

## **Beneath Joseph's Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat: Jacob and Joseph Reunited (Genesis 46)**

The story of Joseph has all the dramatic highs and lows of a Shakespeare play. At the beginning of this drama the heights of Joseph's lofty dreams are revealed. But before the opening chapter (37) is finished Joseph has been thrown into a pit and sold into foreign slavery. Things begin looking up for Joseph when his new master recognises his skills and puts him in charge of his household. But then Joseph is falsely accused by his master's wife and thrown into prison. And although Joseph discovers an opportunity to get out of jail by interpreting a dream for Pharaoh's cupbearer, this man forgets about Joseph and leaves him languishing in prison for another two years. Finally Joseph is remembered and given the opportunity to interpret an all-important dream for Pharaoh. When he succeeds Joseph is made second-in-command over Egypt. But then Joseph is forced to step back into his painful family history when his brothers suddenly reappear in his life. By chapters 44 – 45 this story appears to be reaching its climax as Joseph's brothers are personally convicted of their sin against him. Joseph then reveals his identity to them and a full family reunion seems imminent. Joseph's father Jacob can hardly believe it when he hears the news that his dead son is alive (and we can't help but wonder how Joseph's brothers explained this to their father). Finally Joseph has the tearful reunion with his father that we've been waiting for. But the story is not yet finished. The final chapters of Genesis go on to explain how Jacob's family would eventually end up as an enslaved people in Egypt, far away from their Promised Land. And what is to come of Joseph's second dream<sup>1</sup> where even the sun, moon and stars bow to him? At no point in this story does Joseph's father ever bow before him, and by now Joseph's mother Rachel is long gone. Just like God's children today, Joseph and his family will have to wait a while longer for the final fulfilment of Joseph's dream, and also for their ultimate happy ending...

1. Read Genesis 45:25 – 28. Reflect upon the explanation that Joseph's brothers must have given to their father regarding what really happened to Joseph all those years ago. Why do you think this explanation and Jacob's response isn't mentioned in this story?
2. Read Genesis 46:1 – 4 regarding God's promise to eventually bring the nation Israel out of Egypt. Why is this promise so important to Jacob?
3. What is the purpose of the list and numbers of Jacob's descendants that went down into Egypt? (Genesis 46:5 – 27)
4. Read Genesis 46:28 – 30. Reflect upon or discuss with your group the validity of this statement: "*Jacob's reunion with his son Joseph is the dramatic climax and highlight of the entire Joseph story.*"
5. How does this chapter of the Joseph's story relate to you?

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 37:9 – 10