

Bible Stories for Adults

God Prepares Joseph

Genesis 37 - 41

Opening

- Gathering: Tell of how God has used your life experiences to prepare you to do His work.
- Today's Focus: To recognize that God uses experiences in our lives to prepare us for His work.
- Key Verses: *How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?* Genesis 39:9
Who knows but that you have come to position for such a time as this? Esther 4:14
I cannot do it, but God will give the answer. Genesis 41:16

Opening Prayer

Lesson

The Favorite Son (*Genesis 37:3*)

- How many sons did Jacob have?
Genesis 35:22b-26
- Why did Jacob have so many sons?
Genesis 29:31; 30:1-3, 9, 22-24
- Who was Jacob's favorite son and why?
Genesis 37:3
- What was likely another reason?
Genesis 29:30a

Brotherly Love? (*Genesis 37:2-5*)

- How did Joseph's brothers feel about Joseph and why?
Genesis 37:4
- How was the brothers' feelings about Joseph reinforced?
Genesis 37:2
- What even further deepened the brothers' attitudes toward Joseph?
Genesis 37:5

Canaan Dreamin' (*Genesis 37:6-11*)

- What was Joseph's dream?
Genesis 37:6-7
- Why did the brothers hate him for dreaming of bowing grain?
Genesis 37:8
- Did Joseph keep his dreams to himself after this?
Genesis 37:9
- Did Jacob stand up for Joseph in front of his brothers?
Genesis 37:10-11

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Joseph's Travels (*Genesis 37:12-22*)

Did Jacob try to keep Joseph away from his jealous brothers?

Genesis 37:12-14b

Where did Joseph go to find his brothers?

Genesis 37:14c-17

What did Joseph's brothers think when they saw Joseph coming?

Genesis 37:18-20

Who came to Joseph's rescue? Why?

Genesis 37:21-22

Had Rueben always been so discerning and protective of his father's interests?

Genesis 35:22

How did Jacob later deal with this?

Genesis 49:3-4

Family Business (*Genesis 37:23-35*)

What did the brothers decide to do?

Genesis 37:23-24

How was this plan changed? Why?

Genesis 37:25-28

Why was the price set at 20 shekels of silver?

Leviticus 27:5 (Exodus 21:32)

Did Rueben agree with this sale?

Genesis 37:29-30

How was this explained to Jacob?

Genesis 37:31-32

How did Jacob respond to his loss?

Genesis 37:33-35

Potiphar's Wife (*Genesis 39*)

Where was Joseph taken?

Genesis 39:1 (*Genesis 37:36*)

How did God remember Joseph in Egypt?

Genesis 39:2-6a

Why did Potiphar have to *concern himself with the food he ate*?

Genesis 43:32

What threatened Joseph's position and how did he respond?

Genesis 39:6b-9

How did Potiphar's wife respond to Joseph's rejection?

Genesis 39:10-12

How did she deal with his continued rejection?

Genesis 39:13-18

How did Potiphar respond to the accusation against his chief servant?

Genesis 39:19-20a

How did God remember Joseph in prison?

Genesis 39:20b-23

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The Cupbearer and the Baker (*Genesis 40:1-8*)

Who did God bring to Joseph while he was in prison?

Genesis 40:1-3

How did God intervene so that Joseph would interact with these high profile men?

Genesis 40:4-5

What did these men's confusing dreams have to do with Joseph?

Genesis 40:6-8

Does God use dreams elsewhere?

Daniel 2:27-28, 47

The Servants' Dreams (*Genesis 40:9-23*)

What was the cupbearer's dream and what was its meaning?

Genesis 40:9-13

What was the purpose of the cupbearer's dream?

Genesis 40:14-15

What was the baker's dream and what was its meaning?

Genesis 40:16-19

Were Joseph's interpretations correct?

Genesis 40:20-22

Did the cupbearer fulfill the purpose of his dream and work for Joseph's release?

Genesis 40:23

Pharaoh's Dreams (*Genesis 41:1-7*)

How much longer did Joseph remain in prison before the story continues?

Genesis 41:1a (Psalm 105:16-22)

How can Joseph's patience be an example for us?

James 5:7-8, 10-11

What was Pharaoh's dream?

Genesis 41:1b-4

What happened when Pharaoh tried to go back to sleep?

Genesis 41:5-7

God Alone Has the Wisdom and Power (*Genesis 41:8-16*)

Who was able to interpret the dreams for Pharaoh?

Genesis 41:8

Who was finally cured of amnesia?

Genesis 41:9-13

Would Joseph be able to interpret Pharaoh's dreams?

Genesis 41:14-16

How was this later paralleled before another Pharaoh?

Exodus 7:10-12

What is the message behind these two stories?

Exodus 8:17-19

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The Meaning of Pharaoh's Dreams (*Genesis 41:17-39*)

Did Pharaoh remember his dreams well enough to tell them to Joseph?

Genesis 41:17-24

Would it have been a problem if Pharaoh had forgotten his dreams?

Daniel 2:1, 9, 11, 27-28

What did the dreams mean?

Genesis 41:25-32

What did Joseph recommend to Pharaoh?

Genesis 41:33-36

Who did Pharaoh find for this task? Why?

Genesis 41:37-39

Zaphenath-Paneah in Charge - Again (*Genesis 41:40-46*)

How much power did Pharaoh give Joseph?

Genesis 41:40-41

How did Pharaoh make sure everyone knew the responsibility and power he had given to Joseph?

Genesis 41:42-43

How old was Joseph at this time?

Genesis 41:44-46

What did Joseph name his children? Why?

Genesis 41:50-52

Joseph at Work (*Genesis 41:47-57*)

What did Joseph do during the 7 years of abundance?

Genesis 41:47-49

What did Joseph do during the 7 years of famine?

Genesis 41:53-56

How did God use Joseph to *bless the nations of the world*?

Genesis 41:57

Closing Prayer

Response

1. When have I recently been jealous of someone? How did I deal with it?
(*Genesis 37:3-11; Acts 13:45; 1 Corinthians 3:3; 13:4; Galatians 5:19-21, 26; James 3:13-18*)
2. When have I helped cause harm to someone? How have I repented and tried to make amends?
(*Genesis 37:19-35; 42:21-24; 50:15-21; 2 Samuel 11-12; 1 Kings 21; Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-31*)
3. How faithful am I to God when Satan tempts me?
(*Genesis 39:6-12; Matthew 4:1-11; 26:41; 1 Corinthians 10:13; James 1:13-15; 2 Peter 2:9*)
4. Do I remember and appreciate the good others have done for me? (*Genesis 40:12-15, 23; Ecclesiastes 9:13-16; 2 Chronicles 24:22; Luke 17:11-19; 1 Thessalonians 3:9*)
5. How well do I carry out the responsibilities that God has entrusted to me? (*Genesis 39:2-6, 21-23; 41:46-49, 56-57; Luke 16:1-15; 19:11-27; Romans 12:4-8; Ephesians 4:11-16; 6:5-8*)

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Charles Spurgeon on *God's Providence*

I believe that it is in the little things that we can see God. I want you to notice how little circumstances of daily life, when we put them all together, evidently betray their origin.

When Joseph was sent into Egypt by his brothers, in order to provide for them against a day of famine, we all agree with Joseph's declaration, "It was God that sent me hither." But now, if we notice each of the little ways through which this great result was brought to pass, we shall see God in each of them.

One day, Joseph's brothers are out with the sheep; Jacob wants to send to them. Why does he send Joseph? He was his darling son; he loved him better than all his brothers. Why does he send him away?

Joseph goes; his brothers are in want of pasture, and therefore leave Shechem, where Joseph expected to find them, and journey on to Dothan. Why go to Dothan? Was not the whole land before them? However, Joseph goes there; he arrives at Dothan just when they are thinking of him and his dreams, and they put him in a pit.

As they are about to eat bread, some Ishmaelites came by. Why did they come there at all? Why did they come at that particular time? Why were they going to Egypt? Why might they not have been going any other way? Why was it that the Ishmaelites wanted to buy slaves? Why might they not have been trading in some other commodity?

However, Joseph is sold; but he is not disposed on the road to Egypt, he is taken to the land. Why is it that Potiphar is to buy him? Why is it that Potiphar has a wife at all? Why is it that Potiphar's wife should be so full of lust?

Why should Joseph get into prison? How is it that the baker and the butler should offend their master? All chance, as the world has it, but every link necessary to make the chain.

They do both offend their master; they are both put into prison. How is it that they both dream? How is it that Joseph interprets the dreams? How is it that the butler forgets him? Why, just because if he had recollected him, it would have spoiled it all?

Why is it Pharaoh dreams? How can dreams be under the arrangement of God's providence? However, Pharaoh does dream; the butler then thinks of Joseph; Joseph is brought out of prison and taken before Pharaoh.

But take away any of these simple circumstances, break any one of the links of the chain, and the whole of the design is scattered to the winds. You can not get the machine to work; if any of the minute cogs of the wheels are taken away, everything is disarranged.

We will now notice, in the minutiae of providence, how punctual providence always is. You will never wonder more at providence, than when you consider how well God keeps time with himself.

To return to our history - how is it that the Ishmaelites should come by just at that time? How many thousand chances there were that their journey might have been taken just before!

There certainly was no special train to call at that station at that particular time so that Joseph's brothers might arrange to go and call him. No such thing. And yet if there had been all this arrangement, it could not have happened better.

You know Reuben intended to fetch Joseph out of the pit half an hour later, and "the child was not". God had these Ishmaelites ready: you do not know how He may have sped them on their journey, or delayed them, so as to bring them on the spot punctually at the identical moment.

It could not be mere coincidence, as men sometimes say; there must be God here, for it is harder to think that there is not God than that there is. And while a belief in God may be said by some to involve a great stretch of faith, the putting Him out of such things as this would involve an infinitely greater amount of credulity. No, there was God there.

Depend upon it, then, that the will of man, the thought of man, the desire of man, that every purpose of man, is immediately under the hand of God.

Take an instance - Jesus Christ is to be born at Bethlehem; his mother is living at Nazareth: he will be born there to a dead certainty. No, not so. Caesar takes a whim into his head. All the world shall be taxed, and he will have all of them go to their own city. What necessity for that? Stupid idea of Caesar's! If he had had a parliament, they would have voted against him. They would have said, "Why make all the people go to their own peculiar city to the census? Take the census where they live; that will be abundantly sufficient." "No," says he, "it is my will, and Caesar can not be opposed." Some think Caesar is mad. God knows what He means to do with Caesar.

Mary, great with child, must take a laborious journey to Bethlehem; and there her child is born in a manger. We should not have had the prophesy fulfilled, that Christ should be born at Bethlehem, and our very faith in the Messiah might have been shaken, if it had not been for the whim of Caesar's. So that even the will of man is in the hand of God.