

JOSEPH BECOMES RULER OF EGYPT

Genesis 41-42

Lesson Memory Verse: Hebrews 11:6 **“But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”** (Grades 1 & 2 memorize the portion of the verse printed in **bold**.)

Lesson Aim: To teach the students to have faith in God’s promises because He will reward them if they do.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): Can you think of any time in the year when your father and mother try to honor you in a special way? (Your birthday) Have they ever promised you something special on your birthday like going to the zoo or to the amusement park? What else have your mother and father promised to do for you on your birthday? (Give you a special party with your friends? Give you some present? Take you to your favorite eating place for your favorite food?) Did you believe that they would do what they had promised on your birthday? Sometimes mothers and fathers are not able to keep their promises, but God always keeps His. If you can believe your parents, you certainly ought to believe God. God is pleased when you believe His promises, but He is not pleased if you do not believe His promises. That is what our memory verse says to us.

HE (for Authority): Our verse says that we cannot please God without faith. Faith is very important. If faith is so important, we had better know what it is. Remember when your mother and father promised to do something special for you on your birthday? You showed your faith when you believed that they would do it, even though they had not yet done it. That was faith in your mother and father. When you believe something God promises to do for you in the Bible, you are showing faith in God. When you have faith in God, it pleases Him very much. The last part of the verse says that God “is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” This means that if you keep coming to God in prayer, and have faith that He will do what He has said, He will reward you by answering your prayers.

Let us go over our memory verse again: “But without faith (without believing His promises) it is impossible to please Him (you cannot make God happy): for he that comes to God (comes to God in prayer) must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder (God gives rewards) of them that diligently seek Him (those that truly look to Him for answers to their prayers).

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

I. God Gave a Promise to Joseph (Review Gen 37:5-11)

A. God used dreams to speak to Joseph.

1. God often used dreams to speak to people before the Bible was written (Abimelech – 20:3; Jacob – 31:11; Laban – 31:24; and the butler and baker – 40).
2. God spoke to Joseph in two dreams when he was a young lad.

B. God gave a promise to Joseph.

1. God told Joseph that his family would someday bow down to him.
2. Joseph believed God’s promise even though it seemed impossible to his brothers. Even his father doubted that it would happen.

WE: Now God speaks to us through the Bible. We need to believe that God will do what He promises in the Bible. One promise says that God will take care of all your needs (Phil 4:19). What are some needs that we have? (Clothes, food, a place to live) If you did not have any food to eat, and you prayed and asked God for some food, do you believe that He would somehow give you some food to eat? Why? (Because God will reward those who come to Him in prayer and believe that He will do what He has promised.)

II. God Kept His Promise to Joseph (Gen 37-42)

A. God tested Joseph's faith through much trouble (Gen 37-41).

1. Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave to the Midianites (37:28).
2. The Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh (37:36).
3. Potiphar put Joseph in prison where he met the butler and baker of the Pharaoh. They also had been put in prison (39:20; 40:1-4).
4. Joseph correctly interpreted the dreams of these two men (40:6-23).
5. The butler was given his job back but forgot about Joseph for two years, even though Joseph had been very kind to him (40:1-15, 23; 41:1).
6. Through all of the troubles, Joseph never complained but always did the right thing (39:1-6; 39:21-23). This showed that Joseph believed God in spite of the troubles.

WE: We need to believe God when troubles come. We must not give up. The Bible says in Isaiah 55:8 that God's ways are different but better than our ways. We must continue to believe God. He will reward our faith.

B. God rewarded Joseph's faith by making him a ruler in Egypt (Gen 41).

1. The Pharaoh had two dreams which no one could interpret. Then the butler remembered Joseph in prison and told the Pharaoh about his ability to interpret dreams (41:1-13).
2. The Pharaoh called for Joseph to come and interpret his dreams (41:14-24).
3. Joseph told the Pharaoh that God was warning him about the future; there were seven years of plenty coming that would be followed by seven years of famine (41:25-32).
4. Joseph suggested that Pharaoh choose someone to help him prepare for the famine by storing up food during the good years (41:33-36).
5. The Pharaoh chose Joseph and made him the most important man in Egypt after himself (41:37-44).

WE: God will honor us, too, if we believe His promises.

C. God rewarded Joseph's faith by making his brothers bow to him (Gen 42).

1. Famine forced Joseph's ten brothers to go to Egypt for food (42:1-5).
2. These ten brothers bowed before the governor of Egypt, not knowing they were bowing before Joseph (42:6-7). Part of God's promise to Joseph in his boyhood dream was now done. What part of the promise was done? (His brothers were bowing before him.) What was not yet done? (Only ten brothers bowed, not eleven as the dream promised. God also promised that his whole family would bow before him.) God kept all of His promises to Joseph as we shall see later.
3. Since Joseph knew that God had promised more than ten brothers to bow before him, he used a plan to get all of them to Egypt. He got them to tell him about another brother (Benjamin), and then demanded that he come with them the next time they came for food. Then he put Simeon in prison until they returned with the other brother. Even though this was a tough plan, he showed his love to them by giving back to them their money. This would make it possible for them to return quickly to buy more food and bring Benjamin. His plan did not work right away, but God blessed it, and finally it worked (42:7-38; 43:1ff).

WE: We must not be afraid to make plans that God can bless. We must not tell God what to do, but we can make plans and ask Him to bless the ones that He likes. God has given us brains to use. We must use them to make plans that He can bless. This also is a part of faith.

BE (for Action): Who can you trust on earth? (Let them make some suggestions.) If you can trust someone on this earth, then you should be able to trust God in heaven. God always keeps His promises, but men do not. God has the power to keep His promises, but men do not. Will you trust the promises that God has given to you in the Bible? If so, let us tell God that we believe His promises now and will try to believe His promises all through our lives because we want to please Him like Joseph did. (Let them have an opportunity to pray.)