

**Peace** be with you, listening friends. We greet you in the name of God, the Lord of peace, who wants everyone to understand and submit to the way of righteousness that He has established, and have true peace with Him forever. We are happy to be able to return today to present your program *The Way of Righteousness*.

In the past two programs we have been reading about Joseph, the son of Jacob. Today we plan to hear **the rest of the story of Joseph** and, in so doing, to come to the **end of the first section of the Torah**, the book of Genesis. We have already seen that Jacob, Abraham's grandson, had twelve sons. Joseph was the eleventh son. They all lived in the land of Canaan, the land which, as you know, God had promised to give to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. When Joseph was a young man, he dreamed that his older brothers would, one day, bow down before him. But his older brothers despised him and his dreams, and sold him as a slave into the land of Egypt. However, God delivered Joseph from all his troubles, and gave him the wisdom to interpret the dream of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. With God's help, Joseph predicted the severe seven-year famine which was to take place throughout the land. Thus, Pharaoh appointed Joseph supreme ruler over the whole land of Egypt.

After the seven years of plenty ended, we saw that the famine, which Joseph had predicted, came upon Egypt and upon the land of Canaan. However, in the land of Egypt there was grain stored up in abundance because of the grace and wisdom which God gave to Joseph.

When Jacob heard that Egypt had grain for making bread, he sent Joseph's ten older brothers to go buy some. But he did not send Benjamin, Joseph's younger brother, along with them for fear that some harm would come to him. Next, we saw that the ten older brothers arrived in Egypt and bowed down before their brother Joseph, thus fulfilling that which Joseph had dreamed long before. Joseph recognized his older

brothers, but they did not recognize him, because they had not seen him for more than twenty years and, in their minds, Joseph was dead.

Today we will conclude the story to see **how Joseph made himself known to his brothers**. Joseph did not immediately reveal himself to his brothers, because he wanted to test them first, to know whether their deceitful and wicked hearts had changed. Thus, the Scriptures say: *"As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them. 'Where do you come from?' he asked. 'From the land of Canaan,' they replied, 'to buy food.'"*

Joseph asked them many questions, accused them of being spies and locked them in prison. **Joseph wanted to make them think about their lives and the condition of their hearts before God.** Three days later, Joseph allowed them to depart, but kept one of them in prison, telling the others to return to Egypt with their younger brother Benjamin, their father's youngest child.

After many months, the older brothers returned to Egypt to buy more grain, bringing Benjamin, their younger brother, along with them. When they arrived, they again met Joseph, the ruler of the land-but still they did not recognize him. Joseph had them brought into his house, which caused them to be very much afraid. He then put on a great feast for them, making them sit around the table in the order of their ages, beginning with the eldest to the youngest, and giving them food from his table.

Benjamin received five times more food than the others. Perhaps Joseph was testing his brothers to see if they would be jealous of Benjamin, as they had been jealous of him. However, not one of them showed any jealousy toward their younger brother, Benjamin.

After the feast, Joseph ordered a servant to fill their sacks with grain and to hide his special silver cup in Benjamin's sack. After Joseph's brothers had left, Joseph sent his

chief steward to pursue them and to accuse them of stealing. When the chief steward caught up with them, he said, "Why have you repaid good with evil? Did you not take the cup from which my master drinks?" They replied, "We did not take it. Let the one with whom you find the cup die and we ourselves will become your slaves!" The chief steward replied, "Whoever is found to have the cup will become my slave, but the rest of you may go on your way."

The chief steward searched all the sacks, beginning with the sack of the eldest and ending with the sack of the youngest--and found the cup in Benjamin's sack! At this, Joseph's older brothers tore their clothes, and returned to the city, and threw themselves to the ground before Joseph. Joseph then said to them, "What have you done? Did you think you could deceive me?" Judah, the fourth son of Jacob, said to him, "What can we say? How can we clear ourselves? God has revealed our wrongdoings and our unrighteousness! We are your slaves, we and the one with whom you found the cup!"

Joseph replied, "Only the man with whom the cup was found will be my slave. The rest of you may return in peace to your father." Then Judah came near to Joseph and told him again of the anguish which his father had in letting Benjamin accompany them to Egypt. After this, Judah pleaded with Joseph to have mercy on them and to allow Benjamin to return home to his father. Judah also asked that he, Judah, become Joseph's slave instead of Benjamin. When Joseph saw the anguish which the brothers had because of their past sins, and the pity they had for their father and their younger brother, Joseph knew that **his older brothers had truly repented**. He knew that **the time had come to make himself known** to his brothers!

Thus, the Scriptures say:

*Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Make everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it. Joseph said to his brothers, "**I am Joseph!** Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.*

*Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "**I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt!** And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because **it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.** For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be ploughing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a **great deliverance.** "**So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God.** He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. Now hurry back to my father and say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don't delay. You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me- you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.' You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you. Tell my father about all the honor accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly." Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterwards his brothers talked with him.*

After this, Joseph's brothers prepared to return to their father's house. Joseph gave them carts, as Pharaoh had commanded, and he also gave them provisions for their journey.

*So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. They told him, "Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of all Egypt." Jacob was stunned; he did not believe them. But when they told him everything Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. And Israel [that is, Jacob] said, "I'm convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."*

After this, the Scriptures tell how Jacob and his family moved out of the land of Canaan and headed for Egypt. Jacob offered a sacrifice along the way, and there God spoke to him, saying,

*"I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."*

After a long journey, Jacob and his family arrived in the land of Egypt. How happy Jacob was to see his beloved son Joseph after so many years! Thus Jacob, who is also called *Israel*, and his family, settled in Egypt, in the region of Goshen. There they increased greatly in numbers and became a very large tribe. Jacob lived in Egypt for seventeen years. In all, he lived to be 147 years old. Thus, Jacob, the father of the tribes of Israel, died, and went to be with God on high. Joseph and his brothers and all the people of Egypt mourned for him for seventy days. Jacob's sons buried their father in the land of Canaan, in the tomb of Abraham his grandfather.

In the last chapter of the book of Genesis, chapter fifty, the Scripture says:

*When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?"... But [when Joseph heard this] he said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? **You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.** So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them. Joseph stayed in Egypt, along with all his father's family. He lived a hundred and ten years... Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." And Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath and said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place." So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.*

This is how the book of Genesis ends. "So Joseph **died**...and...was placed in a **coffin in Egypt.**" This book, which began with the story of how God created **life**, ends with a story of **death**. Because of Adam's sin, death has come to all men. Like it or not, "the wages of sin is death!" Even a good man like Joseph, who bore the title *Preserver of Life*, had to die, because he, too, was a descendant of Adam with the roots of sin in his heart. Joseph, with the help of God, was able to **preserve** the people of Egypt, and his family, from starving to death, but he could **not preserve** them from **death itself**. Yet we can praise God with joyful hearts {Lit. in Wolof: *cold hearts*}, because, in the book of Genesis, we also read about **God's wonderful promise** to send us an all-sufficient Savior who would **conquer death itself**. Death is a result of **sin**. The Savior God promised to send would deliver Adam's descendants from **the root of sin and the penalty of sin**. The root of sin is the devil and the evil heart of man.

The penalty of sin is death and hell. The Savior whom God promised to send has conquered them all and can transform the lives of those who believe in Him.

You who are listening today, do you know this all-sufficient Savior who has defeated Satan and sin, death and hell, and offers eternal life to all who believe in His Name?

The holy Gospel, or *Injil*, speaks of this Savior saying: *"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because He has come and has redeemed His people. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us...as he said through His holy prophets of long ago!"* Amen!

In our next program, God willing, we will begin the second book contained in the Torah, which is called *Exodus*....

God bless you as you consider this verse of Scripture which summarizes the book of Genesis:

*"Where sin increased, [God's] grace increased all the more!"*