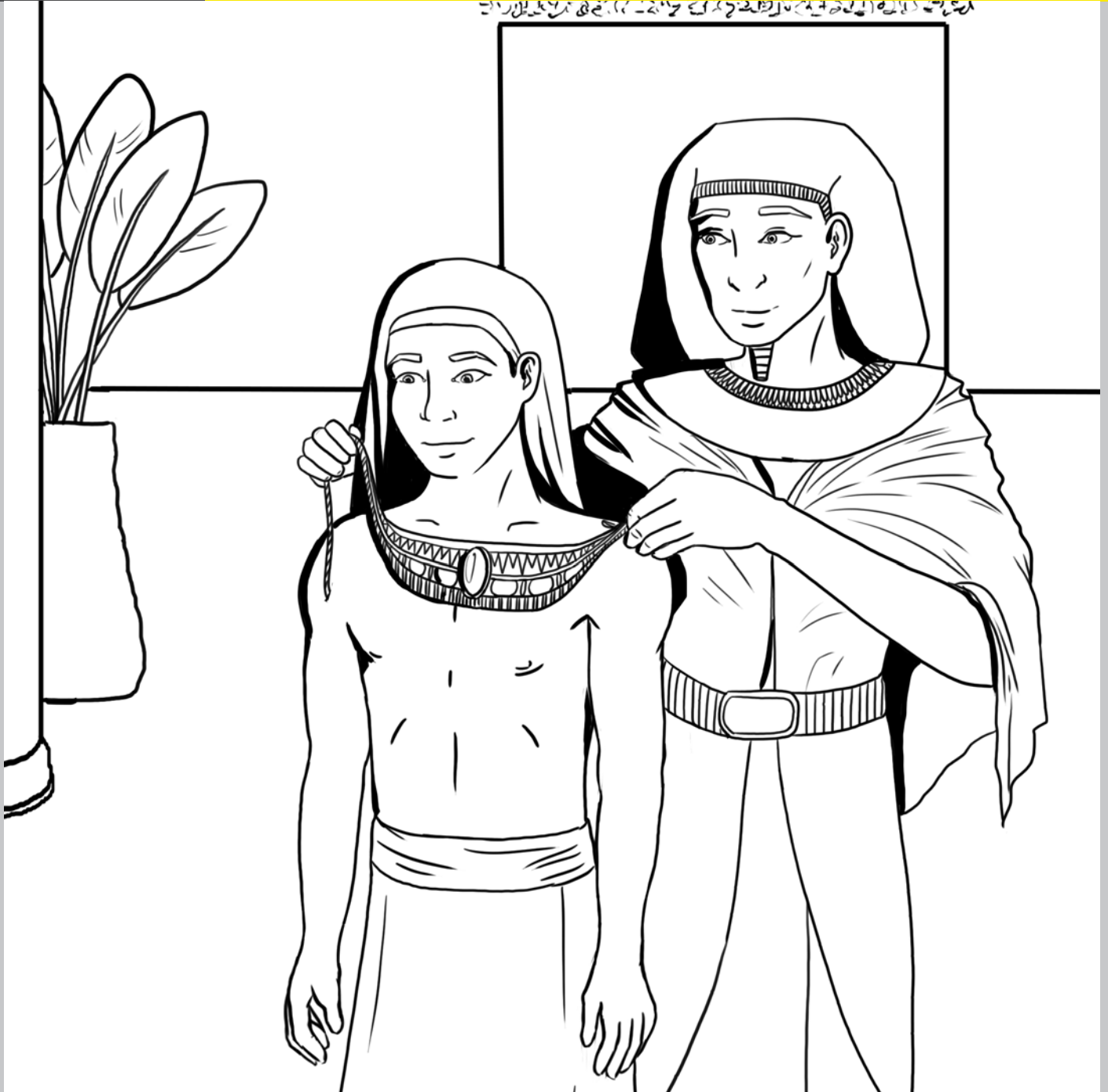




LEVEL 3
3-6
LESSON 6

Imperial Academy Bible Lessons



Joseph in Egypt

Joseph in Egypt

While Jacob was working for his Uncle Laban, God blessed him with 11 sons and a daughter named Dinah.

Jacob's 11th son was with his favorite wife, Rachel. The son's name was Joseph. After Jacob moved his family back to Canaan, Rachel had a second son, but something went wrong and she died while giving birth to the baby.

Jacob named the baby boy Benjamin.

Because Joseph was the firstborn son of Jacob's favorite wife, Jacob loved Joseph more than his other sons. This was a big mistake. Joseph's brothers saw that their father favored Joseph more than them, and they became jealous.

As Joseph grew into his teen years, he began receiving extraordinary dreams from God about how his older brothers would someday bow down to him. Joseph foolishly told his brothers all about these dreams, which made them even more jealous. They allowed their anger to grow so much that they actually decided to get rid of Joseph.

SOLD INTO SLAVERY

When Joseph was about 17 years old, Jacob sent him to check up on his brothers while they were herding sheep several days' journey away from home. When his brothers saw him coming, some of them suggested that they should kill him, throw his body into a pit, and tell their father a wild beast had eaten him.

But the eldest brother, Reuben, convinced the brothers to spare Joseph's life. Instead, they took him alive and threw him into an empty well. Joseph's brothers were very evil to treat their own brother like this and to actually want to kill him. Reuben should have put a stop to it, but he was afraid of his angry brothers.

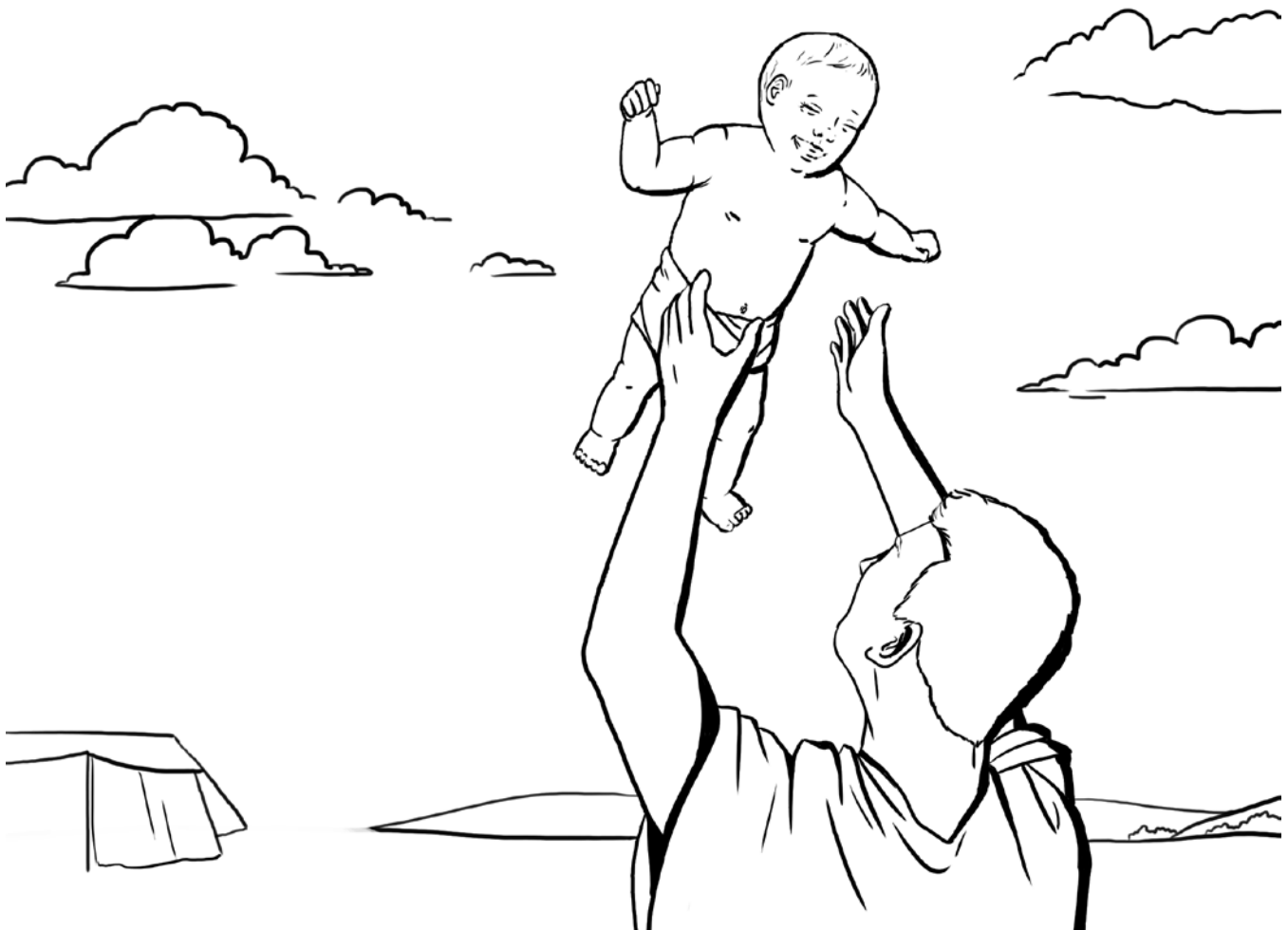
After the brothers threw Joseph into the pit, Reuben left to watch the sheep. While he was gone, a caravan of slave traders passed by on their way to Egypt. One of the brothers, Judah said, "What good is it if we kill our brother and hide his blood? Let us sell Joseph to the slave traders, and let us not kill him, for he is our brother."

So, the brothers sold Joseph into slavery for 20 shekels of silver.

Reuben came back and saw Joseph was gone. He tore his clothes in distress. Reuben knew Jacob would be furious when he found out they sold Joseph to be a slave. So the brothers killed a goat, dipped Joseph's coat in its blood, and went home to tell Jacob a lie: that Joseph must have been killed by a wild beast.

Meanwhile, the slave traders took Joseph to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, the captain of the pharaoh's bodyguard. Joseph had gone from being a favored son who received dreams from God to being a slave in a foreign land!

Even though things were going so badly for him, Joseph still trusted God. And because he trusted God, and worked hard, God blessed him.



Joseph is Jacob's 11th son.

Potiphar saw that Joseph was an honest and hard worker, and put him in charge of his household.

However, Potiphar's wife started to like Joseph more than she liked her own husband. She repeatedly tried to get Joseph to kiss her, but Joseph obeyed God's law against this, and always refused to let her come close to him.

Angry, Potiphar's wife told her husband that Joseph tried to hurt her. This was an evil lie, but Potiphar believed his wife and threw Joseph into jail. But Joseph still trusted God and obeyed His laws, so God blessed Joseph. The keeper of the prison saw that Joseph had success in everything he did, so he actually put Joseph in charge of the prison.



Joseph's brothers were going to kill him, but Reuben convinced them to spare Joseph's life.

INTERPRETING DREAMS

While Joseph was in prison, the pharaoh, or king, of Egypt threw his butler and the chief baker into the same jail.

One night, each of them had a strange and troubling dream. They told Joseph about their dreams and Joseph told them that both of their dreams were messages from God. God gave Joseph the ability to interpret what the dreams meant. He said the butler's dream meant that he would be freed from jail, but the baker's dream meant that he would be hanged.

Both of these interpretations came true!

Joseph asked the butler to remember him when he was a free man. "Mention me to the pharaoh," he said, "and help me get out of prison." But the butler forgot about Joseph.

Joseph remained in prison for two more years. But he did not become bitter against God. He continued to obey Him.

Then the pharaoh himself had an unusual dream. The butler remembered his own dream from prison, and told the pharaoh that he knew a man who could interpret dreams. The pharaoh sent for Joseph.

"I have had a dream and there is no one who can interpret it," the pharaoh told Joseph when he arrived. "But I have heard that you are able to interpret dreams."

"I cannot interpret dreams," Joseph told the pharaoh. "But there is a God in

heaven who will give you an answer."

The pharaoh described his dream: First he saw seven fat cows. Then he saw seven skinny cows come out of the river and eat the fat cows. Yet the skinny cows remained skinny. In the second part of his dream, the pharaoh saw seven ears of grain growing on one stalk. Then a withered stalk of grain with seven diseased ears sprang out of the ground. The withered stalk swallowed up the healthy stalk, like the skinny cows had eaten the fat cows.

God revealed to Joseph what both parts of the dream meant. "God has revealed to the pharaoh what He is about to do," Joseph said. "The seven fat cows are seven years, and the seven good ears of grain are seven years. The seven skinny cows are seven years, and the seven diseased ears of grain are also seven years. So, there will be seven years of plenty throughout Egypt, followed by seven years of famine."

The pharaoh was happy to hear about seven years of abundant food, but he was worried about the seven years of famine. Joseph advised him to store away one fifth of all the crops that were harvested during the years of plenty. That way the Egyptians would have enough food to survive the years of famine. The pharaoh was so impressed with Joseph's wisdom that he appointed Joseph to be the chancellor of Egypt. In one day, Joseph went from being a foreign

slave prisoner hoping that God would save him to the second-highest leader in the Egyptian empire!

SEVEN YEARS OF FAMINE

After the seven years of plenty passed and the famine came, Joseph's family back in Canaan began to run out of food. So, when Jacob heard that the Egyptians had stored away extra food, he sent all of his sons except Benjamin

to Egypt to buy some grain. When these Hebrews arrived in Egypt, they encountered the chancellor.

They did not recognize that he was Joseph, but Joseph recognized that they were his brothers.

Joseph had not seen his brothers since the day they ganged up on him and sold him to strangers. But he did not tell them that he was their lost brother. Instead, he accused them



Joseph's brothers bow before him, but they don't recognize him.

of being spies. He said he would not believe that they were innocent brothers who just wanted to buy food unless they brought their youngest brother, Benjamin, to Egypt.

The brothers were afraid to ask their father to let Benjamin go to Egypt. They spoke to each other in Hebrew and admitted, "We are guilty of selling Joseph into slavery. We saw how scared he was and

how he begged us to spare him, but we didn't listen." Then Reuben said, "Didn't I tell you not to do this evil thing to Joseph? But you would not listen, and now God is punishing us." The brothers did not know that the chancellor was actually Joseph, and that he understood everything they were saying, because he too spoke Hebrew. Joseph pretended that he did not understand what they



Benjamin is presented to Joseph.

were saying and used an Egyptian interpreter to speak to them.

Joseph ordered that his brother Simeon be thrown into jail, saying that he would not be released until the brothers brought Benjamin to Egypt to prove they were not spies. Then Joseph let the rest of the brothers go home. But he took the money they had paid for the grain and hid it inside their grain sacks. On the way

home, the brothers discovered the money. This made them very afraid: They thought that the Egyptians would accuse them of stealing.

Jacob initially refused to allow the brothers to take Benjamin to Egypt. But after they had used all the grain they had purchased, they needed more food. Jacob reluctantly allowed Benjamin to go with his brothers to Egypt.



Benjamin is shocked to discover Joseph's cup hidden in his grain sack.

Joseph was thrilled to see his brother Benjamin, but he still did not reveal who he was. Instead, he once again told members of his staff to hide the brothers' money in their grain sacks. He also ordered that his personal silver cup be placed inside Benjamin's sack. After the brothers left, Joseph sent Egyptian soldiers after them to arrest them for theft.

When the brothers were brought before Joseph, they were afraid he would never let Benjamin go and that their father would die in sorrow. They bowed before Joseph and begged for mercy, just as Joseph had seen in his dream when he was a teenager. At that moment, Joseph could not hold it in any longer!

"I am Joseph!" he said. "Does my father live?"

The brothers were shocked and greatly troubled. They could not believe it at first. But then they realized it was true: The young brother they had sold into slavery was now the second-most powerful man in the world! They feared that he wanted to get revenge against them for what they had done to him. But Joseph was kind and forgave his brothers, because he focused not on himself or on them, but on what God was doing.

Joseph then sent his brothers to bring Jacob and the rest of the family to Egypt. Jacob almost fainted when he heard Joseph was still alive. He agreed to travel to Egypt to see his long-lost son.

ISRAEL BECOMES A NATION

When his father arrived, Joseph embraced him and wept with emotion.

The pharaoh welcomed Joseph's family and gave them land in Goshen, the most fertile land in Egypt. There they became herders and shepherds, and the pharaoh chose some of them to manage his own cattle.

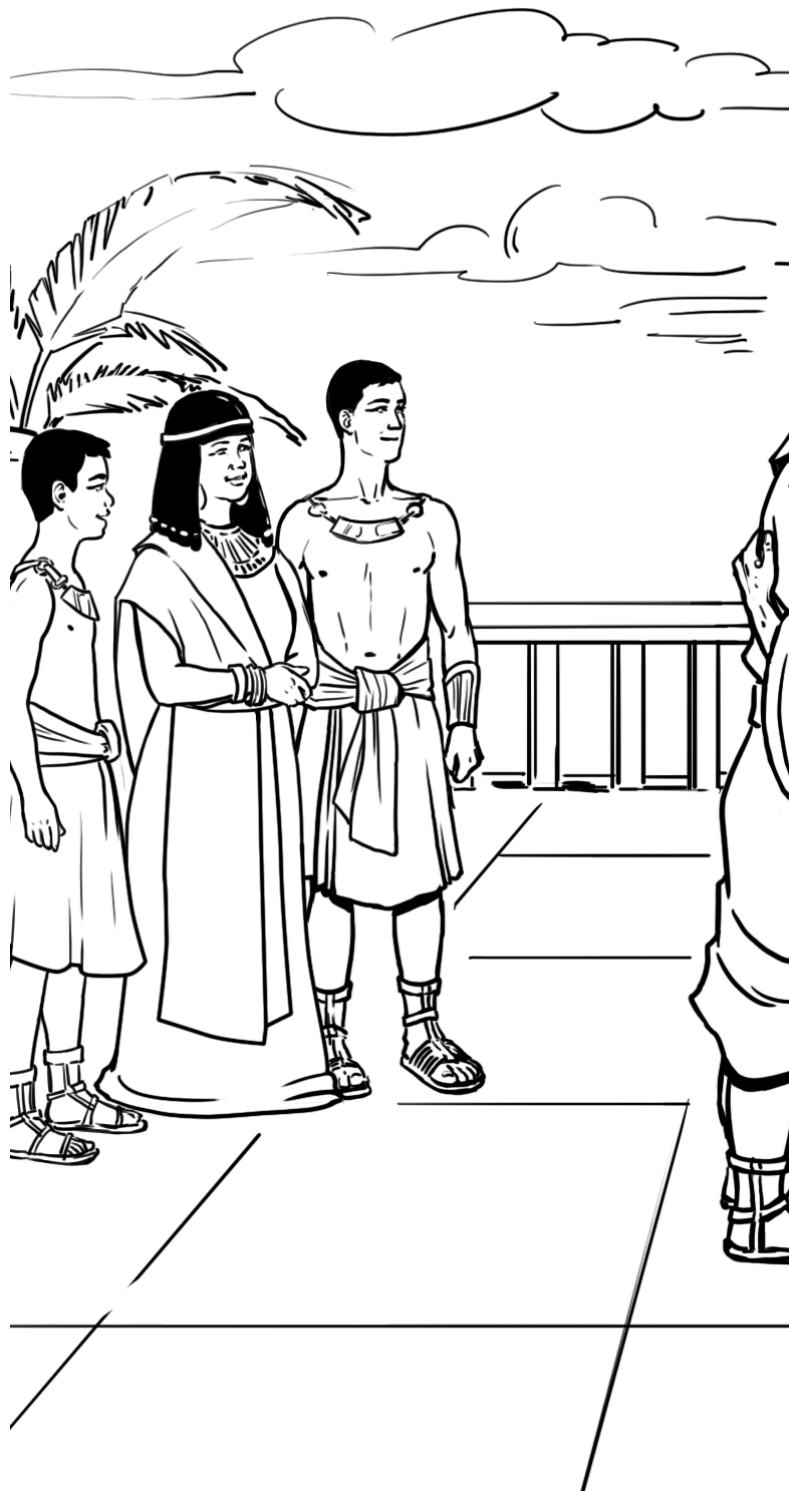
Before he died, Jacob adopted Joseph's sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and passed on to them the amazing birthright that his brother, Esau, had sold to him for a bowl of soup years ago. At this time, Jacob was 147 years old and nearly blind. So Joseph guided his older son Manasseh to Jacob's right hand and his younger son Ephraim to Jacob's left hand. The son who was blessed with Jacob's right hand would get an even greater blessing, and Joseph thought this greater blessing should go to the first-born son. But Jacob crossed his arms to bless Manasseh with his left hand and Ephraim with his right hand.

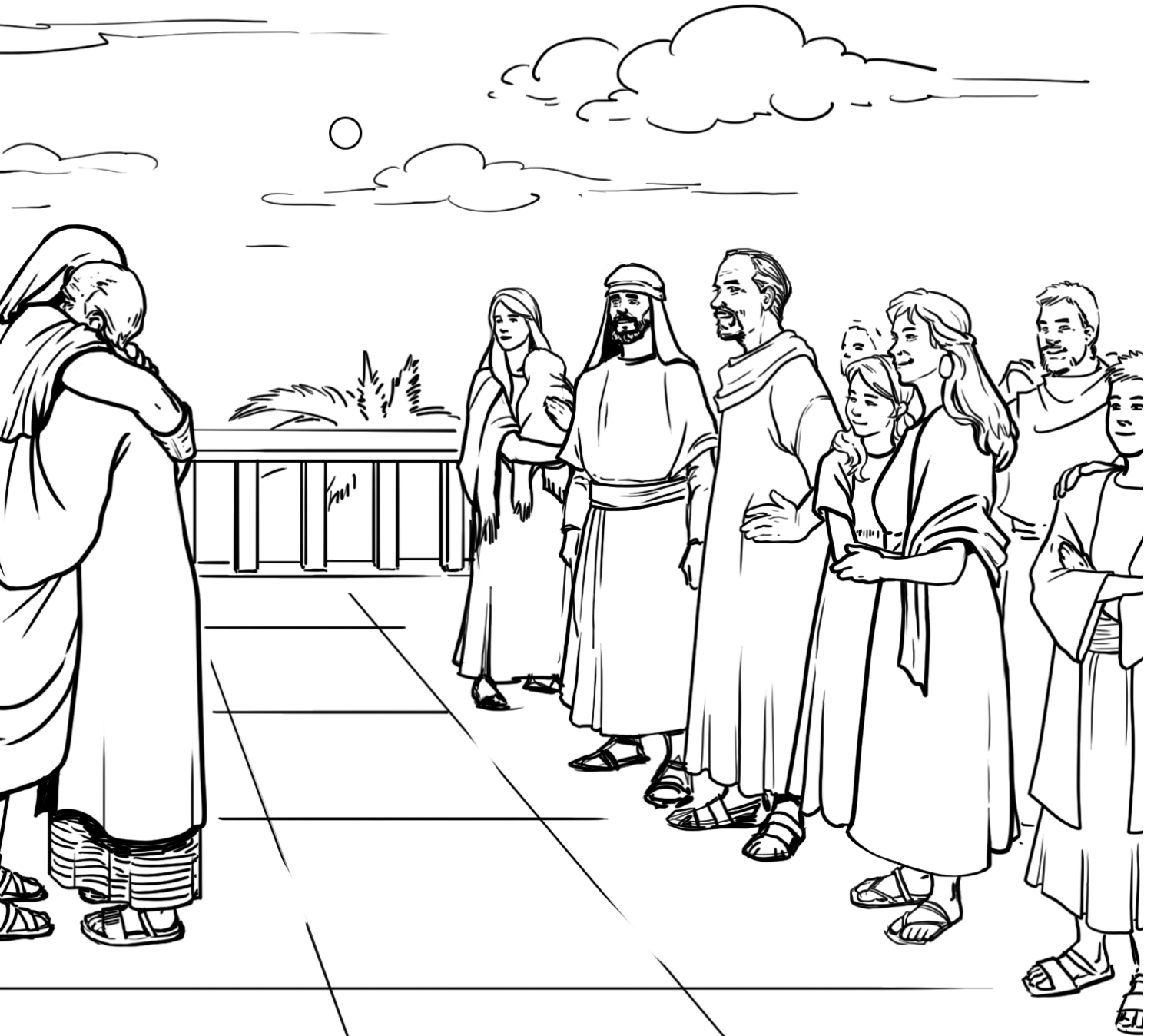
This upset Joseph, who thought his father was confused. But Jacob told Joseph that he knew what he was doing and that it was God's plan for the younger child to get the greater blessing. "Manasseh shall become the father of a great nation," Jacob said. "But truly his younger brother shall be greater than he. His children shall become many nations."

Herbert W. Armstrong's amazing book *The United States and Britain in*

Prophecy explains how Manasseh's descendants became the people of the United States of America—the greatest single nation in human history. Ephraim's descendants became the English-speaking peoples who settled throughout the British Empire, a vast company of nations that once included Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and many other nations.

By the time Joseph died, when he was 110 years old, the descendants of the 12 sons of Jacob had multiplied into 12 great tribes of people. Since the tribes traced their ancestry back to Jacob, and because God had changed Jacob's name to Israel, these tribes became known as the 12 tribes of Israel.





Jacob is reunited with his long-lost son.

Journey to Egypt

Navigate the maze to help Joseph's brothers get to Egypt.

