



CREATION AND THE BEGINNING OF HUMAN HISTORY

#43 – Joseph Becomes Ruler Genesis 41:14-40

PICTURES NEEDED

- 43-1 Pharaoh's dream
- 43-2 Joseph brought before Pharaoh

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 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?
- **The Big Question Review:** What does God do for those who love him? Let the students give their answers to the question.
- **Bible Verse Review:** 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.

LESSON CONTENT

Joseph was his father Jacob's favored son but was treated unfairly by other people. What did his brothers do to him? Because they were jealous of him, Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave to a caravan of Ishmaelites who took him to Egypt.

Besides his brothers' mistreatment of him, what other bad thing happened to Joseph? The wife of the man who bought Joseph as a slave in Egypt accused him of trying to hurt her. Even though it wasn't true Joseph was thrown into prison.

What happened to Joseph in prison? While he was in prison God was with Joseph and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden who put him in charge of everything in the prison.

When he was in prison Joseph also interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh's chief baker and cupbearer, who Pharaoh had thrown into prison. Everything happened to them exactly as Joseph said it would. Pharaoh restored the chief cupbearer to his position, and had the chief baker hanged. When the cupbearer was released from prison, Joseph asked him to remember him, but he didn't.

Later, however, when Pharaoh had two dreams that greatly troubled him, his chief cupbearer remembered about Joseph in prison and told Pharaoh about him and his ability to interpret dreams. Pharaoh sent for Joseph and he was brought out of prison.

Vs. 14-40

¹⁴ So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from the dungeon. When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh.

¹⁵ Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it."

¹⁶ "I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."

(picture 43-1) *¹⁷ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "In my dream I was standing on the bank of the Nile, ¹⁸ when out of the river there came up seven cows, fat and sleek, and they grazed among the reeds. ¹⁹ After them, seven other cows came up—scrawny and very ugly and lean. I had never seen such ugly cows in all the land of Egypt. ²⁰ The lean, ugly cows ate up the seven fat cows that came up first. ²¹ But even after they ate them, no one could tell that they had done so; they looked just as ugly as before. Then I woke up.*

²² "In my dreams I also saw seven heads of grain, full and good, growing on a single stalk. ²³ After them, seven other heads sprouted—withered and thin and scorched by the east wind. ²⁴ The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven good heads. I told this to the magicians, but none could explain it to me."

²⁵ Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one and the same. God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁶ The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads of grain are seven years; it is one and the same dream. ²⁷ The seven lean, ugly cows that came up afterward are seven years, and so are the seven worthless heads of grain scorched by the east wind: They are seven years of famine.

(picture 43-2) *²⁸ "It is just as I said to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁹ Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt,*

³⁰ but seven years of famine will follow them. Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ravage the land. ³¹ The abundance in the land will not be remembered, because the famine that follows it will be so severe. ³² The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon.

³³ "And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. ³⁴ Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. ³⁵ They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food. ³⁶ This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine."

³⁷ The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. ³⁸ So Pharaoh asked them, "Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?"

³⁹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. ⁴⁰ You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you."

Why did God give the dreams to Pharaoh? God gave Pharaoh the dream to let him know what he was going to do. God had plans and he wanted Pharaoh to know about them, as he was going to use Egypt to save Joseph's family.

What showed Pharaoh that Joseph was wise? Pharaoh could see that Joseph relied on and learned from God. Joseph had insight that no one else had. Probably the jailer also had given a good report of him.

In what ways had Joseph suffered to get to the position of ruler in Egypt? He had been hated by his brothers, sold into slavery, accused unfairly, put in prison and left there.

Why do you think God allowed him to suffer in that way? God had a plan and purpose for Joseph. God had to form him into the man and ruler he wanted him to be. Joseph had to be humbled and made useful to God. He had started out full of pride. Proudful people aren't useful to God.

How did Joseph respond to his suffering? He was a model slave and prisoner. He relied upon God and did what was right in all circumstances.

Why didn't Joseph become bitter through all he suffered? Joseph had suffered greatly at the hands of his brothers, but he wasn't bitter and didn't hold onto a grudge. He had looked to and trusted God in the midst of all his troubles and had received all that God wanted to do in and through him. He listened to and gained wisdom from God and became an important ruler over Egypt.

What is wisdom? Wisdom is knowing what is right to do and then doing it.

How did Joseph's life and deeds show he was wise? Joseph's life and good deeds reflected God's wisdom and through all that happened to him he brought honor to God.

James 3:13 says, *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.*

What should the way we live our life show? The way we live our life should reflect our relationship with Jesus. If we trust and depend on Jesus, we will do what is right and reflect God's wisdom no matter what happens to us. If we get angry and become bitter because of what is done to us, we won't act in God's wisdom and life won't go well for us. Joseph is a model of how we should choose to live. Because he chose to act wisely in all situations, he became a great ruler in Egypt.

LESSON WRAP-UP

- **Overview Questions:** What were Pharaoh's dreams? What did Joseph say would happen? Why did Pharaoh make Joseph ruler over Egypt?
- **Thought Questions:** Why do you think Pharaoh appointed Joseph as a ruler even though he had been put in prison as a criminal? How would you describe Joseph's character? What causes the development of good character?
- **Prayer:** Thank God that through your connection to him you can respond rightly in all situations and reflect his wisdom in what you do. Thank God that good character and godly wisdom come out of a relationship with him and can be demonstrated in whatever situation you find yourself in. Pray that in all circumstances you would desire what God wants and choose to go his way so that people see him at work in you.
- **The Big Question: How does a person demonstrate wisdom?**
Let the students give their answers to the question. Share the memory verse. Ask how it answers the question.
- **Memory Verse: James 3:3**
Good deeds show God's wisdom

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

Questions: What is wisdom? What is humility? Why does humility come from wisdom? What are good deeds that reflect humility and wisdom?

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: Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, had a dream that bothered him a lot and he found out that Joseph could interpret dreams so he brought Joseph out of prison to explain them to him. .

1. In one dream seven fat cows were eaten up by seven ugly and skinny cows. In the other dream seven healthy stalks of grain were swallowed up by seven thin and dried up heads of grain.
2. Joseph told Pharaoh that the dreams were from God and told him what was going to happen in Egypt. God said there would be seven years with lots of food, followed by seven years where there wouldn't be any food.
3. Pharaoh made Joseph a leader in Egypt to collect the grain in the good years so there would be something to eat in the bad years.

★ **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:** Hidden Message

Activity: There are many names used in Scripture for rulers. Unscramble the words used for rulers to uncover an important biblical truth. Pharaoh (Gen. 39:1), Caesar (Mt. 22:21), Captain (Gen. 39:1), King (Ex. 1:8), Lord (Ps. 110:1), Judge (Jdg. 2:18), Master (Gen. 39:2), Official (Gen. 39:1)

Truth: Wise rulers follow God's laws.

★ **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?

James 3:13-18 – True wisdom comes with humility.

¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. ¹⁵Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. ¹⁶For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

¹⁷But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

Discussion Questions: What is wisdom? What is the evidence of wisdom? Why are good deeds evidence of wisdom? What is humility? Why does humility come from wisdom? What is envy? What is selfish ambition? What is disorder? What is evil? How do envy and selfish ambition lead to disorder and evil?

JOURNAL

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 41-44

Reading 1: Genesis 41:41-57 Joseph is put in charge.

What did Joseph do for Egypt? What did the names Joseph gave to his sons show about him?

Reading 2: Genesis 42 Joseph's brothers go to Egypt.

Why did Joseph's brothers go to Egypt? Why do you think Joseph's brothers didn't recognize him? How do you know that the guilt of what they did to Joseph still haunted them? Why weren't the brothers honest men as they told Joseph? Why wouldn't Jacob send Benjamin to Egypt?

Reading 3: Genesis 43:1-14 The brothers go back to Egypt.

Why did Jacob finally relent to sending Benjamin to Egypt?

Reading 4: Genesis 43:15-34 The brothers eat with Joseph.

What do you think Joseph's brothers were thinking as Joseph brought them to his house and questioned them?

Reading 5: Genesis 44 Judah offers himself instead of Benjamin.

What did Judah's plea to spare Benjamin show about him? How do you think that affected Joseph?

Reading 6: James 3:13-18 True wisdom comes with humility.

What demonstrates true wisdom? Why is humility essential for being truly wise? What causes disorder and evil? Why? How did Joseph show he was truly wise?