

Lesson 4: Forgiveness



Old Testament

New Testament

Where in the Bible?

The Joseph story cycle concludes the Book of Genesis.

The Old Testament: Pentateuch

The **Pentateuch** (the first section of Scripture) tells the story of Israel's ancestors. Scripture is honest about the real-life struggle of this family, not hiding the sin and jealousies they dealt with. They were not some false ideals or perfect examples; they were real people.

Biblical Time Period: Slavery

In God's wisdom, the misfortune of being sold off to slavery was not the end for Joseph. Elevated to leadership in the land, Joseph used his position in Egypt to save his family. The Book of Genesis concludes with the family of Israel moving to Egypt, where Joseph provided them a new home. This corresponds to the time in Egyptian history known as the Hyksos Dynasty (16th and 15th Centuries B.C.) and the rule of the Canaanite Shepherd Kings.

Over time, the Israelites entered a long period of slavery in Egypt, summarized briefly in Exodus 1-2.

Introduction

Young Joseph had been sold into slavery by his jealous brothers. But God was with him. When God revealed that a great famine would take place, Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of the preparations. Joseph met his brothers again when they came to Egypt to buy food.

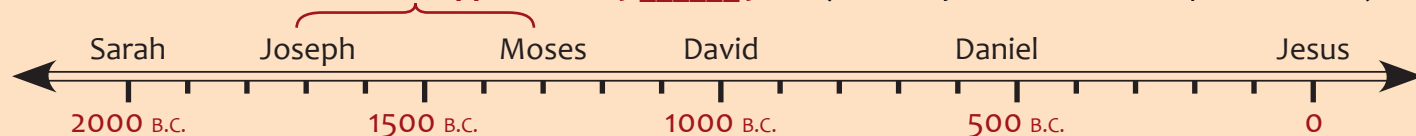
Read: Genesis 45:4-20, 25-28

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

When in Time?

Because of a famine in Canaan, God's people moved to Egypt at the time of Joseph, where they prospered and multiplied. Years later, they became slaves to the Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, when he feared that the Hebrews would rebel. According to the timeline below, about how many years were the Israelites slaves in Egypt?

SLAVERY IN EGYPT = Approximately _____ years (to check your answer, look up Genesis 15:13)



Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them ..." (Exodus 1:8-10a).

Discuss: Genesis 45:4-20, 25-28

1. Go back and read Genesis 37:1-4. Why did Joseph's brothers dislike him so much? According to Genesis 37:25-28, what did they do to get rid of him? What did they tell their father (v. 29-35)?
2. Genesis 39-41 recounts that Joseph was a slave in Egypt and was imprisoned on false charges before he came to his place of power in Egypt. What led to his high position? What do you think sustained Joseph through all his difficult times? Can you say the same for yourself?
3. Read Genesis 41:46-49, 53-57. How was Joseph responsible for Egypt surviving the famine? What do you think was happening in the land of Canaan? How did all this work together in God's plan to bring Joseph's brothers to Egypt?
4. Joseph's brothers spoke to him on two separate trips they made to Egypt. What are some of the reasons you think they didn't recognize their brother?
5. In verses 45:4-20, why was Joseph unable to control himself emotionally? Do you think these were tears of sadness, anger, or joy? How do you think you would have felt if you were Joseph?
6. Even though his brothers were mean to him, God used Joseph's situation for good. What does Joseph say was God's plan (v. 7)? In a similar way, how does God work through *us* to serve the needs of our world? Give some examples.
7. What message did Joseph send to his father, Jacob (v. 9-11)? In what land did Joseph want his family to settle? Why do you think Pharaoh gave his permission for all this?
8. Read Leviticus 19:17-18. In what way(s) does God command us here to act like Joseph? What are we called to do and not do? What people quoted this same verse in Mark 12:31, Galatians 5:14, and James 2:8?

Where in the World?

The map shows a closeup of the land between Canaan and Egypt. Joseph lived with his family in the town of Shechem, in Canaan, until his jealous brothers sold him off as a slave and he was taken to the land of Egypt.

The Hyksos Dynasty ruled in Egypt from the city of Avaris from about 1700-1550 b.c. Sometimes referred to as the Shepherd Kings, the Hyksos were descendants of Canaanite people who had migrated to Egypt around 1800-1700 B.C.

On the map, trace the path that Joseph's brothers took from Shechem to Avaris when they traveled to buy food during the famine that Egypt was prepared for because of the leadership of Joseph.

