



The Story of Joseph

Quotations from the Qur'an and Genesis

**Edited for the Internet by 'a
volunteer'**

Joseph

From the Koran

Sura 12

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

12:1 Alif. Lam. Ra. These are the verses of the Glorious Book. We have revealed the Koran in the Arabic tongue so that you may grow in understanding.

12:3 In revealing this Koran We will recount to you the best of narratives, though before it you were heedless.

Joseph said to his father: 'Father, I dreamt of eleven stars and the sun and the moon; I saw them prostrate themselves before me.'

'My son,' he replied, 'say nothing of this dream to your brothers, lest they plot evil against you: Satan is the sworn enemy of man. Even thus shall you be chosen by your Lord. He will teach you to interpret visions, and will perfect His favour to you and to the house of Jacob, as He perfected it to your forefathers Abraham and Isaac before you. Your Lord is all-knowing and wise.' Surely in Joseph and his brothers there are signs for doubting men.

They said to each other: 'Surely Joseph and his brother are dearer to our father than ourselves, though we are many. Truly, our father is much mistaken. Let us slay Joseph, or cast him away in some far-off land, so that we may have no rivals in our father's love, and after that be honourable men.'

12:10 One of the brothers said: 'Do not slay Joseph; but, if you must, rather cast him into a dark pit. Some caravan will take him up.'

They said to their father: 'Why do you not trust us with Joseph? Surely we wish him well. Send him with us tomorrow, that he may play and enjoy himself. We will take good care of him.'

He replied: 'It would much grieve me to let him go with you; for I fear lest the wolf should eat him when you are off your guard.'

They said: 'If the wolf could eat him despite our number, then we should surely be lost!'

And when they took him with them, they resolved to cast him into a

dark pit. We revealed to him Our will, saying: 'You shall tell them of all this when they will not know you.

12:16 At nightfall they returned weeping to their father. They said: 'We went off to compete together, and left Joseph with our packs. The wolf devoured him. But you will not believe us, though we speak the truth.' And they showed him their brother's shirt, stained with false blood.

'No!' he cried. 'Your souls have tempted you to evil. Sweet patience! God alone can help me bear the loss you speak of.'

And a caravan passed by, who sent their water-bearer to the pit. And when he had let down his pail, he cried: 'Rejoice! A boy!' They concealed him as part of their merchandise. But God knew what they did. They sold him for a trifling price, for a few pieces of silver. They cared nothing for him.

The Egyptian who bought him said to his wife: 'Be kind to him. He may prove useful to us, or we may adopt him as our son. Thus We established Joseph in the land, and taught him to interpret dreams. God has power over all things, though most men may not know it. And when he reached maturity We bestowed on him wisdom and knowledge. Thus do We reward the righteous.

12:23 His master's wife attempted to seduce him. She bolted the doors and said: 'Come!' 'God forbid!' he replied. 'My lord has treated me with kindness. Wrongdoers shall never prosper.'

She made for him, and he himself would have succumbed to her had he not seen a sign from his Lord. Thus did We shield him from wantonness, for he was one of Our faithful servants. They both rushed to the door. She tore his shirt from behind. And at the door they met her husband.

She cried: 'Shall not the man who wished to violate your wife be thrown into prison or sternly punished?' Joseph said: 'It was she who attempted to seduce me.'

'If his shirt is torn from the front,' said one of her people, 'she is speaking the truth and he is lying. If it is torn from behind, then he is speaking the truth, and she is lying.' And when her husband saw that Joseph's shirt was rent from behind, he said to her: 'This is but one of your tricks.'

12:29 Your cunning is great indeed! Joseph, say no more about this. Woman, ask pardon for your sin. You have assuredly done wrong.'

In the city, women were saying: 'The Prince's wife has sought to seduce her servant. She has conceived a passion for him. We can see that she has clearly gone astray.'

When she heard of their intrigues, she invited them to a banquet prepared at her house. To each she gave a knife, and ordered Joseph to present himself before them. When they saw him, they were amazed at him and cut their hands, exclaiming: 'God preserve us! This is no mortal, but a gracious angel.'

'This is he,' she said, 'on whose account you blamed me. I attempted to seduce him, but he was unyielding. If he declines to do my bidding, he shall be thrown into prison and shall be held in scorn.'

'Lord,' said Joseph, 'sooner would I go to prison than give in to their advances. Shield me from their cunning, or I shall yield to them and lapse into folly.'

12:34 His Lord answered his prayer and warded off their wiles from him. He hears all and knows all. Yet, for all the evidence they had seen, they thought it right to jail him for a time. Two young men

entered the prison with him. One said:

'I dreamt that I was pressing grapes.' And the other: 'I dreamt I was carrying a loaf upon my head, and the birds came and ate of it. Tell us the meaning of these dreams, for we can see you are a man of virtue.'

Joseph replied: 'Whatever food you are provided with, I can divine for you its meaning, even before it reaches you. This knowledge my Lord has given me, for I have left the faith of those that disbelieve in God and deny the life to come. I follow the faith of my forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We will serve no idols besides God. Such is the grace which God has bestowed on us and on all mankind. Yet most men do not give thanks.'

12:40 'Fellow prisoners! Are sundry gods better than God, the One who conquers all? Those you serve besides Him are nothing but names which you and your fathers have devised and for which God has revealed no sanction.

'Judgement rests only with God. He has commanded you to worship none but Him. That is the true faith: yet most men do not know it.

'Fellow prisoners, one of you will serve his lord with wine. The other will be crucified, and the birds will peck at his head. That is the answer to your question.' And Joseph said to the prisoner who he knew would survive: 'Remember me in the presence of your lord.'

But Satan made him forget to mention Joseph to his lord, so that he stayed in prison for several years.

The king said: 'I saw seven fatted cows which seven lean ones devoured; also seven green ears of corn and seven others dry. Tell me the meaning of this vision, my nobles, if you can interpret visions.

They replied: 'They are but a medley of dreams; nor are we skilled in the interpretation of dreams.' Thereupon the man who had been freed remembered after all that time. He said: 'I shall tell you what it means. Give me leave to go.'

'Joseph,' he said, 'man of truth, tell us of the seven fatted cows which seven lean ones devoured; also of the seven green ears of corn and the other seven which were dry: so that I may go back to my masters and inform them.'

He replied: 'You shall sow for seven consecutive years. Leave in the ear the corn you reap, except a little which you may eat. There shall follow seven hungry years which will consume all but a little of what you stored. Then will come a year of abundant rain, in which the people will press the grape.'

The king said: 'Bring this man before me.' But when the envoy came to him, Joseph said: 'Go back to your master and ask him about the women who cut their hands. My master knows their cunning.'

The king questioned the women, saying: 'What made you attempt to seduce Joseph?' 'God forbid!' they replied. 'We know no evil of him.'

'Now the truth must come to light,' said the Prince's wife. 'It was I who attempted to seduce him. He has told the truth.'

'From this,' said Joseph, 'my lord will know that I did not betray him in his absence, and that God does not guide the mischief of the treacherous. Not that I claim to be free from sin: man's soul is prone to evil, except his to whom my Lord has shown mercy. My Lord is forgiving and merciful.'

The king said: 'Bring him before me. I will choose him for my own.' And when he had spoken with him, the king said: 'You shall

henceforth dwell with us, honoured and trusted.'

Joseph said: 'Give me charge of the granaries of the land. I shall husband them wisely.'

Thus did We establish Joseph in the land, and he dwelt there as he pleased. We bestow Our mercy on whom We will, and shall never deny the righteous their reward. Surely better is the recompense of the life to come for those who believe in God and keep from evil.

Joseph's brothers arrived and presented themselves before him. He recognized them, but they knew him not. And when he had given them their provisions, he said: 'Bring me your other brother from your father. Do you not see that I give just measure and am the best of hosts? If you refuse to bring him, you shall have no measure, nor shall you come near me again.'

They replied: 'We will endeavour to fetch him from his father. This we will surely do.' He said to his servants: 'Put their silver into their packs, so that they may discover it when they return to their people. Perchance they will come back.'

When they returned to their father, they said: 'Father, corn is henceforth denied us. Send our brother with us and we shall have our measure. We will take good care of him.'

He replied: 'Am I to trust you with him as I once trusted you with his brother? But God is the best of guardians: and of all those that show mercy He is the most merciful.'

When they opened their packs, they discovered that their money had been returned to them. 'Father,' they said, 'what more can we desire? Here is our money paid back to us. We will buy provisions for our people, and take good care of our brother. We should receive

an extra camel-load; a camel-load should be easy enough.'

He replied: 'I will not send him with you until you promise in God's name to bring him back to me, unless the worst befall you.'

And when they had given him their pledge, he said: 'God is the witness of what we say. My sons, do not enter from one gate; enter from different gates. In no way can I shield you from the might of God; judgement is His alone. In Him I have put my trust. In Him let the faithful put their trust.'

And when they entered as their father bade them, he could in no way shield them from the might of God. It was but a wish in Jacob's soul which he had thus fulfilled. He was possessed of knowledge which We had given him. But most men have no knowledge.

When they went in to Joseph, he embraced his brother, and said: 'I am your brother. Do not grieve at what they did.' And when he had given them their provisions, he hid a drinking-cup in his brother's pack. Then a crier called out after them: 'Travellers, you are surely thieves!'

They turned back, and asked: 'What have you lost?'

'We miss the king's drinking-cup,' they replied. 'He that brings it shall have a camel-load of corn. I pledge my word for it.'

'In God's name,' they cried, 'you know we did not come to do evil in the land. We are no thieves.'

The Egyptians said: 'What punishment shall be his who stole it, if you prove to be lying?'

They replied: 'He in whose pack the cup is found shall render himself your bondsman. Thus do we punish the wrongdoers.'

Joseph searched their bags before his brother's, and then took out the cup from his brother's bag.

Thus We directed Joseph. By the king's law he had no right to seize his brother: but God willed otherwise. We exalt whom We will to a lofty station: and above those that have knowledge there is One who is all-knowing.

They said: 'If he has stolen - know then that a brother of his stole before him.'

But Joseph kept his secret and revealed nothing to them. He said: 'Your deed was worse. God best knows the things you speak of.'

They said: 'Noble prince, this boy has an aged father. Take one of us, instead of him. We can see you are a generous man.'

He replied: 'God forbid that we should take any but the man with whom our property was found: for then we should surely be unjust.'

When they despaired of him, they went aside to confer in private. The eldest said: 'Do you not know that your father took from you a pledge in God's name, and that long ago you did your worst with Joseph? I will not stir from the land until my father gives me leave or God makes known to me His judgement:

He is the best of judges. Return to your father and say to him: "Father, your son has stolen. We testify only to what we know. How could we guard against the unforeseen? Inquire at the city where we lodged, and from the caravan with which we travelled. We surely speak the truth."

'No!' cried their father. 'Your souls have tempted you to evil. But I will have sweet patience. God may bring them all to me. He alone is all-

knowing and wise.'

And he turned away from them, crying: 'Alas for Joseph!' His eyes went white with grief, and he was oppressed with silent sorrow.

His sons exclaimed: 'In God's name, will you not cease to think of Joseph until you ruin your health and die?'

He replied: 'I complain to God of my sorrow and sadness. God has made known to me things that you know not. Go, my sons, and seek news of Joseph and his brother. Do not despair of God's spirit; none but unbelievers despair of God's spirit.'

And when they went in to him, they said: 'Noble prince, we and our people are scourged with famine. We have brought but little money. Give us our full measure, and be charitable to us: God rewards the charitable.'

'Do you know,' he replied, 'what you did to Joseph and his brother? You are surely unaware.' They cried: 'Can you indeed be Joseph?'

'I am Joseph,' he answered, 'and this is my brother. God has been gracious to us. Those that keep from evil and endure with fortitude, God will not deny them their reward.'

'By the Lord,' they said, 'God has exalted you above us all. We have indeed done wrong.' He replied: 'None shall reproach you this day. May God forgive you: of all those that show mercy He is the most merciful. Take this shirt of mine and throw it over my father's face: he will recover his sight. Then return to me with all your people.'

When the caravan departed their father said: 'I feel the breath of Joseph, though you will not believe me.' 'In God's name,' said those who heard him, 'it is but your old illusion.'

And when the bearer of good news arrived, he threw Joseph's shirt over the old man's face, and he regained his sight. He said: 'Did I not tell you, God has made known to me what you know not?'

His sons said: 'Father, implore forgiveness for our sins. We have indeed done wrong.' He replied: 'I shall implore my Lord to forgive you. He is forgiving and merciful.'

And when they went in to Joseph, he embraced his parents and said: 'Welcome to Egypt, safe, if God wills!'

12:100 He helped his parents to a couch, and they all fell on their knees and prostrated themselves before him.

'This,' said Joseph to his father, 'is the meaning of my old vision: my Lord has fulfilled it. He has been gracious to me. He has released me from prison, and brought you out of the desert after Satan had stirred up strife between me and my brothers. My Lord is gracious to whom He will. He alone is all-knowing and wise.

12:101 'Lord, You have given me authority and taught me to Interpret dreams. Creator of the heavens and the earth, my Guardian in this world and in the world to come! Allow me to die in submission, and admit me among the righteous.'

That which We have now revealed to you is a tale of the unknown. You were not present when Joseph's brothers conceived their plans and schemed against him.' Yet strive as you may, most men will not believe. (The Qur'an Dawood, s12-joseph_dawood)

40:35 Long before this, Joseph came to you with veritable signs, but you never ceased to doubt them; and when he died you said: "After him God will never send another apostle." (The Qur'an Dawood, s40-

Joseph from Genesis

GENESIS 37

Joseph in Egypt

1 SO JACOB LIVED IN CANAAN, the country in which his father had settled. And this is the story of the descendants of Jacob. When Joseph was a boy of seventeen, he used to accompany his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives, when they were in charge of the flock; and he brought their father a bad report of them. Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was a child of his old age, and he made him a long, sleeved robe. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not say a kind word to him.

5 Joseph had a dream; and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him still more. He said to them, 'Listen to this dream I have had. We were in the field binding sheaves, and my sheaf rose on end and stood upright, and your sheaves gathered round and bowed low before my sheaf.' His brothers answered him, 'Do you think you will one day be a king and lord it over us?' and they hated him still more because of his dreams and what he said. He had another dream, which he told to his father and his brothers. He said, 'Listen: I have had another dream. The sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.' When he told it to his father and his brothers,

his father took him to task: 'What is this dream of yours?' he said. 'Must we come and bow low to the ground before you, I and your mother and your brothers?' His brothers were jealous of him, but his father did not forget.

12 Joseph's brothers went to mind their father's flocks in Shechem. Israel said to him, 'Your brothers are minding the flocks in Shechem; come, I will send you to them', and he said, 'I am ready.' He said to him, 'Go and see if all is well with your brothers and the sheep, and bring me back word.' So he sent off Joseph from the vale of Hebron and he came to Shechem. A man met him wandering in the open country and asked him what he was looking for. He replied, 'I am looking for my brothers. Tell me, please, where they are minding the flocks.' The man said, 'They have gone away from here; I heard them speak of going to Dothan.' So Joseph followed his brothers and he found them in Dothan. They saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him. They said to each other, 'Here comes that dreamer. Now is our chance; let us kill him and throw him into one of these pits and say that a wild beast has devoured him. Then we shall see what will come of his dreams.' When Reuben heard, he came to his rescue, urging them not to take his life. 'Let us have no bloodshed', he said. 'Throw him into this pit in the wilderness, but do him no bodily harm.' He meant to save him from them so as to restore him to his father. When Joseph came up to his brothers, they stripped him of the long, sleeved robe which he was wearing, took him and threw him into the pit. The pit was empty and had no water in it.

25 Then they sat down to eat some food and, looking up, they saw an Ishmaelite caravan coming in from Gilead on the way down to Egypt, with camels carrying gum tragacanth and balm and myrrh. Judab said to his brothers, 'What shall we gain by killing our brother and concealing his death? Why not sell him to the Ishmaelites? Let us do him no harm, for he is our brother, our own flesh and blood';

and his brothers agreed with him. Meanwhile some Midianite merchants passed by and drew Joseph up out of the pit. They sold him for twenty pieces of silver to the Ishmaelites, and they brought Joseph to Egypt. When Reuben went back to the pit, Joseph was not there. He rent his clothes and went back to his brothers and said, 'The boy is not there. Where can I go?'

31 Joseph's brothers took his robe, killed a goat and dipped it in the goat's blood. Then they tore the robe, the long, sleeved robe, brought it to their father and said, 'Look what we have found. Do you recognize it? Is this your son's robe or not?' Jacob did recognize it, and he replied, 'It is my son's robe. A wild beast has devoured him. Joseph has been torn to pieces.' Jacob rent his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned his son for a long time. His sons and daughters all tried to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. He said, 'I will go to my grave mourning for my son.' Thus Joseph's father wept for him. Meanwhile the Midianites had sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's eunuchs, the captain of the guard.

GENESIS 39

1 WHEN JOSEPH WAS TAKEN DOWN TO EGYPT, he was bought by Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's eunuchs, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian. Potiphar bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him there. The Lord was with Joseph and he prospered. He lived in the house of his Egyptian master, who saw that the Lord was with him and was giving him success in all that he undertook. Thus Joseph found favour with his master, and he became his personal servant. Indeed, his master put him in charge of his household and entrusted him with all that he had. From the time that he put him in

charge of his household and all his property, the Lord blessed the Egyptian's household for Joseph's sake. The blessing of the Lord was on all that was his in house and field; He left everything he possessed in Joseph's care, and concerned himself with nothing but the food he ate.

7 Now Joseph was handsome and good-looking, and a time came when his master's wife took notice of him and said, 'Come and lie with me.' But he refused and said to her, 'Think of my master. He does not know as much as I do about his own house, and he has entrusted me with all he has. He has given me authority in this house second only to his own, and has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How can I do anything so wicked, and sin against God?' She kept asking Joseph day after day, but he refused to lie with her and be in her company. One day he came into the house as usual to do his work, when none of the men of the household were there indoors. She caught him by his cloak, saying, 'Come and lie with me', but he left the cloak in her hands and ran out of the house. When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hands and had run out of the house, she called out to the men of the household, 'Look at this! My husband has brought in a Hebrew to make a mockery of us. He came in here to lie with me, but I gave a loud scream. When he heard me scream and call out, he left his cloak in my hand and ran off.' She kept his cloak with her until his master came home, and then she repeated her tale. She said, 'That Hebrew slave whom you brought in to make a mockery of me, has been here with me. But when I screamed for help and called out, he left his cloak in my hands and ran off.' When Joseph's master heard his wife's story of what his slave had done to her, he was furious. He took Joseph and put him in the Round Tower, where the king's prisoners were kept; and there he stayed in the Round Tower. But the Lord was with Joseph and kept faith with him, so that he won the favour of the governor of the Round Tower. He put Joseph in charge

of all the prisoners in the tower and of all their work. He ceased to concern himself with anything entrusted to Joseph, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in everything.

GENESIS 40

1 It happened later that the king's butler and his baker offended their master the king of Egypt. Pharaoh was angry with these two eunuchs, the chief butler and the chief baker, and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the Round Tower where Joseph was imprisoned. The captain of the guard appointed Joseph as their attendant, and he waited on them. One night, when they had been in prison for some time, they both had dreams, each needing its own interpretation the king of Egypt's butler and his baker who were imprisoned in the Round Tower. When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they looked dejected. So he asked these eunuchs, who were in custody with him in his master's house, why they were so downcast that day. They replied, 'We have each had a dream and there is no one to interpret it for us.' Joseph said to them, 'Does not interpretation belong to God? Tell me your dreams.' So the chief butler told Joseph his dream: 'In my dream', he said, 'there was a vine in front of me. On the vine there were three branches, and as soon as it budded, it blossomed and its clusters ripened into grapes. Now I had Pharaoh's cup in my hand, and I plucked the grapes, crushed them into Pharaoh's cap and put the cup into Pharaoh's hand.' Joseph said to him; 'This is the interpretation. The three branches are three days: within three days Pharaoh will raise you and restore you to your post, and then you will put the cup into Pharaoh's hand as you used to do when you were his butler. But when things go well with you, if you think of me, keep faith with me and bring my case to Pharaoh's notice and help me to get

out of this house. By force I was carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and I have done nothing here to deserve being put in this dungeon.'

16 When the chief baker saw that Joseph had given a favourable interpretation, he said to him, 'I too had a dream, and in my dream there were three baskets of white bread on my head. In the top basket there was every kind of food which the baker prepares for Pharaoh, and the birds were eating out of the top basket on my head.' Joseph answered, 'This is the interpretation. The three baskets are three days: within three days Pharaoh will raise you and hang you up on a tree, and the birds of the air will eat your flesh.'

20 The third day was Pharaoh's birthday and he gave a feast for all his servants. He raised the chief butler and the chief baker in the presence of his court. He restored the chief butler to his post, and the butler put the cup into Pharaoh's hand; but he hanged the chief baker. All went as Joseph had said in interpreting the dreams for them. Even so the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

GENESIS 41

1 Nearly two years later Pharaoh had a dream: he was standing by the Nile, and there came up from the river seven cows, sleek and fat, and they grazed on the reeds. After them seven other cows came up from the river, gaunt and lean, and stood on the river-bank beside the first cows. The cows that were gaunt and lean devoured the cows that were sleek and fat. Then Pharaoh woke up. He fell asleep again and had a second dream: he saw seven ears of corn, full and ripe, growing on one stalk. Growing up after them were seven other ears,

thin and shrivelled by the east wind. The thin ears swallowed up the ears that were full and ripe. Then Pharaoh woke up and knew that it was a dream. When morning came, Pharaoh was troubled in mind; so he summoned all the magicians and sages of Egypt. He told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them for him. Then Pharaoh's chief butler spoke up and said, 'It is time for me to recall my faults. Once Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and he imprisoned me and the chief baker in the house of the captain of the guard. One night we both had dreams, each needing its own interpretation. We had with us a young Hebrew, a slave of the captain of the guard, and we told him our dreams and he interpreted them for us, giving each man's dream its own interpretation. Each dream came true as it had been interpreted to us: I was restored to my position, and he was hanged.'

14 Pharaoh thereupon sent for Joseph, and they hurriedly brought him out of the dungeon. He shaved and changed his clothes, and came in to Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to him, 'I have had a dream, and no one can interpret it to me. I have heard it said that you can understand and interpret dreams.' Joseph answered, 'Not I, but God, will answer for Pharaoh's welfare.' Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'In my dream I was standing on the bank of the Nile, and there came up from the river seven cows, fat and sleek, and they grazed on the reeds. After them seven other cows came up that were poor, very gaunt and lean; I have never seen such gaunt creatures in all Egypt. These lean, gaunt cows devoured the first cows, the fat ones. They were swallowed up, but no one could have guessed that they were in the bellies of the others, which looked as gaunt as before. Then I woke up. After I had fallen asleep again, I saw in a dream seven ears of corn, full and ripe, growing on one stalk. Growing up after them were seven other ears, shrivelled, thin, and blighted by the east wind. The thin ears swallowed up the seven ripe ears. When I told all this to the magicians, no one could explain it to me.'

25 Joseph said to Pharaoh, 'Pharaoh's dreams are one dream. God has told Pharaoh what he is going to do. The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears of corn are seven years. It is all one dream. The seven lean and gaunt cows that came up after them are seven years, and the empty ears of corn blighted by the east wind will be seven years of famine. It is as I have said to Pharaoh: God has let Pharaoh see what he is going to do. There are to be seven years of great plenty throughout the land. After them will come seven years of famine; all the years of plenty in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ruin the country. The good years will not be remembered in the land because of the famine that follows; for it will be very severe. The doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that God is already resolved to do this, and he will very soon put it into effect. Pharaoh should now look for a shrewd and intelligent man, and put him in charge of the country. This is what Pharaoh should do: appoint controllers over the land, and take one fifth of the produce of Egypt during the seven years of plenty.

35 They should collect all this food produced in the good years that are coming and put the corn under Pharaoh's control in store in the cities, and keep it under guard. This food will be a reserve for the country against the seven years of famine which will come upon Egypt. Thus the country will not be devastated by the famine.'

37 The plan pleased Pharaoh and all his courtiers, and he said to them, 'Can we find a man like this man, one who has the spirit of a god in him?' He said to Joseph, 'Since a god has made all this known to you, there is no one so shrewd and intelligent as you. You shall be in charge of my household, and all my people will depend on your every word. Only my royal throne shall make me greater than you.' Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'I hereby give you authority over the whole land of Egypt.' He took off his signet-ring and put it on Joseph's finger, he had him dressed in fine linen and hung a gold

chain round his neck. He mounted him in his viceroy's chariot and men cried 'Make way before him. Thus Pharaoh made him ruler over all Egypt and said to him, 'I am the Pharaoh. Without your consent no man shall lift hand or foot throughout Egypt.' Pharaoh named him Zaphenathpaneah, and he gave him as wife Asenath the daughter of Potiphera priest of On. And Joseph's authority extended over the whole of Egypt.

46 Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. When he took his leave of the king, he made a tour of inspection through the country. During the seven years of plenty there were abundant harvests, and Joseph gathered all the food produced in Egypt during those years and stored it in the cities, putting in each the food from the surrounding country. He stored the grain in huge quantities; it was like the sand of the sea, so much that he stopped measuring: it was beyond all measure.

50 Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath the daughter of Potiphera priest of On. He named the elder Manasseh, 'for', he said, 'God has caused me to forget all my troubles and my father's family.' He named the second Ephraim, 'for', he said, 'God has made me fruitful in the land of my hardships.' When the seven years of plenty in Egypt came to an end, seven years of famine began, as Joseph had foretold. There was famine in every country, but throughout Egypt there was bread. So when the famine spread through all Egypt, the people appealed to Pharaoh for bread, and he ordered them to go to Joseph and do as he told them. In every region there was famine, and Joseph opened all the granaries and sold corn to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe. The whole world came to Egypt to buy corn from Joseph, so severe was the famine everywhere.

GENESIS 42

1 WHEN JACOB SAW that there was corn in Egypt, he said to his sons, 'Why do you stand staring at each other? I have heard that there is corn in Egypt. Go down and buy some so that we may keep ourselves alive and not starve.' So Joseph's brothers, ten of them, went down to buy grain from Egypt, but Jacob did not let Joseph's brother Benjamin go with them, for fear that he might come to harm.

5 So the sons of Israel came down with everyone else to buy corn, because of the famine in Canaan. Now Joseph was governor of all Egypt, and it was he who sold the corn to all the people of the land, Joseph's brothers came and bowed to the ground before him, and when he saw his brothers, he recognized them but pretended not to know them and spoke harshly to them. 'Where do you come from?' he asked. 'From Canaan,' they answered, 'to buy food.' Although Joseph had recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him. He remembered also the dreams he had had about them; so he said to them, 'You are spies; you have come to spy out the weak points in our defences.' They answered, 'No, sir: your servants have come to buy food. We are all sons of one man. Your humble servants are honest men, we are not spies.' 'No,' he insisted, 'it is to spy out our weaknesses that you have come.' They answered him, 'Sir, there are twelve of us, all brothers, sons of one man in Canaan. The youngest is still with our father, and one has disappeared.' But Joseph said again to them, 'No, as I said before, you are spies. This is how you shall be put to the proof: unless your youngest brother comes here, by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place. Send one of your number to bring your brother; the rest will be kept in prison. Thus your story will be tested, and we shall see whether you are telling the truth. If not, then, by the life of Pharaoh, you must be spies.' So he kept them in prison for three days.

18 On the third day Joseph said to the brothers, 'Do what I say and your lives will be spared; for I am a God-fearing man: if you are honest men, your brother there shall be kept in prison, and the rest of you shall take corn for your hungry households and bring your youngest brother to me; thus your words will be proved true, and you will not die.'

21 They said to one another, 'No doubt we deserve to be punished because of our brother; whose suffering we saw; for when he pleaded with us we refused to listen. That is why these sufferings have come upon us.' But Reuben said, 'Did I not tell you not to do the boy a wrong? But you would not listen, and his blood is on our heads, and we must pay.' They did not know that Joseph understood, because he had used an interpreter. Joseph turned away from them and wept. Then, turning back, he played a trick on them. First he took Simeon and bound him before their eyes; then he gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to return each man's silver, putting it in his sack, and to give them supplies for the journey. All this was done; and they loaded the corn on to their asses and went away. When they stopped for the night, one of them opened his sack to give fodder to his ass, and there he saw his silver at the top of the pack. He said to his brothers, 'My silver has been returned to me, and here it is in my pack.' Bewildered and trembling, they said to each other, 'What is this that God has done to us?'

29 When they came to their father Jacob in Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them. They said, 'The man who is lord of the country spoke harshly to us and made out that we were spies. We said to him, "We are honest men, we are not spies. There are twelve of us, all brothers, sons of one father. One has disappeared, and the youngest is with our father in Canaan." This man, the lord of the country, said to us, "This is how I shall find out if you are honest men. Leave one of your brothers with me, take food for your hungry

households and go. Bring your youngest brother to me, and I shall know that you are not spies, but honest men. Then I will restore your brother to you, and you can move about the country freely.'" But on emptying their sacks, each of them found his silver inside, and when they and their father saw the bundles of silver, they were afraid. Their father Jacob said to them, 'You have robbed me of my children. Joseph has disappeared; Simeon has disappeared; and now you are taking Benjamin. Everything is against me.' Reuben said to his father, 'You may kill both my sons if I do not bring him back to you. Put him in my charge, and I shall bring him back.' But Jacob said, 'My son shall not go with you, for his brother is dead and he alone is left. If he comes to any harm on the journey, you will bring down my grey hairs in sorrow to the grave.'

GENESIS 43

1 The famine was still severe in the country. When they had used up the corn they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, 'Go back and buy a little more corn for us to eat.' But Judah replied, 'The man plainly warned us that we must not go into his presence unless our brother was with us. If you let our brother go with us, we will go down and buy food for you. But if you will not let him; we will not go; for the man said to us, "You shall not come into my presence, unless your brother is with you.'" Israel said, 'Why have you treated me so badly? Why did you tell the man that you had yet another brother?' They answered, 'He questioned us closely about ourselves and our family. "Is your father still alive?" he asked, "Have you a brother?", and we answered his questions. How could we possibly know that he would tell us to bring our brother to Egypt?' Judah said to his father Israel, 'Send the boy with me; then we can start at once. By doing this we shall save our lives, ours, yours, and our dependants', and none

of us will starve. I will go surety for him and you may hold me responsible. If I do not bring him back and restore him to you, you shall hold me guilty all my life. If we had not wasted all this time, by now we could have gone back twice over.

11 Their father Israel said to them, 'If it must be so, then do this: take in your baggage, as a gift for the man, some of the produce for which our country is famous: a little balsam, a little honey, gum tragacanth, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds. Take double the amount of silver and restore what was returned to you in your packs; perhaps it was a mistake. Take your brother with you and go straight back to the man. May God Almighty make him kindly disposed to you, and may he send back the one whom you left behind, and Benjamin too. As for me, if I am bereaved, then I am bereaved.' So they took the gift and double the amount of silver, and with Benjamin they started at once for Egypt, where they presented themselves to Joseph.

16 When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to his steward, 'Bring these men indoors, kill a beast and make dinner ready, for they will eat with me at noon.' He did as Joseph told him and brought the men into the house. When they came in they were afraid, for they thought, 'We have been brought in here because of that affair of the silver which was replaced in our packs the first time. He means to trump up some charge against us and victimize us, seize our asses and make us his slaves.' So they approached Joseph's steward and spoke to him at the door of the house. They said, 'Please listen, my lord. After our first visit to buy food, when we reached the place where we were to spend the night, we opened our packs and each of us found his silver in full weight at the top of his pack. We have brought it back with us, and have added other silver to buy food. We do not know who put the silver in our packs.' He answered, 'Set your minds at rest; do not be afraid. It was your God, the God of your father, who hid treasure for you in your packs. I did receive the silver.' Then he brought Simeon out to them.

The steward brought them into Joseph's house and gave them water to wash their feet, and provided fodder for their asses. They had their gifts ready when Joseph arrived at noon, for they had heard that they were to eat there. When Joseph came into the house, they presented him with the gifts which they had brought, bowing to the ground before him. He asked them how they were and said, 'Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?' They answered, 'Yes, my lord, our father is still alive and well.' And they bowed low and prostrated themselves. Joseph looked and saw his own mother's son, his brother Benjamin, and asked, 'Is this your youngest brother, of whom you told me?', and to Benjamin he said, 'May God be gracious to you, my son!' Joseph was overcome; his feelings for his brother mastered him, and he was near to tears. So he went into the inner room and wept. Then he washed his face and came out; and, holding back his feelings, he ordered the meal to be served. They served him by himself, and the brothers by themselves, and the Egyptians who were at dinner were also served separately; for Egyptians hold it an abomination to eat with Hebrews. The brothers were seated in his presence, the eldest first according to his age and so on down to the youngest: they looked at one another in astonishment. Joseph sent them each a portion from what was before him, but Benjamin's was five times larger than any of the other portions. Thus they drank with him and all grew merry.

GENESIS 44

1 Joseph gave his steward this order: 'Fill the men's packs with as much food as they can carry and put each man's silver at the top of his pack. And put my goblet, my silver goblet, at the top of the youngest brother's pack with the silver for the corn.' He did as

Joseph said. At daybreak the brothers were allowed to take their asses and go on their journey; but before they had gone very far from the city, Joseph said to his steward, 'Go after those men at once, and when you catch up with them, say, 'Why have you repaid good with evil? Why have you stolen the silver goblet? It is the one from which my lord drinks, and which he uses for divination. You have done a wicked thing.'" When he caught up with them, he repeated all this to them, but they replied, 'My lord, how can you say such things? No, sir, God forbid that we should do any such thing! You remember the silver we found at the top of our packs? We brought it back to you from Canaan. Why should we steal silver or gold from your master's house? If any one of us is found with the goblet, he shall die; and, what is more, my lord, we will all become your slaves.' He said, 'Very well, then; I accept what you say. The man in whose possession it is found shall be my slave, but the rest of you shall go free.' Each man quickly lowered his pack to the ground and opened it. The steward searched them, beginning with the eldest and finishing with the youngest, and the goblet was found in Benjamin's pack.

13 At this they rent their clothes; then each man loaded his ass and they returned to the city. Joseph was still in the house when Judah and his brothers came in. They threw themselves on the ground before him, and Joseph said, 'What have you done? You might have known that a man like myself would practise divination.' Judah said, 'What shall we say, my lord? What can we say to prove our innocence? God has found out our sin. Here we are, my lord, ready to be made your slaves, we ourselves as well as the one who was found with the goblet.' Joseph answered, 'God forbid that I should do such a thing! The one who was found with the goblet shall become my slave, but the rest of you can go home to your father in peace.'

18 Then Judah went up to him and said, 'Please listen, my lord. Let me say a word to your lordship, I beg. Do not be angry with me, for you are as great as Pharaoh. You, my lord, asked us whether we had

a father or a brother. We answered, "We have an aged father, and he has a young son born in his old age; this boy's full brother is dead and he alone is left of his mother's children, he alone, and his father loves him." Your lordship answered, "Bring him down to me so that I may set eyes on him." We told you, my lord, that the boy could not leave his father, and that his father would die if he left him. But you answered, "Unless your youngest brother comes here with you, you shall not enter my presence again." We went back to your servant our father, and told him what your lordship had said. When our father told us to go and buy food, we answered, "We cannot go down; for without our youngest brother we cannot enter the man's presence; but if our brother is with us, we will go." Our father, my lord, then said to us, "You know that my wife bore me two sons. One left me, and I said, 'He must have been torn to pieces.' I have not seen him to this day. If you take this one from me as well, and he comes to any harm, then you will bring down my grey hairs in trouble to the grave." Now, my lord, when I return to my father without the boy -- and remember, his life is bound up with the boy's -- what will happen is this: he will see that the boy is not with us and will die, and your servants will have brought down our father's grey hairs in sorrow to the grave. Indeed, my lord, it was I who went surety for the boy to my father. I said, "If I do not bring him back to you, then you shall hold me guilty all my life." Now, my lord, let me remain in place of the boy as your lordship's slave, and let him go with his brothers. How can I return to my father without the boy? I could not bear to see the misery which my father would suffer.'

GENESIS 45

1 Joseph could no longer control his feelings in front of his attendants, and he called out, 'Let everyone leave my presence.' So

there was nobody present when Joseph made himself known to his brothers, but so loudly did he weep that the Egyptians and Pharaoh's household heard him. Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph; can my father be still alive?' His brothers were so dumbfounded at finding themselves face to face with Joseph that they could not answer. Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come closer', and so they came close. He said, 'I am your brother Joseph whom you sold into Egypt. Now do not be distressed or take it amiss that you sold me into slavery here; it was God who sent me ahead of you to save men's lives. For there have now been two years of famine in the country; -- and there will be another five years with neither ploughing nor harvest. God sent me ahead of you to ensure that you will have descendants on earth, and to preserve you all, a great band of survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God, and he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord over all his household and ruler of all Egypt. Make haste and go back to my father and give him this message from his son Joseph: "God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not delay. You shall live in the land of Goshen and be near me, you, your sons and your grandsons, your flocks and herds and all that you have. I will take care of you there, you and your household and all that you have, and see that you are not reduced to poverty; there are still five years of famine to come." You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is Joseph himself who is speaking to you. Tell my father of all the honour which I enjoy in Egypt, tell him all you have seen, and make haste to bring him down here.' Then he threw his arms round his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin too embraced him weeping. He kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and afterwards his brothers talked with him.

16 When the report that Joseph's brothers had come reached Pharaoh's house, he and all his courtiers were pleased. Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Say to your brothers: "This is what you are to do. Load your beasts and go to Canaan. Fetch your father and your

households and bring them to me. I will give you the best that there is in Egypt, and you shall enjoy the fat of the land." You shall also tell them: "Take wagons from Egypt for your dependants and your wives and fetch your father and come. Have no regrets at leaving your possessions, for all the best that there is in Egypt is yours." The sons of Israel did as they were told, and Joseph gave them wagons, according to Pharaoh's orders, and food for the journey. He provided each of them with a change of clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of clothing. Moreover he sent his father ten asses carrying the best that there was in Egypt, and ten she-asses loaded with grain, bread, and provisions for his journey. So he dismissed his brothers, telling them not to quarrel among themselves on the road, and they set out. Thus they went up from Egypt and came to their father Jacob in Canaan. There they gave him the news that Joseph was still alive and that he was ruler of all Egypt. He was stunned and could not believe it, but they told him all that Joseph had said; and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to take him away, his spirit revived. Israel said, 'It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive; I will go and see him before I die.'

GENESIS 46

1. SO ISRAEL SET OUT with all that he had and came to Beersheba where he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. God said to Israel in a vision by night, 'Jacob, Jacob', and he answered, 'I am here.' God said, 'I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you a great nation. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I myself will bring you back again without fail; and Joseph shall close your eyes.' So Jacob set out from Beersheba. Israel's sons conveyed their father Jacob, their dependants, and their wives in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent

to carry them. They took the herds and the stock which they had acquired in Canaan and came to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him, his sons and their sons, his daughters and his sons' daughters: he brought all his descendants to Egypt.

8 These are the names of the Israelites who entered Egypt: Jacob and his sons, as follows: Reuben, Jacob's eldest son. The sons of Reuben: Enoch, Pallu, Hezron and Carmi. The sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Saul, who was the son of a Canaanite woman. The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. The sons of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelari, Perez and Zerah; of these Er and Onan died in Canaan. The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul. The sons of Issachar: Tola, Pua, Iob and Shimron. The sons of Zebulun: Sered, Elon and Jahleel. These are the sons of Leah whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan-aram, and there was also his daughter Dinah. His sons and daughters numbered thirty-three in all.

16 The sons of Gad: Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi and Areli. The sons of Asher: Imnal, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serah. The sons of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel. These are the descendants of Zilpah whom Laban gave to his daughter Leah; sixteen in all, born to Jacob.

19 The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. Manasseh and Ephraim were born to Joseph in Egypt. Asenath daughter of Potiphera priest of On bore them to him. The sons of Benjamin: Bela, Becher and Ashbel; and the sons of Bela: Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim and Ard. These are the descendants of Rachel; fourteen in all, born to Jacob.

23 The son of Dan: Hushim. The sons of Naphtali: Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer and Shillem. These are the descendants of Bilhah whom Laban gave to his daughter Rachel; seven in all, born to Jacob.

26 The persons belonging to Jacob who came to Egypt, all his direct descendants, not counting the wives of his sons, were sixty-six in all. Two sons were born to Joseph in Egypt. Thus the house of Jacob numbered seventy when it entered Egypt.

28 Judah was sent ahead that he might appear before Joseph in Goshen, and so they entered Goshen. Joseph had his chariot made ready and went up to meet his father Israel in Goshen. When they met, he threw his arms round him and wept, and embraced him for a long time, weeping. Israel said to Joseph, 'I have seen your face again, and you are still alive. Now I am ready to die.' Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, 'I will go and tell Pharaoh; I will say to him, "My brothers and my father's household who were in Canaan have come to me."' Now his brothers were shepherds, men with their own flocks and herds, and they had brought them with them, their flocks and herds and all that they possessed. So Joseph said, 'When Pharaoh summons you and asks you what your occupation is, you must say, "My lord, we have been herdsmen all our lives, as our fathers were before us." You must say this if you are to settle in the land of Goshen, because all shepherds are an abomination to the Egyptians.'

Joseph in Egypt

GENESIS 47

1 Joseph came and told Pharaoh, 'My father and my brothers have arrived from Canaan, with their flocks and their cattle and all that they have, and they are now in Goshen.' Then he chose five of his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh, who asked them what their occupation was, and they answered, 'My lord, we are shepherds, we

and our fathers before us, and we have come to stay in this land; for there is no pasture in Canaan for our sheep, because the famine there is so severe. We beg you, my lord, to let us settle now in Goshen.' Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'So your father and your brothers have come to you. The land of Egypt is yours; settle them in the best part of it. Let them live in Goshen, and if you know of any capable men among them, make them chief herdsmen over my cattle.'

7 Then Joseph brought his father in and presented him to Pharaoh, and Jacob gave Pharaoh his blessing. Pharaoh asked Jacob his age, and he answered, 'The years of my earthly sojourn are one hundred and thirty; hard years they have been and few, not equal to the years that my fathers lived in their time.' Jacob then blessed Pharaoh and went out from his presence. So Joseph settled his father and his brothers, and gave them lands in Egypt, in the best part of the country, in the district of Rameses, as Pharaoh had ordered. He supported his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with all the food they needed.

13 There was no bread in the whole country, so very severe was the famine, and Egypt and Canaan were laid low by it. Joseph collected all the silver in Egypt and Canaan in return for the corn which the people bought, and deposited it in Pharaoh's treasury. When all the silver in Egypt and Canaan had been used up, the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, 'Give us bread, or we shall die before your eyes. Our silver is all spent.' Joseph said, 'If your silver is spent, give me your herds and I will give you bread in return.' So they brought their herds to Joseph, who gave them bread in exchange for their horses, their flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, and their asses. He maintained them that year with bread in exchange for their herds. The year came to an end, and the following year they came to him again and said, 'My lord, we cannot conceal it from you: our silver is all gone and our herds of cattle are yours. Nothing is left for your lordship but our bodies and our lands. Why should we perish before

your eyes, we and our land as well? Take us and our land in payment for bread, and we and our land alike will be in bondage to Pharaoh. Give us seed-corn to keep us alive, or we shall die and our land will become desert.' So Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh, because the Egyptians sold all their fields, so severe was the famine; the land became Pharaoh's. As for the people, Pharaoh set them to work as slaves from one end of the territory of Egypt to the other. But Joseph did not buy the land which belonged to the priests; they had a fixed allowance from Pharaoh and lived on this, so that they had no need to sell their land.

23 Joseph said to the people, 'Listen; I have today bought you and your land for Pharaoh. Here is seed-corn for you. Sow the land, and give one fifth of the crop to Pharaoh. Four fifths shall be yours to provide seed for your fields and food for yourselves, your households, and your dependants.' The people said, 'You have saved our lives. If it please your lordship, we will be Pharaoh's slaves.' Joseph established it as a law in Egypt that one fifth should belong to Pharaoh, and this is still in force. It was only the priests' land that did not pass into Pharaoh's hands.

27 Thus Israel settled in Egypt, in Goshen; there they acquired land, and were fruitful and increased greatly. Jacob stayed in Egypt for seventeen years and lived to be a hundred and forty-seven years old. When the time of his death drew near, he summoned his son Joseph and said to him, 'If I may now claim this favour from you, put your hand under my thigh and swear by the Lord that you will deal loyally and truly with me and not bury me in Egypt. When I die like my forefathers, you shall carry me from Egypt and bury me in their grave.' He answered, 'I will do as you say'; but Jacob said, 'Swear it.' So he swore the oath, and Israel sank down over the end of the bed.

GENESIS 48

1 The time came when Joseph was told that his father was ill, so he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Jacob heard that his son Joseph was coming to him, and he summoned his strength and sat up on the bed. Jacob said to Joseph, 'God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in Canaan and blessed me. He said to me, "I will make you fruitful and increase your descendants until they become a host of nations. I will give this land to your descendants after you as a perpetual possession. Now, your two sons, who were born to you in Egypt before I came here, shall be counted as my sons; Ephraim and Manasseb shall be mine as Reuben and Simeon are. Any children born to you after them shall be counted as yours, but in respect of their tribal territory they shall be reckoned under their elder brothers' names. As I was coming from Paddan-aram I was bereaved of Rachel your mother on the way, in Canaan, whilst there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, and I buried her there by the road to Ephrath, that is Bethlehem.'

8 When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, 'Who are these?' Joseph replied to his father, 'They are my sons whom God has given me here.' Israel said, 'Bring them to me, I beg you, so that I may take them on my knees.' Now Israel's eyes were dim with age, and he could not see; so Joseph brought the boys close to his father, and he kissed them and embraced them. He said to Joseph, 'I had not expected to see your face again, and now God has granted me to see your sons also.' Joseph took them from his father's knees and bowed to the ground. Then he took the two of them, Ephraim on his right at Israel's left and Manasseh on his left at Israel's right, and brought them close to him. Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, although he was the younger, and, crossing his hands, laid his left hand on Manasseh's head; but Manasseb was the

elder. He blessed Joseph and said:

15 'The God in whose presence my forefathers lived,
my forefathers Abraham and Isaac,
the God who has been my shepherd all my life until this day,
the angel who ransomed me from all misfortune,
may lie bless these boys;
they shall be called by my name,
and by that of my forefathers, Abraham and Isaac;
may they grow into a great people on earth.'

17 When Joseph saw that his father was laying his right hand on Ephraim's head, he was displeased; so he took hold of his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseb's. He said, 'That is not right, my father. This is the elder; lay your right hand on his head.' But his father refused; he said, 'I know, my son, I know. He too shall become a people; he too shall become great, but his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall be a whole nation in themselves.' That day he blessed them and said:

20 'When a blessing is pronounced in Israel,
men shall use your names and say,
God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh',

21 thus setting Ephraim before Manasseb. Then Israel said to Joseph, 'I am dying. God will be with you and will bring you back to the land of your fathers. I give you one ridge of land more than your brothers: I took it from the Amorites with my sword and my bow.'

GENESIS 49

1 JACOB SUMMONED HIS SONS and said, 'Come near, and I will

tell you what will happen to you in days to come.

2 Gather round me and listen, you sons of Jacob;
listen to Israel your father.

Reuben, you are my first-born,
my strength and the first fruit of my vigour,
excelling in pride, excelling in might,
turbulent as a flood, you shall not excel;
because you climbed into your father's bed;
then you deified his concubine's couch.

Simeon and Levi are brothers,
their spades became weapons of violence.

My soul shall not enter their council,
my heart shall not join their company;
for in their anger they killed men,
wantonly they hamstrung oxen.

A curse be on their anger because it was fierce;
a curse on their wrath because it was ruthless!

I will scatter them in Jacob,
I will disperse them in Israel.

Judah, your brothers shall praise you,
your hand is on the neck of your enemies.

Your father's sons shall do you homage.

Judah, you lion's whelp,
you have returned from the kill,
my son, and crouch and stretch like a lion;
and, like a lion, a who dare rouse you?

10 The sceptre shall not pass from Judah,
nor the staff from his descendants,
so long as tribute is brought to him
and the obedience of the nations is his.

To the vine he tethers his ass,
and the colt of his ass to the red vine;
he washes his cloak in wine,
his robes in the blood of grapes.

Darker than wine are his eyes,

his teeth whiter than milk.
Zebulun dwells by the sea-shore,
his shore is a haven for ships,
and his frontier rests on Sidon.
Issachar, a gelded ass
lying down in the cattle-pens,
saw that a settled home was good
and that the land was pleasant,
so he bent his back to the burden
and submitted to perpetual forced labour.
Dan – how insignificant his people,
lowly as any tribe in Israel!
Let Dan be a viper on the road,
a horned snake on the path,
who bites the horse's fetlock
so that the rider tumbles 'backwards.

18 For thy salvation I wait in hope, O Lord.

Gad is raided by raiders,
and he raids them from the rear.
Asher shall have rich food as daily fare,
and provide dishes fit for a king.
Naphtali is a spreading terebinth
putting forth lovely boughs.
Joseph is a fruitful tree by a spring
with branches climbing over the wall.
The archers savagely attacked him,
they shot at him and pressed him hard,
but their bow was splintered by the Eternal
and the sinews of their arms were torn apart
by the power of the Strong One of Jacob,
by the name of the Shepherd of Israel,
by the God of your father – so may he help you,
by God Almighty – so may he bless you
with the blessings of heaven above,
the blessings of the deep that lurks below.

26 The blessings of breast and womb
and the blessings of your father are stronger

than the blessings of the everlasting pools
and the bounty of the eternal hills.
They shall be on the head of Joseph,
on the brow of the prince among his brothers.
Benjamin is a ravining wolf;
in the morning he devours the prey,
in the evening he snatches a share of the spoil.'

28 These, then, are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father Jacob said to them, when he blessed them each in turn. He gave them his last charge and said, 'I shall soon be gathered to my father's kin; bury me with my forefathers in the cave on the plot of land which belonged to Ephron the Hittite, that is the cave on the plot of land at Machpelah east of Mamre in Canaan, the field which Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite for a burial-place. There Abraham was buried with his wife Sarah; there Isaac and his wife Rebecca were buried; and there I buried Leah. The land and the cave on it were bought from the Hittites.' When Jacob had finished giving his last charge to his sons, he drew his feet up on to the bed, breathed his last, and was gathered to his father's kin.

GENESIS 50

1 Then Joseph threw himself upon his father, weeping and kissing his face. He ordered the physicians in his service to embalm his father Israel, and they did so, finishing the task in forty days, which was the usual time for embalming. The Egyptians mourned him for seventy days; and then, when the days of mourning for Israel were over, Joseph approached members of Pharaoh's household and said, 'If I can count on your goodwill, then speak for me to Pharaoh; tell him that my father made me take an oath, saying, "I am dying.

Bury me in the grave that I bought for myself in Canaan." Ask him to let me go up and bury my father, and afterwards I will return.' Pharaoh answered, 'Go and bury your father, as he has made you swear to do.' So Joseph went to bury his father, accompanied by all Pharaoh's courtiers, the elders of his household, and all the elders of Egypt, together with all Joseph's own household, his brothers, and his father's household; only their dependants, with the flocks and herds, were left in Goshen. He took with him chariots and horsemen; they were a very great company. When they came to the threshing-floor of Atad beside the river Jordan, they raised a loud and bitter lament; and there Joseph observed seven days' mourning for his father. When the Canaanites who lived there saw this mourning at the threshing-floor of Atad, they said, 'How bitterly the Egyptians are mourning!'; accordingly they named the place beside the Jordan Abel-mizraim.

12 Thus Jacob's sons did what he had told them to do. They took him to Canaan and buried him in the cave on the plot of land at Machpelah, the land which Abraham had bought as a burial-place from Ephron the Hittite, to the east of Mamre. Then, after he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had gone up with him.

15 When their father was dead Joseph's brothers were afraid and said, 'What if Joseph should bear a grudge against us and pay us out for all the harm that we did to him?' They therefore approached Joseph with these words: 'In his last words to us before he died, your father gave us this message for you: 'I ask you to forgive your brothers' crime and wickedness; I know they did you harm.'" So now forgive our crime, we beg; for we are servants of your father's God.' When they said this to him, Joseph wept. His brothers also wept and prostrated themselves before him; they said, 'You see, we are your slaves.' But Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You meant to do me harm; but God meant to bring good out

of it by preserving the lives of many people, as we see today. Do not be afraid. I will provide for you and your dependants.' Thus he comforted them and set their minds at rest.

22 Joseph remained in Egypt, he and his father's household. He lived there to be a hundred and ten years old and saw Ephraim's children to the third generation; he also recognized as his the children of Manasseh's son Machir. He said to his brothers, 'I am dying; but God will not fail to come to your aid and take you from here to the land which he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' He made the sons of Israel take an oath, saying, 'When God thus comes to your aid, you must take my bones with you from here.' So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. He was embalmed and laid in a coffin in Egypt.