

Joseph's Brothers Come to Egypt Again

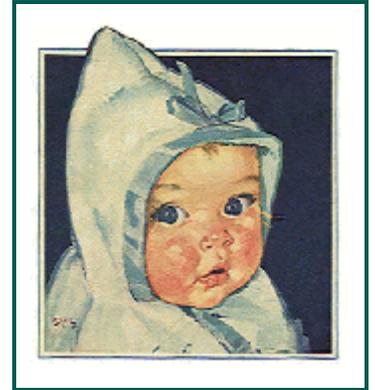
Genesis 43-45

Imagine a parent who would take a syringe containing a disease and inject the disease into his/her infant's blood stream. This certainly would be a bad thing, right!?

The truth is this injection of disease can actually help save a child's life! How you ask? Good question, but before we go on let's recognize that this is a scenario that surely looked bad, or wrong, at first. Let's find out how it is indeed good for an infant.

The act of injection referred to earlier is called an immunization. Our bodies are better at fighting disease the 'second time around.' So, in an immunization a weakened form of the disease is introduced to the child's blood stream so the child's immune system can learn to fight the disease. The idea is once the immune system learns to fight, using a weakened enemy, it will be better prepared if a stronger form of the disease attacks!

In today's lesson we will acknowledge how God is in control of our lives and try to identify how He takes things that seem bad to us and turns them into good - life saving, **soul saving** good!



Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, Thank You for allowing us to meet again today to study Your Word. Help us apply this lesson to our own lives so that our faith in Your Son, Jesus, is strengthened. In His name we ask this. Amen.

The Story

The famine in Canaan and the surrounding area was severe. After the food that his sons had purchased from Egypt ran out, Jacob told them to go back and buy more. Judah reminded his father that they had been told to bring their youngest brother back with them, or they would not be allowed to buy any more grain. This worried Jacob very much, but after much persuading, he finally agreed to let Benjamin go along. Judah promised, "I myself will be surety (*one*

who is responsible for another) for him; from my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever."

Jacob told his sons to take some gifts along to Egypt: a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. He also told them to take double the amount of money required to purchase the grain. He did



this because the last time they had gone, their money had been found inside their grain sacks, making it look like they had stolen the grain.

So the brothers returned to Egypt and stood before Joseph, the Egyptian ruler in charge of selling grain. Again they did not recognize him. When Joseph saw Benjamin, he ordered one of his servants to slaughter an animal and prepare a feast to eat at noon with his unsuspecting brothers.

As they prepared to buy more grain from Joseph's steward, the brothers were afraid. They explained what had happened when they found the money in their sacks the last time. But he said, "Peace be with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money." Then he brought Simeon out of prison to them and took them to Joseph's house.

When Joseph appeared at noon, the brothers all bowed to him and offered their gifts. Joseph asked about their father's health. He then said, "Is this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?" And he said to Benjamin, "God be gracious to you, my son." Joseph was so moved to see his younger brother that he had to leave the room to go out and weep. When he had washed his face and composed himself, he returned and joined the feast. Joseph arranged the brothers at the table in order from youngest to oldest, which surprised them since they had not told him their ages. Benjamin received five times as much food as the others.

After the feast, Joseph commanded the steward to fill the men's sacks with food and to put each man's money in the sack again as well. Joseph also told him to put his special silver cup in the mouth of Benjamin's

sack. The steward did as he asked.

When the brothers had left Egypt, Joseph ordered the steward to go after them. He accused them of stealing his master's silver cup. The brothers were astonished and afraid. They couldn't believe it was true, and were so convinced of their innocence, they promised that if the cup were found in one of the sacks, that owner of the sack would be killed. The steward told them whoever had the silver cup would become his slave instead. As planned, it was found in Benjamin's sack. The brothers tore their clothes; they were very upset. Then they went back to Egypt.

Judah pleaded with Joseph. He told him the whole story about Jacob's loss of one son and their promise to bring Benjamin back safely. Judah told Joseph he would remain instead of Benjamin as a slave, because it would surely kill Jacob if his youngest son did not return to him.

At last Joseph knew it was time to reveal the truth. He asked all his servants to leave the room, and then he wept aloud so that all heard him. He cried, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" His brothers were shocked and couldn't answer.

Then Joseph said, "Please come near to me." Again he repeated, "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not be angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither

plowing nor harvesting. And God sent me before you to preserve posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of his entire house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.”

Joseph went on to tell them that he wanted them to go back and get Jacob because he wanted them to live in the land of Goshen. Then he embraced Benjamin and wept. He kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and they talked together for some time. Pharaoh also heard about the situation, and assured Joseph that his father and family

would be richly provided for in Egypt. He sent donkeys, carts, food, and supplies with them all so they could go back to Canaan and get Jacob. When the eleven brothers got home, they told Jacob, “Joseph is alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt.” Jacob’s heart stood still, because he did not believe them. But when they told him all the words that Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts that Joseph had sent to carry him, he started to believe them.

Then Jacob said, “It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”

Outer Aim - The Lord sent Jacob and his family to Egypt to make a great nation of them.

What the Story Tells Us - Answer the following from the story. *(Teacher should read through questions beforehand and guide discussion during the reading to emphasize important parts of the reading.)*

1. Can you identify the ‘bad’ event that brought Joseph’s brothers back to Egypt?
2. What great benefit did the brothers gain by returning to Egypt?
3. Jacob worried about sending Benjamin. This was evidence of his lack of trust that the Lord does indeed work all things out to our good. It is easy for us to have such a lack of trust as well. What good was the Lord working out for Jacob when he was asked to send his son Benjamin to Egypt?
4. Forgiveness of sins is one of the greatest gifts God gives us. The Lord used Joseph as a tool to bring the brothers to repentance and recognize the forgiveness they have - which leads then to a ‘change of heart.’ Quote evidence from Scripture that the brothers have indeed been led to a change in the way they act.
5. How could Judah’s actions in this section of scripture be a picture of Christ?

What God's Word Tells Us - Discuss the following.

Try to come up with a time in your life when you feel the Lord was turning something bad into your good.

Your Turn

Concordance Activity:

N Search for passages that show God is in control of our lives.

Passages

Romans 8:28 - And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

Proverbs 3:5,6 - Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Isaiah 42:16 - I will bring the blind by a way they did not know; I will lead them in paths they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked places straight. These things I will do for them, and not forsake them.

Matthew 6:25 - "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

Philippians 4:6,7 - Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Hymn - TLH #435

My spirit on Thy care,
Blest Savior, I recline;
Thou wilt not leave me to despair,
For Thou art Love divine.

Whate'er events be'tide,
Thy will they all perform;
Safe in Thy breast my head I hide
Nor fear the coming storm.

In Thee I place my trust,
On Thee I calmly rest;
I know Thee good, I know Thee just,
And count Thy choice the best.

Let good or ill befall,
It must be good for me;
Secure of having Thee in all,
Of having all in Thee.

Prayer ACTivity

Write a prayer that will remind us of the main points presented in this lesson. Use the acronym ACTS as explained below.

A (Acknowledge who you are praying to along with a characteristic)

Ex - Dear just and forgiving Father in Heaven.

C (Confess)

Ex. - We admit that we sinfully resist the correction of Your Word. We ,at times. lack the wisdom to see that it is out of love for our souls that You instruct our parents to punish us.

T (Thank)

Ex. - We praise You for Your indescribable love that led You to send Your Son to save us from our sins and for those you have placed over us to help us recognize our need for repentance.

S (Supplicate - ask)

Ex. - We ask for the continued blessing of the Holy Spirit to lead us to confess and repent of our sins and that through Christ we may one day be with You in heaven. Amen.