

Joseph's Brethren Tested

Key Verse: *“They said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.”*
—Genesis 42:21

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 42:5-25

not die. And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt.”—Gen. 42:1-3

Since Jacob assumed Joseph was dead, and being very protective of Benjamin, the other son of his favorite wife, Rachel, he was not allowed to travel to Egypt with his brothers. Upon their arrival they were required to appear before Joseph to explain their mission, bowing before him, since he alone had the authority to grant their petition. Although Joseph recognized his brethren, they did not realize he was their brother. As a test, he

SEVERAL YEARS HAD elapsed since the events of our last lesson, and the famine which Joseph predicted had extended not only throughout the borders of Egypt but also embraced all lands, including Canaan, where Jacob and his family dwelt. “Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and

accused them of being spies and had them imprisoned. After three days, he released all of them except Simeon and indicated he would be detained until they returned to Egypt with their youngest brother, Benjamin.—vss. 4-20

Our Key Verse describes the guilt and remorse the brothers experienced as they recalled Joseph's anguish years ago when they removed his coat, cast him into a pit and ultimately sold him into slavery. They now believed this was the cause of their present distressing situation.

Joseph then allowed his brothers to return to Canaan with their sacks filled with corn, but without their knowledge he had authorized that each of them should have the money they paid placed into their bundles of grain. Upon their arrival home, they had difficulty explaining to their father why Simeon was not with them, as well as how they secured the grain and still had money. Furthermore, Jacob was informed they would be unable to return to Egypt and obtain food in the future, if Benjamin did not accompany them.—vss. 25-38

Many Old Testament personalities are cited for their faith in God even before the Savior came to earth. As members of the Gospel Age church, we entertain the hope of a heavenly reward for following in the Master's footsteps. We can be inspired towards faithfulness in our present endeavors by considering the examples found in the lives of many ancient stalwarts of faith, including Jacob and Joseph.—Luke 12:32; Heb. 11:38,39

May we be especially encouraged to trust God for strength to endure all of life's difficulties as we strive to make our calling and election sure and help to bless the entire human family during the soon to be established kingdom of righteousness. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."—Rom. 8:28