

Chapter Ten – Joseph, the Governor of Egypt

When there was no more wheat in Canaan, Jacob sent ten of his sons to Egypt to buy more. When the ten arrived in Egypt, Joseph was told about it. When his brothers saw him, they bowed before him, in line with the first dream about the wheat long ago. Joseph sat on his throne and said, “You ten must be spies. You have come here to spy on Egypt. Your country will attack us when you have found our weakness.” But they answered, “No, we are not spies but honest men and have come to buy wheat for our families. We are twelve brothers of our father, Jacob.”

Joseph replied, “You are only ten. Where are the other two?”

“One is dead and the youngest is at home,” they answered.

Joseph said, “I don’t believe you. I will keep one of you in prison. The next time you come back make sure that your youngest brother comes with you. When I can trust your words, you may buy your wheat.”

Joseph gave them some wheat to bring back home but he told the housekeeper to put each man’s money back in the sack tied at the mouth. When they reached home they all found their money in the sacks, and they were very afraid. When Jacob heard what the Governor had said about Benjamin the youngest, he was very frightened and said, “Joseph is dead and Simeon is in prison. If Benjamin goes, something worse will happen to him. I will never let him go.”

After some months, all the wheat was eaten. Jacob had to give in and sent Benjamin with the ten. He told Reuben to bring the Governor the best produce as gifts and take twice as much money with them because the Governor did not take their money last time. He prayed to God for their safety as he could not bear the pain of losing another son. Reuben knew that his father was very worried so he promised that he would try his best to protect his brothers.

Joseph assembled the eleven in his hall and had lunch with them. They were very surprised to see Joseph giving their correct places at the table, beginning with the eldest. Then he went to his own table to eat. Benjamin was given five times more food than the others. Joseph did this to see if they were jealous of Benjamin. Meanwhile he told the housekeeper to put the silver cup in Benjamin’s sack.

On the way back, the brothers were pleased that nothing had happened. Suddenly they heard shouting and orders to stop. Up came the housekeeper with some guards and asked, “Why have you stolen the silver cup from my master?” And they found it in Benjamin’s sack. They arrested him.

The ten begged Joseph to let their brother go as they did not want to see their father die of sorrow. At this Joseph knew that they loved his brother and told them, "I am your brother Joseph." They were so stunned that they could not say a word. "You sold me into Egypt to do harm to me," he continued, "but God took care of me and I am now the Governor of Egypt." Then they all came near to embrace him, especially Benjamin, his own brother. With the approval of Pharaoh, Joseph invited his father and brothers to live in the east side of Egypt. Some days later, Jacob died after blessing all his sons. The Israelites remained in Egypt until the time of Moses. They expanded there and became a great nation.



Joseph the Governor

Questions:

1. Why did Joseph test his brothers?
2. Why did Jacob ask Reuben to bring gifts to the Governor of Egypt?
3. List FIVE important events in Joseph's life.
4. Suggest TWO good qualities of Joseph. Explain each with an example.
5. In which TWO ways, was Reuben a good son?
6. Why is there famine in some parts of the world? What can you do to help?