

## Joseph, Part 2 of 2: From Egypt to the Promised Land

by Joelee Chamberlain

Another time I was telling you about Joseph, the son of Jacob, wasn't I? But the Bible tells us so much about Joseph that I had to break it up into two parts in order to tell it all to you. It would have been way too long otherwise. So very quickly let's go over what we talked about the first time, then I'll finish up the story of Joseph for you.

All right, let's see. What do we remember? Well, Joseph's father Jacob had 4 wives. Leah and Rachel were the most important wives, weren't they? Jacob also had 12 sons, but the son that Jacob loved the most was Joseph, the older son of his very favorite wife Rachel. Joseph was a good son, and the other brothers were jealous of Joseph, and one day they had the chance to do something really mean to him. At first they were going to kill Joseph, but then one of the brothers, Judah, suggested that instead, they sell him as a slave to some merchants who were passing by. These merchants bought Joseph and took him way down to Egypt where he was sold as a slave. And his poor father Jacob thought Joseph was dead and was very, very unhappy. You remember all of that, don't you?

But the Lord was with Joseph down in Egypt, and God had a big plan for Joseph. So after a while Joseph became very, very important in Egypt, didn't he? Only the king, Pharaoh, was more important than Joseph. And, remember, Joseph had told Pharaoh what Pharaoh's dreams had meant, that a big famine was coming and that it would last for 7 years. So before the famine came, the king had Joseph gather all of the extra grain and put it into storehouses. Well, the famine came, but it wasn't just in Egypt, was it? No, it was in other countries, too, and it was in the land of Canaan where Joseph's father Jacob and the rest of his family lived. People mostly ate just bread then, just as in some countries today people eat mostly rice. So when the people in Joseph's time ran out of grain, they couldn't make their bread then, could they? Bread, the food they mainly ate. And Jacob and his family ran out of grain. And that's where I had to stop telling the story last time. So now let's find out what happened next!

Well, Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, so he said to his sons, "Look, I've heard there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us so that we don't starve to death."

So Jacob's ten older sons went down to Egypt to buy grain. But Jacob didn't let Benjamin go. Benjamin was about 30 years old by then, so why not let Benjamin go, too? Well, remember, Joseph and Benjamin were the only sons of Rachel, the wife that Jacob had loved so much, weren't they? And Rachel was dead. Now, of course, it had been many years, probably about 20, since the brothers had sold Joseph as a slave, and Jacob had thought all those years that Joseph was dead. So he kept Rachel's other son, Benjamin, home. Jacob said, "Something might happen to him, too."

Well, Reuben and Levi and Judah and the other brothers took donkeys and began their long journey down to Egypt. They finally got there, and they went to where the grain was being

sold. And guess who was selling the grain?! Yes, Joseph, their brother, was selling the grain!!! But they didn't know it was Joseph; they didn't recognize him at all! Of course, they probably thought that Joseph was either still just some lowly slave somewhere in that big country or that he was dead. How could they possibly know that this big, important man who looked and dressed like some high Egyptian officer was really their brother!! Also, the Egyptians shaved, so Joseph shaved, too. But the Hebrews, Joseph's brothers, had beards. So Joseph really looked like an Egyptian, didn't he? And the brothers went up and bowed down to the ground before this important man! But Joseph recognized his brothers! The Bible doesn't tell us, but I imagine that he had been keeping an eye out for them!

Anyway, Joseph saw his brothers and knew them, but he didn't tell them who he was. In fact, he just spoke the Egyptian language to them with someone who interpreted for him, someone who would tell the brothers in their Hebrew language what he was saying. So they really thought he must be an Egyptian! Joseph said to his brothers in a rough sort of way, "Where do you come from?"

They said, "We've come from the land of Canaan to buy food."

Then Joseph remembered his dreams that he'd had. You remember them, don't you? One dream had been that he and his brothers had been in the field cutting grain and putting it into bundles, and his brother's bundles of grain had bowed to his bundle of grain. Remember? And here his ten brothers were bowing to him! That dream had been a prophecy, hadn't it?

But Joseph wasn't ready to tell his brothers who he was. I'm wondering if Joseph wanted to find out if his brothers had changed from being jealous young men and were now sorry for what they had done to him and how unhappy they had made their father. But we need to be careful if the Bible doesn't come right out and say something, don't we?

Anyway, for whatever reason, Joseph kept on speaking roughly to his brothers with the interpreter telling them in Hebrew what he was saying. He said, "You are spies! You've come to see what things are like in the land here!"

But his brothers said, "No, sir, we have only come to buy food here. We are all the sons of one man. We are honest men. Your servants aren't spies!"

They called themselves Joseph's servants. That was a very polite and humble way to talk.

But Joseph just said to them, "No! You've come to see what things are like in the land here."

And the brothers said, "Your servants are 12 brothers, sons of one man in the land of Canaan. And, see, our youngest brother is with our father today, and one brother is no more." (The "no more" part was talking about Joseph himself, wasn't it?! It meant that he was dead! But there he was standing in front of them looking like a very important Egyptian!)

And Joseph said to them, "No, it is as I have said; you are spies. Here is how you shall be tested. You aren't going to leave here unless your youngest brother comes here. You send one of you to get your other brother, and the rest of you shall be kept in prison. That will prove whether you're telling the truth or whether you are spies!"

And Joseph had his brothers all put in jail for 3 days! On the third day Joseph said to them, "All right. You do this and you'll live; you see, I fear God. So if you are honest men, have just one of your brothers be kept in the jail, and the rest of you go back to your homes with grain. But you are to bring your youngest brother back to me. This will prove that you're telling the truth, and you won't die."

And the ten brothers began talking to each other about what they had done to Joseph so many years before. They said to each other, "We are really guilty about our brother Joseph. We saw how very unhappy he was when he begged us not to mistreat him, but we wouldn't listen to him. That is why we are now having this terrible trouble."

Reuben said to the other 9 brothers, "Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy, and you wouldn't listen to me?! So we are responsible for his death."

Now, the brothers were talking in their own language, Hebrew, and didn't realize that Joseph could understand what they were saying! Remember, he was using an interpreter. That is, Joseph was speaking the Egyptian language to them and having someone tell the brothers in Hebrew what he had said. But Joseph heard them and understood all they said. And when he heard them saying this about what they had done to him, he turned away from them where they couldn't see what he was doing and began crying. Then he came back to them and spoke to them again, but he still didn't tell his brothers who he was. Then Joseph took one of his brothers, Simeon, and had him tied up while they watched. Simeon was going to be in jail while they were gone.

Then Joseph gave orders for their sacks to be filled with grain, but secretly he had each brother's money put back into his sack of grain again! And he had them given extra food for the long journey back home. So the brothers each put his sack of grain on his donkey and started off, having left Simeon in jail there.

Well, later they stopped and one of them was going to feed his donkey some of the grain, so he opened his sack, and what do you think he saw?! Yes, he saw his money there in the bag of grain!

And he said to his other brothers, "My money is back here in my sack!!!"

And the brothers were scared!! They said to each other, "What is God doing to us?!"

Well, they kept on heading home toward the land of Canaan, and when they got back to

their father Jacob, they told him everything that had happened. They said to Jacob, "The man who is the ruler of that country (they were talking about Joseph, weren't they? -- but they didn't know it!) The man who is the ruler of that country spoke roughly to us and thought we were spies. We told him that we were not spies but were honest men. We told him that we were 12 brothers, all sons of one father, and that one was dead and that the youngest was with our father back in Canaan."

And they said to Jacob their father, "But the man who was ruler of the country then said to us that in order to know if we were really honest men, that we would have to leave one of our brothers there and then take food home to our families. But we would have to bring our youngest brother back with us, and that way he would know we weren't spies but were really honest men. If we did that, then he said he would give our other brother back to us and let us buy food in Egypt when we needed to."

And they all began emptying their sacks of grain, and what do you think they saw in them?! Yes! Each of them saw his bag of money in his sack of grain!! And when the brothers and their father Jacob saw the bags of money, they were all scared!!

Then Jacob said to them, "You have taken my children away! Joseph isn't here, and Simeon isn't here, and now you want to take Benjamin away too! Everything is against me!"

Reuben, the oldest brother, said to their father, "If I don't bring Benjamin back to you, you can kill my two sons! Let me take Benjamin, and I will bring him back to you." (I don't know what good he thought that would do! That seems to me like a foolish thing for Reuben to say!)

But Jacob just said, "My son Benjamin will not go to Egypt with you. Rachel's other son Joseph is dead, and Benjamin is all I have left from her. If anything happened to Benjamin on the trip, I would just die I'd be so unhappy!"

Well, the famine was very bad and kept going on and on, and Jacob and his sons and their families ate up all the grain they'd bought in Egypt. Then Jacob said to them, "Go again and buy us some food."

But Judah said to his father, "The man warned us that we weren't to go back unless we brought our youngest brother with us. If you will send Benjamin with us, we will go down and buy food. But if you won't send him, we won't go, because the man told us not to go again unless our brother was with us."

Jacob said, "Why did you do that to me?! Why did you tell the man that you had another brother?!"

They said, "The man questioned us carefully about ourselves and our families. He asked us if our father was still alive, and he asked us if we had another brother, and we just answered

his questions. How could we know he'd say to bring our brother to Egypt!?"

Then Judah said to Jacob his father, "Send the boy with me, and we will get up and go to Egypt so we won't all starve to death. I will be responsible for Benjamin. If I don't bring him back to you, then I will take the blame forever."

And Judah said, "Why, if we hadn't been waiting so long, we could have been to Egypt and back again this second time."

Then his father Jacob said, "Well, if this is the way it has to be, then do this. Take from the best fruits of our land and take them as a present to the man. Take a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh and nuts. And take two times as much money in your bags and give it to him. Maybe it was just a mistake."

Jacob said, "And take your brother Benjamin, too. Get up and go again to the man. And may God Almighty make the man have mercy on you so that he will let Simeon go, and Benjamin and all of you may come home. If I lose my sons, I will be very, very unhappy."

So the brothers took the present they'd gotten together and two times as much money and their donkeys and got up and made the long trip back down to Egypt. And when they got there, they stood before Joseph again.

And when Joseph saw his brother Benjamin with them, he said to the man who ran his house, "Take these men home and get a big meal ready, because these men are going to eat with me at noon."

So the man did as Joseph had said and took the brothers over to Joseph's house. But this scared the brothers! They thought, "Oh! It's because of the money that was given back in our sacks! That's why we're being brought here! The man is looking for a reason to find fault with us and will grab us and our donkeys and make us slaves!"

So as they got near the door, they went up to the steward, the man who took care of Joseph's house for him and said, "Oh, sir, we really did come down the first time just to buy food, but when we left and had gone a ways and were going to feed our donkeys, each of us found our money in our sacks. But we've brought that money back and even more money to buy more food. We don't know how that money got into our sacks!"

But the steward just said to them, "Don't be afraid. Your God and the God of your father gave you treasure in your sacks. I had your money." (Now we know that Joseph had really had the money put back, hadn't he?)

And then the man brought Simeon out from the jail to be with his brothers, and he took them all into Joseph's house and brought them water and washed their feet. And he fed their donkeys. And the brothers heard they were going to eat there at noon, and they got their present

of food ready for Joseph. Remember, they still didn't know that this very important Egyptian man was actually their brother Joseph!

Well, Joseph came home, and the brothers gave him the present, and they all bowed themselves down to the ground before him.

Joseph asked them how they were doing, and then he said to them, "How is your father, the old man you told me about? Is he still alive?"

They said, "Your servant our father is still alive and doing well." And they bowed to him again.

Then Joseph looked up and saw his brother Benjamin, the only other son of his mother Rachel, and he said, "Is this your youngest brother you spoke of?"

Then Joseph said to Benjamin, "May God be gracious to you, my son."

Well, Joseph couldn't take it anymore! He was so glad to see Benjamin! He left that room and went into another room and just cried! But this wasn't a babyish thing for him to do. After all, he hadn't seen his brother for about 20 years! Then he washed his face and went back out to his brothers again. But he wasn't quite ready yet to tell them who he was.

So they all sat down to dinner. There were 3 tables. One for Joseph by himself. One for the Egyptians who were having dinner with him, too. And one for the brothers. You see, Egyptians wouldn't eat with Hebrews, and, of course, the brothers were Hebrews.

And Joseph had the brothers sit down according to their ages, from the oldest, Reuben, down through to the youngest, Benjamin. And the brothers were amazed at this, that he knew their ages. And as a special treat Joseph sent down food for his brothers from his own table, some for each brother. But he sent 5 times as much to Benjamin. And so they all had a good time eating and drinking.

Then Joseph told his steward, the man in charge of his house, "Fill all of their sacks with grain, as much as they can carry. And put each man's money back into his sack. And then take my special silver cup and put it just inside of the sack of the youngest man along with his money." That is, he was to put the cup into Benjamin's sack, right? I wonder what the steward thought about all of this! But we aren't told in the Bible, so let's go on.

So the steward did what Joseph said. And as soon as it was morning, the brothers and their donkeys were sent on their way to go back to their home in the land of Canaan. And they didn't know anything about the money in their sacks or the cup in Benjamin's sack!

Well, when the brothers got out of the city a little way, Joseph said to his steward, "Now get up and follow after those men. And when you catch up with them, you say to them, `Why

are you rewarding the good done to you with evil!? Isn't this my lord's (Joseph's) special cup?! You've been very bad!"

So the steward took off after the brothers and caught up with them and said to them what Joseph had told him to say, accusing them of stealing Joseph's special silver cup.

Joseph's brothers said, "What are you talking about?! Why, God forbid that we would do what you've said!"

They said, "Look, we brought back the money that we'd found the other time in our sacks. Why would we then steal anything from your master? Why, if you find the cup with any of us, let that one die, and we'll all be your master's slaves!" They just knew none of them had taken the cup!

But the steward said, "No, just the one who has the cup will be a slave, and the rest of you can just go on home."

So quickly Joseph's brothers took all of their sacks down off of their donkeys and began opening them for the steward. And the steward began searching the sacks, starting with the oldest brother's sack and going on down until he came to the youngest brother's, to Benjamin's sack. And, of course, there in Benjamin's sack the steward found the cup -- right there where the steward himself had put it when Joseph had told him to!

When the brothers saw the cup in Benjamin's sack, they all tore their clothes they were so very upset! And they packed their donkeys back up, and they all headed back to the city!

Joseph was still at his house. And when they got there they all fell on the ground in front of him. Then Judah said, "What can I say to you?! How can I let you know we didn't do this?! God has found out how evil we've been!" Remember, about 20 years before this same brother Judah had been the one to suggest to the others that they sell Joseph to the merchants to be a slave. Judah was probably thinking of this.

Judah said, "We will all be your slaves, all of us and the one in whose sack the cup was found!"

But Joseph said, "God forbid that I should do that. Only the man who had the cup will be my slave. The rest of you just get up and go back to your father in peace."

Now why was Joseph acting this way? Why was he making his brothers so unhappy? I don't know, because the Bible doesn't really come right out and tell us why. But maybe Joseph was testing them to see if they really were sorry for the evil they had done to him in selling him to the merchants to be a slave, that they were now really changed, honest men. Or maybe he was testing them to see if they really wanted to take care of their brother Benjamin and not make their father sad. But, again, the Bible doesn't clearly tell us just why he acted this way, so we

need to be careful.

Anyway, when Judah heard what Joseph said, Judah went up near to Joseph and said, "Oh my lord. Please let me talk to you for just a minute, and please don't get mad at me. I know you are almost as important as Pharaoh."

Remember, now, Judah was speaking Hebrew and Joseph was using an interpreter and speaking Egyptian.

Judah said, "The other time you had asked us whether we had a father or a brother. And we had told you that we had a father who was an old man and that we had another brother, the youngest brother. This one's brother was dead, and this one here is the only other child of his mother, and our father loves him."

And Judah said, "And you told us that we had to bring him down to you so that you could see him. But we had told you that the boy couldn't leave his father, because if anything happened to him, our father would die. But you told us that we couldn't come to you again unless our youngest brother was with us."

Judah was calling Benjamin a boy, but, as I said earlier, actually Benjamin was about 30 years old. But he was the youngest of all the brothers by several years, so Judah just said he was a boy.

Judah said, "Well, when we got home, we told our father what you had said. And when we ran out of grain our father told us to go get more, and we reminded him that we couldn't do that unless our youngest brother (Benjamin) were with us. And our father said that if anything happened to this other son of his beloved wife that he would die. So if we go back without our youngest brother, our father will die, and it will be our fault."

And Judah said, "So please. Let me stay as your slave instead of the boy, and let the boy go back with his brothers. For how can I face my father if the boy isn't with me? I would see what would happen to my father."

Well, then Joseph couldn't stand it anymore, and he said loudly, "Let everyone leave me!" And all of his servants, including the interpreter, left him, leaving just Joseph and his 11 brothers alone together.

Then Joseph began really crying. Remember, he'd been away from his family for about 20 years! And he cried so loudly that the people in the other rooms could hear him! But can't you just imagine how startled the brothers must have been?! Here was this very important Egyptian standing there in front of them crying!

And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph!! Is my father still alive?!"



Well!! His brothers just stood there! They were so upset they couldn't say anything!

And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they went up close to him. And Joseph said to them, "I am Joseph your brother, the one you sold into Egypt!"

And Joseph said to them, "Don't be unhappy about this nor angry with yourselves that you sold me here, because God actually sent me here so that I could save lives. There has been a famine for two years, but there shall be 5 more years without any food growing. God sent me ahead of you to save you from the famine."

Joseph said, "So now it wasn't you who sent me here to Egypt, it was God, and He has made me like a father to Pharaoh and the ruler of all of Pharaoh's house and a ruler all over the land of Egypt."

And Joseph said, "Now hurry and go to my father and tell him that his son Joseph says that God has made him to be ruler of all Egypt and for him to come down to me. Don't wait! And he shall live in the land of Goshen in Egypt, and he shall be near me, he and his children and grandchildren and his flocks and everything he has."

Joseph said to his brothers, "Tell him that I'll take care of him there in Goshen and give him food, for there are 5 more years of famine. Otherwise he and his family won't have food."

And remember that the interpreter had left, and Joseph wasn't speaking the Egyptian language to his brothers. No, he was speaking Hebrew. So Joseph said, "Look, you can see and Benjamin my brother can see that I'm not using an interpreter. I'm speaking to you myself! So go and tell my father about all the honor I have here and everything you've seen. Hurry, and bring my father back here!"

And then Joseph just grabbed his brother Benjamin and hugged him and cried some more and Benjamin cried with him. Then Joseph kissed all of his brothers and cried over them. Then his brothers talked with him.

And Pharaoh the king heard people saying, "Joseph's brothers are here!" And this made Pharaoh happy and made Pharaoh's other officials happy. You see, they all liked Joseph.

And Pharaoh told Joseph, "Tell your brothers to load up their donkeys and go back to Canaan and get your father and their families and come back here to me. And I will give them the best land in Egypt and they will have plenty of food."

Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Now this is what you are to do. Have your brothers take wagons from Egypt for their children and their wives and your father, and have them come here. They don't need to bring any of their things with them -- they can have the best things in Egypt."

So Joseph did what the king told him to do. He gave his brothers wagons and plenty of

food for the trip. And he gave a set of clothes to each of his brothers as presents, but he gave to Benjamin a lot of money and 5 sets of clothes. And he sent to his father 10 donkeys loaded down with the good things of Egypt and ten more donkeys with lots of food for his father to eat on the trip down to Egypt. So Joseph sent his brothers away to go back home and get their families to bring to Egypt, and he said to them as they left, "Be careful that you don't get into any arguments on the way home!"

Now the Bible doesn't tell us, but I wonder what the brothers were thinking on the way home! How would they explain to their father how Joseph had gotten to Egypt?! It seems to me that they would have to admit to their father that 20 years earlier they had sold Joseph as a slave and then lied to their father about it! Imagine how they would be feeling now! But again, this is something that the Bible doesn't tell us, what they thought or what they planned on saying, so we need to be careful.

Anyway, the brothers left Egypt and went back to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob. And they told Jacob everything Joseph had told them to say to him. At first Jacob didn't believe them, but when Jacob saw the wagons which Joseph had sent, he finally believed them, and he was so happy!

So Jacob packed up and they all started on the long journey to Egypt. Jacob offered sacrifices to God, and God spoke to him in a vision and told him not to be afraid to go to Egypt. God said, "I will make a great nation of your descendants there, and I will bring you back again. And Joseph will be with you when you die."

So Jacob and his family and all of their herds went to Egypt. And as they got to Egypt, Jacob sent Judah to Joseph to tell them just where in Egypt they were to go.

Well, Joseph got his chariot ready and went out to meet his father in Goshen, in the rich land where they were to live. And he got to Jacob his father, and he went up to him and hugged him and cried and cried. They were so happy to see each other!

Now, we aren't told this in the Bible either, but I'm sure that when Jacob and his wife Leah and his brothers first saw Joseph dressed as an Egyptian riding toward them in a chariot, that they all bowed to him before he had time to run up and grab his father and kiss him. Why do I say that? Because remember Joseph's other dream when he was a boy, his dream where the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed to him? And remember that Jacob had said, "What?! Am I and your mother and your brothers going to bow to you?!" That dream was a prophecy, too. And whenever God gives a prophecy, it always comes true, doesn't it?

Anyway, Joseph was so very happy to see his father Jacob again. And then Joseph took his father and some of his brothers to meet Pharaoh, and Pharaoh was very good to them. And then they lived in Goshen with their flocks and herds where there were good pastures. And Joseph took care of his father and brothers and their families all during the rest of the famine.

Well, the famine was very bad, and after a while the Egyptians ran out of money to buy grain with. They came to Joseph and said, "We don't have any more money. We know you have grain, so give us some." So Joseph had the Egyptians give their herds of horses and cows and donkeys to him, and then he gave them grain for that year. Of course, he didn't keep the herds for himself. He was working for Pharaoh, so the herds then belonged to the king.

At the end of the year the Egyptians had eaten all of the grain they had bought with their herds, so they came to Joseph again. They knew there was still grain in the storehouses. They said to Joseph, "We're going to be honest with you. Our money is gone, and our herds all belong to you. All we have left is our land and ourselves."

The Egyptians then said, "Why should we die right before your eyes? Just buy us and our land in exchange for food. We and our land will belong to Pharaoh, and you will give us food for the rest of the famine."

So Joseph bought all of the fields and the land of Egypt for Pharaoh. And he had the people all move to the cities. And Joseph gave them grain.

And Joseph said to the Egyptians, "I bought you and your land, so you all belong to Pharaoh. Here is grain for you to eat. Also, you'll plant seeds on the land. Then when you get grain from what you've planted, divide the grain you get into five parts. You keep four parts of the grain for food for you and your families and to plant for the next year. But the fifth part you will give to Pharaoh." And he made that a law in Egypt. Joseph had worked very hard and very well for his master the king, hadn't he?

Well, Joseph took care of his father Jacob and his brothers and their families. And Jacob lived there in Egypt where he could see Joseph for 17 years. And Jacob was getting to be very old and knew that he would be dying soon. So he called Joseph to him and said, "Please be kind to me and do what I ask. I'm asking that when I die, please don't bury me here in Egypt. I want to be buried back in the land of Canaan with my father and grandfather."

Joseph said, "I promise that I'll do as you want."

Later someone told Joseph that his father was sick, so Joseph went to see him and took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him. And Jacob told Joseph that he was adopting Joseph's two sons, that they would inherit right along with Joseph's brothers. And Jacob blessed his two grandsons, but he blessed Ephraim, the younger one, first. Jacob made a prophecy then and said that the younger son would be more important than the older one. Later the tribe of Ephraim was much more important and much larger than the tribe of Manasseh.

Well, when Jacob was ready to die, he blessed all of his sons, but he gave bigger blessings to Judah and to Joseph. He told Judah that some of his descendants would be kings and that one of his descendants would be the great king of Israel. (We know that is a prophecy about Jesus, don't we?) Then Jacob died, and Joseph and his brothers mourned for him. And the

Egyptians mourned with them.

Joseph had a very big funeral for his father Jacob, and then Joseph told Pharaoh about how he had promised his father that he'd take him back to Canaan to be buried with his father and grandfather. So Pharaoh told Joseph to keep his promise. And Joseph and his brothers and their families all took a trip back to the land of Canaan and buried Jacob in the cave of Machpelah with Abraham and his wife Sarah and with Isaac and his wife Rachel and with Jacob's first wife Leah. Then they all went back to Egypt and lived there.

After their father was dead, Joseph's brothers got to worrying that now Joseph would be mad at them for what they had done to him so many years before. So they sent a messenger to Joseph saying, "Before your father died he told us to ask you to forgive us for the evil we did to you. So please forgive us."

What do you think Joseph did then? Do you think he was now going to get even with them? No! He just started crying. He had forgiven them many years before! Then his brothers came to Joseph and fell down in front of him and said to him, "Look, we are your slaves."

But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in God's place? You thought you were doing evil to me when you sold me as a slave, but God meant it for good so that I could save many people alive when the famine came. So don't be afraid. I will take care of you and your children." So Joseph spoke kindly to his brothers and comforted them.

I'm glad the brothers were so sorry for the bad thing they had done to Joseph, aren't you? But I'm also glad that Joseph was so forgiving.

Well, quite a few years later Joseph knew that he himself was going to die. But he knew about the promises that the Lord had given to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, that the Lord would give the land of Canaan to their descendants. So he said to his brothers, "God is going to help you and He will take you out of Egypt. When he does, promise me that you will take my dead body out with you."

And his brothers promised this. And when Joseph died, they put his body in a coffin and kept it there. And whenever any of them or their children or grandchildren might look at his coffin, they could remember that God had promised to take them back to the land of Canaan.

Well, many years later the Lord had Moses lead all of the many children of Israel, all of the descendants of Jacob, out of Egypt. You remember about that, don't you? (And you can hear more about that in "Exodus", another Bible story that I told you.) And when the children of Israel went out of Egypt, they took the coffin with Joseph's body in it with them just as he had asked them to do. And they carried this coffin with Joseph's body in it all through their travels, through the 40 years that they were in the wilderness. And then when they got to the land of Canaan and sort of got settled down there, they buried Joseph's body there in the land of Canaan. And that piece of ground then belonged to Joseph's descendants. So the body of Joseph

finally got back to Canaan, the land of promise.

And that is the story of Joseph, the favorite son of Jacob. He was a good son, then a good slave, then a good ruler, and a good brother.

Now, we heard how Joseph forgave his brothers for the bad things they had done to him. But all of us do some bad things, don't we? Of course, we don't sell people as slaves! But we do other things that we shouldn't. We get mad at someone for no reason, or we might tell a lie, or not obey our parents. These are all bad things, aren't they? These are called sins. And we all of us, every one of us, do sins sometimes, don't we? And the Bible tells us that anyone who does any sins at all can't go be with God someday. Oh dear!! What can we do about that?! Well, the Bible also tells us that we can have our sins forgiven! And then we can be with God someday! How wonderful! But how do we have them forgiven?

Well, remember that Jacob had said that one of Judah's descendants would be the great king? Yes. And that great king is the Lord Jesus Christ who is descended from Judah. You see, someday after He comes back to earth, the Lord Jesus, Who is the Son of God, is going to rule all of the world.

And God loves us so much that He made a way for us to have our sins forgiven and to be able to go be with Him someday forever. Remember the first time Jesus came as a little baby in Bethlehem, Mary, a descendant of Judah, was His mother. And after growing up and doing many miracles in Israel (that's the land of Canaan) Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose again, was alive again, after 3 days. And many people saw Him. And all we have to do to be saved is to ask Jesus to forgive our sins, trust in Him and He'll forgive us. Of course, after that then we should follow the Lord Jesus, this great King that Jacob prophesied about. And, of course, God's prophesies always come true, don't they? Whatever God says will happen, always does happen, doesn't it?! Isn't God good and loving to make this way for us to have our sins forgiven and be able to be with Him forever? I'm so glad! Aren't you?!