

Chapter 41

Joseph Is Put in Charge of Egypt

[41](#) So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I'm putting you in charge of the whole land of Egypt."

[42](#) Then Pharaoh took his ring off his finger. It was the ring he used to stamp all of the official papers. He put it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes that were made out of fine linen. He put a gold chain around his neck. [43](#) He also had him ride in a chariot. Joseph was now next in command after Pharaoh. People went in front of him and shouted, "Get down on your knees!" By doing all of those things, Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of the whole land of Egypt.

[44](#) Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh. But without your word, no one will do anything in the whole land of Egypt." [45](#) Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah. He gave him a wife. She was Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera. Potiphera was the priest of On. Joseph traveled all over the land of Egypt. [46](#) Joseph was 30 years old when he began serving Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. He left Pharaoh's palace and traveled all over Egypt.

[47](#) During the seven years when there was plenty of food, the land produced more than the people needed. [48](#) Joseph collected all of the extra food produced in those seven years in Egypt. He stored it in the cities. In each city he stored up the food that was grown in the fields around it. [49](#) Joseph stored up huge amounts of grain. It was like the sand of the sea. There was so much grain it couldn't be measured. So Joseph stopped keeping records of it.

[50](#) Before the years when there wasn't enough food, two sons were born to Joseph. He had them by Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera. Potiphera was the priest of On. [51](#) Joseph named his first son Manasseh. That's because he said, "God has made me forget all of my trouble and my father's whole family." [52](#) He named the second son Ephraim. That's because he said, "God has given me children in the land where I've suffered so much." [53](#) The seven years when there was plenty of food in Egypt came to an end. [54](#) Then the seven years when there wasn't enough food began. It happened exactly as Joseph had said it would. There wasn't enough food in any of the other lands. But in the whole land of Egypt there was food.

[55](#) When all of the people of Egypt began to get hungry, they cried out to Pharaoh for food. He told all of the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph. Do what he tells you." [56](#) There wasn't enough food anywhere in the country. So Joseph opened the storerooms. He sold grain to the Egyptians because people were very hungry all over Egypt. [57](#) People from all of the other countries came to Egypt. They came to buy grain from Joseph. That's because people were very hungry all over the world.

Chapter 42

Joseph's Brothers Go Down to Egypt

[1](#) Jacob found out that there was grain in Egypt. So he said to his sons, "Why do you just keep looking at each other?" [2](#) He continued, "I've heard there's grain in Egypt. Go down there. Buy some for us. Then we'll live and not die." [3](#) So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to Egypt to buy grain there. [4](#) But Jacob didn't send Joseph's brother Benjamin with them. He was afraid Benjamin might be harmed. [5](#) Israel's sons were among the people who went to buy grain. There wasn't enough food in the land of Canaan. [6](#) Joseph was the governor of the land. He was the one who sold grain to all of its people. When Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. [7](#) As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them. But he pretended to be a stranger. He spoke to them in a mean way. "Where do you come from?" he asked. "From the land of Canaan," they replied. "We've come to buy food." [8](#) Joseph recognized his brothers, but they didn't recognize him. [9](#) Then Joseph remembered his dreams about them. So he said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see the places where our land isn't guarded very well." [10](#) "No, sir," they answered. "We've come to buy food. [11](#) All of us are the sons of one man. We're honest men. We aren't spies." [12](#) "No!" he said to them. "You have come to see the places where our land isn't guarded very

well.” [13](#) But they replied, “We were 12 brothers. All of us were the sons of one man. He lives in the land of Canaan. Our youngest brother is now with our father. And one brother is gone.” [14](#) Joseph said to them, “I still say you are spies! [15](#) So I'm going to put you to the test. You can be sure that Pharaoh lives. And you can be just as sure that you won't leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. I promise with an oath that you won't leave here. [16](#) Send one of you back to get your brother. The rest of you will be kept in prison. “I'll put your words to the test. Then we'll find out whether you are telling the truth. You can be sure that Pharaoh lives. And you can be just as sure that if you aren't telling the truth, we'll know that you are spies!” [17](#) So Joseph kept all of them under guard for three days. [18](#) On the third day, Joseph spoke to them again. He said, “Do what I say. Then you will live, because I have respect for God. [19](#) If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here in prison. The rest of you may go and take grain back to your hungry families. [20](#) “But you must bring your youngest brother to me. That will prove that your words are true. Then you won't die.” So they did what he said. [21](#) They said to one another, “God is certainly punishing us because of our brother. We saw how troubled he was when he begged us to let him live. But we wouldn't listen. That's why all of this trouble has come to us.” [22](#) Reuben replied, “Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn't listen! Now we're being held accountable for killing him.” [23](#) They didn't realize that Joseph could understand what they were saying. He was using someone else to explain their words to him in the Egyptian language. [24](#) Joseph turned away from them and began to sob. Then he turned around and spoke to them again. He had Simeon taken and tied up right there in front of them. [25](#) Joseph gave orders to have their bags filled with grain. He had each man's money put back into his sack. He also made sure they were given food for their journey. [26](#) Then the brothers loaded their grain on their donkeys and left. [27](#) When night came, they stopped. One of them opened his sack to get feed for his donkey. He saw his money in the top of his sack. [28](#) “My money has been given back,” he said to his brothers. “Here it is in my sack.” They had a sinking feeling in their hearts. They began to tremble. They turned to each other and said, “What has God done to us?” [29](#) They came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. They told him everything that had happened to them. They said, [30](#) “The man who is the governor of the land spoke to us in a mean way. He treated us as if we were spying on the land. [31](#) But we said to him, ‘We're honest men. We aren't spies. [32](#) We were 12 brothers. All of us were the sons of one father. But now one brother is gone. And our youngest brother is with our father in Canaan.’ [33](#) “Then the man who is the governor of the land spoke to us. He said, ‘Here's how I will know whether you are honest men. Leave one of your brothers here with me. Take food for your hungry families and go. [34](#) ’ ‘But bring your youngest brother to me. Then I'll know that you are honest men and not spies. I'll give your brother back to you. And you will be free to trade in the land.’ ” [35](#) They began emptying their sacks. There in each man's sack was his bag of money! When they and their father saw the money bags, they were afraid. [36](#) Their father Jacob said to them, “You have taken my children away from me. Joseph is gone. Simeon is gone. Now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is going against me!” [37](#) Then Reuben spoke to his father. He said, “You can put both of my sons to death if I don't bring Benjamin back to you. Place him in my care. I'll bring him back.” [38](#) But Jacob said, “My son will not go down there with you. His brother is dead. He's the only one left here with me. Suppose he's harmed on the journey you are taking. Then I would die as a sad old man. I would go down into the grave full of sorrow.”

Chapter 43

Joseph's Brothers Go Down to Egypt Again

[1](#) There still wasn't enough food anywhere in the land. [2](#) After a while Jacob's family had eaten all of the grain the brothers had brought from Egypt. So their father said to them, “Go

back. Buy us a little more food.” [3](#) But Judah said to him, “The man gave us a strong warning. He said, ‘You won't see my face again unless your brother comes with you.’” [4](#) So send our brother along with us. Then we'll go down and buy food for you. [5](#) “If you won't send him, we won't go down. The man said to us, ‘You won't see my face again unless your brother comes with you.’” [6](#) Israel asked, “Why did you bring this trouble to me? Why did you tell the man you had another brother?” [7](#) They replied, “The man questioned us closely about ourselves and our family. ‘Is your father still living?’ he asked us. ‘Do you have another brother?’ “We just answered his questions. How could we possibly know he would say, ‘Bring your brother down here?’” [8](#) Judah spoke to Israel his father. “Send the boy along with me,” he said. “We'll go at once. Then we and you and our children will live and not die. [9](#) “I myself promise to keep him safe. You can hold me accountable for him. I'll bring him back to you. I'll set him right here in front of you. If I don't, you can put the blame on me for the rest of my life. [10](#) “As it is, we've already waited too long. We could have gone to Egypt and back twice by now.” [11](#) Then their father Israel spoke to them. He said, “If that's the way it has to be, then do what I tell you. Put some of the best things from our land in your bags. Take them down to the man as a gift. Take some lotion and a little honey. Take some spices and myrrh. Take some pistachio nuts and almonds. [12](#) Take twice the amount of money with you. You have to give back the money that was put in your sacks. Maybe it was a mistake. [13](#) “Also take your brother. Go back to the man at once. [14](#) May the Mighty God cause him to show you mercy. May the man let your other brother and Benjamin come back with you. And if I lose my sons, I lose them.” [15](#) So the men took the gifts. They took twice the amount of money. They also took Benjamin. They hurried down to Egypt and went to Joseph. [16](#) When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he spoke to the manager of his house. “Take these men to my house,” he said. “Kill an animal and prepare dinner. I want them to eat with me at noon.” [17](#) The manager did what Joseph told him to do. He took the men to Joseph's house. [18](#) They were afraid when they were taken to Joseph's house. They thought, “We were brought here because of the money that was put back in our sacks the first time. He wants to attack us and overpower us. Then he can hold us as slaves and take our donkeys.” [19](#) So they went up to Joseph's manager. They spoke to him at the entrance to the house. [20](#) “Please, sir,” they said. “We came down here the first time to buy food. [21](#) We opened our sacks at the place where we stopped for the night. Each of us found in our sacks the money we had paid. So we've brought it back with us. [22](#) We've also brought more money with us to buy food. We don't know who put our money in our sacks.” [23](#) “It's all right,” the manager said. “Don't be afraid. Your God, the God of your father, has given you riches in your sacks. I received your money.” Then he brought Simeon out to them. [24](#) The manager took the men into Joseph's house. He gave them water to wash their feet. He provided feed for their donkeys. [25](#) They prepared their gifts for Joseph. He was planning to arrive at noon. They had heard that they were going to eat there. [26](#) When Joseph came home, they gave him the gifts they had brought into the house. They bowed down to the ground in front of him. [27](#) He asked them how they were. Then he said, “How is your old father you told me about? Is he still living?” [28](#) They replied, “Your servant our father is still alive and well.” And they bowed low to show him honor. [29](#) Joseph looked around. Then he saw his brother Benjamin, his own mother's son. He asked, “Is this your youngest brother? Is he the one you told me about?” He continued, “May God be gracious to you, my son.” [30](#) It moved him deeply to see his brother. So Joseph hurried out and looked for a place to cry. He went into his own room and cried there. [31](#) Then he washed his face and came out. He calmed down and said, “Serve the food.” [32](#) They served Joseph by himself. They served the brothers by themselves. They also served the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves. Because of their beliefs, Egyptians couldn't eat with Hebrews. [33](#) The brothers had been given places in front of Joseph. They had been seated in the order of their ages, from the oldest to the youngest. That made them look at each

other in great surprise. [34](#) While they were eating, some food was brought to them from Joseph's table. Benjamin was given five times as much as anyone else. So all of Joseph's brothers ate and drank a lot with him.

Chapter 44

A Silver Cup in a Sack

[1](#) Joseph told the manager of his house what to do. "Fill the men's sacks with as much food as they can carry," he said. "Put each man's money in his sack. [2](#) "Then put my silver cup in the youngest one's sack. Put it there along with the money he paid for his grain." So the manager did what Joseph told him to do. [3](#) When morning came, the men were sent on their way with their donkeys. [4](#) They hadn't gone very far from the city when Joseph spoke to his manager. "Go after those men at once," he said. "Catch up with them. Say to them, 'My master was good to you. Why have you paid him back by doing evil? [5](#) Isn't this the cup my master drinks from? Doesn't he also use it to figure things out? You have done an evil thing.' " [6](#) When the manager caught up with them, he told them what Joseph had said. [7](#) But they said to him, "Why do you say these things? We would never do anything like that! [8](#) We even brought back to you from Canaan the money we found in our sacks. So why would we steal silver or gold from your master's house? [9](#) "If you find out that any of us has the cup, he will die. And the rest of us will become your slaves." [10](#) "All right, then," he said. "As you wish. The one who is found to have the cup will become my slave. But the rest of you will be free from blame." [11](#) Each of them quickly put his sack down on the ground and opened it. [12](#) Then the manager started to search. He began with the oldest and ended with the youngest. The cup was found in Benjamin's sack. [13](#) When that happened, they were so upset they tore their clothes. Then all of them loaded their donkeys and went back to the city. [14](#) Joseph was still in the house when Judah and his brothers came in. They threw themselves down on the ground in front of him. [15](#) Joseph said to them, "What have you done? Don't you know that a man like me has ways to figure things out?" [16](#) "What can we say to you?" Judah replied. "What can we say? How can we prove we haven't done anything wrong? God has shown you that we are guilty. We are now your slaves. All of us are, including the one who was found to have the cup." [17](#) But Joseph said, "I would never do anything like that! Only the man who was found to have the cup will become my slave. The rest of you may go back to your father in peace." [18](#) Then Judah went up to him. He said, "Please, sir. Let me speak a word to you. Don't be angry with me, even though you are equal to Pharaoh himself. [19](#) You asked us, 'Do you have a father or a brother?' [20](#) We answered, 'We have an old father. A young son was born to him when he was old. His brother is dead. He's the only one of his mother's sons left. And his father loves him.' [21](#) "Then you said to us, 'Bring him down to me. I want to see him for myself.' [22](#) "We said to you, 'The boy can't leave his father. If he does, his father will die.' [23](#) "But you told us, 'Your youngest brother must come down here with you. If he doesn't, you won't see my face again.' [24](#) So we went back to my father. We told him what you had said. [25](#) "Then our father said, 'Go back. Buy a little more food.' [26](#) "But we said, 'We can't go down. We'll only go if our youngest brother goes there with us. We can't even see the man's face unless our youngest brother goes with us.' [27](#) "Your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife had two sons by me. [28](#) One of them went away from me. And I said, 'He must have been torn to pieces.' I haven't seen him since. [29](#) What if you take this one from me too and he is harmed? Then you would cause me to die as a sad old man. I would go down into the grave full of pain and suffering.' [30](#) "So now, what will happen if the boy isn't with us when I go back to my father? His life is closely tied up with the boy's life. [31](#) When he sees that the boy isn't with us, he'll die as a sad old man. Because of us, he'll go down into the grave full of sorrow. [32](#) "I promised my father I would keep the boy safe. I said, 'Father, I'll bring him back to you. If I don't, you can put the blame on me for the rest of

my life.' [33](#) "Now then, please let me stay here. Let me be your slave in place of the boy. Let the boy return with his brothers. [34](#) How can I go back to my father if the boy isn't with me? Don't let me see the pain and suffering that would come to my father."

Chapter 45

Joseph Tells His Brothers Who He Is

[1](#) Joseph couldn't control himself anymore in front of all of his attendants. He cried out, "Have everyone leave me!" So there wasn't anyone with Joseph when he told his brothers who he was. [2](#) He sobbed so loudly that the Egyptians heard him. Everyone in Pharaoh's house heard about it. [3](#) Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" But his brothers weren't able to answer him. They were too afraid of him. [4](#) Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." So they did. Then he said, "I am your brother Joseph. I'm the one you sold into Egypt. [5](#) But don't be upset. And don't be angry with yourselves because you sold me here. God sent me ahead of you to save many lives. [6](#) "For two years now, there hasn't been enough food in the land. And for the next five years, people won't be plowing or gathering crops. [7](#) But God sent me ahead of you to keep some of you alive on earth. He sent me here to save your lives by an act of mighty power. [8](#) "So then, it wasn't you who sent me here. It was God. He made me like a father to Pharaoh. He made me master of Pharaoh's whole house. He made me ruler of the whole land of Egypt. [9](#) "Now hurry back to my father. Say to him, 'Your son Joseph says, "God has made me master of the whole land of Egypt. Come down to me. Don't waste any time. [10](#) You will live in the area of Goshen. You, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and everything you have will be near me. [11](#) There I will provide everything you need. " " "Five years without enough food are still coming. If you don't come down here, you and your family and everyone who belongs to you will lose everything." ' [12](#) "Brothers, you can see for yourselves that it's really I, Joseph, speaking to you. My brother Benjamin can see it too. [13](#) "Tell my father about all of the honor that has been given to me in Egypt. Tell him about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly." [14](#) Then Joseph threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and sobbed. Benjamin also hugged him and sobbed. [15](#) Joseph kissed all of his brothers and sobbed over them. After that, his brothers talked with him. [16](#) The news reached Pharaoh's palace that Joseph's brothers had come. Pharaoh and all of his officials were pleased. [17](#) Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Here's what I want you to tell your brothers. Say to them, 'Load your animals. Return to the land of Canaan. [18](#) Bring your father and your families back to me. I'll give you the best land in Egypt. You can enjoy all of the good things in the land.' [19](#) "And here's something else I want you to tell them. Say to them, 'Take some carts from Egypt. Your children and your wives can use them. Get your father and come back. [20](#) Don't worry about the things you have back there. The best of everything in Egypt will belong to you.' " [21](#) So the sons of Israel did it. Joseph gave them carts, as Pharaoh had commanded. He also gave them supplies for their journey. [22](#) He gave new clothes to each of them. But he gave more than seven pounds of silver to Benjamin. He also gave him five sets of clothes. [23](#) He sent his father ten donkeys loaded with the best things from Egypt. He also sent ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and other supplies for his journey. [24](#) Then Joseph sent his brothers away. As they were leaving he said to them, "Don't argue on the way!" [25](#) So they went up out of Egypt. They came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. [26](#) They told him, "Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of the whole land of Egypt." Jacob was shocked. He didn't believe them. [27](#) So they told him everything Joseph had said to them. Jacob saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back. That gave new life to their father Jacob. [28](#) Israel said, "I believe it now! My son Joseph is still alive. I'll go and see him before I die."