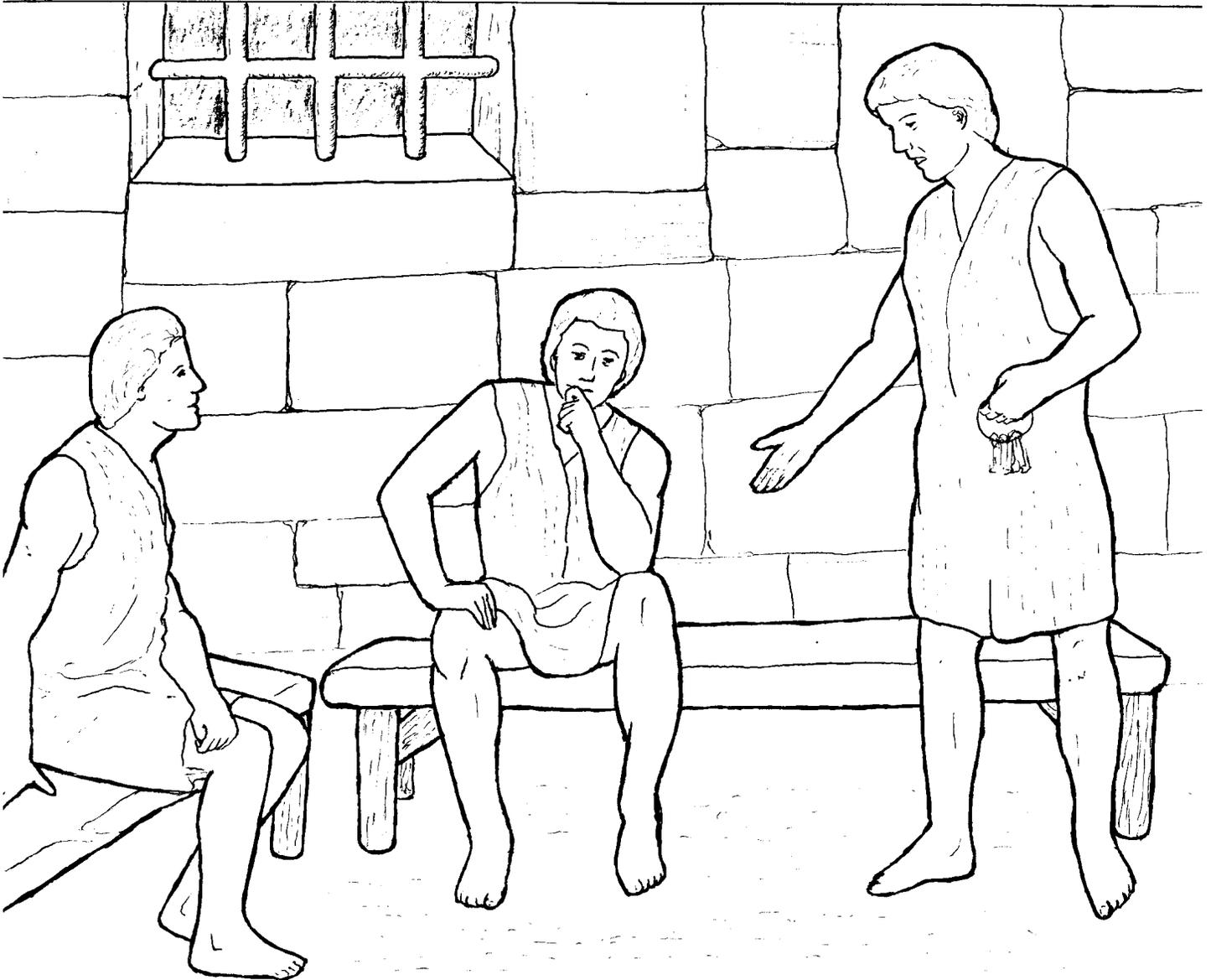


Joseph in Egypt

Genesis 39 - 41



Who is Joseph? How did his brothers treat him? Where was Joseph taken by the traveling merchants? Today we will learn what happened to Joseph in Egypt and how God was preparing him to become a ruler in Egypt.



The Story

When Joseph arrived in Egypt with the traveling merchants, he was sold to a man named Potiphar. Potiphar was a captain for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. He became Potiphar's slave. He had to do everything that Potiphar told him to do.

At first, Joseph was just another servant in Potiphar's house, but it did not take long for Potiphar to notice that there was something special about Joseph. Potiphar saw that Joseph believed in God and that He was with Joseph in all that he did. Everything that Joseph did for Potiphar turned out well. Potiphar thought, "The one Joseph calls Lord is with him. His Lord makes Joseph successful in all that he does."

Potiphar gave Joseph more jobs to do in his house. Finally, he put Joseph in charge of all of his house and all that he had. Potiphar trusted Joseph with everything.

Potiphar's wife, however, was a wicked woman. She noticed that Joseph was a very handsome young man and sinful desires came into her heart. One day she asked Joseph, "Come, be like a husband to me."

Joseph told her, "No," at once. He said, "My master put me in charge of his whole house. He trusts me, and you are his wife. I cannot do this thing with you. How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

But Potiphar's wife kept on trying to make Joseph sin with her. Each time she asked him, Joseph would say, "No." Finally, one day as Joseph was doing his work and no one else was nearby, Potiphar's wife caught hold of his robe and begged him to sin with her. Joseph immediately ran out of the house and left his robe in her hand.

Potiphar's wife was very angry with Joseph because he dared to say "No" to her! She then called the other servants together and told them a lie. She told them that Joseph had tried to make her sin with him! When Potiphar came home, she told him the lie and showed him Joseph's robe.

Potiphar was very angry when he heard his wife's story. He had Joseph thrown into prison. Joseph was sent to a special prison where officers of Pharaoh were sent when they had done some crime while they were serving him.

Joseph in Prison

Joseph had to stay in Pharaoh's prison, but this did not mean that God had forgotten all about him. The keeper of the prison liked Joseph very much and trusted him. He eventually made Joseph his helper. That meant that Joseph had the job of looking after the other prisoners. It was in this way that God was blessing Joseph while he was in prison.

One day, two of the Pharaoh's officers were put into this prison because they had done something wrong against Pharaoh. One of these men was the chief butler and the other man was the chief baker. Joseph was also in charge of these two prisoners.

It happened that one night both of these prisoners had dreams. Joseph noticed the next morning that they looked sad and confused. He asked them what the problem was and they said, "We have had dreams, but there isn't anyone who can tell us what these dreams mean."

Joseph told them that it was God's business to explain dreams, but he asked them to tell him about their dreams.

The chief butler told his dream first. He said, "In my dream, I saw a vine sprout and it grew three branches. The branches then sprouted and blossomed and then bunches of ripe grapes appeared on the branches. I was holding Pharaoh's cup in my hand, and I took the grapes and squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup. I then gave the cup of juice to Pharaoh to drink."

Joseph said, "This is the meaning of

your dream. The three branches stand for three days. In three days, Pharaoh is going to let you out of prison and make you his chief butler again." Joseph also added, "But remember me when this happens. Please be kind and tell Pharaoh about me. I was taken out of my country and I have done nothing wrong for which I should have been put into prison."

The chief baker was happy to hear the meaning of the chief butler's dream, so he told his dream to Joseph. He said, "In my dream I saw myself with three baskets of baked goods on my head. But the birds came and ate the bread out of the baskets."

Joseph then told him, "The three baskets also stand for three days. In three days, the Pharaoh will cut off your head and hang your body on a tree. The birds will eat the flesh off your bones."

Three days later, Pharaoh had a big celebration for his birthday. He had his men bring the butler back to the palace and give him back his job. But Pharaoh had the chief baker hanged on a tree, just as Joseph said he would.

The chief butler, however, forgot all about Joseph and didn't tell Pharaoh all of the things that Joseph had asked him to say.

Joseph Made Ruler

Two years passed and Joseph was still in prison. It was then that Pharaoh himself had a dream. He dreamed that he was near the Nile River and he saw something very strange. Out of the river came seven very fine, fat cows that began eating the rich grasses by the river. After that, seven very skinny, hungry-looking cows also came out of the river and stood beside the seven fat cows. The skinny cows then ate the healthy cows. Pharaoh woke up.

He soon fell asleep again and had another very strange dream. In a field, he saw a stalk with seven plump, full heads of grain. Seven more heads grew out of the stalk. These grains were dry and shriveled. The thin heads then swallowed up the plump heads! Then Pharaoh woke up and he was very troubled

about these two dreams.

Pharaoh called all of his magicians and wise men and told them about his dreams, but none of them could tell him what the dreams meant. It was then that the chief butler remembered Joseph. He told Pharaoh, "When the chief baker and I were in prison, we, too, had dreams that troubled us. There was a young Hebrew man there who was the helper in the prison. He explained to us the meaning of our dreams and everything came true just as he had told us it would."

Pharaoh called for Joseph right away. After Joseph had shaved and changed his clothes, he was brought before Pharaoh.

Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had dreams, but there is no one that can tell me what they mean. I heard that you can explain dreams."

Joseph answered, "I do not have that kind of power, but God will give you the answer to these dreams."

Pharaoh told his two dreams to Joseph. Joseph then told Pharaoh, "Both of your dreams have the same meaning. Through these dreams, God has shown what He will do here in Egypt. The seven good cows and the seven good heads of grain stand for seven good years. More than enough food will grow during these seven good years. The seven skinny cows and the seven shriveled heads of grain stand for seven bad years. After the seven good years, there will be seven bad years. The famine will be so bad that hardly anything will grow."

"God sent these two dreams for a good reason. God wants you to know what He has decided to do and that it will happen soon. You should get ready for the seven bad years. You should choose a very wise man to be in charge of gathering food from all over Egypt. Have men from all over the country help with this. Let them store up food in the

cities during the seven good years so that there will be plenty of food on hand during the seven bad years. You and your people will not starve and die during the famine."

Pharaoh thought that this plan was a good one. He chose Joseph to be the man in charge of storing up food in Egypt. He said, "Since God has shown you the meaning of the dreams, there is no man as wise as you are in all of Egypt. You will be the most important ruler in Egypt. Only I, Pharaoh, will be higher than you." Pharaoh gave Joseph his special ring showing that Joseph had the power to rule. He also gave Joseph fine clothes and one of his chariots so

that the Egyptian people would know that Joseph was to be honored as a ruler in Egypt.

Seven years passed and plenty of food was saved in storehouses all over Egypt. Then the seven bad years came, just as God had said they would. Pharaoh sent the hungry people to Joseph, who made sure that food was passed out to them. The famine was everywhere around Egypt as well, and people from other countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain so that they would not starve and die.

God watched over and blessed Joseph's life.

Passages

Hebrews 13:5b - "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Acts 17:28a - For in Him we live and move and have our being.

Philippians 4:13 - I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Genesis 39:9b - "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Activity One - Number the following events in order (1 - 9) in Joseph's life.

_____ Potiphar's wife lies about Joseph.

_____ Joseph appears before Pharaoh.

_____ Joseph is sold as a slave to Potiphar in Egypt.

_____ The chief butler and the chief baker have dreams.

_____ Pharaoh makes Joseph a ruler in Egypt.

_____ Joseph is put into prison.

_____ Joseph tells the chief butler and chief baker what their dreams mean.

_____ Joseph explains the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams.

_____ Pharaoh has two dreams.

God watches over us and guides and blesses our lives for our good.

