

## Genesis 37 – 39 – Joseph and Egypt

Jacob had 12 sons, but his favorite was Joseph because he was the son of his old age. To show his love, Jacob had a robe of many colors made for him. This angered the brothers and they couldn't speak peaceably with Joseph.

One day the brothers took the flocks to graze in a distant land. Jacob sent Joseph to see if all was well with the brothers and to bring word back. When the brothers saw him coming, they said, "Let's kill him and throw his body into a pit."

But Reuben said, "We must shed no blood. Throw him into a deep pit, but don't lay a hand on him." Reuben's plan was to rescue Joseph later.

Reuben then left on an errand, and a caravan of merchants approached on their way to Egypt. Judah said, "Why should we kill Joseph? Let's sell him to these merchants instead."

When Reuben returned, he was dismayed to learn what they had done. At that point they decided to kill a goat and dip Joseph's coat into the blood to show to their father.

Jacob grabbed the coat and cried out, "Joseph has been killed by wild animals." He tore his clothes and cried. None of his children could comfort him. He said, "I will go to my death mourning the loss of my son."

Once Joseph arrived in Egypt he was sold to Potiphar, the captain of the guard. He adjusted to his life as a slave and God prospered everything he did. He grew in his abilities and Potiphar came to respect him and put him in charge of the household.

Joseph was a handsome young man and soon Potiphar's wife cast a desirous eye toward him. She asked him to come lie with her in her bed. Joseph refused. One day she grabbed him and as he pulled away, he left his robe behind in her hands.

Angry, she sought revenge. She screamed until her servants came running. She cried, "The Hebrew servant that my husband brought into our home came to my room to lie with me. He ran away when I screamed. See, I have his robe as proof."

When Potiphar returned, she repeated her lie to him and he threw Joseph into prison.

Life in prison was difficult, but God showed Joseph steadfast love and helped him to prosper. The jailer came to respect Joseph and soon put him in charge of all the prisoners.

After several years had passed, Pharaoh had two dreams. None of his counselors or wise men could interpret them. Suddenly, the cupbearer remembered Joseph and how he could interpret dreams. Pharaoh sent guards to bring Joseph and he was able to do what no one else could; he interpreted Pharaoh's dream – warning them that 7 years of plenty would be followed by seven years of famine.

Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, there can be no one as wise or discerning as you. You shall be over my house and my people will honor your commands. Only I will be greater than you throughout all of Egypt."

Everything happened just as Joseph said. When the famine struck Joseph opened the storehouses and sold grain to the people of Egypt and to those in surrounding countries.

In time Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to purchase grain. They didn't recognize Joseph, so he devised a plot that would force his brothers to return home but without Simeon. They would then have to return and bring along the youngest brother, Benjamin, who had stayed home with his father.

Upon their return sometime later, Joseph revealed his identity. The brothers were truly frightened and feared his revenge. Joseph said, "Don't be afraid of me. I can't act in the place of God. It is true that you wanted to hurt me, but God was sovereign and planned to save the lives of our entire clan. Now return to Canaan and bring my father to Egypt."

When Pharaoh heard of all this he said, "Go back to Canaan and bring your father, your wives, your children. Take wagons from Egypt that your families might travel safely. Don't worry about possessions for I will see that when you return you will have the best that Egypt has."

And so it was that Joseph was reunited with his father and all of his family. They settled in the land of Goshen and were fruitful and multiplied exceedingly.