

VaYigash Genesis - Bereshit (44.18-47.27)

The brothers were now with Pharaoh's Overseer whom they do not know is Joseph. They are pleading to stay with Benjamin who was found with a silver goblet and made a slave. "Overseer, please listen," brother Judah said. "Our father had two children, Joseph and Benjamin, by his favorite wife Rachel. Many years ago, wild beasts killed Joseph. Our father is still so sad and if we return home without Benjamin our father will die in sorrow. Please take me as your slave and not Benjamin."

Joseph could no longer control himself. He released all his servants so that he could be alone with his brothers when he made himself known. Joseph cried out with weeping so loud it could be heard throughout the land "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?"

But the brothers could not answer him because they were shocked and too amazed to speak. "Please come close to me and do not be troubled about selling me," Joseph said. "God sent me here in order to preserve life. God sent me to get this land for our great nation to be ready for God's deliverance. So listen, it was God, not you who sent me here. Hurry, go to Father and bring him here. I will provide for all of you." Then Joseph and his brothers cried and all the brothers wept together.

When Pharaoh heard the news of Joseph's brothers, he gave them provisions and wagons for moving. And when the sons of Israel reached the land of Canaan and their father, they told him, "Joseph is still alive and he is the Overseer of Egypt." Jacob's heart stood still because he could not believe it. But when he saw the wagons he knew it was true and his spirit revived.

Later, Israel (Jacob) made an offering to God of his father Isaac. God said, "Jacob. Jacob." Jacob said, "Here I am." And God said, "I am God, the God of your father. Do not fear moving for I will make you a great nation in Egypt. I will be with you." So Jacob moved with all sons. These are the twelve tribes of Israel: Reuben, Shimeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin, Dan, and Naphtali.

The Overseer Joseph harnessed his chariot and went to meet his father Israel. Joseph came before his father and wept and wept. Then Israel Jacob said to his son, "I can die satisfied now because I have seen your face and know you are alive." Joseph introduced Jacob, his father to Pharaoh, who gave them land and the job of watching over his royal livestock. And Jacob blessed the Pharaoh.

After the families of Israel settled in Goshen, hunger became so bad that the people gave the Overseer all their money and traded all their animals and land to buy food. Finally, lest they die from hunger, the people offered themselves as slaves to the Pharaoh in exchange for food. Still, Jacob and his sons grew and prospered. Jacob grew old and made Joseph promise to not bury him in Egypt but to take his burial remains back to his forefathers in Canaan.

Questions: 1) Describe how you feel when you are satisfied. 2) Do you think God makes things happen for a reason? Why? 3) What does it mean to be a slave? Have you ever felt like a slave? **Illustration Ideas:** Joseph telling his brothers that he was alive... The brothers telling their father about Joseph... the wagons... Joseph and his father meeting... Joseph introducing his family to Pharaoh... the famine...