

# God Preserves a Remnant

**Key Verse:** “So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.”  
—Genesis 45:8

**Selected Scripture:**  
Genesis 42:1-38;  
45:1-28

## **THE FAMINE FOLLOWING**

the seven years of plenty was now upon the land, in accordance with Joseph’s interpretation of Pharaoh’s two dreams years earlier. It was not only upon Egypt, but it was also upon the land of Canaan, where Jacob and his eleven remaining sons lived. In the opening verses of our lesson, we are told that Jacob had heard that there was corn in the land of Egypt. He sent all of his sons, Joseph’s brothers, with the exception of the youngest, Benjamin, to the land of Egypt to buy corn. (Gen. 42:1-4) Jacob did not send Benjamin because he feared that evil would come to him just as he thought it had come years earlier to Joseph, whom he believed was dead.

In Genesis 42:7-25 is the account of Joseph’s initial encounter with his ten brethren. He knew who they were, but they did not know him. To test them, Joseph claimed that they were spies, which they fervently denied. As Joseph continued to accuse them of spying, he told them that he would only give them corn and let them go if they promised to bring back their youngest brother, for whom he would hold Simeon as ransom.

Joseph filled their sacks with corn and, unknown to them, also put the money with which they had paid for the corn back into their sacks.

When Joseph's nine brothers returned to Jacob they discovered that the money had been put back in their sacks, which made them deeply afraid. When they told this to their father Jacob, along with the request that Benjamin be taken to Egypt, and that Simeon was now being held there, he was distraught. Jacob said, "Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me." (vs. 36) After much protest, Jacob finally allowed Benjamin to go back to Egypt with his brothers.—chap. 43:11-15

Genesis, chapter 44, recounts additional severe tests Joseph placed upon his brethren. Finally, after seeing their truly repentant condition of heart, and the great love they had for their father Jacob and youngest brother Benjamin, Joseph could contain himself no longer. He sent everyone away except his brethren. Weeping as he spoke, Joseph said, "I am Joseph; . . . Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt." (chap. 45:3,4) He then told them how all these experiences had been ordained of God for their ultimate good. (vss. 5-8) In our Key Verse, Joseph went so far as to say that it was God, not them, who had sent him to Egypt. What a recognition this was of the providence of God!

We see how the many experiences of Joseph and his brethren picture the various lessons man is learning during the present nighttime of sin and difficulty. Just as Joseph's brethren were severely tested and finally developed a truly repentant and loving heart, so mankind in Christ's coming kingdom will finally have God's law in their hearts. "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."—Jer. 31:33 ■