



CREATION AND THE BEGINNING OF HUMAN HISTORY

#42 – Joseph is Mistreated Genesis 37:1-36

PICTURES NEEDED

42-1 Joseph's dream of wheat sheaves

42-2 Joseph being sold as a slave

REVIEW (Before Teaching Lesson)

- **Journal Review:** Ask students to share an important truth that they learned from their journal readings at home that week. Share some of your own insights.
- **Previous Lesson Review:** (Use the visual from the last lesson to aid in review)
Why was Jacob afraid to go back to his home? How did he prepare to meet Esau?
What happened when Jacob wrestled with God?
- **The Big Question Review:** What enables us to live and flourish?
Let the students give their answers to the question.
- **Bible Verse Review:** Isaiah 46:3-4
God sustains and takes care of his people.

Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all you who remain of the house of Israel, you whom I have upheld since you were conceived, and have carried since your birth. ⁴(Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.)

LESSON CONTENT

Why had Jacob left his home? Because Jacob had deceived his brother Esau he had to leave his home and go far away to the place his mother Rebekah had come from to find a wife in his uncle's house.

What happened to him at his uncle's house? He grew rich and his family grew large. He ended up with four wives and eleven sons.

Who was Jacob's favorite wife? Rachel was Jacob's favorite wife and he loved his son Joseph which he had with Rachel more than his other sons. This lesson is about Joseph's relationship with his brothers.

When Jacob and his family were back in the land God had promised to Abraham, Jacob's wife Rachel had one more son and then she died giving birth to him. This son was named Benjamin and he was the brother of Joseph.

Vs. 1-11 (picture 42-1)

¹ Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.

² This is the account of Jacob.

Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

³ Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made a richly ornamented robe for him. ⁴ When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

⁵ Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. ⁶ He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: ⁷ We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

⁸ His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

⁹ Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

¹⁰ When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" ¹¹ His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

Why did Joseph's brothers dislike him so much? That Joseph was his father's favorite was evident. Joseph also seemed arrogant. He didn't have to tell his brothers his dreams. He wanted to lord it over them.

What did Joseph's dreams mean? Some day his family would bow down to him as he would be ruler over them.

What did Joseph's brothers have towards Joseph? Jealousy

What does giving oneself over to jealousy do to a person? Jealousy is a sin that causes a person to act in ways that hurts oneself and others. Being jealous separates a person from God and eats away at one's soul.

Genesis 37:12-24

¹² Now his brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem, ¹³ and Israel said to Joseph, "As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them."

"Very well," he replied.

¹⁴ So he said to him, "Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me." Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron.

When Joseph arrived at Shechem, ¹⁵ a man found him wandering around in the fields and asked him, "What are you looking for?"

¹⁶ He replied, "I'm looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are grazing their flocks?"

¹⁷ "They have moved on from here," the man answered. "I heard them say, 'Let's go to Dothan.'"

So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. ¹⁸ But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him.

¹⁹ "Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each other. ²⁰ "Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams."

²¹ When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. "Let's not take his life," he said. ²² "Don't shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the desert, but don't lay a hand on him." Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father.

²³ So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the richly ornamented robe he was wearing—²⁴ and they took him and threw him into the cistern. Now the cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

What did the brothers want to do to Joseph? Kill him and throw him in the cistern.

What is a cistern? A cistern is an underground storage area for collecting rain water.

Why do you think Reuben was the one who wanted to rescue Joseph? Reuben was the first born and was called to lead his brothers. He had the birthright so he probably wasn't as jealous of Joseph as the others were.

Genesis 37:25-36 (picture 42-2)

²⁵ As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt.

²⁶ Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? ²⁷ Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood." His brothers agreed.

²⁸ So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

²⁹ When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes. ³⁰ He went back to his brothers and said, "The boy isn't there! Where can I turn now?"

³¹ Then they got Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. ³² They took the ornamented robe back to their father and said, "We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son's robe."

³³ He recognized it and said, "It is my son's robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces."

³⁴ Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days.

³⁵ All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. "No," he said, "in mourning will I go down to the grave to my son." So his father wept for him.

³⁶ Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.

What happened to Joseph? The brothers sold him to a caravan which took him down to Egypt. There he was sold as a slave to Potiphar who was an important official in Pharaoh's court. To make matters worse Potiphar's wife told lies about Joseph, saying that he tried to hurt her, and so he was thrown into prison.

Where was God when all this was happening to Joseph? Because bad things were happening to Joseph doesn't mean God wasn't with him.

The Bible says (Genesis 39:20-23) *But while Joseph was there in the prison, ²¹the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. ²²So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. ²³The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.*

When we believe God and put our trust in Jesus God promises to work all things together for our good. What is the good God wants for us? God wants us to grow in our faith and our likeness of Jesus. When we trust him in difficult times he does a work in us that causes us to grow. Joseph wasn't treated fairly but he still believed God and put his trust in him. God was working in ways Joseph didn't even know. As you read through more of Genesis you will see the good that God brought out of Joseph's troubles.

Romans 8:28 says, *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

What does the verse say we can trust in? When we go through bad times we can trust that God is working for our good when we love him and give ourselves to him for his work to be done in us.

LESSON WRAP-UP

- **Overview Questions:** Why did Joseph's brothers hate him? What did they plan to do to him? What did they do instead? What did Jacob think happened to Joseph? Why did he think that? What happened to Joseph in Egypt?

- **Thought Questions:** Because of his dreams and father's favor how do you think Joseph viewed himself? What effect do you think that had on his brothers? What did Joseph need to learn about himself? What do you think Joseph learned from being sold into slavery? What do you think Joseph learned from being put in prison? What would be a right attitude to maintain in those circumstances? How does one maintain an attitude like that? How do you know Joseph had a right attitude? What is the result of keeping a right attitude towards God and one's circumstances?
- **Prayer:** Thank God that he never stops loving you and wanting what is good for you. Pray that you would trust him so that even in bad times you would know that he is working for your good. Pray that you would focus on the eternal work God is doing and not the circumstances of the moment.
- **The Big Question: What does God do for those who love him?**
Let the students give their answers to the question. Share the memory verse. Ask how it answers the question.
- **Memory Verse: Romans 8:28**
God works for our good in all things.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Questions: Who does God work for the good of? What is the good God wants for us? What is God's purpose for us? What does it mean to be called according to God's purpose?

ACTIVITIES (Completed after the lesson)

Any age appropriate activity can be included which fits into the class time. The activities with a star are included on the class notes.

- ★ **Lesson Notes:** Ask the students to summarize in one sentence what the lesson was about. Then have them give three main points covered in the lesson. An example is below.

Theme: Joseph was Jacob's favorite son and even though many bad things happened to him God still loved him and watched over him.

1. Jacob gave Joseph a beautiful coat because he was his favorite son and his brothers were jealous of him.
 2. Joseph's brothers put him in a dry cistern and were going to kill him but they pulled him out and sold him to be a slave instead.
 3. The wife of the man who bought Joseph told lies about him and he was thrown in jail. The jailer trusted Joseph and he did well in jail.
- ★ **Memory Verse:** Read the memory verse on the cover of the class notes and then have the students fill in the blanks in the verse.

- **Activity Page:** Crossword Puzzle

Instructions: Fill in the crossword puzzle with answers from the lesson.

Potiphar Man Joseph was sold to

Reuben Brother who wanted to rescue Joseph

Twenty Amount of shekels Joseph was sold for

Robe Special gift Jacob gave to Joseph

Rachel Jacob's favorite wife

Dream What Joseph had that made his brothers angry

Jealousy The sin Joseph's brothers gave themselves over to

Cistern Place Joseph was put by his brothers

- **Further Understanding:** Bible Study Skills

Instructions:

1. Read the whole passage below to the students as they read along in their Bibles or on the discussion notes.
2. Read the passage verse by verse and have the students explain each verse.
3. Have the students extract one important truth from the passage. This can be done as an entire class or you can break into pairs or small groups.
4. Have the students answer the additional two questions: How can you apply this truth in your life? What will be the result of applying that truth?

Romans 8:28-39 – God works in all things for our good.

²⁸And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

³¹What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Discussion Questions: What does it mean that God works all things for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose? What is good? What happens to people who choose to follow God? How do we know that God is for us and not against us? How does knowing that affect the way we view life? What does it mean that nothing can separate us from the love of God? Are some people separated from God's love? Why?

The journal is passed out at the end of class for the students to complete at home. It has six readings that answer a digging deeper question. It would be beneficial for the teacher to work through the journal readings also.

Digging Deeper: Journal Focus – Genesis, chapters 39-41, Romans chapter 8

Reading 1: Genesis 39 Joseph is thrown into prison.

Why did Potiphar put Joseph in charge of his household? What does that show about Joseph? Why was Joseph thrown in jail? What does that show about life? What did God do for Joseph in prison? What does that show about God?

Reading 2: Genesis 40 Joseph interprets dreams.

Who did Joseph say could interpret dreams? What does saying that show about Joseph? Why do you think the chief cupbearer didn't remember Joseph once he was out of prison?

Reading 3: Genesis 41:1-13 Pharaoh has strange dreams.

Why do you think Pharaoh was so troubled by his dreams? Why couldn't anyone interpret the dreams for him?

Reading 4: Romans 8:9-17 The Spirit gives life.

What is our obligation? Why? What does the Spirit of God in us do for us? Why was Joseph able to live the way he did?

Reading 5: Romans 8:18-27 We have a future hope.

Why is hope that is seen not hope? How did Joseph show he had hope?

Reading 6: Romans 8:28-39 God works in all things for our good.

What does God do for those who love him and are called according to his purpose? What does that mean? How was that true for Joseph? What is Jesus doing for us now? What does that mean? Why can't anything separate us from God's love?