

# The First Family

**Date: 6.28.2026 | Joseph Cares for His Brothers**  
**Scripture: Genesis 42-50**

## CENTRAL TRUTHS



### PRESCHOOL:

God takes care of His people, and we can forgive others.

### YOUNGER KIDS (K5-2ND GRADE):

God helped Joseph forgive his brothers and take care of his family.

### OLDER KIDS (3RD-5TH GRADE):

Even though Joseph's brothers hurt him, God used it for good, and Joseph chose to forgive them.

### STUDENTS:

God worked through Joseph's suffering to save many lives, and Joseph's forgiveness shows that we can trust God's plan and extend grace to others.

### ADULTS:

God's sovereign providence is fully revealed as He uses human sin and suffering to accomplish His redemptive purposes—preserving His covenant people. Joseph's declaration that what others meant for evil God meant for good calls believers to trust God's providence and embody forgiveness grounded in His greater plan.

## MEMORY VERSE

*So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.*  
*Galatians 3:9*



## DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

*The genealogies of Genesis 46:5-27 close the patriarchal period in Canaan. A patriarch is the administrative, legislative, and instructional head of a family or tribe. - Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, "Patriarch"*

## BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

After years of suffering, waiting, and God's providential preparation in **Genesis 37-41**, Joseph has now been exalted to power in Egypt. What appeared to be the end of Joseph's suffering in his rise to authority was actually only the beginning of God's greater purpose. Joseph's exaltation was never merely for his personal success—it was the means by which God would preserve the covenant family and continue fulfilling His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.



When the famine spread beyond Egypt, things happened exactly as Joseph had predicted. Because Joseph had wisely stored grain during the years of abundance, people from many lands came to Egypt to buy food (**Genesis 41:53-57**). Among them were Joseph's brothers, whom Jacob sent to Egypt to purchase grain—all except Benjamin, the youngest (**Genesis 42:1-4**). When Joseph saw his brothers, they did not recognize him, but Joseph recognized them immediately (**Genesis 42:7-8**). At that moment, Joseph remembered the dreams God had given him many years earlier (**Genesis 42:9**), and the fulfillment of God's word had begun.

Rather than revealing himself immediately, Joseph began testing his brothers. These tests were not acts of revenge but were designed to examine whether their hearts had changed since the day they sold him into slavery. Joseph sought to test their consciences, character, and compassion—the very areas in which they had previously failed so grievously.

Joseph first tested their consciences by accusing them of being spies and speaking harshly to them (**Genesis 42:9-17**). Though Joseph knew the accusation was false, he used the pressure of the moment to expose their hearts. When the brothers explained their family situation, Joseph demanded that they bring Benjamin to Egypt to prove their honesty and kept Simeon imprisoned until they returned (**Genesis 42:18-24**). Overhearing their conversation, Joseph learned that his brothers still felt guilt over what they had done to him, saying, "In truth we are guilty concerning our brother" (**Genesis 42:21**). More than twenty years later, their sin still weighed heavily on

their consciences.

Joseph then continued testing them with unexpected kindness. He filled their sacks with grain and secretly returned their money (*Genesis 42:25*). When the brothers discovered the money, they feared judgment and again connected their circumstances to their past sin against Joseph (*Genesis 42:28*). God was using Joseph's actions to bring conviction and discipline to their hearts.

Eventually, the famine forced Jacob to allow Benjamin to travel to Egypt with his brothers (*Genesis 43:1-15*). In doing so, the brothers demonstrated growth in character and responsibility. They willingly returned the money from their previous trip and sought to act honestly before Joseph's household (*Genesis 43:20-23*). Joseph then observed how they treated Benjamin, creating opportunities for jealousy by showing Benjamin special favor at the meal (*Genesis 43:33-34*). Unlike years before, the brothers displayed no resentment toward Rachel's other son.

Joseph's final test focused on compassion. He secretly placed his silver cup in Benjamin's sack and then accused Benjamin of theft (*Genesis 44:1-12*). When the cup was found, Judah stepped forward and offered himself in Benjamin's place, pleading passionately for their father's sake (*Genesis 44:18-34*). This moment revealed how dramatically the brothers had changed. The same men who once sold their brother into slavery now offered themselves sacrificially to save another brother. No longer were they cruel, jealous, and callous. God had transformed them into men of sorrow, humility, and compassion.

At last, Joseph could restrain himself no longer. Overcome with emotion, he revealed his identity to his brothers, saying, "I am Joseph!" (*Genesis 45:1-3*). His brothers were terrified, expecting vengeance for their past sins. Instead, Joseph comforted them with one of the clearest statements of God's providence in all of Scripture: "Do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life" (*Genesis 45:5*). Joseph understood that while his brothers had acted wickedly, God had been sovereignly working through their evil for a greater purpose.

Joseph's reconciliation with his brothers was genuine and complete. He embraced them, wept with them, forgave them, and provided for them (*Genesis 45:14-15*). He gave them land in Egypt, promised to

sustain them through the remaining years of famine, and urged them to bring Jacob and their families to live near him (*Genesis 45:9–13*). Joseph's forgiveness demonstrates that true reconciliation bears the fruit of grace, generosity, and restored relationships rather than bitterness or revenge.

When Jacob learned that Joseph was alive, he could hardly believe it (*Genesis 45:25–28*). But eventually Jacob and his entire household moved to Egypt, where Joseph provided for them throughout the famine (*Genesis 46:1–7; 47:11–12*). This move to Egypt was not only a rescue from famine but also part of God's larger covenant plan. In Egypt, Jacob's family would be protected, preserved, and multiplied into the great nation God had promised (*Genesis 12:2; 15:5; 46:3*).

Removed from the constant tribal conflicts of Canaan and placed in the fertile land of Goshen by Pharaoh's decree (*Genesis 47:5–6*), Israel had room to grow and flourish. Over the coming centuries, they would multiply greatly, just as God had promised (*Exodus 1:7*). Joseph's suffering had become the means by which God preserved and expanded His covenant people.

Joseph's wisdom also saved Egypt and the surrounding nations from destruction during the famine (*Genesis 47:13–26*). The Egyptians themselves declared to Joseph, "You have saved our lives" (*Genesis 47:25*). In fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant, those who blessed Abraham's family were themselves blessed (*Genesis 12:3*). Pharaoh, who welcomed and blessed Jacob's family, experienced blessing in return.

As Genesis closes, Jacob blesses Joseph and his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, granting them an inheritance among the tribes of Israel (*Genesis 48*). Then, before his death, Joseph reminds his family to hold fast to God's covenant promises, declaring, "God will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob" (*Genesis 50:24*).

Joseph's story ultimately explains how Israel came to be in Egypt and reveals the mysterious providence of God in using both sinful and righteous actions to accomplish His redemptive purposes. Joseph summarizes the entire message of his life with these words to his brothers: "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" (*Genesis 50:20*).

Joseph's story points powerfully to Jesus Christ. Like Joseph,

Jesus was rejected by His own people, betrayed by those close to Him, and handed over to suffer. Yet through that suffering, God brought salvation. Joseph became the savior of the very brothers who rejected him; Jesus became the Savior of the world through His death and resurrection. What sinful men intended for evil at the cross, God intended for the greatest good—the redemption of sinners.

*Genesis 42–50* reminds believers that God is sovereign over every detail of life. He can use betrayal, suffering, waiting, and even human sin to accomplish His perfect purposes. Nothing is wasted in the hands of a sovereign God, and His plans of redemption cannot be stopped.

## TELL THE STORY

### *Genesis 42 - 50*

The Biggest Story Storybook Bible - Joseph's Mean Brothers and What God Meant to Do

The Jesus Storybook Bible - The Forgiving Prince

Hey Oh! Stories of the Bible - Joseph Forgives His Brothers

Just as Joseph had said, the seven years of plenty ended, and a terrible famine began. Soon, people from many lands came to Egypt to buy food.

Back in Canaan, Jacob sent Joseph's brothers to Egypt to buy grain. When they arrived, they bowed before Joseph—but they did not recognize him. Joseph remembered the dreams God had given him many years earlier. God's plan was coming true.

Joseph recognized his brothers right away, but instead of telling them who he was, he tested them. Joseph wanted to see if his brothers had changed since the day they sold him into slavery.

Joseph accused them of being spies and kept Simeon in prison until they returned with Benjamin, Joseph's younger brother. When the brothers talked among themselves, they admitted that their troubles might be happening because of the way they had sinned against Joseph years before.



Later, when the famine grew worse, the brothers returned to Egypt with Benjamin. Joseph was overjoyed to see his younger brother, but he continued testing the others.

Joseph gave Benjamin extra food and special attention to see whether his brothers would become jealous, as they had before. But this time, the brothers did not show jealousy.

Then Joseph tested them one last time. He secretly placed his silver cup in Benjamin's sack and accused Benjamin of stealing it.

When the cup was found, Joseph said Benjamin must stay in Egypt as his servant.

But something had changed in the brothers.

Judah stepped forward and begged Joseph to let Benjamin go free. He offered to stay in Benjamin's place because he did not want to break their father's heart.

When Joseph saw this, he knew his brothers had changed.

Joseph could not hold back his tears anymore. He sent everyone else out of the room and cried, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?"

His brothers were terrified. They thought Joseph would punish them for what they had done.

But Joseph said, "Do not be afraid. You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good."

Joseph explained that God had sent him to Egypt ahead of them to save many lives during the famine.

Then Joseph forgave his brothers. He hugged them, cried with them, and invited them to bring their whole family to Egypt, where he could care for them.

When Jacob heard that Joseph was alive, he could hardly believe it! But soon Jacob and all his family moved to Egypt.

God had used everything—even betrayal, slavery, prison, and suffering—to save His people and keep His promises.

Joseph's story points us to Jesus. Like Joseph, Jesus was rejected by His own people and suffered even though He had done nothing wrong. But through Jesus' suffering, God brought salvation to the world.

**Genesis 42–50** teaches us that God can use even the hardest and most painful parts of life for His good purposes.

## REBUILD THE STORY



1. What did Joseph do as governor of Egypt to prepare for the famine?  
**Genesis 41:46–49**

2. Why did Joseph's brothers travel to Egypt? **Genesis 42:1–5**

3. What happened when Joseph's brothers bowed before him in Egypt? **Genesis 42:6–9**

4. Why did Joseph test his brothers before telling them who he was?  
**Genesis 42:18–24; 44:1–17**

5. How did Joseph's brothers show they had changed since selling Joseph into slavery? **Genesis 44:18–34**

6. How did Joseph respond when he finally revealed himself to his brothers? **Genesis 45:1–8**

7. What did Joseph do for his family after forgiving his brothers?  
**Genesis 45:9–11; 46:5–7; 47:11–12**

8. What did Joseph tell his brothers after Jacob died to reassure them of his forgiveness? **Genesis 50:15–21**

9. Why do you think Joseph was able to forgive his brothers after everything they did to him?

10. What does Joseph's story teach us about how God can use suffering and hardship for good?
11. What does Joseph's forgiveness teach us about how believers should respond when others sin against us?
12. How does Joseph's story show God keeping His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

### **GOSPEL EMPHASIS**

Joseph did not ignore or excuse the evil his brothers committed against him, but he trusted that God had been sovereignly working through even their sin to accomplish a greater purpose (*Genesis 45:5-8; 50:20*). God used Joseph's suffering to place him in Egypt so that Jacob's family would be preserved during the famine and His covenant promises would continue through them. By the end of Genesis, Abraham's family had grown and thrived not because of their own faithfulness, but because of God's grace and His determination to keep His promises despite their sin, weakness, and failures. Joseph's story points us to Jesus, who also suffered evil at the hands of sinful men, yet through that suffering God accomplished the salvation of His people. Just as Joseph became the means of physical rescue for his family, Jesus became the greater Savior who rescues sinners from eternal death. Genesis ends by reminding us that God always keeps His promises and that His plans of redemption cannot be stopped by sin, suffering, or human failure.



### **WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE TEACH US ABOUT GOD?**

Use your Attributes of God poster as a guide.

### **PRAYER PROMPTS**

God, thank You for forgiving us. Help us to forgive others because of what You have done in our lives. Thank You for showing us that we can trust You and Your plans for us because of all that You did in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Help us remember Your faithfulness and sovereignty, and believe in that during our own struggles.

