

# Joseph in Egypt

## The Slave Boy Becomes a Ruler

When Joseph was a little boy he was sold as a slave to a band of traveling merchants. It was his older brothers who had done this terrible thing to him. They believed that their father loved Joseph much more than he loved them, and they wanted to get Joseph out of the way. The traveling merchants took Joseph with them to Egypt and there sold him to a very rich man.

As Joseph grew up he did his work so well that his master came to admire him very much. In fact, he thought so well of Joseph that one day he said to him, "From now on, I want you to take care of everything that has to be done in my house. I leave everything to you. You can run my big farms; you can buy everything I need and sell the things that I don't need. I trust you completely."

And Joseph took care of everything very well. But one day his master's wife came to him and asked him to do something wrong. Joseph said that he wouldn't do anything wrong. This made her so angry that she went to the master and lied, and said that Joseph had done wrong. Joseph's master believed his wife's lies, and he put Joseph in prison.

Most people when they are treated unfairly, like Joseph was, would sit and pity themselves. But Joseph didn't do that.

Instead he made the best of things. He behaved so well in prison that the prison-keeper treated him very kindly. Of course, Joseph was not happy. Ho often he thought of his father! It was so many years since he had seen him. If only he could see his father once more! First he had been a slave and now he was in prison. Would he ever get to see his dear, kind father again?

Ten weary days went by. Then one day two knew prisoners were brought to Joseph's prison. These two men had once been very rich and important. One of them had been the Chief Baker to the king of Egypt and the other had been the king's Chief Wine-keeper. But both of them had done something which had made the king angry, and so they had been put in prison.

One morning they spoke to Joseph and said, "We each have had a strange dream. Sometimes a dream tells ahead of time what is going to happen. Do you think you can tell us what our dreams mean?"

And Joseph answered, "It is true that sometimes God helps me to understand what a dream means. Tell me your dreams. Maybe God will give me the wisdom to understand them."

So the men told Joseph what had happened in their dreams.

Then Joseph said to the wine-keeper, "Your dream means that in three days you will be set free. The king will take you out of this prison and make you his Chief Wine-Keeper again."

"Oh! What wonderful news!" cried the wine-keeper.

"Yes, it is very good news for you," said Joseph, "but when you are free once more, and happy, will you think of me, locked up in prison? Will you see if you can help me? Talk to the king and ask him to set me free, too."

"I certainly will," said the wine-keeper.

Then Joseph turned to the Chief-Baker. "I have sad news for you," he said. "Your dream means that in three days you shall be put to death. I am sorry to have to tell you this, but that is what God tells me your dream means."

And sure enough, that is exactly what happened. In three days the Chief Baker was put to death, while the Chief Wine-Keeper was pardoned and given back his job. But the wine-keeper did not keep his promise. He did not speak to the king and try to help Joseph. He forgot all about Joseph.

But God did not forget Joseph. He was watching over him all the time. And one night the king himself had a dream. The dream was so upsetting that it woke the king out of his sleep. After a little while the king went to sleep again. This

time he dreamed another dream, even more upsetting than the first.

When morning came, the king sent for all the wise men in Egypt to ask them the meaning of his dreams. But none of them could tell him. Then the Chief Wine-Keeper remembered Joseph. He went to the king and said, "When I was in prison there was a wonderful young man there with me. His name was Joseph. He was very wise, for once when I had a dream he told me exactly what the dream meant. And it happened just as he said it would."

When the king heard this, he immediately sent for Joseph and had him brought out of prison. And the king said to Joseph, "I have dreamed a dream and no one can tell me what it means. I have been told that you have the power to understand dreams. Is that so?"

And Joseph answered, "The power is not in me, but in God. God will tell me what your dream means."

Then the king said, "I dreamed that I was standing next to a river, and seven fine-looking fat cows came up out of the river and began to eat the grass nearby. While they were eating, seven more cows came out of the river. These cows were thin and small, the poorest-looking cows I ever saw. But the next moment the seven thin cows ate up the seven fat cows. And they didn't get any fatter, but looked just as thin and starved as before. Then I woke up.

"I fell asleep again and dreamed a second dream. In this dream I saw seven ears of corn growing on a stalk, and these ears of corn were big and fat. Then seven more ears of corn appeared upon the stalk, and these ears were small and thin and dried-up. But the thin ears of corn ate up the fat ones, and after eating them up, they looked just as small and thin and dried-up as before. Then I awoke."

Then Joseph answered the king and said, "The two dreams have the same meaning. God wants to tell you by means of these dreams what is going to happen. The seven fat cows and the seven fat ears of corn stand for the seven good years. And the seven thin cows and the seven thin ears of corn stand for seven bad years.

"There are seven good years coming to the land of Egypt. During that time everything shall grow wonderfully throughout the whole land—the corn and the wheat, the fruit and the vegetables—so that there will be more food than you even need. But after that there will come seven years when everything will go wrong. There won't be enough rain. There won't be enough sunshine. Hardly anything will grow at all. Then all the food that you had during the seven good years will be used up and no one will have enough to eat. Oh king, God has sent you these dreams for a purpose. Now you know what is to happen. You should pay attention to these warning.

"You must find a wise man and set him over the land to take care of things. During the seven good years, he must

save part of the food, and store it in large storehouses. Then, when the seven bad years come, there will be plenty of food for everyone and no one will go hungry."

When the king heard this, he said to Joseph, "since God has given you such wisdom, there is no one as wise as you. I want you to take care of everything, just as you said should be done. You shall rule the whole land of Egypt, and no one shall be higher than you except me, the king."

So Joseph, the son of Jacob, who was stolen away from his father's house when he was still a boy; who was set to work as a slave; who was sent to prison for something he did not do; was now lifted up out of all his suffering. God had remembered Joseph. He had seen how, in spite of all the unkind things that people had done to him, Joseph had kept on being good and kind to everyone, according to God's law. Now Joseph was made a prince and a master over all the people of Egypt.



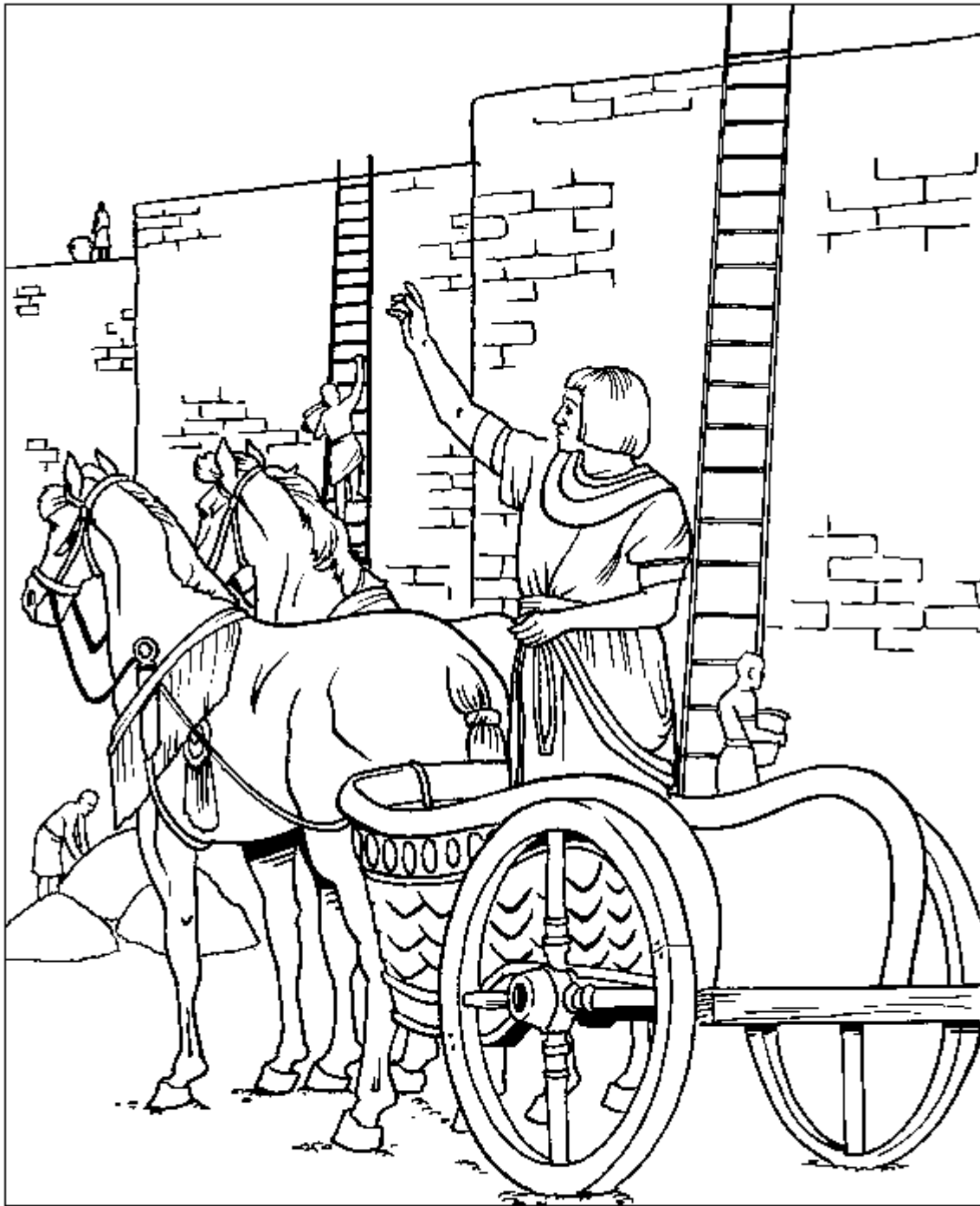
## JOSEPH IN PRISON

Scripture: Genesis 39 – 40



Memory Verse: Genesis 39:20b-21a

<http://www.msscrafter.com/oldtestament/josephegypt.htm>



## JOSEPH RULES IN EGYPT

Scripture: Genesis 41 – 42



Memory Verse: Romans 8:28