

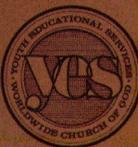
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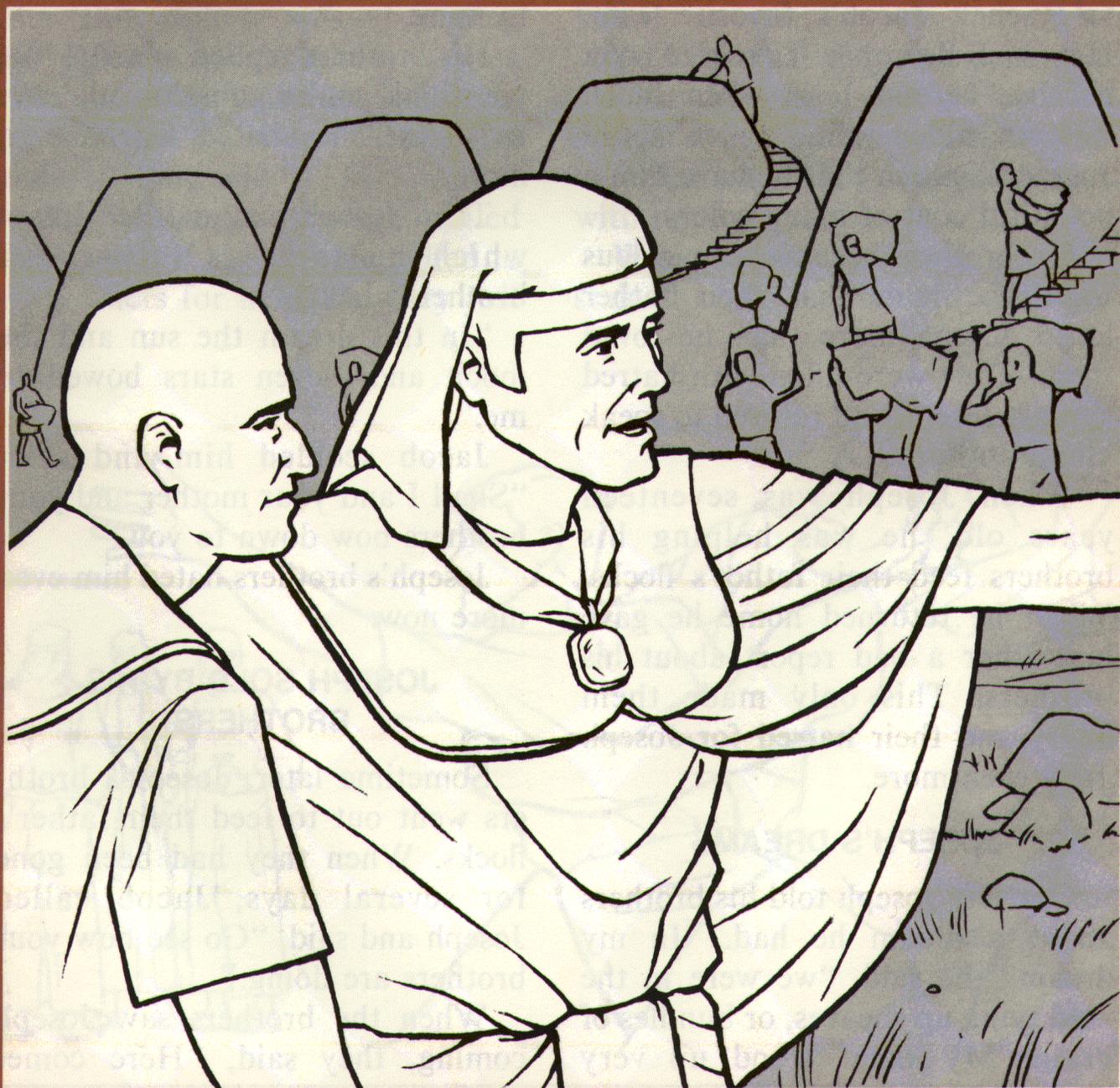
LEVEL 3

BIBLE

LESSONS



LESSON 6



Joseph

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# JOSEPH

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Joseph was the firstborn son of Rachel, Jacob's favorite wife. He was Jacob's favorite son because he was born when Jacob was an older man. Jacob loved Joseph so much that he gave him a beautiful coat of many colors.

His brothers became very jealous when they saw that their father loved Joseph more than he loved them. They were filled with hatred against Joseph and refused to speak kindly to him.

When Joseph was seventeen years old, he was helping his brothers feed their father's flocks. When he returned home he gave his father a bad report about his brothers. This only made them angry and their hatred for Joseph grew even more.

## **JOSEPH'S DREAMS**

One day Joseph told his brothers about a dream he had. "In my dream," he said, "we were in the field tying up sheaves, or bundles of grain. My sheaf stood up very

straight, while yours bowed down to mine."

His brothers replied angrily, "So you think you're going to rule over us?" And they hated Joseph even more.

Then Joseph had another dream which he told his father and brothers about.

"In this dream the sun and the moon and eleven stars bowed to me."

Jacob scolded him and said, "Shall I and your mother and your brothers bow down to you?"

Joseph's brothers hated him even more now.

## **JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BROTHERS**

Sometime later, Joseph's brothers went out to feed their father's flocks. When they had been gone for several days, Jacob called Joseph and said, "Go see how your brothers are doing."

When the brothers saw Joseph coming, they said, "Here comes

that dreamer. Let's kill him."

But Reuben, the oldest brother, said, "No, let's not kill him. Let's just put him into a pit."

When Joseph reached his brothers, he was very happy. But they ripped off his special coat and dropped him into a deep pit.

Reuben planned to rescue Joseph later. But while he was off tending the flocks, his brothers saw a caravan of Midianite traders coming by. "Let's sell Joseph to these traders," they said.

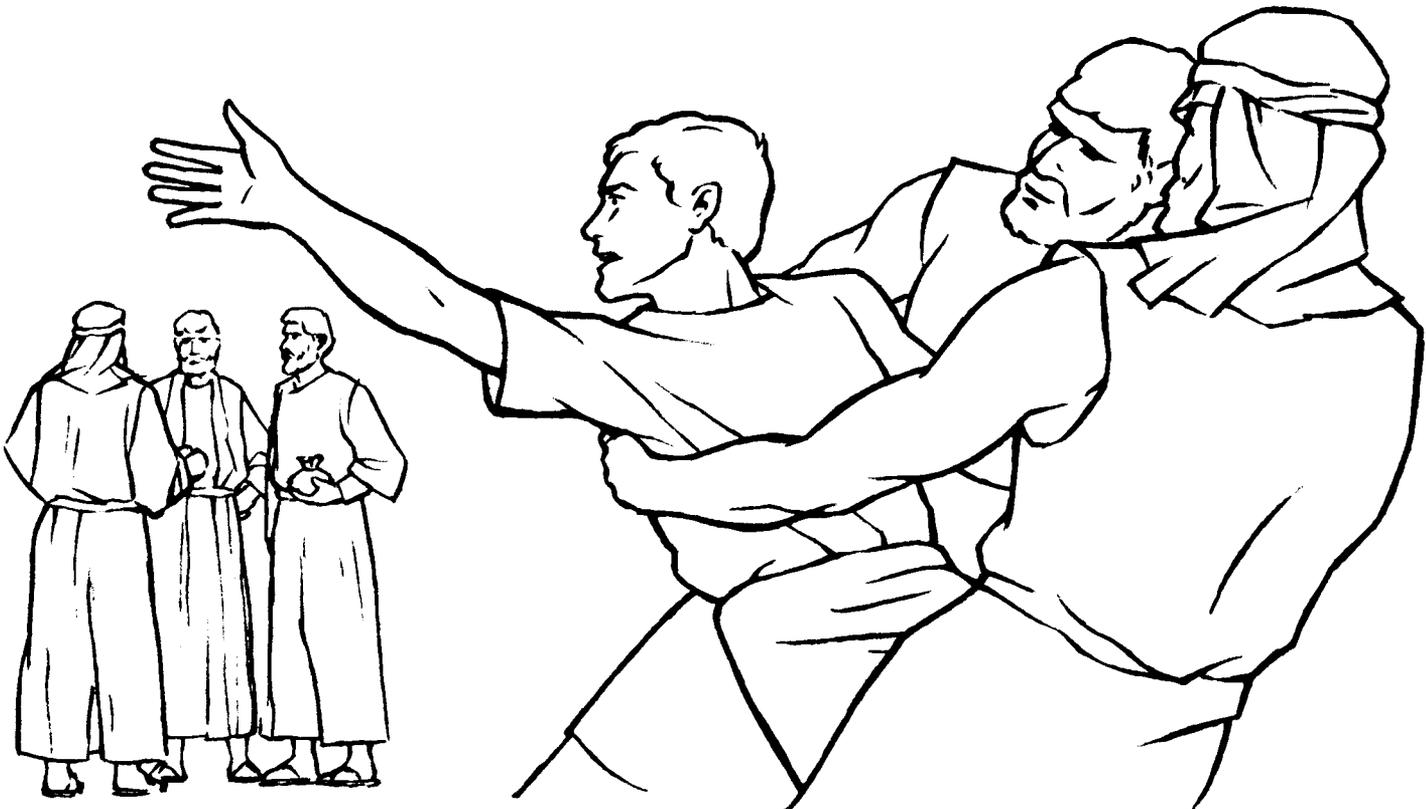
The Midianite traders pulled Joseph out of the pit. He called to his brothers for help, but they just

stood by and divided up the twenty pieces of silver they had been paid. Then Joseph was carried off to Egypt.

When Reuben returned and discovered that Joseph was gone, he was so upset that he tore his clothes. He then ran back to tell his brothers, but of course they already knew!

To hide what they had done, the evil brothers put goat's blood on Joseph's coat and pretended to be very sad when they returned home with it.

When Jacob saw Joseph's blood-stained coat, he thought that his



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favorite son had been killed by a wild animal. He was very upset and mourned for many days. His sons tried to make him feel better, but they did not tell him the truth.

## **JOSEPH A SLAVE IN EGYPT**

The Midianites sold Joseph to an Egyptian named Potiphar. He was an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.

Joseph was put to work in Potiphar's house doing many different tasks. He was the best worker there because he followed God's laws. Potiphar soon put Joseph in charge of his entire household.

Then Potiphar's wife started to like Joseph as much as she liked her own husband. She wanted him to spend time with her, but Joseph told her it would be wrong.

One day she became very angry at Joseph and pulled off his jacket.

"Servants," she cried, "Joseph has been very rude to me. He ran away after I called out for help, but I have his jacket in my hand."

She told her husband the same untrue story. Potiphar became very angry, and had Joseph put in prison. But Joseph had not done wrong.

It wasn't long before the man in

charge of the prison noticed that Joseph was very different from the other prisoners. He obeyed the rules and could be trusted. God caused Joseph to be put in charge of the prison under the head jailer.

## **THE PRISONERS' DREAMS**

Then the chief butler and chief baker who served Pharaoh were put in prison. Joseph looked after these men.

While in prison, both the chief butler and baker had dreams.

The chief butler told Joseph, "I dreamed of a vine with three branches that blossomed and produced ripe grapes. I pressed the grapes into a cup and then gave the cup to Pharaoh."

Joseph said that only God could reveal the meaning of dreams. God then revealed the meaning to Joseph. "Within three days," Joseph said, "you will be free and back in your office as chief butler."

The chief baker was anxious to hear the meaning of his dream.

"I was carrying three baskets of food to Pharaoh on my head," the chief baker said. "Suddenly birds swooped down and ate up all the food in the baskets."

Joseph realized the terrible

## PHARAOH'S DREAMS

One night Pharaoh had two dreams. The next morning, he called for his magicians and wise men to explain what the dreams meant. But they could not.

Then the chief butler remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh about him. "Bring Joseph to me at once," Pharaoh ordered.

Joseph was very thankful for the opportunity to get out of prison. He now stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

"In the first dream," Pharaoh said, "I was standing by the Nile River when suddenly seven fat cows came up out of the water and fed on the grass by the riverside. As they were eating, seven thin cows came up out of the water and ate up the seven fat cows. But the thin cows were just as thin as before.

"Then I saw seven plump heads of grain growing out of one stalk. Seven thin, withered heads of grain grew out of the same stalk and ate the plump heads."

Because he received help from God, Joseph was able to tell Pharaoh that his dreams meant there would be seven years of plenty in the land of Egypt. But after the seven good years, there would be seven years of famine.



meaning of the dream. "Within three days you will be hanged," he told the frightened baker.

Three days later, the baker was hanged, and the butler was freed—exactly as Joseph had said.

Joseph asked the butler to tell Pharaoh of his innocence, but the butler was so happy to be free that he forgot. So Joseph was in prison for two more years.

(Famine means there is very little food to eat.)

## JOSEPH BECOMES A RULER

“You should know how we can best prepare for the famine. So I now put you in charge under me,” said Pharaoh.

Pharaoh then gave Joseph special gifts, and a wife, who was the daughter of an important man in Egypt.

Joseph was now thirty years old. Thirteen years had passed since he was sold as a slave at age seventeen. (How much is 17 and 13? \_\_\_\_\_.)

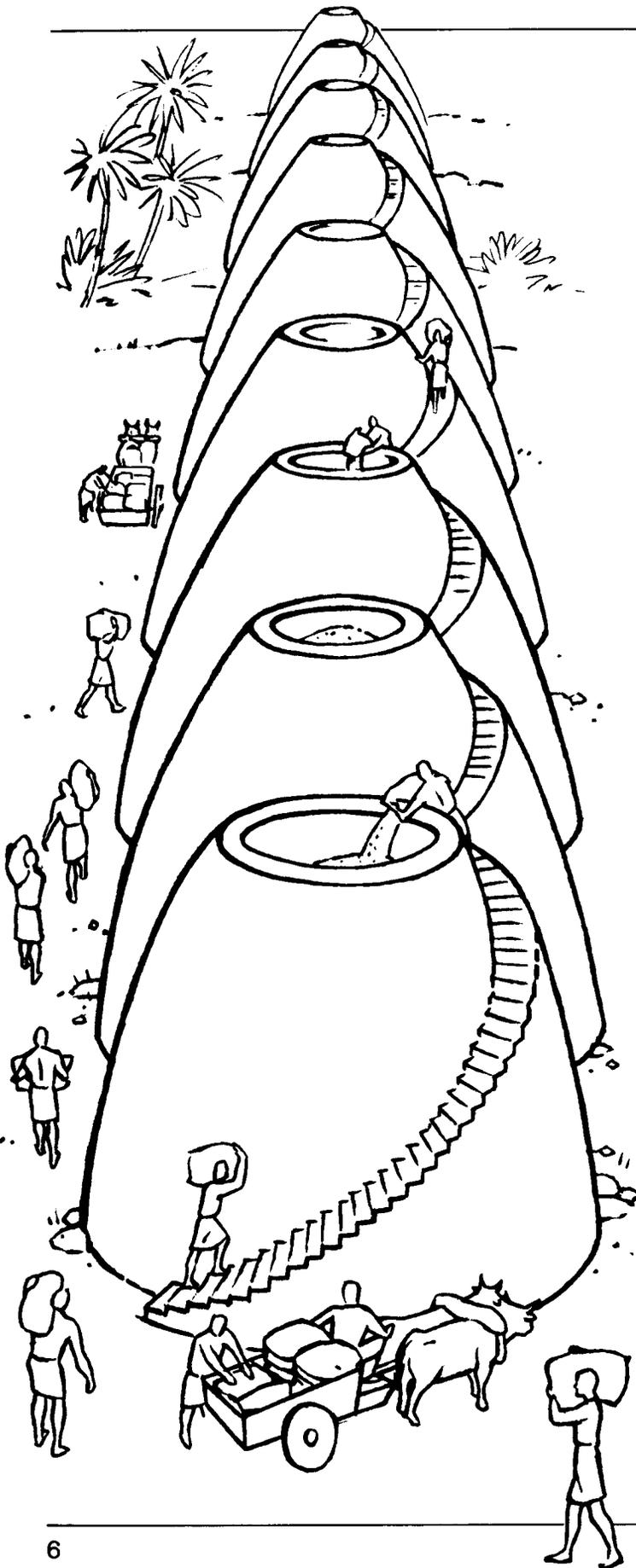
The seven years of plenty soon came upon the land, just as God had promised. During this time, Joseph gave orders to build granaries, or big storage houses to put some of the crops in. The stored food would be eaten during the famine.

Also during this time, Joseph became father of two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

## JOSEPH'S BROTHERS GO TO EGYPT

The seven plentiful years came to an end. The weather changed. There was not much rain now, and hot winds blew very often. The seven years of famine had begun.

It wasn't long before the people



began to run out of food. Joseph then ordered the storehouses opened. People came to Egypt to buy grain. At this time Joseph's father, Jacob, was still living in Canaan. Jacob heard that the Egyptians were selling grain.

"Go to Egypt and buy us some grain," he told his sons. When they arrived in Egypt, they bowed down before the governor and then asked him for grain. They had no idea who this governor really was—that he was Joseph, their younger brother!

But Joseph immediately recognized them. When they bowed, he

remembered the dreams that he had when he was younger.

Joseph wanted to welcome them, but decided to be harsh and stern with them for a while to help them learn a lesson.

"You say you've come to buy food," he said harshly. "I think you are spies!"

"We are not spies, sir. We are the sons of an elderly man who had twelve sons," they answered. "The youngest is at home, and one is dead."

Joseph wanted to find out more about the youngest son, but he remained stern.



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“All of you should go to jail!”

After three days, Joseph had them brought out. “I will give you grain, but one of you will stay here until you return with the younger brother you speak of,” he said.

The brothers were frightened. “All this trouble is coming upon us because of what we did to Joseph,” they said among themselves.

“Didn’t I tell you it was wrong to do what you did?” said Reuben.

The brothers didn’t realize that Joseph understood every word they said among themselves. He felt so sorry for them that he left the room and cried.

When Joseph returned, he said, pointing to Simeon, “Take that man to the dungeon!”

The brothers knew that God was having a part in this.

“Go now and get your grain,” said Joseph.

Later, on their way home, they opened their sacks and found the exact amount of money they had paid for the grain. They were worried!

“God is dealing with us for what we did to Joseph many years ago,” one of the brothers said.

Jacob was very happy when his sons returned home, but was sad to hear that Simeon was being held in jail.

“We must take Benjamin so the governor will believe us,” said Reuben.

“I don’t intend to let Benjamin go,” replied Jacob. “If anything should happen to him, I’d die of sorrow.”

## **THE RETURN TO EGYPT WITH BENJAMIN**

The months passed and the famine became worse. Soon Jacob’s food supply was so low that he had to send his sons back to Egypt for more grain.

“Unless we take Benjamin with us, there is no use returning for more food,” Judah said.

“Then go,” Jacob finally said, “but take gifts to the governor. Take packages of choice dates and nuts, honey, spices and perfumes. Also, be sure to return the money that you found in your sacks.”

Soon the sons were standing before the governor again. Joseph was very pleased to see Benjamin, but didn’t show how he felt. He had a special meal prepared for them.

The brothers were afraid. They told Joseph’s chief servant about the money they found in their grain sacks and offered to return it.

“Don’t worry,” said the servant. “Go make yourselves comfortable.”



Simeon was soon brought in. Then Joseph entered, and the brothers bowed and gave him their gifts. Joseph asked about their father and how he was doing.

Joseph was so happy to be with his brothers that he left the room and cried. He then returned a short time later.

Much food and drink was brought in for the brothers. Benjamin was given all kinds of special food.

The next morning the brothers happily set out for home, their animals loaded with grain.

Suddenly, they saw men on

horses coming toward them! The leader was the governor's chief servant.

"Why have you stolen the governor's silver cup?" he demanded.

"We aren't thieves," they explained.

But after a search was made, the cup was found in Benjamin's sack! The brothers didn't know that Joseph had the cup put there before they left.

The chief servant now took them all back to appear before the governor.

When Joseph saw how sorrowful

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the brothers were and heard that their father, Jacob, would die of sorrow if Benjamin didn't return, he could no longer hold back his feelings.

### **I AM JOSEPH**

"I am Joseph, your brother," he told them as they stared in amazement and disbelief!

"Don't be unhappy for having sold me as you did so many years ago," Joseph said. "God caused events to work out so that I would be here to help prepare for the famine. Tell our father that I want him and his family to come to Egypt. I will provide for them during the famine."

Then the brothers returned to Canaan and told their father all that had happened to them. When Jacob heard that Joseph was still alive and was the governor over all the land of Egypt, he was so surprised and overjoyed from the news, he fainted.

### **JACOB AND HIS FAMILY MOVE TO EGYPT**

Soon Jacob and his family were on their way to Egypt.

The reunion of a loving father and a son, whom he had thought to be dead, was a joyous occasion. Jacob was very happy and God



gave him several more years to live and enjoy his family.

Pharaoh gave Joseph's family the land of Goshen to live in. It was located in the northeastern part of Egypt and was the best of the land.

### **JACOB ADOPTS JOSEPH'S CHILDREN**

Jacob lived seventeen years in Egypt. During this time, his children's families grew larger and larger.

Thinking that his life was about over, Jacob called for Joseph and his two sons, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

“I want to adopt your sons as mine and bless them,” said Jacob. He then placed his left hand on Manasseh’s head and his right hand on Ephraim’s. Thinking that his father was too blind to see which boy was which, Joseph gently tried to reverse Jacob’s hands. Manasseh was the older and the custom was that the right hand be on the firstborn.

“I know what I’m doing,” said Jacob. He then asked God to cause mighty nations to come from each of the two boys. “A great nation will come from Manasseh, but his younger brother Ephraim shall be even greater. His descendants shall become a multitude of nations.”

Jacob then called the rest of his sons around him and told each of them what their families would be like in the future.

After Jacob finished blessing his sons, he died at the age of 147.

Joseph’s brothers began to worry that he might now punish them after their father’s death. But Joseph spoke kindly to them. He told them that he had forgiven them of what they had done to him many years ago.

Joseph died at the age of 110. Just before his death, Joseph reminded his brethren that God would give their descendants the

land he had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

In the next lesson, we will continue to learn how God fulfilled His promises of national greatness to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

### FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. How old was Joseph when he was sold by his brothers? \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Which brother did not want to harm him? \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Describe Joseph’s two dreams.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
4. Who was the captain of the guard in Egypt? \_\_\_\_\_.
5. What does famine mean? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

### TRUE OR FALSE

1. Potiphar’s wife didn’t like Joseph. T F
2. Joseph was first in command of Egypt. T F
3. The baker was restored to his office. T F
4. The brothers bowed to Joseph. T F
5. Jacob was happy to send Benjamin to Egypt. T F

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EDITOR IN CHIEF: **Herbert W. Armstrong**

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**BIBLE MEMORY**      Psalm 23:1-6

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## WHO ARE THEY?

Unscramble the letters in each of the following names below. Then write each name in the blank next to the scrambled one.

- |                 |                    |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. NAD _____    | 7. HJDA _____      |
| 2. DAG _____    | 8. LUUBNEZ _____   |
| 3. REASH _____  | 9. SAASCHIR _____  |
| 4. VEIL _____   | 10. PAANTHLI _____ |
| 5. BEERNU _____ | 11. HEPJSO _____   |
| 6. NEOMIS _____ | 12. INNEBJMA _____ |
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## DRAW THESE PICTURES

Draw the following pictures on separate pieces of paper.  
Be sure to keep them with this lesson.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Joseph in his coat of many colors.          | 5. Joseph second in command of Egypt.                      |
| 2. Joseph being dropped into a pit.            | 6. Joseph storing grain in one of the many granaries.      |
| 3. Joseph being sold to the Midianite traders. | 7. Joseph meeting his brothers and telling them who he is. |
| 4. Joseph in the prison.                       |  |
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## WORD HUNT

Find the following words in the lesson and circle them. Then write their meanings on a separate piece of paper. Use a dictionary if you do not know what they mean.

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1. sheaves     | 5. jealous   |
| 2. multitudes  | 6. harsh     |
| 3. descendants | 7. plentiful |
| 4. stern       | 8. innocence |