

## THE STORY OF JOSEPH AND HOW JACOB'S FAMILY MOVES TO EGYPT. (PART TWO)

Joseph was imprisoned unfairly but God still blessed him by letting him find favor with the chief jailor and Joseph was soon in charge of all the other prisoners. Some terrible things had already happened to Joseph in his young life, but we see that God was able to work through Joseph even in those difficult circumstances. We as Christians realize this very well. God does not promise a smooth life, but we can prosper in most circumstances with his help. If nothing else, we can use the difficult times as stepping-stones to build our character. The book of James says, *“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance”*. (James 1:2-3)

Sometime later, the king of Egypt became angry with two servants; the ones who served him bread and wine. He threw them into prison. The Bible does not tell us why but it is logical to conclude that there had been an attempt to poison the king. One night, both of these men had disturbing dreams. Joseph asked them to tell him their dreams and God would allow him to tell the meaning. He predicted according to their dreams that the cupbearer would in three days be allowed to return to his job, but the one who baked the bread would be put to death.

Joseph asked the cupbearer,

*“When things are going well with you, please do this kindness by mentioning me to the king, for I have done nothing that should have brought me to this prison.” The cupbearer said he would, but neglected to keep his promise to Joseph.*

Two years later, Pharaoh, the king, had two very similar disturbing dreams. He called the wisest men in his kingdom together but they were as confused about the dreams as he was. Finally, the cupbearer remembered Joseph and told the king of a man he met in prison that had interpreted his dream. When Joseph was called before the king, the king explained what he dreamed.

*“Out of the Nile River came seven fat cows, followed soon by seven thin cows. The seven thin cows ate the seven fat cows. In a second dream, I saw seven plump ears of grain followed by seven withered ones. The plump ears were eaten by the withered ears.”*

Joseph said,

*“God is trying to tell you the same thing in both dreams. The seven fat cows and plump ears of grain represent seven years of bountiful harvest. This will be followed by seven years of famine represented by the thin cows and withered ears of grain. You will have much abundance followed by a terrible famine that will make you forget the good times. God has planned this, and it will begin soon. I would suggest that someone be appointed to prepare for the famine.”*

Pharoah said to his advisors,

*“Who could be better for this job than Joseph? I appoint Joseph as Prime Minister, and he will be second in command to me.”*

Things went just like God had predicted through Joseph. Joseph oversaw the collection of all the abundance for the seven years, and then the famine followed. Back in Canaan where Joseph’s family lived, Jacob said to his sons, “Go to Egypt and buy food before we starve to death.”

All the sons left for Egypt except Benjamin, the youngest brother of Joseph. As the ten sons came to Egypt, Joseph was in charge of the grain sales. He recognized them as they bowed down before him. (Remember Joseph’s boyhood dreams) However, due to his being dressed like an Egyptian and the fact that it had been 20 years since they had seen him, they did not recognize him. Joseph, in order to test them said, “You are spies!” They responded, “No we are not spies, we are all brothers and our father is back in Canaan. One younger brother is there and one of our brothers is dead.”

Joseph threw all of them into prison, but after three days released all but one of them. He said he would keep Simeon until they could prove their story was true. They would have to bring back their younger brother, Benjamin. The brothers cried to each other in their own language, “All of this has happened to us because of what we did to Joseph 20 years ago. We heard him cry for help but we did not listen.” The brothers did not know Joseph understood their language. He had to go off into a private room to cry.

He sent them away with their grain, secretly hiding the money they brought to pay for it in their sacks. In the next lesson, we will finish the story of Joseph.

## **Questions**

1. Which servant of Pharoah was eventually put to death?
2. What did the seven thin cows represent in the king’s dream?
3. Joseph accused the ten brothers of being \_\_\_\_\_.

