

# YOUTH



LEVEL 4

# BIBLE

# LESSONS



LESSON 3



Joseph's Adventures

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# JOSEPH'S ADVENTURES

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Our last lesson left Jacob moving back to Canaan. He knew he would once again see his brother, Esau. And he wondered if Esau would still be angry with him.

But Jacob knew the best thing to do was to ask God to help him handle the problem. God answered Jacob's prayer. And the two brothers had a very happy, warm meeting.

By the time Jacob and Esau were reunited, each had his own large family. Jacob already had eleven sons and a daughter named Dinah. He settled his family in Canaan where his twelfth son, Benjamin, was born.

## **SOLD INTO SLAVERY**

Jacob's sons worked at tending sheep and other livestock. Though Joseph was only 17, he worked hard to help his older brothers.

But Joseph's older brothers disliked him. You see, he was Jacob's favorite. It made his brothers angry

to see Jacob do special favors for him. And the two dreams Joseph had did not help. In both he dreamed that he would someday rule over his brothers. From then on they disliked him even more.

One day, Jacob sent Joseph to check up on his brothers who were tending the flocks away from



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home. After a few days on foot he found his brothers. But when they saw Joseph coming, they began to talk about how they hated him. They wanted to kill their brother Joseph.

Then Reuben, the oldest brother, spoke up. "Let's not kill him," he said. "Let's just put him in a pit to starve." He secretly planned to rescue Joseph later, then send him home.

By this time Joseph had found his brothers and happily greeted them. But suddenly, they grabbed him and held him tightly. Joseph was wearing a beautiful, many-

colored coat which was a special gift from his father. They ripped off the coat, picked up Joseph and dropped him into a deep, dark pit.

Joseph tried to climb out, but the sides of the pit would not allow him to. The loose soil just crumbled each time he tried to escape.

Reuben went to watch the flocks while the others ate a meal. He planned to return later to rescue Joseph. However, he did not see the caravan of traders in the distance. But the other brothers did see it.

"We could get a good price if we sold Joseph as a slave," Judah suggested.



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When Reuben returned to the pit to rescue Joseph, his brothers had already sold him. He was saddened when he heard what they had done. What would he tell his father?

They took Joseph's coat and dipped it into some goat's blood. When they returned home a few days later, they lied to Jacob about Joseph.

"We found Joseph's coat," they said. "He must have been killed by some wild animal."

What a terrible way to treat their father!

## **JOSEPH BECOMES A RULER IN EGYPT**

Meanwhile, Joseph was taken to Egypt where a man named Potiphar bought him as a slave. Potiphar was a captain in the service of the king, or pharaoh, of Egypt.

Joseph was a good, hard worker. Potiphar noticed how much he could be trusted. Soon, Joseph was put in charge over the other servants in Potiphar's house.

For a while things went well for Joseph. But then Potiphar's wife began to like Joseph as much as her own husband. When Joseph told her how wrong that was, she became angry. She grabbed

Joseph's coat as he ran away.

When Potiphar came home, his wife lied to him. "Your Hebrew servant was cruel to me," she said. "When I screamed, he dropped his jacket and ran!"

Potiphar believed her story. He became so angry that he ordered soldiers to throw Joseph in prison. But because he was so obedient, Joseph became very well-liked by the jail-keeper. Although he still had to live in the prison, he was soon put in charge of other prisoners.

Part of Joseph's job was to look after two special prisoners — the pharaoh's chief butler and the chief baker. One day, Joseph noticed that they both looked worried. He asked them why.

"We have each dreamed a disturbing dream," they replied. "And there is no one to tell us the meaning."

"Tell me your dreams," Joseph said. "God will give me the wisdom to know their meaning."

The butler's dream meant that in three days he would get his job back. But the baker's dream meant that he would die.

In three days the butler was pardoned, while the baker was hanged — just like Joseph had said.

“Don’t forget to bring my case before Pharaoh,” Joseph reminded the butler. “I’m innocent!” But the butler forgot all about Joseph.

Two years passed and one night Pharaoh had two dreams that confused and worried him. He told his dreams to his wise men. These men were supposed to have magic powers. But none could tell him the meaning.

Suddenly, after two years, the chief butler remembered Joseph. He suggested that Pharaoh send for him.

Joseph was brought before Pharaoh. “Only God has the power to interpret dreams,” Joseph said. “Tell me your dreams and He will show me the answer.”

“I dreamed that as I stood by the Nile River, seven fat cows came up out of the water,” Pharaoh began. “As they ate the grass at the edge of the water, seven thin cows came up out of the water. The thin cows ate up the fat cows. Yet, the thin cows were just as thin as before they ate.”

Then Pharaoh told Joseph of his second dream. This time seven plump heads of grain grew out of one stalk. Seven thin heads of grain also came out of the same stalk and ate up the plump heads of grain!

“What do these dreams mean?”

asked Pharaoh. “None of my wise men can tell me their meaning. Can you?”

“Both dreams mean the same thing,” Joseph answered. “God sent two dreams because he wants



to be sure you obey His warning. The seven fat cows and seven plump ears of grain mean that the next seven years will bring good crops,” Joseph continued. “There will be much more food than anyone could ever eat!

“The thin cows and the thin heads of grain mean that there will be seven years of severe famine following the good years. There will be very little food for either people or animals.”

The Pharaoh was shocked! He asked Joseph how best to prepare for the next 14 years.

Joseph quickly explained his plan to Pharaoh. During the next seven years all the extra crops must be stored. Then there will be enough food to last through the

years of famine. Pharaoh liked Joseph’s idea. Not only was Joseph put in charge of this storage project — he was made ruler over all Egypt, second only to Pharaoh!

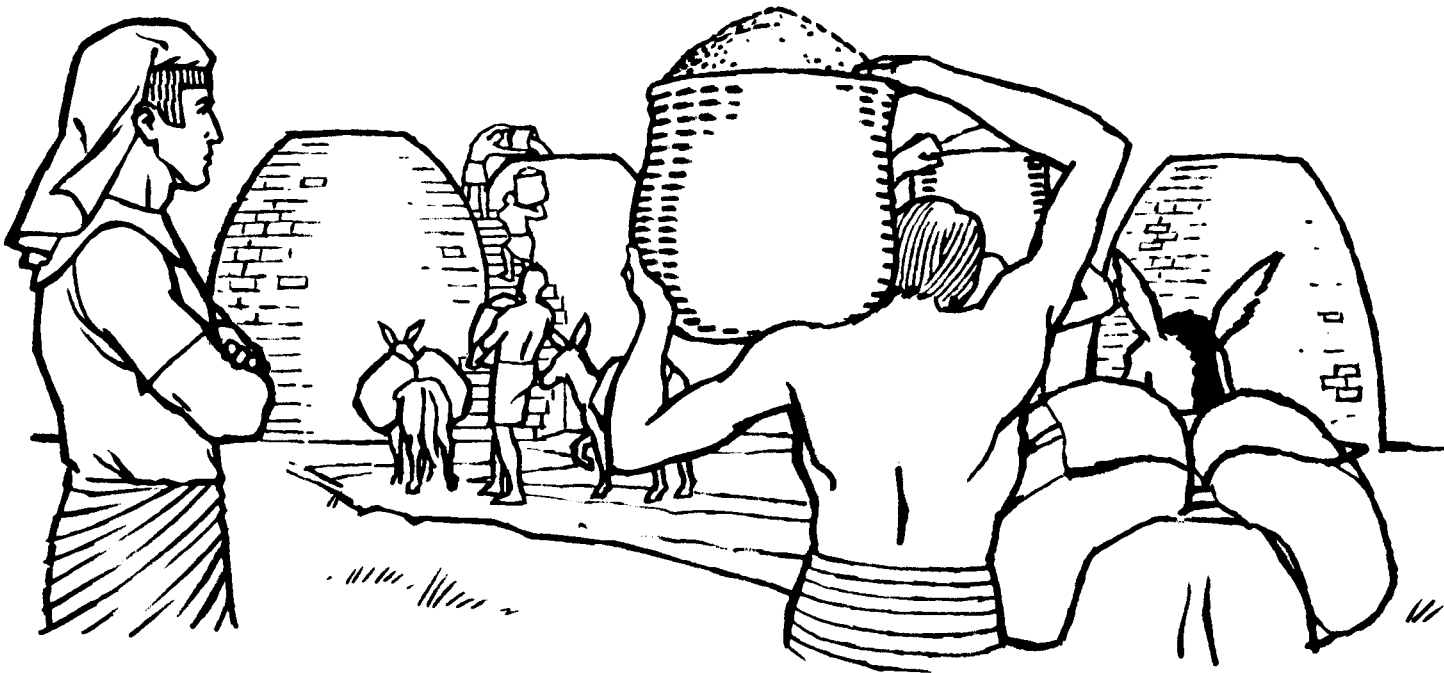
Joseph married the daughter of one of the government leaders. They had two sons — Ephraim and Manasseh.

During the next seven years, Joseph ordered many warehouses built. He gathered all the extra grain and stored it in these warehouses.

### **SEVEN YEARS OF FAMINE**

At the end of those first seven years the weather began to change. Rain came less and less often. The famine had come.

People in some nations were



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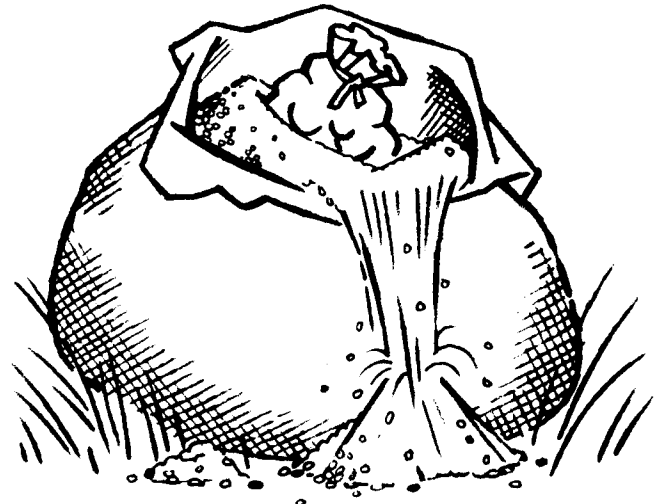
already out of food. They began asking to buy grain from Egypt. Jacob's family ran out of food, too. So Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to buy grain. But he kept his youngest son, Benjamin, at home. He well remembered losing Joseph by sending him on a trip.

When Jacob's sons arrived in Egypt they were sent to the governor. Of course, they did not know that the governor was their own brother. So many years had passed that they did not recognize him.

Joseph remembered the dream he had dreamed when he was still a boy — that his brothers would one day bow down to him. That dream had now come true. Joseph decided to be a little harsh with his brothers. He accused them of being spies. Then he ordered them thrown in prison.

A few days later, Joseph let them buy grain and go home. But he warned them not to return without their youngest brother. And he kept Simeon in prison to make sure they returned.

By now Joseph's brothers were beginning to wonder why all this trouble was coming upon them. Was it because of all the terrible things they had done to Joseph years before?



On the way home, one brother opened a sack of grain to feed the animals. He could not believe what he saw — a bag of coins with the exact amount of money they had paid for the grain! During the rest of the trip home they worried that this might be a plot. What would happen the next time they came to Egypt? Would they be arrested for not paying for the grain?

When they arrived home, Jacob was quite upset to hear that Simeon was left in prison in Egypt. It upset him even more to hear that the governor demanded to see Benjamin.

But the time came when they needed more food. Jacob had no choice. He let them take Benjamin to Egypt.

Once again, Joseph treated his brothers harshly. When they had bought food and started home, Joseph sent his servant after them. They were

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very frightened when Joseph's servant found the money they had paid for the grain in their grain sacks. The servant also found Joseph's silver cup in Benjamin's sack. He accused them of stealing from the governor and brought them back to the governor's house. They did not know that Joseph had ordered that their money and the silver cup be placed in their grain sacks.

Finally, Joseph told them who he was. As they stared at him in disbelief, he told them not to be upset. "Don't be angry with yourselves for what you did to me years

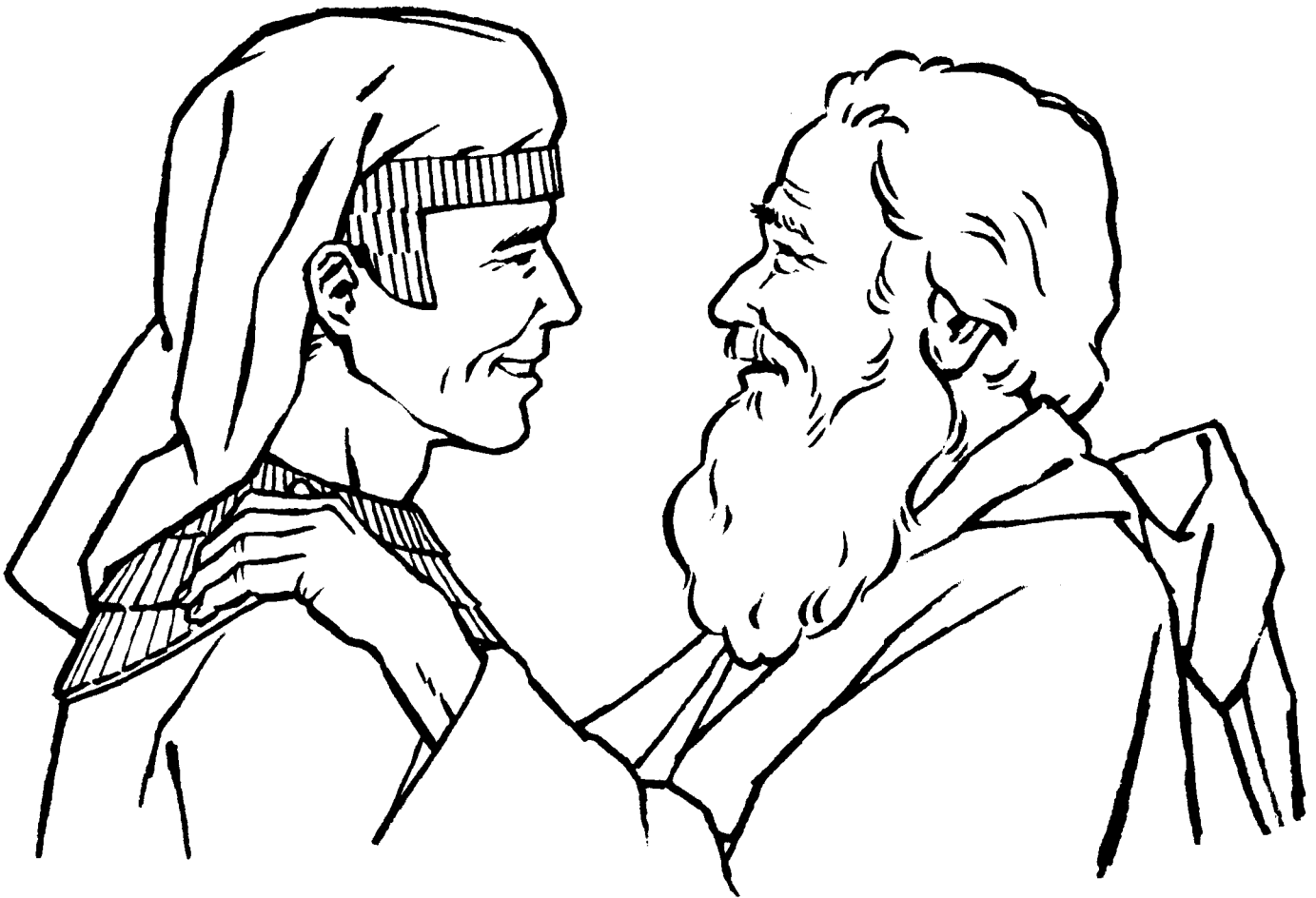
ago," Joseph said. "It was God's will that I go to Egypt."

Joseph sent his brothers back to Canaan. "Bring our father, Jacob, and all your possessions to Egypt. We still have five years of famine to come," he said. "And there is plenty of food for everyone here."

Jacob was so surprised to hear the news of Joseph, he fainted. But soon Jacob moved all his family to Egypt to be near Joseph.

It was quite an exciting event when father and son finally met again!

A few years later when Jacob





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was near death, he asked Joseph to bring his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh to him. Jacob wanted to include them with his own sons in the promises God had made to him. Soon after Jacob blessed his two grandsons, he died. He was 147 years old.

## MOSES

The families of Jacob's 12 sons multiplied greatly while Joseph lived and ruled. But sometime after Joseph died there arose a Pharaoh who did not know Joseph.

This Pharaoh did not like the Israelites. He was afraid they would someday turn against him, so he forced them to be his slaves. They were made to work hard, and were often struck with sticks and whips.

But still the Israelites grew in number.

So the Pharaoh came up with a cruel idea to lessen the number of Israelites. He told the Hebrew midwives to kill all the boy babies when they were born. But because the midwives feared God, they disobeyed Pharaoh. Then he ordered his people to cast all newborn Israelite sons into the river.

One set of Israelite parents had a beautiful baby boy. They hid their baby for about three months, but

could no longer keep his birth a secret.

God then put an idea in their minds!

They carefully worked out a plan to keep their son alive. They put the plan to work the very next morning.

The baby's mother placed him in a waterproof basket. Then she put the basket in the Nile River near the place where Pharaoh's daughter bathed. The baby's older sister, Miriam, ran along the river's bank to see what would happen.

Pharaoh's daughter caught sight of the basket in the reeds by the water's edge. As she opened the basket, she saw that it was an Israelite baby. But just then the baby began to cry and she felt very sorry for him. She wanted to protect this baby from her father.

The baby's sister ran to Pharaoh's daughter. "If you need someone to nurse the baby for you, I can get someone," she spoke up.

Pharaoh's daughter nodded. At once the girl ran to get her mother. Pharaoh's daughter had no idea she was speaking to the baby's real mother. She offered to pay the mother to take care of the baby.

What a blessing! Because this family trusted God, He saved their child. And they were able to raise

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him during his very early years.

The time finally came, though, when they brought the boy to Pharaoh's daughter. She named him Moses.

### **MOSES FLEES EGYPT**

Though Moses grew up as an Egyptian prince, he became more and more concerned about his own people. He did not like the way they were being treated.

One day Moses saw an Egyptian guard beating an exhausted Israelite slave. Moses became so angry, he rushed forward and killed the guard. Immediately Moses realized what a terrible thing he had done and buried the man in the sand.

The next day Moses learned that someone knew he had killed the Egyptian guard. That meant Pharaoh would soon know also. So Moses left Egypt right away before Pharaoh could send soldiers to kill him. He had quickly escaped to the mountains east of Egypt.

While in this area, Moses found a family who invited him to share their home. In return, Moses helped them herd their flocks. Later he married one of the daughters of this family.

Meanwhile, things got worse for the Israelites. Each new pharaoh treated them more cruelly than the

last. But God had not forgotten them.

### **GOD CALLS MOSES**

One day while Moses was herding flocks, he saw a strange sight. A small bush was on fire. It kept burning, but it would not burn up! Moses stared at the bush, amazed. Suddenly a voice called, "Moses! Moses!" Moses' eyes grew bigger. "Don't come any closer. You are standing on holy ground. Take off your shoes and listen closely to what I am about to say," the voice said to Moses.

"I am God," the voice continued. "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I have heard the cries of my people. And I have chosen you, Moses, to lead them out of slavery!"

Moses could hardly believe what he was hearing! Why would God choose him for this important job?

Moses tried every way he knew to get out of it. But God kept patiently assuring Moses that He would help him.

### **GOD SHOWS HIS POWER**

Finally, God told Moses to throw his staff down. Moses obeyed. The moment it touched the ground it became a wriggling snake!



“Now take it by the tail,” God commanded him. Moses picked up the snake and it was a rod again.

“Now put your hand inside your jacket,” God said. So Moses did so. When he pulled it out, he stared with horror at his hand. It was covered with a terrible disease!

“Put your hand back inside your jacket,” God said. Moses again obeyed and his hand became perfectly normal!

Then God told Moses that if the people still did not believe he was sent from God, he was to take some water from the river. When he poured it out upon the ground, it would turn to blood.

Even after the miracles, Moses still did not believe he could do the job. He told God he did not think he could speak well enough.

“Then I will send your brother, Aaron, to help you,” God told Moses. “I will tell you what to do and say and you will tell Aaron. Then Aaron will speak for you.”

Meanwhile, God spoke to Aaron. He told him to go into the wilderness to meet Moses.

What a reunion! The two brothers had not seen each other for 40 years!

Moses had much to tell Aaron when they met. How excited they were as they started for Egypt!

**BIBLE MEMORY**

Twelve Tribes  
of Israel

Reuben  
Simeon  
Levi  
Judah

Zebulun  
Issachar  
Dan  
Gad

Asher  
Naphtali  
Joseph (Ephraim, Manasseh)  
Benjamin

**WORD SEARCH**

Read each sentence and fill in the blanks with the word that completes the sentence. Then find and circle that word in the Word Search. Words are hidden across, down, diagonally, and backwards!



1. Joseph's oldest brother was named \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Joseph's youngest brother was named \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Joseph was thrown into a deep \_\_\_\_\_ by his \_\_\_\_\_.
4. A group of Midianite \_\_\_\_\_ bought Joseph and took him to \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Joseph was bought as a slave by a man named \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Potiphar's wife caused Joseph to be thrown in \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Pharaoh had a \_\_\_\_\_ about seven thin and seven fat \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The dream meant that there would be \_\_\_\_\_ years of plenty followed by the same number of years of \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Pharaoh gave Joseph the job of \_\_\_\_\_ over all Egypt.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ was reunited with his son Joseph.
11. Baby Moses was put into a \_\_\_\_\_ and floated down the Nile in order to spare his life.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ kept Moses as her own son.
13. Moses had a brother named \_\_\_\_\_.
14. God appeared to Moses in a \_\_\_\_\_ bush.