brothers. (Compare Mark 9:33–35; John 17:11.)

When they arrived back in Canaan and told their father Jacob, 'Joseph is still alive and he is ruler in Egypt!' (45:26), Jacob did not believe them at



A remnant

At certain times in history, God saved a few people who had faith in Him, to continue His work on earth. The Bible calls them 'a remnant' (the few believers who are left):

- God saved Noah and his family (a remnant of 8 persons) from the flood (Genesis. 7:23; 1 Peter 3:20).
- God saved Jacob and his family (a remnant of 70 persons) from the famine (Genesis. 46:27).
- God brought back a remnant from the captivity in Babylon (Jeremiah. 27:22).

first.

But when he saw all the carts and gifts, old Jacob said, 'Now I know for sure that Joseph is alive. I will go and see him before I die' (45:28).

Father and son wanted to be together again. God wanted the whole family of Israel to be together. He wanted them to be safe and well cared for. The way Joseph cared for his family, and Jesus cared for people, is the way God loves us all. We should all learn to trust God, who cares for us.

Egypt . . . Don't be angry with yourselves . . . it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you . . . God sent me here to save your lives' (45:4–8).

In this way Joseph shows how much he had learned to trust God in all things and to believe in God's wonderful plan for his life.

JOSEPH IS LIKE JESUS

Joseph is like Jesus:

- because He suffered but shows love towards those who hurt Him.
- because He waits for the right time to show who He is.
- because He plans for those who hate Him to repent and for Him to forgive them.
- because He takes away their fear and does not remember their sin.
- because He brings families together.

We say that Joseph is a 'type of Christ'. But unlike Joseph, Christ is the sinless Son of God and so there is this great difference between the two



persons. It is only through belief in Jesus Christ that people can be saved from their sins.

Joseph had given his brothers the chance to choose between good and evil. He pretended that they were thieves, by hiding the silver cup in Benjamin's sack. They could have left Benjamin to take the blame and run away, but they chose to do what was right. They came back and took the blame. In this way they showed Joseph that they were now changed men and were sorry for the wrong they had done all those years ago. Jacob suffered at first by losing his son. Joseph suffered at first by being part of God's plan in Egypt. But now all his brothers were saved.

Jesus also suffered much trouble in order to save many people. This is God's plan of salvation for all people. Never forget the love of God and the suffering of Christ that sets you free from the punishment of sin.

5. The father of Tamar's twin boys was —

- a) Onan.
- b) Er.
- c) Judah.

6. When Joseph worked in Potiphar's house he —

- a) loved Potiphar's wife.
- b) ran away from Potiphar's wife.
- c) ran away from Potiphar.



Genesis 40:1–31

GOD GIVES JOSEPH WISDOM

Some time later Pharaoh, king of Egypt, became angry with two of his workers. He put them in prison. It was the same prison where Joseph was (40:1–3).

One night the two men had dreams. They did not know what their dreams meant and their faces were sad.

'We both had dreams,' they told Joseph, 'but there is no-one who can tell us what they mean' (40:8). Joseph answered, 'Only God knows what dreams mean. Tell me your dreams.' So Joseph told them that the dreams were to warn them what would happen to them in three days time (40:12–19).



Dreams

In Joseph's day God often spoke to people through dreams. God spoke to Joseph's father, Jacob, several times through dreams (Gen. 28:12–15; 31:10–13; 46:2). God also spoke to Joseph in dreams (Gen. 37:5,9) and explained the meaning to him (40:12; 41:25). God also gave this gift of understanding to Daniel (Dan. 2:19; 4:19). God also spoke in dreams to another Joseph who was the husband of Mary the mother of Jesus (Matthew 1:20; 2:13).

Sometimes God spoke to unbelievers. The dreams were usually given to warn them (Gen. 20:3; 31:24; 40:5; 41:1; Daniel 2:1; Matthew 2:12). Sometimes people see Jesus in their dreams – and they become believers. But bad spirits and false teachers can use dreams for bad things (Deuteronomy 13:1–4; Jeremiah 23:25–32).

God warns those people who do not speak his truth: "You who try to work out what is going to happen will be disgraced." Micah 3:7

God sometimes speaks to people in dreams today. However, it is important for us to understand God's written words, the Bible, with the help of the Holy Spirit. This is more important than understanding dreams. Dreams must be tested by God's written word, the Bible.

The third day was Pharaoh's birthday. He gave a special meal for his workers. Just as Joseph had said, Pharaoh let one prisoner go free, but he hanged the other prisoner (40:20–22).



Talk about:

1. Potiphar's wife tried to make Joseph sin (39:12). Was this temptation from God or from Satan? Compare Matthew 4:1.
2. Who was put in prison with Joseph (40:1–3)?
3. How could Joseph explain dreams?
4. Did Pharaoh's wine taster remember Joseph after he got out of prison (40:23)?
5. How do we know that Joseph kept on trusting God while he was in prison (40:8)?
6. Joseph went to prison for doing what was right. Do we say that life is unfair to us? Read Romans 5:3; 8:28.
7. If we suffer because of what others have done, how do we behave?

JOSEPH EXPLAINS THE KING'S DREAMS

Two more years passed. Then Pharaoh had two dreams, one right after the other. In the morning he was worried, so he sent for all his magicians and wise men (41:8). Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no-one could tell him what they meant.

Then the king's wine taster remembered Joseph. He told Pharaoh about Joseph who was in prison. He told the king how Joseph knew the meaning of his dreams.

So Pharaoh sent for Joseph. The king said to him, 'I have heard that when you hear a dream you can explain it' (41:15).

Joseph looked at Pharaoh. 'I cannot do it,' he replied, 'but God will give Pharaoh the answer he wants' (41:16). Joseph did not want the praise. He wanted God to have all the praise.

Then Pharaoh told Joseph his dreams. Joseph said to Pharaoh, 'God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do. Seven years of plenty are coming to the land of Egypt, when all the crops will be good, but seven years of famine will follow them' (41:28–30).



Genesis 41:32–57

JOSEPH IN CHARGE OF ALL EGYPT

'The matter has been firmly decided by God,' Joseph told Pharaoh, 'and God will do it soon. Now let Pharaoh look for a wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. These good crops should be stored . . . to be used during the seven years of famine' (41:32–36).

youngest one, with his money,' Joseph ordered (44:2).

After they had left for Canaan, Joseph told his manager to go after them. Joseph's manager opened each sack, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest brother's sack. He found the cup in Benjamin's sack.

The men were very upset. They went back with Benjamin to the city. They bowed down to the ground before Joseph. They were very frightened. Joseph still spoke to them in the Egyptian language. 'What is this you have done?' he asked.

Judah begged for his little brother Benjamin. He told again all that had happened to them. He said, 'I promised my father to keep the boy safe' (44:32).

If anything happened to Benjamin, Judah would always know it was his fault.



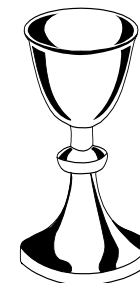
Genesis 45:1–8

JOSEPH TELLS HIS BROTHERS WHO HE REALLY IS

Joseph could not keep quiet any longer. 'Tell everyone to leave . . .' he shouted out. And he began to cry so loudly that all in the house heard him. His love for his brothers was so great, even though they had hurt him so much. He knew it was God's love that had brought them together again.

'I am Joseph!' he said to his brothers. 'Is my father still living?'

The brothers were even more afraid. Joseph called to them to come close. 'I am your brother Joseph,' he told them again, 'the one you sold into



Joseph as a type of Christ

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Judah betrayed Joseph and his brothers also failed to support him. 2. God gave Joseph a great love for his brothers. 3. Joseph wanted his brothers to care for his father. 4. Joseph was willing to forgive his brothers. 5. Joseph suffered much to save his brothers. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Judas betrayed Jesus and His followers also failed to support Him. 7. God gave Jesus a great love for His followers. 8. Jesus wanted His followers to love His father. 9. Jesus was willing to forgive His followers. 10. Jesus suffered much to save His followers. |
|--|---|

Jacob said, 'Put some of the best goods of the land in your bags and take them down to the man as a gift . . . Take double the amount of money with you, for you must return the money that was put back into . . . your sacks. Perhaps it was a mistake' (43:11–12) Then Jacob has to give his most precious gift – his son Benjamin (42:13). And he uses the special name of God – El Shaddai, God Almighty – in his prayer for mercy and safety (42:14). What a change! Jacob now learned to put his whole trust in God.

So the men took Benjamin, with some gifts, and their two lots of money to buy food, and went back to Egypt.

When Joseph saw his brother Benjamin, his own mother's son, he could not hold back his tears. 'Take these men to my house,' he told his servant, 'I want them to eat with me at noon' (43:16).



Genesis 43:17–34

THE BROTHERS ARE AFRAID

The brothers were afraid. They thought perhaps Joseph might be going to keep them as his slaves. When they came to the great house, they told Joseph's manager about the money.

He said to them 'Don't be afraid. Your God, the God of your father, has given you riches in your sacks. I received the silver (for the grain you bought)' (43:23) .Then he brought their brother Simeon to them.

The manager gave Joseph his food at his own table. The brothers sat together at another table.

Joseph ordered more food for Benjamin than the others because he loved him the most. And the brothers noticed a strange thing. Each man was given a place to sit in the order of his age, 'from the eldest to the youngest' (43:33).



Talk about:

1. What did Jacob tell his sons to take as gifts to Joseph (43:11)?
2. What did Joseph say to his brothers when they came back to Egypt (43:16)?
3. What did the manager of Joseph's house say to them (43:23)?
4. Why did Joseph give the best things to Benjamin (43:34)?
5. Had the dreams he had when he was young come true for Joseph?
6. What made Jacob's faith in God become strong (43:14)?



Genesis 44:1–34

THE BROTHERS TRY TO LEAVE EGYPT

Joseph told his manager to fill his brothers' sacks with as much food as they could carry on their donkeys. 'Then put my silver cup inside the sack of the

God gave Joseph this plan. It seemed good to Pharaoh and his officials, so Pharaoh asked them, 'Can we find anyone as wise as this man?'

Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'I put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt . . . I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one will do anything in all Egypt' (41:41,45). Pharaoh took his special ring from his finger and put it on Joseph's finger. This special ring gave Joseph great power in the land of Egypt. Everyone bowed down to Joseph and obeyed his orders (41:43). This is how the dreams God had given to Joseph many years before were coming true. Even Pharaoh himself respected the God of Joseph (41:38).

Pharaoh gave Joseph a wife, called Asenath. Soon Asenath gave Joseph two sons, Ma-nas-seh and E-phra-im (41:50–52).

In each of the seven years of good crops, Joseph stored one fifth of all the grain grown in Egypt (41:34). When famine came to Egypt and all the other lands around them, there was plenty of food in Egypt. The people of Egypt and people from other lands came to Joseph to buy grain (41:56–57).



Genesis 42:1–39

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS TRAVEL TO EGYPT

Joseph's brothers were soon to meet Joseph, though they did not know this. God brought them together so that they could be forgiven and be friends again. Joseph did not travel to Canaan but his brothers travelled to Egypt.

Famine was everywhere. Jacob, living with his family in Canaan, heard that there was food in Egypt. He said to his sons, 'Go down there and buy some for us, so that we may live and not die' (42:2).

The ten oldest sons packed their donkeys and set off, but Jacob kept the youngest son Benjamin at home. Benjamin was the last son from his favourite wife, Rachel.

When Jacob's sons reached Egypt they came to Joseph who was governor of the land. They 'bowed down to him with their faces to the



ground' (42:6). This was in direct fulfilment of Joseph's dreams when he lived at home with his father.

Joseph recognised his brothers at once. But they did not know it was Joseph their brother. He was grown up now, and looked and spoke just like an Egyptian. They told Joseph where they had come from and why – to buy grain. But he spoke roughly to them. 'You are spies' (42:9).

They told him they had only come to buy food and added, 'Your servants are honest men' (42:11). Joseph told them he would see if they were honest. 'You will not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here.' He had them put in prison for three days (42:14–17).

On the third day, Joseph said to them, 'If you are honest men, let one of you stay here . . . and next time you come you must bring your youngest brother to me . . .' Joseph tied up Simeon, then let the others go. The brothers now were remembering what they had done to Joseph all those years ago, and began to think that God was punishing them (42:21,22).

Joseph heard what they were saying. He knew their language and he wept (42:24), but he did not let them see it.

On their way home, one of the brothers opened his sack to get food for his donkey. He found the money he had paid for the corn inside the sack. They were all afraid and said, 'What is this that God has done to us' (42:28)?

When the brothers got home, every man found his money in his sack. Jacob was worried. Simeon was a prisoner in Egypt and his sons wanted to take Benjamin with them next time they went. Jacob said, 'Everything is against me' (42:36).

Benjamin was special! He was born after Joseph to Jacob's favourite wife Rachel. Rachel died when Benjamin was born (35:16–20). At first Jacob said he would never let Benjamin go (42:38).



Talk about:

1. Why did Joseph's brothers go to Egypt?
2. Were Joseph's brothers 'honest men' (42:11)?
3. Who punishes the brothers – God or Joseph (42:21–22)?
4. Why did Joseph weep (42:24)?
5. What did the brothers find in their sacks of grain (42:35)? Where did it come from.



QUESTIONS ON GENESIS CHAPTERS 40 TO 42

(Answers are given at the end)

Which sentences are correct?

1. At the time Joseph was a prisoner, he —
 - a) was put in charge of the other prisoners.
 - b) helped the wine-taster to be freed.
 - c) had a dream about the baker.
2. Pharaoh's dreams —
 - a) showed that Joseph would be made governor of Egypt.
 - b) showed that there would be seven years of famine followed by seven good years.
 - c) showed that there would be seven good years followed by seven years of famine.
3. Joseph was —
 - a) given a position of power.
 - b) given a wife.
 - c) given some land.
4. Joseph's brothers went to Egypt —
 - a) to see Joseph.
 - b) to buy grain.
 - c) to spy on the land.
5. When Joseph's brothers entered Egypt, he —
 - a) welcomed them and was friendly.
 - b) spoke harshly to them.
 - c) gave them some silver instead of grain.
6. Joseph's brother, Simeon —
 - a) was kept in Egypt as a prisoner.
 - b) went back to Canaan with some grain in his bags.
 - c) went back to Canaan to fetch his father.



Genesis 43:1–16

THE SECOND JOURNEY TO EGYPT

When Jacob's sons and their families had eaten all the food, Jacob said to his sons, 'Go back (to Egypt) and buy . . . more food.'

Judah answered his father, 'If you will not send Benjamin with us, we can not go down and buy food . . .'

Jacob groaned. But it was no use arguing.

Judah said to Jacob, 'Send the boy along with me and we will go at once . . . I myself promise to keep him safe' (43:8,9).

What a change! It was Judah who sent his brother Joseph into Egypt as a slave without telling his father. Now he tells his father that he will take his brother Benjamin into Egypt and take care of him.