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# From the Bible

## The Boy Who Dreamed

Once there was a boy named Joseph who was always dreaming. He dreamed that he saw a sheaf of wheat standing up, and that he then saw eleven other sheaves stand up around it and bow to it. He dreamed that he saw the sun and the moon and the stars all making bows to him.

He told one of his dreams to his father. His father Jacob thought it was all very foolish and told him not to be dreaming so much. When he told his dreams to his brothers, they became angry. You see, there were eleven of them, and when Joseph told about the eleven sheaves, his brothers thought he was dreaming about them. They were the kind of brothers, who often become jealous of other family members. Their jealousy became even worse after their father gave Joseph a special coat of many colors.

One day Joseph's brothers did a very wicked thing. They sold him to some strangers and told Jacob that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. The strangers were merchants, and they carried Joseph with them into another country. In that country, which is called Egypt, Joseph was kept many, many years. All this time Joseph's father thought he was dead.

At first Joseph had a hard time in Egypt. He was a slave and was sometimes mistreated. Once he was put into prison and kept there for more than two years. During his time in prison, Joseph explained the dreams of other inmates. Joseph

continued to receive the ability from God to understand dreams even while in prison.

Later Joseph became a great man after he explained two troubling dreams to the **Pharaoh** of Egypt. Pharaoh saw in his first dream seven fat cows and then seven skinny cows that ate the fat cows. In the second dream, he saw seven fat ears of grain followed by seven thin ears of grain that swallowed the fat ears. The Pharaoh and his advisors had no idea what these dreams meant. When Pharaoh was told about Joseph's ability to explain dreams, he ordered Joseph to be brought to him from the prison. Pharaoh wanted Joseph to tell him the meaning of his dreams.

God revealed to Joseph the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams. Egypt would have seven good years of crops and then seven bad years. Joseph also told Pharaoh that he should prepare for the bad years by saving food from the good years. Pharaoh thought that Joseph had a good idea and put him in charge of preparing for the bad years. He also gave Joseph a wife and a fine place in his palace.

After Joseph had become a great man in Egypt, his brothers at home began to have a hard time. Their crops did not grow, and their cattle did not thrive. They had very little to eat. There was a famine one year, a famine the next year, and so on for seven years.

Now in Egypt there was plenty to eat, in spite of the hard times. Joseph had managed things so well that the people in Egypt had enough to eat and some to spare. In fact, the Egyptians sold a great deal of food to the people of other countries.

And now, what do you think? Joseph's brothers went to Egypt to buy food! They had to buy it from Joseph, for he had charge of the king's storehouse.

Joseph had changed so much that his brothers did not know him, but he knew them. He could have put them in jail, but he didn't do it. He sold them food and, after a long time, he told them who he was. They were very much surprised and were terribly frightened, but Joseph did not hurt them. He believed in doing a good turn for a bad one. Joseph understood that while his brothers meant to do evil, God meant it all for good to save the lives of many during the famine.

After this Joseph's father and all his brothers went to Egypt to live. Joseph and Pharaoh picked out for them good farms and rich pasture fields near the river—the big river Nile. If it had not been for Joseph there is no telling what would have become of his father, of his brothers, or of their children. The boy who was a great dreamer turned out to be a kind and godly man who was a great leader.

Now, in closing this story, let me tell you a secret about Joseph's dreams and his ability to explain dreams. Joseph kept his eyes open and could see what ought to be done. He sought God's mind on things, then he went to work to do things. This is the reason his dreams and explanations always counted for so much. As the Holy Bible says in Isaiah 26:3, "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You."

**VOCABULARY WORDS**

**inmates**—people who are in prison

**Pharaoh**—the king of ancient Egypt

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1. What were Joseph's two dreams?
2. What did Joseph's brothers do to him?
3. What did Pharaoh's dreams mean?
4. Why did Joseph help his family?