

Bible Lessons

The Life

of

Joseph

VOLUME 3



G. L. TenBroeke

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by

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Contents

Preface.....	3
JOSEPH'S DREAMS.....	5
JOSEPH SENT TO SEEK HIS BRETHREN.....	9
JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT.....	13
JOSEPH PUT IN PRISON.....	17
JOSEPH STANDS BEFORE PHAROAH.....	21
JOSEPH RULER OVER EGYPT.....	25
JOSEPH PROVES HIS BROTHERS.....	29
JOSEPH'S BROTHERS RETURN.....	33
JOSEPH'S CUP FOUND WITH BENJAMIN.....	37
JOSEPH REVEALS HIMSELF TO HIS BROTHERS.....	41
JOSEPH SENDS FOR HIS FATHER.....	45
ISRAEL GOES DOWN TO EGYPT.....	49
JOSEPH'S TWO SONS ARE BLESSED.....	53
ISRAEL BLESSES HIS SONS.....	57
THE DEATHS OF JACOB AND JOSEPH.....	61
Answers to Questions.....	65

Preface

As Timothy knew the holy Scriptures “from a child”, so it should be the desire of every Christian parent that, from an early age, their children should be well acquainted with the sacred pages.

The aim of this series is to put before little children, in simple form, the fundamental truths of the faith, by consecutively studying the Bible.

The content being interspersed with questions, and colouring texts, it is hoped that the interest of younger children will be encouraged.

It is however the desire of the publishers that the Spirit of Truth will Himself apply the truth to the hearts of the young children who may read these pages, and teach the way of salvation as only He can.

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Chapter 1

JOSEPH'S DREAMS

When God had finished speaking to Jacob at Bethel, he built a pillar to mark the very place where God had talked with him. He then gathered his family, along with the flocks and herds, and started on his way toward Hebron, where Isaac lived. How he longed to see his aged father! What wonderful things had happened since he left his father's house!

They had come almost as far as Bethlehem, when they had to stop. God gave Rachel another baby son; but sadly, after he was born, Rachel died. Jacob called the baby Benjamin. He now had twelve sons. Jacob buried Rachel and set a pillar upon her grave. Then he travelled on toward Hebron.

Finally, Jacob arrived at his father's home. They had so much to tell each other. Jacob's children now met their grandfather Isaac for the first time. No doubt, he told them all that God had done and all that God had promised to him and to their great grandfather, Abraham.

I expect that you like to visit your grandfather and grandmother. May the Lord help you to listen, especially when they give good advice or when they tell what the Lord has done for them.

Quickly, the remaining years of Isaac's life passed by. The time drew near that he must die. Isaac was 180 years old when he died. Esau came down from his home to help Jacob bury their father in the cave at Hebron, where Abraham, Sarah and Rebekah were buried.

Jacob lived in the land of Canaan where his father had lived. As his sons grew older and became young men, they watched over the flocks. His son Joseph, Rachel's eldest son, was now seventeen years old. He was a very obedient boy and his father could trust him in all things. Because of this, Jacob felt a very special love to him.

Sad to say, Jacob's other sons were not so careful to speak and do right things. This grieved Joseph and he would tell his father about their evil ways. How good it is to have a tender conscience like Joseph's.

Because Jacob loved Joseph so much, he made a special coat for him. It was made with many beautiful colours. When Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved him the most, they became very jealous. They began to hate him and could not speak kindly to him.

One night, God gave to Joseph a very strange dream. In his dream, he

and his brothers were in the field, binding the shocks of corn into sheaves, when Joseph's sheaf stood upright and his brothers' sheaves bowed down before it. When he told his brothers about his dream, they said: "Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words."

Joseph dreamed another time. In this dream he saw the sun, the moon and eleven stars bow down before him. After telling his brothers and his father about this strange dream, Jacob reproved his son for the dreams saying: "Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" Yet Jacob wondered what these dreams meant. In those days, God often spoke by dreams. Joseph believed that God had given him those dreams to tell what would happen in days to come.

You can read about this in Genesis chapter 35 verses 6 to 29 and chapter 37 verses 1 to 11.

Questions:

1. What did Jacob call Rachel's baby?
2. How old was Isaac when he died?
3. What did Jacob make for Joseph?
4. Joseph's brothers became jealous and began to (two words)
5. Who gave Joseph his dreams?

'Tis better to suffer than sin;
For sin, when its pleasures are past,
By those who have revelled therein,
Is always found bitter at last.

The tongue of
the wise useth
knowledge
aright: but the
mouth of fools
poureth out
foolishness.
Proverbs 15:2

Chapter 2

JOSEPH SENT TO SEEK HIS BRETHREN

Jacob and his family were living in Hebron. This was the same place where Abraham had lived many years before. Because Jacob's flocks and herds were so large, probably the pastures around Hebron were soon used up. Jacob's ten older sons took the flocks to Shechem to find pasture for them there.

After they had been away for some time, Jacob (who was also called Israel) wanted to know how they were getting on. He called for Joseph and sent him to Shechem so he could bring back a report. Joseph was very pleased to do this for his father, even though it meant a journey of fifty miles.

When Joseph arrived at Shechem, he could not find his brothers. As he wandered in the field, a certain man found him and asked what he was looking for. Joseph answered: "I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed *their flocks*." The man answered, that he had heard them say they were going to Dothan. Joseph, no doubt, felt thankful that he had met this man who could tell him where his brothers were.

Quickly Joseph hurried toward Dothan. How eager he was to see his brothers and learn of their state. While he was yet a great way off, his brothers saw him coming across the fields. Sadly, they were not very happy to see him.

They said one to another: "Behold, this dreamer cometh, ... let us slay him.... and we shall see what will become of his dreams." When Reuben, the eldest brother, heard their plans, he warned them not to kill Joseph. He told them to put him into a deep pit (or hole in the ground) instead. Reuben hoped he would have an opportunity to bring Joseph out of the pit and return him to his father. The others quickly agreed to do as Reuben had said.

When Joseph came near, they took hold of him and tore off his beautiful coat of many colours. Then his brothers cast him down into a dark, empty pit. Poor Joseph must have been hungry and thirsty. However, he was given no food or water to drink! No doubt, he felt very lonely and afraid. He cried out to his brothers, asking them to take him out of that horrible pit. His brothers paid no attention to his crying; instead they sat down to eat their lunch. How cruel they were!

While they were eating, they saw a company of people on camels coming toward them. They were Ishmeelites, who were going down to Egypt to sell their spices and myrrh. Judah, another of Joseph's brothers, said to the rest: "What profit *is it if* we slay our brother? ... let us sell him to the Ishmeelites." Reuben was not with them at this time; perhaps he had gone to another part of the field. However, the rest agreed with Judah.

Quickly they pulled Joseph out of the pit. How happy he was to be removed from the dark pit, but very soon his happiness was turned to grief. Instead of letting him go free, his brothers sold him as a slave to these strangers for twenty pieces of silver. He pleaded with his brothers to let him go, but they refused to listen to his bitter cries. What a sad day it was for Joseph! He would now be carried far away into another land; far away from his dear father and little brother Benjamin. Perhaps he thought what good can ever come out of this? As the Ishmeelites left, most of Joseph's brothers were glad to be rid of him. They thought they would never see him again.

You can read about this in Genesis chapter 37 verses 12 to 28.

Questions:

6. Who found Joseph wandering in the field? (3 words)
7. Who did Joseph say he was seeking?
8. Which brother hoped to bring Joseph back to his father?
9. Where did Joseph's brothers cast him?
10. How many pieces of silver was Joseph sold for?

He came
unto His
own, and
his own
received
him not.

John 1:11

Chapter 3

JOSEPH SOLD IN EGYPT

Reuben returned to the pit, hoping to take Joseph out and bring him to his father. No doubt, he began to call for Joseph, but there was no answer. Reuben was very troubled. Being the eldest, he felt responsible for Joseph. Reuben rent (tore) his clothes. In those days, people did this when they were greatly troubled. Reuben went to tell the rest of his brothers that Joseph was not in the pit.

After his brothers told him what they had done, they all agreed on a plan to deceive their father. They killed one of the goats and dipped Joseph's coat in its blood. Then they brought the bloodstained coat to their father and told him that they had found it. They asked him if he knew whether it was his son's coat. They made up a wicked lie to cover up their wicked deed.

When Jacob saw the bloodstained coat, he said: "It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces." Do you remember how Jacob deceived his own father with the skins of a goat? Now his sin had come back upon himself. The Bible tells us: "they that ... sow wickedness, reap the same."

How Jacob's heart was broken! He rent (tore) his clothes and put on sackcloth (a very rough cloth). He wept over his son for so long that the rest of his sons and daughters thought he would never get over it. They tried to comfort their father, but he refused to be comforted. He said: "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning."

Even when they saw their father overcome with sorrow, the wicked brothers would not tell him the truth. They let him believe that Joseph was really killed by some wild beast.

While his father was mourning for him, the Ishmeelites were taking Joseph farther away from his father's house. Even though his brothers had sold him and Joseph felt all alone, yet: "the Lord was with Joseph". Day after day they travelled across the hot desert until they arrived in the beautiful country of Egypt. Here Joseph would have seen the mighty pyramids and the great Nile River.

Joseph was sold as a slave to a man named Potiphar, who was the captain of Pharaoh's guard. Pharaoh was the king of Egypt. What a change had taken place in Joseph's life; from dwelling in tents with his father Jacob,

to living in a beautiful house in Egypt as a servant. The people of Egypt worshipped many false gods. Joseph was only seventeen years old when he was taken down to Egypt. How difficult it would be to stand alone and worship the ONE TRUE GOD. The Lord put His fear in Joseph's heart so that he could not depart from Him.

Even though Joseph was grieved that his brothers had sold him, yet he was always obedient and cheerful to his master. Potiphar saw that the Lord was with Joseph and made all that he did to prosper. He also saw that Joseph was a very honest boy, one whom he could trust. Soon he put Joseph in charge of all his house. He put all that he had under his care. Potiphar knew that God had blessed his house for Joseph's sake.

You can read about this in Genesis chapter 37 verses 29 to 36 and chapter 39 verses 1 to 6

Questions:

11. What did Joseph's brothers dip his coat in?
12. What do those that sow wickedness reap?
13. Who was with Joseph?
14. What had the Lord put in Joseph's heart?
15. Why had God blessed Potiphar's house? (3 words)

Joseph hated, nearly slain,
(See what hardened brethren do!)
Mercy interfered again,
Yet they stripped and sold him too;
Poor old Jacob's heart was rent,
Comfort he refused to share,
But with Joseph mercy went,
See God's wondrous timely care.

Be not
deceived; God
is not mocked:
for whatsoever
a man soweth,
that shall he
also reap.

Galatians 6:7

Chapter 4

JOSEPH PUT IN PRISON

Although Joseph was a stranger and a slave, he was also admired in Potiphar's house. After some time, he was tempted by his master's wife to commit a wicked sin; but Joseph remembered that the Lord was watching, even when he was far away in a strange home. He answered his master's wife: ". . . how . . . can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Day after day she kept tempting Joseph to sin. How this grieved Joseph! Because we are born with wicked hearts, we love sin; but God had given Joseph a new heart that hated sin. May the Lord help you to pray: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

One day his master's wife caught hold of Joseph's coat to try and force him to sin. Joseph left the coat in her hand, and ran out of the house. Joseph would not do wrong to please her. Her love to Joseph now turned to hatred. She made up a lie and told her husband that Joseph tried to hurt her.

Potiphar believed his wife and put Joseph into the prison: "a place where the king's prisoners were bound." What a sad day! His hands and feet hurt from the heavy iron chains with which he was bound. Once again, he must suffer because of the evil deeds of others.

Even here in the dark prison, the Bible tells us "the Lord was with Joseph and shewed him mercy." Although in prison, Joseph remained cheerful and kind and very respectful. The keeper of the prison found that Joseph was a good, honest man. He put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners.

While Joseph was in the prison, the king sent two men there because he was angry with them. One was the king's chief butler (who served his wine) and the other was the chief baker (who served his food). They were put under Joseph's care.

One morning Joseph found them looking very sad. As Joseph was concerned for others, he asked what made them so sad. The men answered that they had each dreamed in the night and no one could interpret their dreams. Even in Egypt, people believed that a dream could tell them what would happen in days to come.

Joseph told the men that his God could give the meaning of the dreams. First the chief butler told Joseph his dream. He saw three branches of a vine,

which budded, and the blossoms became ripe grapes, which he squeezed into Pharaoh's cup and gave to Pharaoh to drink.

Joseph told the butler that the three branches were three days. In three days Pharaoh would take him out of prison and make him the butler again. Joseph asked the butler to remember him when he was restored and to ask Pharaoh to bring him out of prison because he had done nothing wrong.

Having heard what would happen to the chief butler, the chief baker quickly told his dream to Joseph. In his dream, he had three white baskets on his head. In the top basket were many kinds of baked foods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them out of the basket on his head.

Joseph told the baker that the three baskets meant three days. In three days Pharaoh would take him from prison and hang him on a tree.

Three days later Pharaoh had a birthday and made a great feast for all his servants. He sent for the chief butler and baker and did to them just as Joseph had said.

In his happiness at being restored, the chief butler forgot all about Joseph.

You can read about this in Genesis chapters 39-40.

Questions:

16. Who did Joseph say his sin would be against?
17. What had Joseph been given that hated sin?
18. Where did Potiphar put Joseph?
19. Who did Joseph say could give the meaning of the dreams?
20. Did the chief butler remember Joseph?

Create
in me a
clean
heart,
O God.

Psalms 51:10

Chapter 5

JOSEPH STANDS BEFORE PHARAOH

Two full years had passed since Joseph interpreted the dreams of the chief butler and chief baker. Yet, Joseph was still in the prison. It seemed that he would never come out of prison.

Even though the butler forgot Joseph, the Lord God did not forget him. The Lord made something very wonderful to happen, which would end Joseph's captivity. One night Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had a strange dream. In his dream he saw seven fat, healthy cows which went to feed in a meadow. Then he saw seven thin, starving cows come after them, and they ate up the seven fat cows. This caused Pharaoh to awake. Soon he went back to sleep and dreamed again. In this dream, he saw seven full ears of corn on one stalk. After them came seven thin cars of corn, and they ate up the seven full ears.

When Pharaoh awoke in the morning, his heart was troubled and he wished to know what his dreams meant. He called for all the wise men of Egypt, but not one could tell the meaning of his dreams. When the butler saw Pharaoh's distress, he remembered his own dream and how Joseph had interpreted it.

The butler said to Pharaoh: "I do remember my faults this day: Pharaoh was wroth (*angry*) with his servants, and put me in ward (*prison*) ... *both* me and the chief baker: and we dreamed a dream in one night, . . . and *there was* there with us a young man, an Hebrew, and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams."

Pharaoh sent a messenger to the prison to bring Joseph to him. First, Joseph needed to wash and shave and put on clean clothes. Then he was quickly brought to the palace where Pharaoh lived.

Pharaoh told Joseph about his dreams and said he had heard that Joseph was able to understand and interpret a dream.

Joseph spoke very humbly and told Pharaoh that it was only with God's help that he could interpret dreams. After listening to Pharaoh's dreams, Joseph told him that the two dreams had one meaning. God was showing to Pharaoh what He was going to do in days to come. The seven fat cows and seven full cars of corn meant seven years of plenty, when all the land of Egypt would have a very great harvest. There would be an abundance of

food.

After the seven years of plenty, there would come seven years of famine when nothing would grow. The famine would be so great that the people would forget all about the years of plenty. It would also affect all the countries round about Egypt.

Joseph then advised Pharaoh to seek out a wise man and set him over the land of Egypt. He suggested that a fifth part of the food should be stored up during the seven years of plenty, so the people would have enough to eat during the seven years of famine.

Pharaoh was pleased with Joseph and his counsel. He asked: “Can we find such *a one* as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?”

Pharaoh made Joseph ruler over all his people. He gave Joseph the ring that was on his hand. (The ring held Pharaoh’s seal, which was needed to make any law.) He also clothed Joseph in beautiful garments and put a gold chain about his neck.

He provided Joseph with a chariot that was second only to Pharaoh’s. Wherever he went in the land of Egypt, the people must bow the knee to show him honour.

Pharaoh also gave Joseph a new name. He called him Zaph-nath-pa-ane-ah, which means: “the man to whom secrets are revealed.”

Last, he gave Joseph a wife named Asenath. She was the daughter of a priest (or prince) in Egypt.

You can read about this in Genesis chapter 41 verses 1 to 45.

Questions:

21. How many years had passed since Joseph interpreted the butler’s dream?
22. Who did not forget Joseph?
23. How many years of plenty would there be? How many years of famine?
24. What must the people of Egypt do to show honour to Joseph?
25. What did the name that Pharaoh gave Joseph mean? (7 words)

THE FEAR OF THE
LORD IS THE
INSTRUCTION
OF WISDOM;
AND BEFORE
HONOUR IS
HUMILITY.

PROVERBS 15:33

Chapter 6

JOSEPH, RULER OVER EGYPT

The Hebrew boy, who came down to Egypt as a slave, was now a strong young man and governor over all the land. Instead of the dark, damp prison, he lived in a beautiful palace with many servants waiting on him. All this greatness did not change his heart. Joseph remained kind and helpful to all the people.

God blessed Joseph with two little sons. He named the eldest son Manasseh, which means forgetting: “For God.... hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father’s house.” The second son he named Ephraim, which means fruitful, “For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

Through God’s blessing, the earth produced very large crops. Joseph rode throughout the land of Egypt, gathering all the extra food into storehouses, which he built in every city. There was so much grain stored up that it could not be counted.

Soon the seven years of plenty were over, and the years of famine began. The famine also came to all the countries round about Egypt. Nothing grew in the fields and very quickly the people used up the food in their homes. Then the people cried to Pharaoh for help. Pharaoh told them: “Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.” Joseph opened the storehouses and sold corn to the Egyptians.

The people of other lands also came into Egypt to buy corn from Joseph. Even in Canaan where Jacob lived, the famine was very great. Jacob and his sons were very rich in cattle, gold and silver, but without grain, they and their cattle would die.

One day Jacob told his sons that he had heard there was corn in Egypt. He sent his ten oldest sons to go and buy corn. He kept his youngest son Benjamin at home with him lest he should meet with harm as Joseph had.

As the ten brothers journeyed to Egypt, perhaps they remembered that the merchants who bought Joseph were going to that same country. Such thoughts would only bring guilt and sorrow, so they would try to think of other things.

When they arrived in Egypt, they found the fields were just as barren as those in Canaan. But they soon learned that even though there was great

famine in Egypt, there was plenty of food in the great storehouses.

Joseph was very busy, as all the people came to him to buy corn. One day as Joseph was selling to the people, he looked up and saw ten men from his own country bowing before him. Joseph knew they were his brothers. However, his brothers did not know him. It had been nearly twenty years since they last saw him as a young lad. Now he was a full-grown man. He spoke the language of the Egyptians. They had never expected to see him, and surely not as the great governor over all the land.

Joseph remembered his dreams and felt greatly humbled at the way in which God had fulfilled them. Now he understood the reason for all his trials and why God had permitted him to be sold into Egypt.

You can read about this in Genesis chapter 41 verses 46 to 57 and chapter 42 verses 1 to 9.

Questions:

26. What was the name of Joseph's eldest son?
 27. What did this name mean?
 28. What was the name of Joseph's second son?
 29. What did this name mean?
 30. Where did Joseph put all the extra food?
-

THE LORD
KNOWETH THE
DAYS OF THE
UPRIGHT: ...AND
IN THE DAYS OF
FAMINE THEY
SHALL BE
SATISFIED.

PSALM 37:18,19