Joseph Saves His Family

When the bad years came, people traveled to Egypt from all the lands around in order to buy food. One day, Joseph's brothers came from Canaan to buy grain for their family. Joseph recognized them, but didn't let them know he was their brother. He asked who they were and why they had come to Egypt. They told him there were twelve brothers, but one was dead (meaning Joseph!). Ten had come, but had left their youngest brother at home to care for their aging father Jacob.

Joseph decided to test them and put them into prison. He told them to send one brother home to bring back their youngest brother Benjamin, for he longed to see him again. But then he decided to let them all go back, except for Simeon. Simeon would remain as a prisoner until they came back with Benjamin. The brothers were worried that their father would die from sadness if another son was taken from him. Reuben, the oldest said to them: I told you something would happen because of the way we treated Joseph," not knowing that the Pharoah's governor was their brother they had sold to traders. But they had no choice. Joseph sent them back with bags of grain that they had bought, but he also had his men put the money they had paid into each sack of grain.

When the brothers returned home and opened the sacks, they were stunned to see their money in the sacks. Now the famine was very great in Canaan and soon the grain was gone. They had to go back to buy more, but they were afraid. They thought they would be accused of stealing the money they had found in their sacks, and they couldn't go back without Benjamin, whom their father loved very much. He did not want to lose another son! Then Israel (Jacob) agreed to let them take Benjamin, but he also sent fruits and choice nuts and double the amount of money to convince the governor to send back Simeon and Benjamin on their return home.

When they came to Egypt, Joseph wept when he saw his younger brother, but did not let the others see his tears, for he

had hidden behind a curtain. We served a banquet for them and tested them again on their returned home, when he again had money placed in their sacks and a silver cup in Benjamin's sack, and had his men intercept them on their way home. When they were brought back to the governor, they pleaded their innocence and begged for mercy for their father would die, they said, if their youngest brother did not return. Then Joseph sent his servants out of the room and revealed himself to his brothers. He kissed all his brothers and wept with them. He gave them all gifts and wagons, according to the command of the Pharoah and sent them back, asking them to bring his father back with them.

After they returned to their father Israel, God spoke to him and said: "Jacob, Jacob." Jacob answered, "Here I am." Then God said, "I am God, the God of your father, do not be afraid to down to Egypt; for I will make of you a great nation. I will go down with you to Egypt and I will also bring you up again; and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes." So Israel and his sons went down to Egypt with all his household and servants. They stayed there in the land of Goshen with the permission of the Pharoah. When Israel died, Joseph buried him in the land of Canaan, in the same place where Abraham and Sarah, and Isaac and Rebekah and Leah the wife of Jacob were buried.