

October 3, 2012

Joseph Interprets Dreams    Genesis 41

### LESSON FOCUS

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

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

#### Joseph the Interpreter of Dreams (Genesis 40:1 - 41:36)

Though the Egyptian magicians claimed credit and glory for themselves, Joseph consistently gave all glory to his God for all of the many blessings he had received. This included his ability to interpret dreams.

Again Joseph is wronged when Pharaoh's chief butler is restored to his position, but forgets all about him. He languishes another two full years in prison, and yet we are given no indication that he is anything but faithful to his God. It is often a relatively easy thing to remain faithful during times of brief hardship. Joseph here gives example of patient, humble service in the face of prolonged, terrible, and unjust affliction.

Joseph had to shave his beard prior to appearing before Pharaoh. To come before Pharaoh with a beard would have been an offense. The Egyptians allowed their beards to grow only when in mourning, while the Hebrews shaved their beards only when in mourning.

It took courage for Joseph to tell Pharaoh that God will give him an answer to his dreams since Pharaohs typically regarded themselves as gods.

#### Joseph as Second in Command in Egypt (Genesis 41:37-57)

Because of his demonstration of wisdom in interpreting Pharaoh's dreams, Joseph was given a position second only to Pharaoh himself. (We might compare his office to Britain's Prime Minister, who is subject only to the King or Queen.)

God gave Joseph not only the ability to interpret dreams, but also the wisdom to rule Egypt. Thus Joseph was finally allowed to see why God had allowed such hardship to come into his life.

Countless lives were saved through his actions, most notably the life of his family, through whom the Savior would be born.

### APPLICATIONS

1. God's grace is at the forefront of this Bible truth. We see again how our great and mighty God always provides for all our needs just as He cared for Joseph. We see His love not only in the forgiveness and salvation He has won for us, but also in His gracious mercy upon us each day of our lives. Our God always provides for all our needs. Our God always guides our lives for good.

**"The LORD was with Joseph."** That same Lord is also watching over and providing for us!

2. Note that Joseph's entire experience is a picture of the experience of all of Israel in Egypt. As Joseph arrived in Egypt alone and in need, so also did the small family of Israel. As Joseph was first made to thrive and prosper in the house of Potiphar and then unjustly imprisoned, so the nation of Israel first prospered (growing from 70 to over 2,000,000) and was then placed under unjust bondage. As Joseph enjoyed the favor of the people during the good times, so Israel at first enjoyed the favor of the Egyptians and the abundance of Goshen.

3. Doing the right thing may cost us dearly. Joseph left behind his coat rather than give in to temptation. More than that, he was sent to prison as a direct result of doing the right thing.

## **BIBLE STORY**

### **Joseph Interprets Dreams    Genesis 41**

Read from your Bible. Ask students to find it in a Bible too. Those that can read can follow along. Choose the passages you would like to read aloud. Use visuals to help tell the story.

*Have you ever had troubles in your life?*

*Are there times when you feel alone, as though your friends have deserted you?*

*What do you do for help and comfort at these times?*

*Have you wondered why these things happen?*

*Joseph suffered many hardships while he was in Egypt, but God did not forget about him. God had a plan for him.*

*We, too, realize that God is always with us and has a plan for us as well.*

### **Prayer**

Dear Lord, As we study today about Joseph's experiences in Egypt, help us to understand Your reason for it by seeing how Joseph and all of Your children benefited from his situation. Help us also remember that You are constantly our Guide. Amen.

### **Joseph in Prison**

Joseph had to stay in the king's prison. This did not mean that God had forgotten all about Joseph. The keeper of the prison liked Joseph very much and he 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 that same 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 that 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 be put in 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 birthday and had a big celebration. He had his men bring the butler back to the palace and he was given his job back. 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. Then 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. Then 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 I and the chief baker 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 had changed his clothes, he was brought before the king.

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 that He had decided to do this, and 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 that 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.” He then gave Joseph his special ring which showed that he had the power to rule. He also gave Joseph fine clothes and had him ride in one of his chariots so that the Egyptian people would know that he was to be honored as a ruler in Egypt.

The seven years came and plenty of food was saved in storehouses all over Egypt. Then the seven bad years came, just as God had said it would. Pharaoh had the hungry people go to Joseph, and he made sure that food was passed out to them. But 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.

## **BIBLE CHALLENGE**

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

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

Read this passage from your Bible. Ask students to locate it in a Bible too. Help them learn this verse.

### **Activity 1: What the Bible Tells Us**

Look up the following passages. Discuss how these passages apply to Joseph and his experiences in Egypt. Then explain in a few sentences each how these passages also apply to us today in our lives.

- Romans 8:28
- Acts 17:28a

### **Activity 2: Paper Activities**

#### **Closing Prayer**

Lord Jesus, I know You are always with me, guiding me, protecting me, and making all things work out for my good. Please give me strength to overcome temptation, for without You I am helpless against the attacks of the devil. Please help me to give all glory to You for the gifts and abilities with which You have blessed me. Please forgive me all my sins and keep me forever as Your child and heir. In Jesus saving name. Amen.

## GAMES

### Game 1: Leaping the Nile

***What You'll Need:***

Yarn

***What You'll Do***

Place 2 long pieces of yarn on the floor about 1 foot apart to represent the Nile. Have the children try and jump the Nile without falling in. Move one piece of yarn farther, making the river wider and have the kids try again. Repeat several more times, making the river wider each time until none of the children can make it across.

***Talk About It:*** Tell the children that today's story takes place in Egypt, which has one of the largest rivers in the world called The Nile.

God gave Joseph a very special ability and He helped him to use it to help others. Because he was willing to help others, he became a ruler in Egypt. God gives each one of us special abilities to help others. God made you just the way he wanted to make you. You are different than every other person. What matters the most is that you use the special abilities that God gave you to help others just like Joseph did.

## **“Game” 2: Dreamy Corn**

### ***What You’ll Need:***

16 oz Can of Corn  
Bottled Italian Salad Dressing  
Can Opener  
Mixing Bowl  
Mixing Spoon  
Plastic Spoons  
Plastic Cups

### ***What You’ll Do:***

Open the can of corn and drain.  
Pour a couple of tablespoons of dressing into bowl.  
Pour corn into bowl.  
Mix well.  
Serve in plastic cups.

***Talk About It:*** The pharaoh had two dreams. In one dream, seven large ears of corn were eaten by seven skinny ears of corn. In the other dream, seven fat cows were eaten by seven skinny cows. The skinny cows and the skinny corn stayed skinny; they did not get bigger even though they had eaten the other fat corn and cows.

God revealed the meaning of the dreams to Joseph. There would be seven years of great harvest, followed by seven years of famine.



## SCIENCE EXPERIMENT

### The Incredible Hoop Glider!

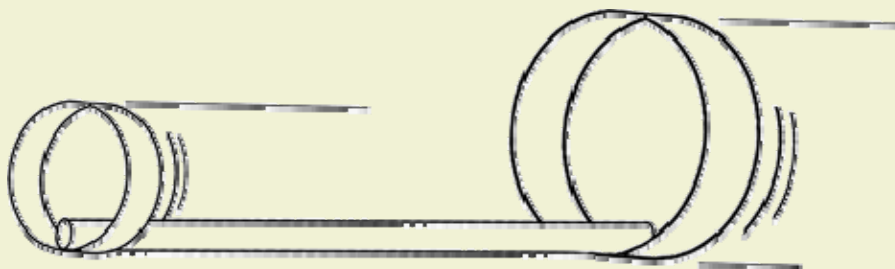
#### YOU WILL NEED:

- A regular plastic drinking straw
- 3 X 5 inch index card or stiff paper
- Tape
- Scissors



#### WHAT TO DO:

1. Cut the index card or stiff paper into 3 separate pieces that measure 1 inch (2.5 cm) by 5 inches (13 cm.)
2. Take 2 of the pieces of paper and tape them together into a hoop as shown. Be sure to overlap the pieces about half an inch (1 cm) so that they keep a nice round shape once taped.
3. Use the last strip of paper to make a smaller hoop, overlapping the edges a bit like before.
4. Tape the paper loops to the ends of the straw as shown below. (notice that the straw is lined up on the inside of the loops)



5. That's it! Now hold the straw in the middle with the hoops on top and throw it in the air similar to how you might throw a dart angled slightly up. With some practice you can get it to go farther than many paper airplanes.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

Can we really call that a plane? It may look weird, but you will discover it flies surprisingly well. The two sizes of hoops help to keep the straw balanced as it flies. The big hoop creates "drag" (or air resistance) which helps keep the straw level while the smaller hoop in at the front keeps your super hooper from turning off course. Some have asked why the plane does not turn over since the hoops are heavier than the straw. Since objects of different weight generally fall at the same speed, the hoop will keep its "upright" position.

## MAKE IT AN EXPERIMENT

The project above is a **DEMONSTRATION**. To make it a true experiment, you can try to answer these questions:

1. Does the placement of the hoops on the straw affect its flight distance?
2. Does the length of straw affect the flight? (You can cut the straws or attach straws together to test this)
3. Do more hoops help the hoop glider to fly better?
4. Do the hoops have to be lined up in order for the plane to fly well?



