



The Beginning

Lesson 18: Joseph And His Brothers

(Genesis 42:1-45:28)

When there was a great famine in all of the lands and Jacob saw that there was food in Egypt, he sent ten of his sons to buy food from there so that they would not die. Only Benjamin was kept home with his father so that nothing bad would happen to him. When the ten brothers arrived in Egypt, they came and bowed before Joseph. Joseph recognized his brothers, but his brothers did not recognize him.

Joseph asked his brothers where they had come from. But, whenever they said they had come from the land of Canaan to buy food, Joseph remembered how he had dreamed about his brothers bowing before him earlier. Then, he said that they were spies! They answered him and said that they were not spies. They said that they were twelve brothers. One brother was with their father and one was no more. But, Joseph kept saying that they were spies.

He told his brothers that he would test them to see if they were honest men. He told them to leave one of their brothers in prison in Egypt while the others took some food back to their families. Then, they were to bring Benjamin to Egypt. This made the brothers remember how they had treated Joseph when they sold him. Simeon was the one who was left and the rest of the brothers went back to their father.

Whenever their grain was loaded, Joseph also had their money returned to them. When the brothers saw their money after they arrived in Canaan, they were afraid. They told their father about what had happened and said they needed to take Benjamin with them. This made Jacob very upset. He did not want to lose another son! But, Reuben offered his own sons a guarantee that Benjamin would be brought back safely.

After they had eaten up the food they had brought, they returned to Egypt with Benjamin (because Joseph would not see them again without seeing Benjamin). Judah offered his father another guarantee that he would bring Benjamin back safely. Jacob finally agreed, and sent gifts to Joseph, including twice as much money as they needed.

When Joseph saw Benjamin with his brothers, along with the double amount of money, he told his servant to prepare a meal in his home and had his brothers join

him. Simeon was brought out of prison to join them. When they came to Joseph's house, Joseph asked how his father was and was so happy to see his brother, Benjamin, that he left the room to cry. When he had the meal served to his brothers, Joseph had all of his brothers seated from the oldest to the youngest. This amazed the brothers. And, Benjamin was given five times more food than his brothers.

Joseph commanded his servant to fill his brother's sacks with as much food as they could carry and put their money in their sacks. Then, he had his silver cup put into Benjamin's sack to test his brothers again. Later, when the brothers left Egypt, Joseph had men catch his brothers and ask them why they had stolen Joseph's cup. When the men searched their sacks, they found the cup in Benjamin's sack. This made the brothers very sad and they returned to Joseph. But, rather than letting Benjamin be punished, Judah offered to stay and be Joseph's slave instead. For, he had promised to take care of Benjamin and did not want to make his father sad by losing Benjamin.

When Joseph saw that his brothers had changed from when they had treated him so wickedly, Joseph could not hide himself from his brothers anymore! He sent everyone out of the room except his brothers and told them that he was Joseph. He told them not to be angry or sad, because God had brought him to Egypt in order to save his family's lives. So, although his brothers had meant to harm Joseph, God had made it work out for good!

Joseph told his brothers to hurry and go to his father and tell him about Joseph. Then, they were to bring him to Egypt with all of their families and animals. They would live in the land of Goshen and Joseph would take care of them for the five remaining years of famine. Jacob could not believe the news when he heard it! But, when they showed him everything Joseph had sent, Jacob knew that Joseph was still alive – and would go see Joseph.

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Study Questions:

- 1) Why did Joseph's brothers go to Egypt? Why did Benjamin stay home?

- 2) Did Joseph recognize his brothers? Did his brothers recognize him?

- 3) What did Joseph accuse his brothers of being?

- 4) What did Joseph's brothers have to do to prove they weren't spies?

- 5) Did Jacob allow Benjamin to go to Egypt? Why or why not?

- 6) How did Joseph have his brothers seated? What did Joseph give to Benjamin at the meal?

- 7) How did Joseph know that his brothers had changed?

- 8) Was Joseph angry with his brothers for what they had done to him?

Memory Verse:

“But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.” (Genesis 45:5).

Draw a picture of the lesson you learned about: