

OT History for Juniors: Lesson 9, "ISRAEL IN BONDAGE"

I. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW

A. Jacob and Esau were twins

1. The blessing was for Jacob, but he was not the firstborn: how did Jacob try to get the blessing?
2. What happened to Jacob because of his sinful way in getting the blessing? He spent 20 years in Haran with his uncle Laban.
3. Laban deceived Jacob in his wives and in his wages. But God blessed Jacob; gave him a large family and much riches, and protected him from Laban and then Esau

B. Jacob had family problems

1. He had two wives (Rachel and Leah) and he had sons by 4 different mothers! There was a lot of jealousy in Jacob's house. Rachel, Jacob's favorite wife, had two sons, Joseph and Benjamin.
2. Jacob showed that he loved one son more than the others. Joseph was a godly child, and his older brothers were evil, and often he would tell on them. Jacob made a special coat for Joseph. *His brothers hated him.*
3. His brothers hated Joseph even more when he told them his dreams (describe [the 11 sheaves of corn bowed down to his sheaf; the sun moon and eleven stars bowed down to him]). Envy!

II. JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT

A. The brothers' plan

1. Joseph's brothers were looking after sheep and their father sent him to see them

- a. But when the brothers saw him coming, they decided to kill him. That would put a stop to his dreams, they thought. They wanted to kill him, put him in a pit and say a beast killed him!
- b. Reuben, the oldest, said that they shouldn't kill him, but put him in a pit (he hoped to rescue him)
- c. Judah had a better idea, he said. No point killing him. Let's sell him into slavery to Egypt.

2. A group of merchants were coming along that road and the brothers took their 17-yr old brother out of the pit, and sold him to the men for twenty pieces of silver.

- a. How cruel and wicked. They gave their brother to strangers; they tied him up and carried him away.
- b. The brothers hoped that they would never see him again. How Joseph cried for help, but they did not listen to his cries. Read Gen. 42:21.
- c. When Reuben came back he was very sad that Joseph was gone, but the brothers took Joseph's coat, tore it in pieces, killed a goat and dipped his coat in the blood, and told their father that an animal had killed him. Poor Jacob mourned for his son for many days.

B. Joseph in Potiphar's house

1. When Joseph arrived in Egypt, he was sold to a man called Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officers.

- a. For a while, things went well for Joseph. His master was pleased with him, and even made him chief over all the other servants. God was with him, even though he was far from home.
- b. But, the devil hated Joseph and tried to make him sin: Potiphar had a wicked wife, and she tried to make Joseph lie with her in her bed. Joseph knew that this was wrong, "*How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*," he said (Gen. 39:9)
- c. Potiphar's wife was very angry and she told wicked lies to her husband about Joseph, and Potiphar in his anger threw Joseph into prison!

2. The Egyptian prison was a terrible place.

- a. But even in prison, God was with Joseph. The jailor was pleased with Joseph and made him chief over the other prisoners.
- b. Sometime later, two other men were brought to the prison: one was Pharaoh's butler & the other was Pharaoh's baker.
- c. One morning Joseph saw the two men and they both looked very sad. He asked them what was the matter and they said, "We both dreamed," and we do not know the meaning. Joseph was able to explain the dreams (butler: vine, three branches, grapes squeezed into cup [three days, back to work] and baker: three baskets on head with bread and cakes, birds eating [three days, hanged]). Both dreams came true. *But what about Joseph's dreams? Would they ever come true?*
- d. The butler did not remember Joseph and his dreams and Joseph was in prison *two more years.*

C. Joseph becomes chief ruler in Egypt

1. After two years, Pharaoh had a dream

- a. His dream was very strange: seven fat cows followed by seven thin cows who swallow up the fat cows and look no different. Seven fat ears of corn followed by seven thin ears which swallow up the fat ears.

- b. Nobody could tell Pharaoh the meaning of the dream, and then the butler remembered Joseph, so the king called for Joseph. Joseph said to Pharaoh, “*God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.*”
- c. Joseph explained the dream: Egypt will have seven years of bumper crops, the best harvest they have ever known; but after that there will be seven years of the worst ever famine. Joseph told Pharaoh to save the food from the good years so that there will be food in the famine.

2. Because Joseph gave such wise advice Pharaoh made him the chief ruler in Egypt.

- a. God gave the dream to Pharaoh and the interpretation to Joseph so that His people would not die in the famine. The famine was also in Canaan where Jacob and Joseph’s brothers lived.
- b. After the seven years of plenty were over, the seven years of famine began, and Jacob heard that there was food in Egypt so he sent his sons to Egypt but he did not send Benjamin. *Why not?*
- c. When the brothers came to Egypt they bowed down before the chief ruler. They did not know he was Joseph but Joseph knew them. *Joseph’s dream was coming true.*

III. JOSEPH TESTS HIS BROTHERS

A. Joseph arrests his brothers

1. Joseph claims that the brothers are spies, but they say, no, and they told him about their family.

- a. Joseph proposes a test: if they are telling the truth, let them bring their youngest brother (Benjamin) with them and he will keep one brother in the prison until they come back (Simeon).
- b. He also told his servants to fill their sacks with corn and put their money in the sacks. The brothers knew that God had remembered their sin against Joseph.
- c. But when they came back to Jacob and told him what had happened, Jacob did not want to lose Benjamin, so he would not send him with them.

2. But soon they had run out of food again, and so they had to take Benjamin or die of hunger.

- a. Jacob knew he had no choice. Joseph was gone, Simeon was gone, and now Benjamin!
- b. To try to gain favour with the chief ruler, Jacob told them to bring double money and presents.
- c. And Judah promised that he would look after Benjamin. If anything happened to Benjamin, he would take the blame forever. Read *Genesis 43:8-9*.

B. Joseph threatens to take Benjamin

1. When the brothers came to Egypt again, Joseph invited them all for dinner!

- a. He was very nice to them, esp. Benjamin; he asked a lot of questions about their father, and he give Simeon back to them.
- b. A very strange dinner party: the table was arranged eldest to youngest (RSJLDNGAZIB). How could the Egyptian have known the order, they wondered. Joseph gave Benjamin 5x as much food as the rest.

2. After the party, the brothers were happy, and got ready to go home

- a. But Joseph told his servants to fill the sacks with corn, put their money in the sacks, and put a silver cup in Benjamin’s sack. Then he sent his servants after them and accused them of stealing the cup. Whoever had the cup in his sack would be sold into slavery and the rest could go home.
- b. The cup was found in Benjamin’s sack! Would the brothers leave Benjamin? Joseph said that Benjamin must be a slave. *But Judah begged to take Benjamin’s place.*
- c. The brothers had learned their lesson. They were no longer the wicked, jealous men they had been. Joseph told them who he was and brought his whole family to live with him. That was how Jacob and the children of Israel came to Egypt and they would be there for 400 years.