

## Joseph Welcomes His Family Down to Egypt

There is one more big part to the story of Joseph. After Joseph made himself known to his brothers the Egyptians also found out that his family had come down to Egypt. It was big news in Egypt to know that the man that God used to save them from the famine had a family living in the land of Canaan.

At that time, the famine was still killing the crops in the dry, dusty fields. No matter what seeds or plants were planted they withered and died. The famine was also killing the animals for they had no water to drink. Cattle and sheep became thin and so weak that their skeletons were found along the roadsides and in the chapped clay fields. They were bare clay for all the grass was burned up in the hot sun. Soon people were crying out for mercy for they were going to die too.

Knowing that the famine was killing people in many countries, Pharaoh insisted that Joseph's family leave the land of Canaan to flee from the famine. He offered to give them the very best land in Egypt and to care for all their needs.

Pharaoh commanded Joseph's brothers to take wagons out of Egypt to carry their wives and children, along with their father Jacob, to bring them back to live in, "the good of the land of Egypt." So the brothers headed home in many wagons with a supply of bread for the trip. When they met their father, Jacob, they told him the news, "Joseph is alive and he is governor of all the land of Egypt" (Genesis 45:26). Jacob could hardly believe it. The very idea of Joseph being alive was confusing at first. But after he listened to the whole story and when he saw the wagons, which had been sent to carry the people down to Egypt, he believed that truly his long-lost son, Joseph, whom he presumed to be dead, was alive and made the ruler of Egypt. He then rejoiced saying, "It is enough; Joseph my son is alive: I will go and see him before I die."

What a wonderful thing this was. The whole of Joseph's family were to live with him in Egypt. They were to have all the best of food and dwell in the best land in all of Egypt. But did it have God's approval? Is that really what God wanted for Jacob and for his family, the people of Israel? Yes, it was exactly what God wanted because as Jacob travelled in the wagons he stopped at Beersheba, and offered sacrifice to worship his God, then God spoke to Jacob saying, "I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt, and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes" (Genesis 46:3 - 4).

So, Jacob happily travelled on down to Egypt. He brought his cattle, his sons, their wives and their children to meet Joseph and to live in the land of Egypt. He was directed into the land of Goshen which was beautiful with lush green fields watered from the water in the river Nile. It was such a paradise compared to the dry, dusty lands that suffered from the ravages of the famine.

When Joseph learned that his father and his brothers along with all their families had arrived in Goshen he keenly rode in his stately chariot to see them. He humbly stood before Jacob, his father, longing to meet and greet him. Then he walked up to his father and hugged him tightly for a long time. They had missed each other for such an awfully long time – at least 11 years. By then Joseph was a strong mature man. Jacob was growing old and losing his eyesight. Jacob was thrilled to find Joseph again and stated that he was then ready to die knowing that Joseph was well and prospering. But Joseph wanted to see his father live. He introduced him to Pharaoh, negotiated that his father and his brothers should live in Goshen, the very best land in Egypt.

There were then a total of seventy Israelites then living in Egypt, including Joseph, his wife, Asenath, and their two sons Manasseh and Ephraim. There must have been great joy and happiness in that family. It must have been deeply satisfying for Joseph to see every one of his family doing so well and safe from the merciless famine, especially since God used his life to bring them down to the safety of Egypt.

You must agree that this is a great story. Only God could have ordered such things.

- Who could have thought that the brothers' hatred of Joseph and their plot to sell him to Ishmaelite traders on route to Egypt would be used to save their whole family from a future famine?
- Who could have thought that Joseph's two years in a terrible Egyptian prison would lead to his standing before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams about the seven years of famine?
- Who could have thought that Joseph's seemingly childish dreams about sheaves bowing down to him, or of the moon, sun and stars bowing to him would be fulfilled so powerfully when he was raised up to rule over all Egypt?
- Who could have thought that because Joseph was sold down to Egypt that the whole family of Israel would one day also live in Egypt so they would be spared from the famine.

Listen to Joseph's testimony to his brothers of how God ordered it all, **"But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (Genesis 50:20).**

The God of Joseph still lives today. God excels at bringing good out of evil. He does so in the lives of all his people. God brought about good from the wicked works of evil men who crucified the Lord Jesus. God used those wicked works to bring about the greatest blessing that was ever known. The Lord Jesus was crucified by cruel men, but God's wisdom was behind it all. The Lord Jesus died on that cross to save His people from their sins. The Lord Jesus did not die in vain. He died victoriously so that sinners saved by faith in His death will not perish in hell. Through Jesus' sufferings and death sinners will be saved from their sins and know the joy of eternal life. While the life of Joseph is a great story, the death of the Lord Jesus is the greatest story in the world.

Some people may ask, why did the Lord Jesus have to die at the hands of evil men? Why did God allow wicked men to crucify His only beloved Son? The answer is that God loved sinners so much that He planned the death of His Son on the cross to save them from their sin. Like the sufferings of Joseph to save many people alive, God therefore meant the death of His Son to save multitudes of sinners from sin and hell. By putting your faith in the Lord Jesus today He will save you from the debt of your sin, and one day you bring you into heaven.