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## **Bible Lesson 10 (BTJ)**

### **1. Introduction**

Jacob and his family were living in Canaan again. He had many possessions and twelve sons. His sons cared for his cattle, sheep, and goats. Joseph was his favorite son and he made him a coat of many colors. Joseph's older brothers did not like Joseph because he was favored by their father. Joseph was a good young man who believed in God. By contrast, his older brothers did not truly follow God.

One day Joseph's brothers sold him to Ishmaelite traders who took him to Egypt. In Egypt they sold him as a slave to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. During this time Joseph did not become bitter against God. He believed in God and trusted him with his life. Joseph was a good man.

Joseph was a good slave for Potiphar. Potiphar made him his head servant. Potiphar's wife noticed that Joseph was a handsome young man and she wanted to commit adultery with him. Joseph feared God and refused her advances. Potiphar's wife then falsely accused Joseph of inappropriate behavior toward her which led to him being imprisoned. Though imprisoned, he continued to honor and worship God.

While Joseph was in prison, he interpreted the dreams of two of Pharaoh's imprisoned servants. One of these servants was released from prison and restored to his position before Pharaoh again. One night Pharaoh had a dream that no one could interpret for him. His servant who had met Joseph in prison told Pharaoh that Joseph could interpret his dream. Joseph was brought before Pharaoh and he correctly interpreted Pharaoh's dreams. Joseph told Pharaoh that the interpretation of his dreams came from God. Joseph stressed that God alone is the one who knows the meaning of dreams and gives the interpretation of dreams to people such as he. Pharaoh made Joseph the second highest ruler in the land of Egypt and richly provided for all of his needs. All this time Joseph remained faithful to God because he believed in God and knew that God was in control of everything.

Because Joseph was in Egypt as the second highest ruler in the land, Pharaoh invited all of Jacob's family to move to Egypt during the time of the famine. The story of Joseph teaches how one should always trust God and believe in him in every situation. It teaches how God worked in a sovereign way when many moments in history seemed to be out of control. God knows everything and he is sovereign. There is no power or being who is equal to God.

## 2. Review

**Setting:** A lively discussion was in progress when Teacher arrived at Greg's house.

**Teacher:** Good morning. As I came here, I could hear that you are having a good discussion.

**Greg:** Yes, that is true. We are discussing the story of Abraham. He believed God and he lived to please God. He did not live for himself. He worshiped God. He did not worship and honor idols. He turned away from traditions and practices that were evil because he believed in God.

**Teacher:** As you listen to the Bible stories, are there times when your old ways want to come back again? Do some people struggle with letting the old beliefs and customs go?

**Greg:** Satan tempts us with thoughts about the old ways. Sometimes I'm tempted to dishonor God and follow the old ways. Then I remember that I cannot go on two roads at the same time. God's truth and his ways are right and good. I have decided that I must choose them all the time.

**Teacher:** It is always good to choose to follow God's ways. Remember this: God is faithful and true always. He is not a trickster deity.

**Greg:** Teacher, when you came here we were in the midst of discussing Abraham's concern for Isaac. Abraham did not want him to marry an idol worshiping woman because he knew she would lead him astray and his children would live wickedly. Abraham wanted his descendants to serve God and to worship him. He knew that God's promise to send the Deliverer would be fulfilled through one of his descendants. As I heard that story, it made me think a lot about my own children.

**Teacher:** Please explain what you were thinking. How does this story relate to you?

**Greg:** Do you see my oldest son? We have already chosen a wife for him but she is from a family in another village where they still worship idols. Those people have said, "We will only follow our customs." Now, what should we do? I have decided to be like Abraham who forbid Isaac to marry a woman who worships idols. I do not want my son to marry a woman who worships idols.

**Teacher:** You are thinking clearly on this matter. It is good that you have chosen to follow Abraham's example.

**Greg:** Teacher, why did Rebekah and Jacob deceive Isaac in order to have Isaac give the blessing of the firstborn to Jacob? Was this a good thing for them to do?

**Teacher:** Rebekah and Jacob were people just like us and they used deception to get their way. Rebekah knew before the twin boys were born that the older one would serve the younger one. God told her so. It wasn't necessary for them to scheme to trick Esau like they did. They should have trusted God in everything, even the matter of the blessing of the firstborn.

**Greg:** Perhaps Rebekah knew that through a descendant of Jacob the Deliverer would come. Or, perhaps she was just like we are. Sometimes we do special favors for someone, especially if it makes us look good.

**Teacher:** It is good to remember that God knew all about this before it even happened. He chose Jacob to be the one through whom the Deliverer would come. God never makes a mistake. All his ways are right.

**Greg:** Yes, that is true. All of God's ways are right. I believe that for myself.

**Teacher:** What else did you learn from the story of Esau and Jacob?

**Greg:** When you taught us about Esau, it sounded like you were talking about us. We are always talking about good food and we want it now! Esau was the same way. He wanted to eat right away so he traded his birthright for some stew. He didn't think about the importance of his birthright or of the consequences. That is how we used to act. If we wanted something now, we got it without ever thinking about the consequences.

**Teacher:** Do you think it is okay to ignore the consequences of the choices we make?

**Greg:** It is foolish to ignore the consequences of bad choices. Cain made bad choices, look at what happened to him. The people of Noah's time, Nimrod, and Esau all lived foolishly before the Lord. They didn't think about him. They had no regard for God. We must think about God and submit to him. He is greater than all else.

**Greg:** This story of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is special to all of us. We want to be persons who serve and worship God as they did.

**Teacher:** I am glad to hear you say that. If you believe in God and trust him, you too can become like Abraham.

### 3. **Jacob Lived in Canaan**

Jacob and his family moved to the land of Canaan where his father Isaac had lived. During the journey, Rachel, his wife died during the birth of Benjamin, the youngest of Jacob's twelve sons. Jacob continued his journey until he came to Mamre where his grandfather Abraham and father Isaac had lived. By now, Isaac was very old. When he died, he was one hundred and eighty years old. Isaac's sons Esau and Jacob buried him in the land of Canaan.

Jacob owned flocks of sheep, goats and cattle. His sons watched over the flocks as they pastured in the fields. One of his sons, Joseph, was a good young man and did not do bad things. He saw that his brothers were not behaving themselves well so he told his father about it. Joseph was born when Jacob was old and he loved him more than his other sons. He made a special colored coat for Joseph because he was his favorite son. Jacob's other sons saw this favoritism and became angry with Joseph. No longer would they speak peaceably to him. They hated him because he was their father's favorite son.

One night Joseph had a dream and he told his brothers about it. He said, "Listen to this dream. We were out in the field, tying up bundles of grain. Suddenly my bundle stood up, and your bundles all gathered around and bowed low before mine!" This angered the brothers even more and they said. "Do you think you will be our king? Do you actually think you will reign over us?" Joseph's brothers hated him all the more because of his dreams and the way he talked about them.

Not long after that dream, Joseph had another dream and once again he told his brothers and his father about it. Joseph said, "Listen, I have had another dream. The sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed low before me!" Jacob heard Joseph's dream and scolded him. He said, "What kind of dream is that? Do you think your mother and I and your brothers will come and bow to the ground before you?" By now the brothers were very angry at Joseph. Jacob, however, kept thinking about these things.

Jacob's angry sons departed from where Jacob was staying and went to their work of watching the flocks. Joseph stayed at home with Jacob. Some time had passed and Jacob wanted to know about his flocks and his sons. Jacob said to Joseph, "Your brothers are pasturing the sheep at Shechem. Go and see how your brothers and the flocks are getting along. Then come back and tell me how it is going for them." Joseph heard his father's instruction, prepared himself and left to find his brothers and the flocks.

Joseph's older brothers hated him very much because their father Jacob showed him extra favoritism. They despised Joseph for telling them dreams that implied they would bow

down to him. When they saw him coming in the distance they plotted to kill him. “Here comes the dreamer!” they said. “Let’s kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns. Then we’ll see what becomes of his dreams! We’ll tell our father that a wild animal killed and ate him.” Now, they thought, they would finally be rid of Joseph.

Lets think about Joseph: Had Joseph wronged his older brothers? No, he had not wronged them. He was a good young man who believed in God and desired to please God. Joseph worshiped God because he knew that God alone was worthy of anyone’s worship.

As Joseph was coming in the distance toward them, his older brothers gleefully planned to get rid of him. One of the brothers, Reuben heard of their scheme to kill him and said to them, “No, we will not kill him. Why should our hands shed any blood? Here is an empty cistern. Let’s just throw him in and he will die in the cistern without us having laid a hand on him.” Reuben said this because he did not agree with the rest of his brothers. He was secretly planning to rescue Joseph and return him to his father.

Soon Joseph arrived where his older brothers were staying. He had no idea of their evil plan. He was simply following his father’s orders to visit them to see how they were doing. Right away his older brothers began to mistreat him. They ripped off the beautiful robe he was wearing which Jacob had carefully made for him. Then they took him to the empty cistern and threw him into it. Now he was way down in the bottom of the empty cistern without a means to get out. As



Show #21: Joseph sold to the Midianites

the older brothers were sitting down to eat, they looked up and saw a caravan of camels in the distance coming toward them. It was a group of Ishmaelite traders taking a load of gum, balm, and aromatic resin from Gilead down to Egypt.

Then Judah said to his brothers, “Let us not kill Joseph because we would just have his blood on our conscience. After all, he is our brother. He is one of our family. Let’s just sell him to those Ishmaelite traders.” This sounded good to the other brothers so they agreed to Judah’s plan. They went to the cistern and pulled Joseph out of it. They offered to sell him to the traders and they agreed to buy him for twenty pieces of silver. In that

way Joseph, who had done no wrong or harm to anyone, was sold to the Ishmaelite traders and taken to Egypt.

Once Joseph was gone, his brothers killed a young goat and dipped Joseph's beautiful robe in its blood. Then they sent it to their father with this message: "Look at what we found. Doesn't this robe belong to your son?" Jacob immediately recognized Joseph's bloodstained robe. "This is my son's robe! A wild animal must have killed and eaten him." Jacob mourned deeply for Joseph for a long time. Jacob would not be comforted by anyone. He missed Joseph so much and wept for him.

The Midianite traders who bought Joseph continued their journey until they arrived in Egypt. There they sold Joseph to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Potiphar was captain of the palace guard.

Let's think about this question: Why did God allow Jacob's evil sons to act wickedly toward Joseph? Joseph had not harmed them. He was a good man who believed in God and worshiped him. He desired to please God by the way he lived. By contrast, Joseph's older brothers were evil and lived for themselves. Why do you think God allowed the evil brothers to mistreat Joseph?

It is important to remember this point. God knows everything from the beginning to the end even before an event starts. God knew the beginning and ending of Joseph's life before he was born. God knows everything about everyone.

When the Ishmaelite traders took Joseph to Egypt, it seemed like his older brothers triumphed over him. Now that Joseph was gone, they did not have to worry about him anymore. As far as they were concerned, that was the end of Joseph.

**Teacher:** Listen carefully to the next part of the story. Remember, God knows everything that happens in this world. When Joseph was treated unjustly, God saw it and knew all about Joseph. God had a plan for Joseph. And, God was still working in history to send the Deliverer to earth to save sinful mankind.

#### **4. The Life of Joseph in Egypt**

Joseph was now living in Egypt as a slave of Potiphar. Did Joseph do something evil that he deserved to be a slave? No, Joseph was a good man who believed in God. He was not working as a slave because he had committed a crime or any evil deed. He was a slave because his evil brothers sold him to the Ishmaelite traders who sold him in Egypt to Potiphar. Joseph did not deserve to be mistreated in this way. Nevertheless, at this time he

had to work as a slave in Potiphar's house far away from his father and his family. He was not a free man anymore. Now he was living in Egypt where the people worshiped idols and lived wickedly.

Do you think that Joseph become angry with God because he was a slave in Egypt? Do you think that he was bitter because he could not see his father? Joseph did not become angry with God. Joseph honored God and feared him. His heart was devoted to God even during this difficult time. He knew that God had not changed. He knew that God had not abandoned him during this difficult time. Joseph knew that God was right there with him as he lived and worked in Potiphar's house. Joseph's ways were good because he was a God-fearing man. During this time, Joseph worked hard to please his master, Potiphar. Even though he was a slave against his will, he worked hard to please Potiphar.

Did God forget about Joseph in Egypt? No, he did not forget him. God is everywhere present which means he was right there with Joseph in Egypt. He heard Joseph's prayers. He helped Joseph in all of his work. Joseph was successful in everything that he did as he served in the home of his Egyptian master, Potiphar. Potiphar noticed that Joseph was a special man and realized that the LORD was with him. Potiphar saw that God was giving Joseph success in everything he did.

Potiphar was very pleased with Joseph's work so he soon made him his personal attendant. He trusted Joseph and put him in charge of his entire household and everything he owned. God continued to bless Joseph in a special way. Everything Joseph did prospered in an extraordinary way because God showed him favor and blessed him. Every day Joseph worked hard for Potiphar regardless of what he had to do. Joseph was a faithful slave who desired to please his master.

Since everything went so well for Joseph, Potiphar gave Joseph complete administrative responsibility over everything he owned. Truly, God blessed Joseph and took care of him in Egypt, far away from his father Jacob and the rest of his family. No doubt Joseph longed to see his father. However, he was not bitter toward God or his brothers who so wrongly mistreated him. Joseph's faith in God remained firm. He knew that God had not failed him. He knew that God could be trusted in all things.

The Egyptians did not serve God. They worshiped idols as though they were true gods. Do people who worship idols live lives which are pleasing to God? No, they live for themselves and engage in pleasures for themselves.

Potiphar's wife noticed that Joseph was a handsome young man and she was attracted to



him. She was an evil woman with evil desires. She lusted for him very much. One day she said to Joseph, "Come and sleep with me." Potiphar's wife did not fear God. Even though she was married, she wanted Joseph to commit adultery with her. She just wanted pleasure for herself.

What did Joseph do when she tempted him to sin? Did he sneak away to be with her? Did he lust for her and secretly commit adultery? Listen carefully to Joseph's response to her tempting words. Joseph said, "No, My master trusts me with everything in his entire household. No one here has more authority in his house than I do. He has held back nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How could I do such a wicked thing? It would be a great sin against God."

Why did Joseph not commit adultery with Potiphar's wife? Joseph feared God and worshiped him. Joseph was not willing to live for the moment like Esau did. No, he believed in God. He feared God and worshiped him. To Joseph, sinning with Potiphar's wife was to disregard God and dishonor him. Joseph could not sin against God.

Potiphar's wife was an evil, wicked woman. She did not give up trying to get Joseph to sin. It did not matter to her that she was married to Potiphar. She lusted for Joseph and day after day tried to coax him to sin with her. Joseph refused to comply with her wishes. One day when he went in to do his work no one else was around. This time Potiphar's wife grabbed him by his cloak and demanded, "Come on, sleep with me!" Joseph tore himself away, but he left his cloak in her hand as he ran from the house.

When Potiphar's wife saw that she was holding his cloak and Joseph had fled, she was afraid of being accused of wrongdoing by anyone who might see it. So she called out to the other servants, "Look at this!" she said. "My husband has brought this Hebrew slave here and he came into my room to rape me, but I screamed. When he heard me scream, he ran outside and got away, but he left his cloak behind with me." Potiphar's wife lied about Joseph to save herself.

That evening when Potiphar came home, his wife showed him Joseph's cloak and lied to him about Joseph. She accused Joseph of wanting to commit adultery with her. Potiphar did not know that his wife was lying to him. He thought she was telling him the truth. He became furious with Joseph and threw him into the prison where the king's prisoners were held, and there he remained. Now Joseph was wrongly imprisoned in Egypt. He had done no evil to anyone. He did not deserve being put in prison.

Let's talk about Joseph being in prison. What will happen to him now? Joseph was in

prison for no reason at all. Because he honored and worshiped God, he refused to sin with Potiphar's wife who turned against him and lied about him. Then he was put in prison as if he was a guilty criminal. He was not guilty of any wrong doing yet he was cast into prison. Did God forget about him?

God did not forget about Joseph. God knew everything that had happened to him. Earlier when his brothers wanted to kill him, God took care of him and they did not kill him. They sold him to the Ishmaelite traders who took him to Egypt. In Egypt, they sold him to Potiphar. God prospered his service in Potiphar's house. Then Potiphar's wife's false accusation about him led to his imprisonment. God saw all that happened to Joseph.

Do you think God will do something to help Joseph? Or will he die in prison? Listen carefully to the next part of this story about Joseph. Think about the way God works to accomplish his purpose in seemingly impossible situations. Remember this. God is sovereign which means he rules over every thing, every power, and every situation.

## **5. Joseph in Prison**

Angered Potiphar had Joseph imprisoned without listening to his side of the story. He believed his wife's story. He thought she had told him the truth. Joseph was treated unjustly in the same manner as his brothers had treated him when they sold him as a slave to the Ishmaelite traders. But, as Joseph was in the prison, God showed favor and love to Joseph and caused the prison warden to like him. Soon, the warden put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners and over everything that happened in the prison. Joseph was a faithful man. He could be trusted with responsibility and the warden had no more worries. Joseph took care of everything he was given to do. The LORD was with him and caused everything he did to succeed just like he did when Joseph served in Potiphar's house.

While Joseph was in prison, Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt became angry with two of his servants and had them imprisoned with Joseph. One night each of these two men had a dream which they could not understand. As hard as they tried, they could not understand their own dreams. Joseph saw that they were dejected and perplexed because they could not understand the meaning of their dreams. "Please tell me your dreams," said Joseph. "God can give the interpretation of dreams. He knows what they mean."

The men told their dreams to Joseph. Would Joseph be able to interpret their dreams? Joseph believed God would help him interpret the dreams. God gave to Joseph understanding of the meaning of the dreams. Then Joseph explained the meaning of each man's dream and told them what was going to happen to them. Joseph's interpretation was right. The things he said would happen to these two men occurred just as he had

stated. Now it was known that Joseph could interpret dreams. Joseph, however, knew that it was God who gave him the understanding to interpret dreams.

Joseph was imprisoned for two years after he had interpreted the dreams of the two imprisoned men. At that time, Pharaoh had two dreams which perplexed him very much. In the first dream, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing on the bank of the Nile River and saw seven fat, healthy cows come up out of the river and begin grazing in the marsh grass. Then he saw seven more cows come up from the Nile River behind them. These cows were scrawny and thin and stood beside the fat cows on the riverbank. They ate the seven healthy, fat cows!

Then Pharaoh had a second dream. This time he saw seven heads of grain, plump and beautiful, growing on a single stalk. Then seven more heads of grain appeared, but these were shriveled and withered by the east wind. The thin heads swallowed up the seven plump, well-formed heads!

In the morning Pharaoh was very disturbed by the dreams. He could not understand what they meant. "What do these dreams mean?" thought Pharaoh, "I must know the meaning of my dreams!"

Pharaoh called for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt and told them his dreams. "Tell me, what is the meaning of my dream," asked Pharaoh. Not one of the magicians and wise men of Egypt could tell him what they meant. Then one of the formerly imprisoned servants of Pharaoh spoke up and said. "A man in prison, Joseph is his name, is able to interpret dreams."

Right away Pharaoh sent for Joseph so that Joseph would interpret his dream. As he spoke about wanting his dreams interpreted, Joseph told him that the power to interpret dreams came from God alone. Then Pharaoh told Joseph all that he had seen in his dream. Joseph listened to Pharaoh as he recalled all that he had seen in his dreams.

Joseph responded to Pharaoh and said, "Both of Pharaoh's dreams mean the same thing. God is telling Pharaoh ahead of time what he is about to do. The seven healthy cows and the seven healthy heads of grain, which you saw, both represent seven years of prosperity. There will be plenty of food those years. The seven thin, scrawny cows that came up later and the seven thin heads of grain, withered by the east wind, represent seven years of famine which will follow the seven good years."

Joseph explained to Pharaoh that his dreams were God's revelation to him about what was going to happen in Egypt. First there would be seven years of great prosperity which

would be followed by seven years of severe famine which will erase the memory of the good years. Joseph assured Pharaoh that God would soon make this happen.

Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “You should find an intelligent and wise man and put him in charge of the entire land of Egypt. You should appoint supervisors over the land and let them collect one-fifth of all the crops during the seven good years and store them in Pharaoh’s storehouses. Store these crops and guard them well so there will be food in the cities during the seven years of famine which will come upon the land of Egypt. If you do not prepare yourself for this famine, it will destroy the land.”

Pharaoh listened intently to Joseph’s recommendations. They were well received by Pharaoh and his officials. Then Pharaoh asked his officials, “Can we find anyone else like this man so obviously filled with the Spirit of God?” Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has revealed the meaning of the dreams to you, it is clear that no one else is as intelligent or wise as you are. I appoint you to be in charge of my court, and all my people will take orders from you. Only I, sitting on my throne, will have a rank higher than yours.”

Joseph was now out of the prison and had the second highest position in Egypt. Only Pharaoh was greater than he. No longer was Joseph a prisoner. Now he had plenty of good food and clothing to wear. God enabled Joseph to interpret Pharaoh’s dreams because he wanted to use Joseph as his instrument for gathering food for the famine.

Who prospered Joseph in the prison? God blessed Joseph and gave him his abundant favor. God knew exactly how he would have Joseph serve him. Joseph gladly served God and gave him all the credit. Whether he was in prison or standing before Pharaoh, Joseph served the Lord with his whole heart. He worshiped God and did what was right because he feared God.

Joseph took charge of gathering food into Pharaoh’s storehouses. For the next seven years in the land of Egypt there was an over abundance of grain. Joseph had the people bring their share of grain to the storehouses in the cities. Joseph knew that seven years of famine would follow and little food would be grown during those years.

## **6. Israel Moves to Egypt**

At the end of the seven prosperous years in Egypt, the famine began just as God had forewarned through the dreams he had given to Pharaoh. God had revealed that the famine would last for seven years which meant many people would suffer food shortages.

During the famine, all the land of Egypt was famished and the people cried out to Pharaoh for bread. Pharaoh replied, “Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, you shall do.” Joseph was in charge of distributing the grain which had been stored for use during the famine.

The famine was severe in Egypt and spread over all the face of the earth. People came to Joseph to buy food. He opened all the storehouses, and sold grain to the Egyptians and people from other lands too. This famine was very hard on everyone.

Joseph’s father Jacob and his family were living in Canaan. The famine was also severe in Canaan and people desperately needed food. They were hungry. They needed food or they would starve.

Jacob heard that there was grain for sale in Egypt so he called his sons and said. “Go down to Egypt and buy enough grain to keep us alive. Otherwise, we’ll die.” Joseph’s ten older brothers prepared themselves for the trip and went down to Egypt to buy grain. Jacob wouldn’t let Joseph’s younger brother, Benjamin, go with them, for fear some harm might come to him. The memory of losing Joseph was still with him. Jacob’s older sons and some others went to Egypt to buy food for their families in Canaan.

Joseph was governor of all Egypt and in charge of selling grain to all the people. When his older brothers arrived in Egypt, they came to him and bowed before him with their faces to the ground. They did not know Joseph but he recognized them instantly. They were his brothers, the ones who had sold him into slavery years ago.

At first, Joseph pretended to be a stranger and he spoke harshly to them. “Where are you from?” he demanded. “We have come from the land of Canaan,” they replied. “We have come to buy food.” Joseph accused them of being spies but they said. “No sir, we are not spies, we are all brothers, members of the same family. We are honest men, sir! We are not spies!”

Joseph sold them some grain and they returned to Canaan again. When they had

consumed the food, Jacob sent them to Egypt again to buy more grain. This time Benjamin went with them to Egypt though Jacob protested his going along. When they arrived in Egypt they appeared before Joseph again and bowed to the ground before him, though they did not know who he was. They were very afraid of Joseph, the ruler in Egypt who sold grain to everyone.

Joseph did not return evil for evil to his brothers. This time he revealed himself and said. “I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into slavery in Egypt. Do not be upset or angry with yourselves for selling me to this place. It was God who sent me here ahead of you to preserve your lives. This famine which has ravaged the land for two years will last five more years. God has sent me ahead of you to keep you and your families alive and to preserve many survivors. He is the one who made me an adviser to Pharaoh. I am the manager of his entire palace and the governor of all Egypt.”

Joseph’s brothers were stunned at this revelation. They trembled in fear before him. “Would Joseph return evil for evil?” they wondered. No, Joseph did not do that. He knew that God was sovereign and had sent him to Egypt at this time. Joseph was overjoyed to know that his father Jacob was still alive. Finally, after many years, Joseph and his brothers were reconciled. And, Joseph knew that Jacob was still alive and he anticipated seeing him again.



Show #22: Joseph's brothers appear before him in Egypt

The news about Joseph’s brothers coming to Egypt reached Pharaoh and his officials. They were all delighted and Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Tell your brothers to load their pack animals, and hurry back to the land of Canaan. Tell them to get your father and all of your families, and return here to me. I will give you the best land in Egypt, and you will eat from the best that the land produces.”

Joseph provided wagons and supplies for Jacob and his entire family to move from Canaan to Egypt. His brothers took the supplies back to Canaan and told Jacob that Joseph was still alive. At first Jacob would not believe them. However, when he saw all the provisions Joseph had sent to him, he was overjoyed knowing that he would see

Joseph again. “It must be true! My son Joseph is alive! I must go and see him before I die,” said Jacob.

Then Jacob and all his family, all of his descendants left the land of Canaan. They took all their livestock and property which they had acquired in the land of Canaan and began the long trip to Egypt. When they arrived in Egypt, Joseph requested from Pharaoh that he would give them permission to live in the land of Goshen. Pharaoh readily granted permission for them to live in Goshen with all their flocks and possessions. Pharaoh was kind and hospitable to Jacob and his descendants because he honored Joseph for his work and service to Egypt during the famine.

Now, the descendants of Abraham were no longer living in the promised land. They were living in Goshen in Egypt. Jacob was now an old man. He knew that Egypt was not the promised land. He believed that someday his descendants would live in Canaan again. Before he died, he asked Joseph to swear that he would not be buried in Egypt. He wanted to be buried in Canaan, the land which God promised to them. Jacob lived for one hundred and forty-seven years then he died. Joseph and his brothers took Jacob’s body to Canaan and buried it there in the cave of the field of Machpelah.

What happened to Jacob’s spirit when he died? Did it stay in the cave of the field of Machpelah? Did it roam around the fields of Canaan? Did it return to Egypt with Joseph and his brothers? Listen carefully so that you will know what happened to Jacob’s spirit when he died.

During Jacob’s lifetime, he served God. He sacrificed blood offerings to God because he knew that he was a sinner and needed God’s mercy and grace. Jacob knew that he could not save himself from his sin’s penalty. God showed mercy and grace to Jacob because he believed in him. Jacob had faith in God and believed that someday God would send the Deliverer to save people from the penalty and the guilt of their sins. When he died, his spirit went to be with God in his abode. Jacob’s spirit did not go to the place of the never-ending fire of punishment. No, his spirit went to the abode of God.

After Jacob’s burial, Joseph and his brothers returned to Egypt again and resumed living there. Now that Jacob was dead, Joseph’s brothers feared that Joseph would use his power to retaliate against them for the evil things they did against him.

But Joseph had no intention of returning evil for evil. He replied to them, “Don’t be afraid of me. Am I God that I can punish you? Although you intended to harm me, God intended everything to work out for good, not evil. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people, and to save you, my family. There is no need for you

to be afraid of me. I will continue to take care of you and your children.”

Joseph believed in God. His faith did not waver nor did he doubt God. Even though he suffered at the hands of his brothers and was unjustly put into prison by Potiphar, Joseph did not doubt God or change his beliefs. In Egypt he saw the Egyptians worship idols but he did not do so. He was devoted to God and he worshiped God.

In this story, the dreams which Joseph had when he was a young boy at home came to pass. All of his family moved to Egypt during the famine. They bowed down before him, the second most powerful man in Egypt just as he had dreamed years earlier.

The life story about Joseph is a good example for all of us to follow. He believed in God all the time. He did not lust for the culture and beliefs of the Egyptians. Even though he suffered for no legitimate reason, his faith in God remained firm because he knew that God is true.

God wants you to believe in him as Joseph did. He wants to show mercy and grace to you. He wants to save you from the guilt and penalty of your sins. Then when you die, your spirit will go to be with him forever. However, if you do not believe in him, he will not show mercy and grace to you. Then you will die in your sins and your spirit will go to the place of the never-ending fire of punishment.

## **7. After the Meeting**

**Setting:** Some of the village leaders were gathered to talk about the teaching they had just heard.

**Oren:** I think we should discuss everything we have been learning from the Bible. We need to make sure that we understand the meaning of these stories.

**Patrick:** You are right. The Bible’s message is truth. When I heard how God made Adam and Eve perfectly, I knew that he was much greater than the deities we serve. He is the true God and can be trusted all the time.

**Oren:** We learned about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They believed in God and trusted him. They knew that they were sinners and deserved to die for their sins. They knew that they were unable to save themselves. They showed God that they agreed with him that they deserved death for their sins by offering a blood sacrifice. They sacrificed a sheep or goat to God as a substitute for them. The animal died and its blood was shed and it was offered to God. They had faith in God which is why they offered these sacrifices to God.



They believed that God would provide a Deliverer for them. We must follow their example and believe in God. I want the Deliverer to save me.

**Patrick:** Let me ask you this, “Was Joseph a good man or was he like us?”

**Oren:** Joseph was a good man because he believed in God. Joseph believed in God and he worshiped God. He lived according to his faith in God.

**Patrick:** When Joseph’s brothers sold him into slavery, he did not quit believing in God. When Potiphar’s wife wrongly accused him, he did not quit believing in God. When he was in prison a long time, he did not quit believing in God. Joseph believed in God during good times and during hard times. He knew that God never changes.

**Oren:** You are right. God never changes. If he changed, he would be like all other gods, unreliable and not trustworthy. God never changes. He is sovereign and rules over everything. He is trustworthy. All of his Word to us is truth.

**Patrick:** Joseph’s father loved him more than his other children and showed him favoritism. Was that a good thing for Jacob to do? I thought, “Jacob, you are making it hard for Joseph. You should try to treat all of your children the same way.”

**Oren:** Jacob was a person like us. Sometimes he made mistakes. Most importantly however, Jacob worshiped God. Jacob did not worship idols or fear the false gods of the Canaanites. Jacob received the promise given to Abraham and Isaac that one of his descendants would be the promised Deliverer.

**Patrick:** Joseph did something else that is unlike the way our forefathers taught us.

**Oren:** What was that? How else was Joseph different from our ways?

**Patrick:** All of us know that we always believed in payback and we practiced returning evil for evil. Joseph did not return evil for evil. He returned good for evil. He said to his brothers, “You meant to harm me, but God made those actions be the way for your own good. God brought me to Egypt through your evil actions so that I could be here to help you.” Joseph returned good for evil. That’s a new idea for us.

**Oren:** Yes, Joseph’s way is a new way for us.

**Patrick:** God helped Joseph live an extraordinary life because he admitted that he was a

sinner who needed God's mercy and grace. God helped Joseph because he believed in God. He trusted God in everything.

**Oren:** I believe the God who helped Joseph can help us put an end to this bad, endless practice of payback. Do you think he can help us?

**Patrick:** God will help us if we trust him and have faith in him. God wants us to believe all of the Bible's teachings. God wants us to accept his teachings because they are truth. He wants to save us from sin's penalty which is eternal death.

#### **8. Review of the Lesson's Themes**

**God is faithful:** In all situations, God remains faithful. In history, God has proven himself to be faithful all the time. He does not change or act like a trickster deity.

**By nature, man is sinful and proves it by his actions:** Joseph's older brothers had the same father and training as Joseph had. Yet, during their early life, they did not walk closely with God. People cannot save themselves. They need God's mercy and grace. They need to believe in God and his way for reconciliation.

**God is omniscient and sovereign:** God remembered his promise to send a Deliverer. He intended that Jacob and his family be preserved during the severe famine in that part of the world. He knew beforehand that it would happen.

God knew that he would use Joseph for the well-being of Jacob's family. Nothing happened to Joseph that God did not know about ahead of time. Joseph's response to circumstances demonstrated his devotion to God and the power of God working in his life.

**Man must have faith in God in order to please him:** Joseph had faith in God which is why he maintained a good testimony towards God. God blessed Joseph and made him prosper in every situation or circumstance he faced. Though Joseph was treated unfairly and received an unjust prison sentence, he kept on believing in God because he knew that God is true and reliable in all things. The life story of Joseph is a good model for us.

## **9. Students Practice Telling the Stories**

At the end of this lesson, practice telling the story you have just heard to each other. Everyone needs to practice teaching Bible lessons by telling the stories.

Practice telling the stories of this lesson in pairs. One pair should teach one of the stories in the lesson following this lesson's Table of Contents for divisions in the lessons.

The Table of Contents at the beginning of the lesson lists the stories for each lesson. Some of the stories or sections of a story are short so they should be combined with another section to make the exercise of practicing to teach by using stories a profitable exercise.

When you are teaching a lesson by telling the story, use culturally appropriate questions and illustrations to keep the story interesting and to make the people think about the lesson's meanings. Be prepared to engage the audience with questions which are crafted to bring out how well they understand the meaning of the story.

Use visual aids or objects used in the lesson when you teach a story. Show the pictures at the right time in the story. When illustrations are used, be sure to bring them to a right and logical conclusion. If you do not make the right conclusions through telling the story, people will likely guess what it means and they could easily come to a wrong conclusion.

After you have practiced telling stories to each other, talk about ways to improve your story-telling ability. Be open to critique and be kind to each other as you work together to help each other become master story-tellers. The goal of teaching God's Word via telling Bible stories is not to merely impress your peers; it is the salvation of spiritually lost people.

As you tell the stories ascertain how well you present the stories and the themes. Does your teaching tend to highlight man or does it rightfully focus on God working in history? Do you tell the story so that God is highlighted? Or is man, in a subtle way, the main actor in the story? You need to make sure that the role of God in these stories is the main focus.

## **10. Teaching Tips for Teachers**

### **Lesson Point #2:**

God continued to work through Jacob after he had returned to Canaan with his wives and children and many possessions. God had promised to Abraham that a descendant of his would be the Deliverer to save people from the guilt and penalty of their sins.

God's sovereignty is seen in the events that happened in Joseph's life. Unknown to Joseph or his brothers was the fact that eventually the evil they showed to Joseph would be turned to good. God's sovereignty is never changed by the ways of people.

### **Lesson Point #3:**

God blessed Joseph as he worked as a slave for Potiphar. Everything that he did prospered because God blessed him. This shows that God is able to work supernaturally through the lives of his servants even though their circumstances may be less than good.

Just because God blessed Joseph and Joseph honored God in everything did not mean that Joseph did not have to face hard times. The accusations of Potiphar's wife were baseless yet Joseph was not vindicated. He was put in prison.

God used the whole prison experience to make it possible for Pharaoh to befriend Joseph and make him the second highest ruler in Egypt. God used Joseph in a mighty way to preserve the people in Egypt and his own family who moved to Egypt. This shows the sovereign rule of God in the affairs of mankind.

### **Lesson Point #4:**

In spite of receiving unfair treatment, Joseph's response was one of submission to God because he believed in God. Stress the sovereignty of God as it is shown through his work in Joseph's life and through his work in interpreting dreams. Humanly speaking, it would have been impossible to orchestrate the events that led to Joseph's release from prison and promotion to the second highest command in Egypt. Only God had the knowledge and power to rule supremely in these affairs.

### **Lesson Point #5:**

God's sovereign care of Jacob and his family was because through this family, the Deliverer would come to save people from the guilt and penalty of their sins. The main reason for God working in history was to ensure the coming of the Deliverer. The name of God was exalted before Pharaoh and the Egyptians as he worked specifically through Joseph among them.

**11. To the Honorable Teacher**

If any part of this lesson is misunderstood, go over that part again. Play that part of the lesson again. Summarize that part briefly for the students then play that part a second time. Then ask questions to ascertain whether or not this part of the lesson is now understood correctly.

Be prepared to use proper illustrations to clarify a given lesson point. Sometimes it is helpful to use a picture and talk about what is portrayed in the picture as you teach.

Stress to the students that the important themes of this lesson must be understood before proceeding to the next lesson.

Simple drama can be useful to make a point clearer in the people's minds. Before using drama, be sure that it is culturally appropriate to do so. If people are not accustomed to understanding simple drama, it may be best to not use it.