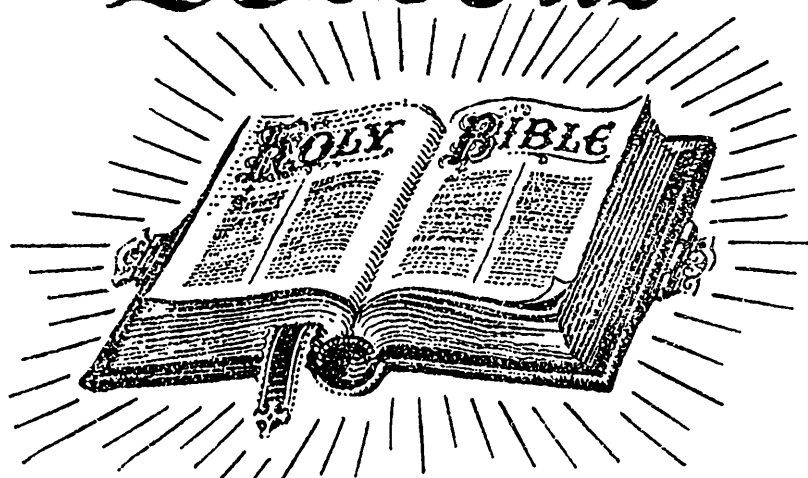


# Bible Lessons



"Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,  
we are CHANGED . . . ." II Cor. 3:18

**ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE**

Vol. 3, No. 3  
July, Aug., Sept.,  
1971

Faith Pub. House  
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# **Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People**

**Vol. 3**

**July, August, September, 1971**

**No. 3**

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**Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of  
Jesus Christ and His Church.**

**Edited by Mrs. Marie Miles, and other co-workers.**

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## **THEME FOR THIRD QUARTER**

Our lessons this quarter will be mostly about Joseph, the first son of Rachel and Jacob. He had eleven brothers and one sister.

God had promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and his posterity. But the Canaanites were a war-like people. They did not bother the handful of Israelites, but they were to grow rapidly into a large nation. No doubt this would have caused the people of Canaan to destroy them, so God's plan was that they go down into Egypt to become a great nation. God also wanted them to be a separate people. The Egyptians were proud and exclusive. They would have no associations with any foreigners. So through Joseph they were led down to the land of Egypt and there in the land of Goshen under the protection of the king, they grew to be a large nation, separate from all others. Then later God brought them back to the land of Canaan, their promised land.

In studying the people of the Old Bible and those in the days of Jacob and Joseph, we must keep in mind that they did not have the Mosaic law nor the truths that we have. They knew very little about the laws of God. They were guided by God speaking to them in various ways. We cannot judge them according to our truths, yet God made them know about Him and His great power. There seemed to be some who had a special knowledge of God. Joseph seemed to be one of them. But remember, God hates sin of all kinds, and they had to offer a sacrifice of a lamb, which was a type of Christ, the perfect Lamb of God who died on the cross and arose again for our perfect salvation.

—Sister Marie Miles

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**July 4, 1971**

### **JOSEPH AND JESUS FACE ENVY AND HATRED**

**Genesis 37:1-4; John 7:1, 5, 7; 3:35; Gen. 37:5, 7, 8a, 9-11**

Gen. 37:1 And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

2 These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren

(1)

ren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.

4 And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

John 7:1 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.

5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.

7 The world . . . me [Jesus] it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

3:35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

Gen. 37:5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

7 For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.

8a And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us?

9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

11 And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

**Memory Verse:** If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. John 15:18.

**Central Thought:** The spirit of envy refuses to admire, or have any complacency in that which does not belong to self.

**Word Definition:** Envy means "a feeling of discontent and ill will because of another's advantages, possessions, etc. A desire for something belonging to another."

**Coat of Many Colors:** A coat with long sleeves, and reaching to the feet. It was variegated, either by the loom or needle or by parts.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Chapter 36 of Genesis tells of generations of Esau who became the father of the Edomites in Mt. Seir. Verses 6 and 7 tell us that Esau's riches were so great that he took his possessions and dwelt in Edom because there was not room for him and Jacob, his brother, to dwell together in Canaan. Just as Ishmael faded out of the picture, even so Esau is dropped. The stream of sacred history leads on to the Messiah through Jacob's family. God kept His promise to Esau, and he did become a great nation. Verse 31 tells us that eight kings had reigned in Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel. We hear only of Esau's descendants after this, except when they cross the path of Israel's history.

We see a high moral and devout tone of character in Joseph when he was very young. His brethren were of a different spirit. They seemed ready to commit the vilest wickedness. Joseph saw and heard things in the field that touched his sensitive soul, and he felt duty-bound to report it to his father. This showed he loved truth and right. Neither was he ready to be a partaker of their sins. Joseph's love for right showed up his brothers' evil, and they hated him for it. Joseph was the son of Rachel, the wife Jacob loved.

In Joseph's dreams, there was a prophetic import. It probably was not the wisest thing for him to reveal the dreams, but this shows his open-mindedness and genuine simplicity. These dreams were remarkably fulfilled in Egypt 23 years later. Could the sheaves have been prophetic of Joseph being able to feed his brethren during the famine?

There are some remarkable resemblances between Joseph and the life of Jesus Christ which I feel will be good to bring to our minds for further meditations. —M. Miles

**Lesson References:** 1 John 3:10-12; Heb. 11:9; Matt. 27: 18; 1 Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:21; Prov. 27:4.

### QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Jacob have such love for Joseph? 2. Discuss the results of Jacob showing his great love to Joseph. 3. Compare what Jesus faced through God's love, His rejections, envy,

and hatred, with Joseph's life. 4. How can we today yield to any envying when tempted? 5. What did Joseph's dreams mean? Did they come true in his later life? 6. How was Joseph different from his brothers?

### COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Envy and hatred are mentioned in the catalog of sins. (Gal. 5:20) From the beginning of time they have worked in the hearts of people. Why did Cain kill Abel? "Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." (1 John 3:12). Esau showed this same envy against Jacob, and later Saul did toward David, and the Scribes and Pharisees toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Pilate said that he "knew that for envy they had delivered him" (Jesus). (Matt. 27:18) God loved His Son and the world hated Him because they saw that love. Jesus pointed out to the world their sins and exposed them and they hated Him for it because they loved darkness. Jesus' own brothers did not believe in Him. "He [Jesus] came to his own [Jews] and his own received him not."

Today, we who are "born again" have the Spirit of Christ in us. The world hates that Spirit of Christ as they did in Jesus' day. If we expose the sins of the world and point them to Christ, they will hate us unless they also repent and accept the truth. We should not be alarmed about this. The righteousness of God in our lives brings condemnation to those who are evil. They do not feel comfortable in our presence. "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you." (1 Pet. 4:4) But we should not be troubled about that. The Apostle Peter said, "Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers; they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation [or conduct] in Christ." 1 Pet. 3:16. Even though we are dear to our Father and it makes our carnal brothers hate us because our deeds are good and theirs evil, we should be encouraged to know that we will receive our reward as we are letting the light of God shine out through our lives. —M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Bible says that "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." All men's hearts are not alike. Some grow hard like flint and become like stone, while others are more impressionable and receptive to influences about them. God is able to deal with a tender heart, and so, of course, it is no wonder that we find Him selecting individuals who possess that kind of nature to deal with. The

wickedness Joseph saw about him amazed him so until he spoke of it because it appeared so heinous to him. The reason it affected him so was because his heart was so tender until it made wickedness seem hard and abrasive to him. In the time before the coming of Christ, the only tender hearts the Lord had to work with were those that were naturally so. When He found one that was impressionable, He exploited it to the fullest in order to manifest Himself through that one to others. To our feeble human minds then, that one whom God could use became outstanding in our eyes and we tend to begin to exalt the individual. But note this: whenever the individual himself begins to feel himself blessed above his fellows and begins to exercise lordship over them, that quality is then just as despicable before the Lord as is the one which envies someone because of his being blessed. True character and honesty of heart will be sensitive to wrong-doing in whatever capacity it appears, and will reject it.

Now, let us consider this: In Ezekiel 36:26-38, God, through the mouth of the prophet, foretold a time when great change would come about in the hearts and lives of people. Christ's coming and the work He performed and the sending of the Holy Spirit into the world has fixed it so that every man who elects to do so may have a tender and receptive heart. Christ proclaimed that He would give a new heart, yea, all who yield to Him become new creatures, created in righteousness and all are sensitive and receptive to moral right and astonished and dismayed at moral wrong. God is able to accomplish the fullness of His will in everyone for they are all subject to Him. None is envious of another's blessing, nor is any willing to elevate himself above another. Whatever any of us are or are able to accomplish is by the virtue of the grace of God and none has anything wherein he may boast of himself. This condition is brought about by the effectual working of the Holy Ghost within each heart. Little wonder we are exhorted to know how to possess our vessel in sanctification and in honor. True holiness will teach us how to accept one who is blessed. It will also teach us how to be blessed. —C. W. Wilson

### **EVA SUFFERING FOR CHRIST**

Eva returned to the Mills' home. She spent the night with them and the next afternoon they took her to her own home. News travels fast and the services of the previous evening had already reached the Grant family and Eva confronted a very angry parent. He forbade Bro. and Sis. Mills' entering the yard and told Eva she should never again visit them and that she

must either give up her crazy religion or leave home and never return, for he would have no one of his family stay around him and make such a fool of themselves as she had done the previous night. After speaking some encouraging words to Eva and telling her that they would pray for her, Bro. and Sis. Mills drove away.

Eva had seen her father angry many times before and had heard him make many threats while angry that she knew he did not mean and never carried out and she thought that possibly his anger would abate after a few weeks and she could again have the privilege of attending services. She took care that she did not mention the name of the Lord in his presence or speak of anything pertaining to religion. She was also unusually kind to him in every way that she could be. Her kindness reached also to her stepmother, who now could not find so much to abuse Eva about, as she was now doing her share of the work about the house since God had healed her, which was an amazement to her family and the neighborhood.

One Sunday in late September the Rhodes family drove up in their automobile and asked Eva to go home with them for a few days, to which she replied, "You will have to get Papa's permission, for he has not let me leave the place for a number of weeks."

"Surely we will get his permission," said Mr. Rhodes, and stepping from the car, he advanced toward Mr. Grant, who was standing in the yard. "We thought we would drive by and see if Eva could not come and spend a few days with us. May she?" said Mr. Rhodes as he extended his hand to Mr. Grant.

The proffered hand was ignored and Mr. Grant confronted him with an angry scowl. Pointing to the car, he said, "You get in your machine and get away from here and I don't want to see you here again. The sooner you leave the better satisfied I will be. It is such folks as you that have helped to put such nonsense in her head that the devil himself can't do anything with her. She is not going with you now or ever so long as she makes this her home."

"Please, Papa," said Eva, "let me go with them. I am sure that there will be no harm done in letting me go to spend a few days with old neighbors, and I am not needed so much here, am I?"

"No, you are not needed so much here with your crazy religion," retorted Mr. Grant, "and you either give that up or you give up your home, for I do not mean to stand for any such stuff to be carried on here." Then turning to Mr. Rhodes he said, "The sooner you leave the better pleased I will be."



Eva burst into tears as Mr. Rhodes turned and walked away. They drove a short distance down the road. Then he related his interview to the family, and stopping the car, they all wept together. They were weeping with those that wept and also asking God to give her freedom that she might serve Him in the way her heart desired.

—Parts taken from book, "Trials and Triumphs of Eva Grant"

(God stood by Sister Eva and kept her saved. And she was granted the privilege of seeing her father saved before he died. Through her life she was able to help others come to the Lord, and she died in the faith. —Editor)

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July 11, 1971

### RESULTS OF HATRED AND ENVY

Genesis 37:13a, 14b, 17b, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25a, 28;

Acts 7:9; Matt. 27:3; Gen. 37:31, 32, 34, 35

Gen. 37:13a And Israel said unto Joseph . . .

14b God, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again.

17b And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

18 And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.

19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.

23 And it came to pass when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him;

24 And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.

25a And they sat down to eat bread: . . .

28 Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

Acts 7:9 And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,

Matt. 27:3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, [Jesus] when he saw that he was condemned, repented

himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

Gen. 37:31 And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood;

32 And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no.

34 And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.

35 And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.

**Memory Verse:** I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Psalm 27:13.

**Central Thought:** While the church, God's people, are thinking of the welfare of sinners, many of the sinners are plotting their destruction.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Jacob's sons had gone to feed the flock on the parcel of ground, bought from the Schechemites, where they had committed such a horrible slaughter of the people because "the son of Hamor, prince of the country" wanted Dinah, Jacob's daughter, for his wife, and against her will detained her in his house. This enraged the brothers. (Chapter 34) No doubt Jacob was very concerned about his sons, lest the neighboring people do them harm by taking revenge.

Schechem was about 60 miles from where Jacob lived in the vale of Hebron. Dothan, where Joseph did find the brothers, after a man found him wandering in the fields and told him where they were, was about 8 miles farther from Schechem.

Ruben, even though a great transgressor (see Gen. 35:22), seemed to want to deliver Joseph safely to his father, so he suggested putting Joseph into the pit and then later he intended to take him out, but while he was gone, they sold Joseph to the caravan of Ishmeelites and Midianites. Because of safety from robbers they were traveling together, with camels carrying "spicery, and balm, and myrrh," going to Egypt.

Jacob concludes in the unprinted part of the lesson that some wild beast had devoured Joseph.

There are comparisons between the life of Joseph and Jesus: The envy and hatred that those around Jesus manifested; the robe that they cast lots for; the money Jesus was sold for; the pit of sin that Jesus came to deliver us out of; the future plan that God had for Jesus when He told it, others rejected it; the murderous schemes that were carried out; and the seeming unconcern they had for Jesus. Then Joseph's brother, Judah, (Greek name Judas) is the one who proposed the bargain of selling Joseph.

The prophet said, "They drank wine in bowls, but no man was sorry for the affliction of Joseph." Amos 6:6.

Joseph was 17 years old when he was sold and taken to Egypt as a slave. How sad for such a terrible crime against a human being to be committed in selling him! This crime has been committed for thousands of years, and in some parts of the country is still being done yet today.

**Lesson References:** John 11:53; 1 Pet. 2:22, 23; Matt. 27:35.

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. In our lesson, how was evil returned for good? 2. How do you know that the brothers considered Joseph's dreams more than his mere ambitions by the way they did? 3. Did the Jews feel they were thwarting the divine decrees of God in killing Jesus? 4. Name some more similarities between the life of Jesus and of Joseph. 5. Discuss the ways people today get into the pits of sin and our responsibilities toward helping them out, while commenting on the brothers sitting down to eat and not heeding the cries of Joseph. 6. How was one sin added to another sin?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Joseph is one who stood for righteousness, and God was with him in the midst of those who hated him for it. They outnumbered him, but his light shone the more because of their wickedness. Of course, we know that they did not have the Bible truths as we have today, nor can we judge them under the truth that we know, but they had much more truth than they were living up to. But God had His ways of teaching them, although it took years. Experiences, heartaches, and God's mercy brought Jacob and his sons to a greater insight of God's ways. Jacob was reaping some things, but he was becoming a humble man, looking to God. His loss of Joseph, who was his dearest and nearest child to his heart, touched him deeply. Maybe he had let Joseph come between himself and God. God wants all of our love and wants to be first in our lives. If we depend on something or someone more than God, we should

not be surprised if God removes that prop. We have such a little of Jacob's life recorded that we do not know all about his thoughts, nor desires, but one thing, we can know today what God requires of us and how He deals with us. God had a plan to work out in the lives of Jacob's posterity, and as we study about Joseph we will see it unfold.

But back to our thought of the results of envy and hatred. One seed of sin that is allowed to get into the heart will grow and bear fruit. As those boys mourned with their father, no doubt their mourning was different. They saw what they had done, and the grief they had caused to come to their aged father. They possibly regretted a thousand times over selling Joseph and the lie they had told. They, no doubt, carried a heavy load of condemnation. Maybe they had nightmares as they worried over the fate of their brother. You just can't do wrong and get by. Sin will add to sin. They no doubt wished they could recall some time and they would have done differently. Isn't that so today with those who do evil? But there is a way out and that is through Jesus Christ. Confess your sins, repent with godly sorrow, correct it, and the load of sin and condemnation will be lifted, then you will be free again.

—M. Miles

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### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Who can tell the results of envy and hatred, for who is able to detect all the places they have exercised influence save God? Such attitudes of heart and mind are not hideous monsters that hurl themselves suddenly upon helpless mortals and cause them to perform some awful evil act on the spur of the moment. No, indeed, we as mortals might be the better off if it were that way for they would be more readily identifiable and more effectively resisted. Instead, they slip in very, very slyly, and ever so cunningly do they contrive to cover their presence and hide their true character. Every act they perform and every influence they exert is very carefully justified before hand, so that their subject will detect no condemnation of conscience and thus discover their presence. They are masters at concealment and past masters at subversion. When we begin to question the motive of an act they have promoted, they immediately indicate to us that the other individual had no right to act as he did and thus deflect our attention away from their activity in us. They creep into hearts and begin to influence lives sometimes from childhood, just as the story in the lesson indicates. This event related in the story didn't just suddenly burst forth and progress to fruition in a matter of a few days. It was the ultimate harvest

of long years of maturity and thus heartache was just one more added to a long list of accumulated injuries and hurts and sore wounds. Oh, how easy it is for a little hatred in a heart to inflict subtle, undercover wounds, designed to injure someone but yet done so subtly until no one else would detect it, or even suspect! Let us be sure that regardless of how cleverly the act is done, God still sees and knows it all and will not overlook.

—C. W. Wilson

### CRIES FROM THE PITS OF SIN

A boy who had left his happy home only two or three days since, finds himself in a dark pit, or tank. He cannot escape out of it. Life about us is full of worse pits, deeper because their bottom is hell—into which thousands of young men and young women, too, are cast.

Brothers had cast Joseph into this pit. There are brothers who evermore are dragging down their brothers into dark snares. Are we our brother's keepers? Yes; yet see how many who ought to bear the image of God and ought to be the loyal guardians of other lives, rest not unless they cause someone to sin. It is a terrible thing to sin, to debauch one's own conscience, to stain one's own soul; it is a far worse thing to cause others to sin, to put the cup to clean lips, to whisper impure, unholy words to innocent ears. Yet there are brothers who are leading brothers into snares and causing the young and innocent to fall into evil pits.

Every drinking saloon is a pit, a thousand times darker and more deadly than Joseph's, into which hundreds of the noble boys and young men of the country are entrapped, never to come out as they went in. Every gambling den is such a pit, where honor and truth and character are the real ventures, where immortal souls are the fortunes lost. Every house of the strange woman is such a pit. "Her feet go down to death! Her house is the way to hell."

There are pits in the "red light" districts. Red lights should be hoisted over these pitfalls of death which are open everywhere. He who loves his own soul, who loves peace, honor, purity, life, should shun them. Those who fall into them can be rescued only by the strong hand of Almighty God.

But we are not done with this picture. See the brothers feasting while this lad, their own brother, lies yonder in the pit. "How cruel! How heartless!" one says. Yes, but is there no such heartlessness in our own life? The world is full of want, suffering, need. Go where we may, we find anguish and distress. Here, it is sickness. There, the fluttering crape tells of death within. Inside this door it is poverty

—little children are crying for bread. Next door it is sin—drunkenness, vice, crime, turning God's blessing of life to cursing.

On all hands are our brothers who have fallen into sin's pits and are perishing there in the darkness. There are homes close to ours where there is no prayer—and that is worse than no bread. There are little children on our streets who are being lured into hell's pitfalls and no one seems to care. This sad, heart-rending picture of the bright, pure, noble boy, in the pit at Dothan, is no strange sight to heaven's angels.

What are we doing? Are we any less heartless than were these inhuman brothers? Do we sit down to our meals and eat them with relish, unmoved by the cries of hunger that come in at our windows? "Heartless," does anyone say they were? Yes; but is much of our Christian charity any better? In one home, feasting, affluence, luxury; at the back gate, beggary timidly knocking. Out in the chill darkness the child of poverty crouches, peering into the brilliant parlors. But where are the hearts that have pity?

Souls are perishing. Young men are being snared in pits of hell. Young women are being lured away to wretchedness and degradation. Children are being entrapped and dragged into pits of shame.

And what is the church doing? What are the greater number of Christian people doing? Are we trying to rescue these ensnared ones? In our own hearts we have Christ and the joy of His love and grace. We sit down to our communion tables and feast on heavenly provision. We sing our songs. We clasp our hands in Christian love. But do the cries of the perishing outside never break upon our ears as we sit there? Do the visions of our brothers and sisters in their peril and woe never flit across our eyes, as we look with rapture into the blessed face of Jesus? There is a wonderful response to calls for physical relief when people are in need. Christian people open their hands to the hungry. But there are sorer, bitterer needs. In sin's dark pits where they have fallen, there are dying ones, with none to care. Is there no pity in our hearts for these? They are all about us—brothers, fallen into pits, brothers cast into pits by brothers, with none to heed their cries. If we found a dog, or an ox, or a horse, fallen into a pit, we would hasten to lift it out. Shall we pass by our brothers and not lend a hand to save them?

—Taken from the book, "Story of Joseph"

### THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER

Thirty pieces of silver  
For the Lord of Life they gave;  
Thirty pieces of silver—  
Only the price of a slave!  
But it was the priestly value  
Of the Holy One of God;  
They weighed it out in the temple,  
The price of the Savior's blood.

Thirty pieces of silver  
Laid in Iscariot's hand;  
Thirty pieces of silver  
And the aid of an armed band,  
Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,  
Brought the humbled Son of God  
At midnight from the garden,  
Where His sweat had been like blood.

Thirty pieces of silver  
Burns on the traitor's brain;  
Thirty pieces of silver!  
O it is hellish gain!  
"I have sinned and betrayed the guiltless!"  
He cried with a fevered breath;  
And He cast them down in the temple,  
And rushed to a madman's death.

It may not be for silver,  
It may not be for gold,  
But still by tens of thousands  
Is this precious Savior sold,  
Sold for a godless friendship,  
Sold for a selfish aim,  
Sold for a fleeting trifle,  
Sold for an empty name,  
Sold in the mart of science,  
Sold in the seat of Power,  
Sold at the shrine of fortune,  
Sold in pleasure's bower,  
Sold where the awful bargain  
None but God's eye can see!  
Ponder, my soul the question;  
Shall He be sold by thee?  
Sold! O God, what a moment!  
Stifled is conscience's voice!

Sold! And a weeping angel  
Records the fatal choice!  
Sold! But the price of the Savior  
To a living coal shall turn,  
With the pangs of remorse forever  
Deep in the soul to burn.

—Selected

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July 18, 1971

### THE GOODNESS AND SEVERITY OF GOD

Genesis 38:6, 7; Prov. 29:1; Rom. 11:22; 2 Pet. 3:9;  
Eccl. 8:11; Matt. 12:32; 1 John 5:16-18; Eccl. 12:13, 14

Gen. 38:6 And Judah [Jacob's fourth son] took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar.

7 And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord slew him.

Prov. 29:1 He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

Rom. 11:22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

2 Pet. 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Eccl. 8:11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

Matt. 12:32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

1 John 5:16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.



18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

**Eccl. 12:13** Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

**Memory Verse:** My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. **Prov. 1:10.**

**Central Thought:** God has given each person a right to choose either the goodness of God or His severity.

**Word Definition:** Blaspheme means "to mock, revile, or speak with contempt."

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

The story of Joseph is interrupted at this point in the book of Genesis by the writer, Moses, to give some of the history of Judah, the fourth son of Jacob. Jacob had 12 sons and one daughter. Rueben was the eldest and was due the birthright and scepter, but because of his great sins, and also because of the great sins of Simeon and Levi, the sceptre went down to the fourth son, Judah. Joseph was given the double portion of the birthright. We will talk about this in a later lesson. So through the tribe of Judah, Jesus Christ was to be born. David was also of his posterity.

In reading the 38th chapter we notice that Judah brought disgrace and a stain on the family and the hope of his posterity was almost gone, yet God preserved one (Phares) to carry on.

God's election is by grace, otherwise Judah would not have been chosen as the ancestor of Christ. Christ derives His glory from Himself and not from His ancestry. The strong purpose of God's love can triumph over the worst evils of human sin.

God also slew Onan, another son of Judah, for a great sin of self-pollution. Tamar was to be counted in the genealogy of Christ. Onan rejected an honorable destiny and position in the covenant family, and God slew him.

In the Scriptures that we have chosen we desire to show the way God deals with souls. He is not willing that any perish,

and will give space to repent, yet people can reject God and cause His wrath to be poured out upon them, or put off salvation until it is too late.

**Lesson References:** Matt. 1:1-16; Mark 3:29; Prov. 1:23-26.

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What were the consequences suffered by those mentioned in our lesson who would not obey the divine law of God? 2. How many dispensations has mankind lived under? 3. Does Rom. 2:14, 15 make us know that Jacob's sons and others before the law of Moses and the gospel day possessed a revelation to a certain extent within their natures to fix responsibility upon them for sin? 4. What sin are we not to pray for God to forgive? 5. Describe the goodness of God to His creation.

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

"There is a spirit in man." (Job 32:8) "Though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." (2 Cor. 4:16) This soul, or spirit, is the creative work of God which He placed in the body or "outward man" which is "dust thou art" and "unto dust shalt thou return." (Gen. 3:19) The soul is eternal and we were made in the "image of God." This expression implies special characteristics of the Divine One not found in other earthly creatures. Man is a moral being and is like God because he possesses a freedom of will, so that he can of his own volition decide his course of conduct. He is an intellectual being and a spiritual being who looks up to God in his natural state. God is the "Father of spirits," and is a Spirit who is immortal, invisible, etc. (Num. 16:22; 1 Tim. 1:17; Matt. 10:28; Zech. 12:1) The spirit or soul of man is eternal.

Mankind, possessing a will of his own, also possesses a method and purpose exclusively his own. God is in no wise responsible for it. Man can voluntarily act right, or he can voluntarily act wrong. So in this respect God's responsibility ceases. When he rejects right, he automatically falls under the judgments of God and his punishment for disobedience. He chooses to take the punishment voluntarily. When Jesus wept over Jerusalem, He said He would have gathered them under His wings as a hen gathered her chickens, but "ye would not." Matt. 23:37. They could have, but they **WOULD NOT**. They did not will to accept Him as their Saviour. They chose to take the results of not accepting Him, which is the punishment of eternal damnation to their souls.

Even in the days of Jacob's sons, they possessed a revelation of God's law within their natures sufficient to fix responsibility. (Read Rom. 2:14, 15) There are three dispensations. One of God, and one of Jesus, and one of the Holy Spirit, which is this gospel day. If one blasphemes the Holy Spirit, he is rejecting his last chance. There is a sin which cannot be forgiven. It is a serious thing to reject God. Yet in our lesson we see His great love and mercy, but there is a time when mercy comes to an end and final judgment falls upon those who turn away from God.

—M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

John the Baptist, speaking of Jesus, declared that He is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. To what extent men were held responsible before God before that light came would be difficult to determine, but according to the Word, all men everywhere are in this dispensation of grace enlightened enough to be saved. How much light is required, who can say? Probably no two are alike, but God's faithfulness somehow imparts to everyone sufficient amount to effect their salvation if they will give heed. That is the manifestation of God's goodness to man and it also serves another purpose as well. If man is born with a nature that will lead him into committed sin, and if he is powerless to deliver himself from that condition, and if the only possible source of deliverance lies in the power of God, then God would not be clear to condemn a man for being in a condition which he was powerless to prevent and from which he could not escape. The provision of the plan of salvation and its availability presented personally to every man, makes every man responsible for his own destiny and leaves God faultless if the man chooses to reject.

Now, how much rejecting does it take to exhaust God's mercy? Who can tell? How much wickedness is required to fill up the cup and how much iniquity will God tolerate before He declares it is enough? Humanity is not able to determine such things for it takes divinity to be able to discern a heart. Jesus said such matters were given to the Father. This much we do know and are assured of by the Word, that all evil must be accounted for some way or other. Either we humble our hearts and cry out to Him for mercy upon ourselves as sinners here and obtain forgiveness here, or else we will meet our sins unforgiven in the hereafter and will suffer the damnation of an eternal lake of fire for our neglect. His Word is true and His judgments sure to the saved and to the unsaved alike. Multiplied millions have proved God's severity by electing

to go out to meet Him unprepared, and on the other hand, a multitude which no man can number have proved His goodness by going out to meet Him with their sins all covered by the blood of His sacrifice which He made for them. Behold, today is the day of salvation, now is the accepted time. —C. W. Wilson

### THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

That it is possible for man or woman to commit sins in which they could get no pardon or forgiveness from God is Scripturally true, for in three of the gospels we find Jesus speaking of sins that would not be forgiven. In Matt. 12:32 we read, "And whosoever speaketh a word against the son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. In Mark, third chapter, 29th verse we read, "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." Webster says that blaspheme means to mock, revile, or speak with contempt. In Luke again we read, "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven." Luke 12:10.

Heb. 6:4, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift [gift of the Holy Spirit] and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." They place themselves with those that crucified the Saviour, even after they had once received Him into their souls.

In these Scriptures we see the apostle merely says, "If they shall fall away." Without any other Scriptures to enlighten us on the subject, we might think that it would be easy for one to commit the unpardonable sin. Let us turn to Heb. 10:26, "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." You see here he says, "Wilfully," which would mean wishfully, desirous, voluntarily, or willingly going back without being in provocation or trial, and beginning to mock and revile the Spirit.

The next verse says, "But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." He continues: "They that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses." To break or despise Moses' law was a trifling thing in comparison to wilfully rejecting the precious blood of the Lamb of God as a

sacrifice for sins. So the writer goes on to say, "Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God and has counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

By these Scriptures we learn that one would have to do despite unto the Spirit of grace and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing. One who willingly goes back and blasphemes the Holy Ghost, rejects, mocks, and reviles the Spirit of grace, after he has been sanctified and has tasted of the good things of heaven, certainly would become exceedingly hard-hearted, wilful, and stubborn. Not many people commit the unpardonable sin, but some do. By then the Spirit is driven away, never to return again. The soul is left to itself to suffer here in this world with a fearful looking forward to the judgment and then eternal burnings.

Man can only get saved as the Spirit or Holy Ghost woos and draws him, and if He never returns the man is left hopeless, which is a sad plight. Jesus said, "No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." John 6:44.

According to the Scriptures, one who has committed the unpardonable sin is one who has willingly gone back without provocation or trial and has reviled and mocked the Spirit, doing despite unto the Spirit of grace, counting the blood wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing. Many times when one backslides through provocation or trial, yet has not done despite unto the Spirit of grace, Satan will try to make him believe that he has committed the unpardonable sin and that there is no use for him to try to get saved for he is forever doomed. But Satan is a liar. Those who fall away in this manner are eligible to receive conviction by the Spirit. If they have godly sorrow, they can repent of their backsliding and get forgiveness and be restored back to fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, and with the saints.

People may also get themselves into a condition where the Spirit will strive with them no more by "sinning away their day of grace."

Illustration: The Spirit strives with a young man, convicts him of sin and draws him to repent and give his heart and life to God, but he refuses, resists Him, and turns from Him, saying, "Not now, but when I get older and settled in life with a companion." The Spirit leaves him. Later in years the Spirit comes again and convicts him of sin and evil. Again he refuses all the pleadings of the Spirit and He has to leave. The Spirit may come again and again through life, but this man refuses and hardens his heart. He does this so much that the Spirit just leaves him forever. He grows old and dies in

his wickedness. He sins away his days of grace. There is a text of Scripture in Prov. 29:1 which reads thus. "He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck [or heart] shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." In other words, he will have no chance or opportunity to get saved but shall suddenly be destroyed, and torment will be his doom.

Dear soul, it is a fearful thing to trifle with God, and to resist the Holy Spirit when He visits you and convicts you of sin. God is long-suffering and has great mercy, but there is a limit. We read in the Word of God, "Behold, therefore the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but toward thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Romans 11:22. Brethren, let us tremble at His Word and fear to displease Him.

—Fred Pruitt

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July 25, 1971

### THE LORD WAS WITH JOSEPH

Gen. 39:1-6; 1 Pet. 3:12; Heb. 13:5, 6; Rom. 5:3b, 4, 5;  
1 Peter 3:15

Gen. 39:1 And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither.

2 And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

3 And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand.

4 And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.

5 And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.

6 And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.

1 Pet. 3:12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

Heb. 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Rom. 5:3b But we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope;

5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

1 Pet. 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

**Memory Verse:** The righteous also shall hold on his way and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger. Job 17:9.

**Central Thought:** Never yield to bitterness or discouragement even in the most humiliating and galling experiences, but have faith in God even if misfortunes seem to leave very little to hold to.

**Word Definition:** Overseer means "to take care of; to visit, same as overseer or bishop among the Greeks"—Clarke Commentary.

"Joseph was a goodly person, and well-favored," means, according to Clarke's Com. that he was "beautiful in person . . . and in his countenance." The same expressions are used about his mother, Rachel. (Gen. 29:17)

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

"Potiphar, we may therefore suppose, was captain of guards whose business it was to take care of the royal person, and execute his sovereign will on all the objects of displeasure." (Clarke's Com.) "Potiphar was provost marshal." (Aimsworth)

Joseph was 17 years old when he was sold as a slave. He was 30 when he was made prime minister of Pharaoh.

**Lesson References:** Prov. 30:5; Prov. 3:33; Phil. 4:12; 2 Cor. 4:7-10, 17, 18.

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. How many times in our lesson does it mention that the Lord was with Joseph or blessed him? 2. Discuss how you think you would have felt had you been in Joseph's shoes. 3. What would have been Joseph's lot had he been resentful, bitter, and morbid? 4. What verses in our lesson cause us to believe that God will help us today when we are in trouble? 5. What does our lesson tell us that tribulations bring to us, which is helpful when we have "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost"?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Unless we experience the treatment that Joseph went through, we could not really explain the depth of his feelings. Torn from his home and a loving father, he was sold to be a slave. He was only seventeen, and the cruelty of his brothers in wanting to kill him and the injustice of it all was enough to break his gentle, sweet spirit, but he went through it all unhurt. How could he? Because he looked to God and sought His blessings and kept his contact with God clear. Therefore our lesson plainly states that the "Lord was with him." If we stay with God, He will stay with us. God can help us to bury the heartache and smile through the tears.

Slavery is terrible—to be sold and bought just like an animal! You can't claim the rewards of your labors as your own. Many have felt the lash of their ill-tempered masters. Those who had God rejected bitterness, and as Joseph, they did the best they knew how to bring good to their masters. Bitterness and hatred eat at the very life of a person and bring morbid, miserable, resentful feelings. Joseph was not like his brothers. Regardless of our lot in life we need to look to God who will help us to be cheerful, hopeful, and ever have a forgiving attitude. We can look at those who mistreat us and feel sorry for them because they are miserable and are in need of God. Joseph bore his deep heartache and loneliness well. His master placed all he had in Joseph's hands. This was a great trust. Joseph was a good slave, only by the help of God.

We need to learn a lesson from Joseph. Some have to live in a home where they are treated worse than slaves sometimes. Some have to work on the job under severe and trying overseers. Can we not look to God and know that the "eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ear is open to their cries"? We must know that "all things work together for



good." We need to know that if we will exercise ourselves in a right manner, God is working in us and fitting us for a greater place to labor for Him even if it takes years for us to know about it. It was thirteen years later that Joseph was made prime minister of Pharaoh. The lessons he learned as a slave helped him to become fitted for a higher position. God is fitting you and me for heaven. Only the holy will make it there. My father, Bro. Fred Pruitt, used to say, "Don't push away the tool that God is using to get you ready for heaven."

—M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The test of a man's true character and the strength of his inner devotion to principles of right and wrong are not always proven when he is under pressure. Folks who are pressed beyond measure and have already arrived at the place where only divine assistance can carry them through will be very careful not to allow anything in their lives that would be apt to hinder that divine assistance. They give diligent heed to regular devotion, spend considerable time in study, prayer, and meditation, and are careful to see that the Lord gets His rightful share of the little they do have. They are constantly faced with the acuteness of their own need and consequently they feel compelled to give diligence to take care of their obligations to the Lord in order not to offend His good will toward them.

But what about the time when conditions reverse, and where distress had been ever present, now there is abundance? Instead of want, there is plenty, and in place of having to pray down necessities, there is ample on hand to go and fill, not only needs, but wants as well! True and honest Christian character will be just as devout and faithful to its God then as it was when in need and destitute. The chances of relaxing and becoming slack in Christian devotion are much greater in times of prosperity than in times of necessity. But God is looking for and seeking out a people whose Christian character will sound a true note anywhere on the scale He wishes to place them. Joseph's fortune and standing among men went up and down through life, but His devotion and attachment to God remained steadfast and true wherever he stood among men. God is seeking the same from everyone of us.

—C. W. Wilson

**August 1, 1971**

**FIRMLY REJECTING SIN**

**Genesis 39:7a, 8-12, 19-21; Matt. 5:10; James 1:14, 15;  
Romans 12:9b; Prov. 4:23, 26, 27**

Gen. 39:7a And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph;

8 But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;

9 There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

10 And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, . . . or to be with her.

11 And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within.

12 And she caught him by his garment, . . . and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.

19 And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled.

20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.

21 But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

Matt. 5:10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

James 1:14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Rom. 12:9b Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

Prov. 4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil.

**Memory Verse:** Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. 1 Peter 4:16.

**Central Thought:** All things concerning the righteous, even their persecutions, are under the control of God; and in the long run, He will vindicate their honour in His own time.

**Word Definition:** Temptation means those means and enticements which the devil makes use of to ensnare and allure mankind. Lust—an overmastering desire. Entice—to attract by offering hope of reward or pleasure. Conceive—to form in the mind.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

The term "Israelite" was not in use as of yet, therefore Joseph was called a Hebrew.

Many useful lessons can be drawn from every part of our lesson, but it is best not to go publicly into detail of this true happening.

Although Joseph ended up in prison, he had a clear conscience. It is said that a young queen once wrote with a diamond point on her castle window, "Keep me pure; make others great." That is the lesson of Joseph's victory over temptation; anything—dishonor, loss, dungeon, death—before sin. The iron went through his soul, but he was pure and clean.

**Lesson References:** 1 Cor. 6:18; Prov. 6:24, 27, 29; 7:13, 14, 24, 27; Psa. 17:5; James 4:7.

### QUESTIONS:

1. Did Joseph brood over his lot as a slave, or did he face and conquer it through God? 2. Even though sin, which would have been hidden, was presented to him, did it attract Joseph? 3. Is it better to rot in prison than to be eaten up with remorse and sin on your soul? 4. Did Joseph lose his reputation with men, yet retain his real character before God? 5. How can we know how to be full or be empty, to be abased or to abound?

## COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The question might be asked why God permitted such a good obedient boy to have such hard things to face. But did you ever think about God needing examples for others to follow? The devil was not satisfied for God to bless Joseph and help him in being the very best slave that he knew how to be. By facing this tragedy without complaining, he rose to high respect. But the devil planned to cause him to fall. Joseph pleads the law of honor, chastity, and piety. But his victory over this great temptation was through flight. Never stay in a place where God cannot be your master. What a wonderful example this is for young people today, as well as older ones. We are to "resist" temptation and flee from it. "Kill the serpent; don't stroke it." Wrong should never be considered for one moment as being the right thing to do. Choose rather to suffer than to sin. In the cause of righteousness he had literally to bear sin. He did not give thought to the consequences. He only thought of his obligations to his master and to God. God will avenge those who do wrong in His own time.

Jesus also suffered unjustly. Mountains of shame and injustices were heaped upon Him. He knows how to help us when we are falsely accused. He can give us that inner peace that will help us to face the ups and downs in life. One time we might be honored, and another time dishonored. The Apostle Paul said he knew how to abound and how to be abased. (Phil. 4:11-13) He could do it all through Christ that gave Him the strength. So can we who are born again and have been washed in the blood of the Lamb. God's rich blessings will rest upon us if we suffer as a Christian.

The verses in James should be studied to understand just how one is tempted to sin. If a ten dollar bill is lying under the vase, and you have an excessive desire to have it (lust) and are strongly attracted to it you are being tempted and enticed to sin. Then when "lust is conceived" or you form it in your mind to take the ten dollar bill you are consenting to sin. Sin is finished when you reach and take it and put it in your pocket and walk away. Now this brings forth death or separation from God. To repent of this, one would have to take back the money, confess it to the person and also to God with godly sorrow. Oh! how much better it is to do as Joseph did, run from evil and resist it, being willing to suffer rather than displease God. —M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is a remarkable thing to observe the way wrong doing has of attaching itself to the innocent and leaving the appear-

ance that they are guilty. Some thirty or forty years ago it was emphatically impressed upon our minds as small school children that such virtues as truthfulness, honesty, fairness, etc., were qualities that would stand us in good stead and would always win out in the long run. Experience has convinced us that the "long run" sometimes may well mean the Judgment!

Joseph was a foreigner and a stranger in Egypt. It is really no remarkable thing then that the word of a native-born Egyptian would be taken above his, especially in the face of all the factors to be considered. What did Joseph have to lose in Egypt? Only in his master's eyes was he anything special. He had no reputation among the people to lose. But his master's wife—a prominent woman among the social set—of course, she would not promote anything that would reflect on her reputation and good standing in the community, to say nothing of being unfaithful to a devoted husband! Then, of course, it was this foreigner who had taken advantage of her and sought to overpower her against her will when she was alone! Potiphar had just simply trusted this fellow too far, and this was the result. There was nothing left for Joseph to do but bear the blame and suffer the consequences, right or wrong.

You and I are pilgrims and strangers in a foreign land. This world is not our home. False accusers and deceivers are already promised to us and they are busy promoting their underhanded, deceitful works of iniquity in such sly and cunning fashion until the blame falls on the upright and honest in heart. This process began with our Lord and Saviour, and He told us plainly, "for if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Being faithful to what is true and just and honest and right will indeed win out in the long run, but it may well take the Judgment to reveal it. In the meantime, let us "endure hardness as good soldiers," and maintain our integrity with God.

—C. W. Wilson

## PURITY

Look to your hearts and lives, and begin at once to grow flowers of grace, beauty, and purity. You may enter the garden of the Lord and procure seeds, slips, and roots of the most precious varieties, and have your hearts well stocked with virtues rare and lovely. The only way to effect this is to receive the grace of God into the heart to its fullest extent. We might place a few very choice plants in a garden; but if there were any weeds or any ugly or imperfect plants therein, we could not consider it a perfect or lovely garden. So, though you may have religion enough to show forth some precious flowers, you need to have all the evil seed destroyed, all the evil plants rooted

up, and the very root of evil removed by the perfect salvation of Jesus. When this is done the heart is made pure, and the life actions become pure; for if the fountain is pure, the water that flows therefrom will be pure, also.

We are glad that the religion of Jesus meets every need of the soul and life, so that its work is perfect; for it purifies the heart, strengthens mind and body, elevates, ennobles, and purifies every thought and action.

Purity is a precious blossom,  
Heavenly gift and gracious power;  
Lovingly its tendrils bind you,  
Longingly it woos each day and hour.

Purity—oh, the precious treasure!  
Holiness, love, and counsel sweet,  
Entreat thee and invite thee,  
Coming now thy heart to meet.

Purity—oh, thy holy greatness,  
Heavenly love, and wisdom too!  
Comforting Spirit, the anointing,  
Lowliness and meekness woo.

Purity—can you slight it ever?  
Purity—your longing heart's desire.  
Purity—choose it "now or never."  
Purity—the Holy Spirit's fire.

—Jennie C. Ratty

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August 8, 1971

### FORGET NOT TO DO GOOD

Heb. 13:16; Gen. 39:22, 23; Gen. 40:3, 4, 7, 8, 12-15  
20a, 22, 23; James 2:14, 17

Heb. 13:16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Gen. 39:22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.

23 The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.

40:3 And he [Pharaoh] put them [the baker and the butler] in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound [confin'd].

4 And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward.

7 And he [Joseph] asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to day?

8 And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you.

12 And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days.

13 Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler.

14 But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house:

15 For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me in the dungeon.

20a And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants:

22 But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them.

23 Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.

James 2:14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

**Memory Verse:** As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. Gal. 6:10.

**Central Thought:** Joseph did not abandon himself to despair in the midst of all his adversities, but tried to do good while he held a steadfast trust in God.

**Word Definition:** Verse Three says "where Joseph was bound" which means "confined." He seemed to have his personal liberty according to the reading of the context. He was in the place where the prisoners were kept. (Gen. 39:20) Butler was the "cupbearer." He "took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup." This expresses the fact that he had fresh grape juice, without fermentation, which he would immediately take to Pharaoh to drink. Baker was the "cook." "Head from off thee:" Clarke's Commentary says that "the ancient Egyptians . . . beheaded the criminal before he was hanged" . . . he then was "either hanged on hooks or by the hands." See Lam. 5:12.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

We left the dreams that the butler and baker had out of the printed lesson so as to shorten it, but will relate it in our Lesson Background.

Pharaoh was the king of Egypt, as is mentioned in our unprinted verses (Gen. 40:1). No doubt (according to Clarke's Comm.) the butler and baker were accused of an attempt on the king's life by possibly poisoning his food, and this was the reason of their imprisonment.

The butler dreamed that he saw a vine that had three branches, that budded and then bore clusters of ripe grapes. The butler had the king's cup in his hand and he pressed the juice into it and gave it into Pharaoh's hand.

The baker dreamed that he had three white baskets on his head and in the top basket there were all kinds of bakemeats for Pharaoh. But the birds ate them out of the basket upon his head. Joseph told him that in three days he would be hanged, which came to pass.

The butler was restored, but he forgot about Joseph for two full years.

**Lesson References:** Dan. 2:11, 18, 19; Luke 23:42, 43; Eccl. 9:14, 15; James 2:14-26.

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Can you describe the humility it took for Joseph to accept the things life brought him? 2. What approach do you think Joseph took for Potiphar to put everything into his hands; and then the keeper of the king's prison to do the same? Do you think he bragged about his intelligence? 3. In what way



did Joseph prove that he did not forget to do good? 4. To whom did Joseph attribute the interpretation of dreams? 5. Tell what happened to the butler and the baker. 6. Did the butler forget Joseph? For how long? 7. Will doing good and having good works save us?

### COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

When we are clear before God we can face the world with faith and confidence, even if our reputation has been marred by gossip or untruths. Joseph knew he was clear, so he just refused to bow down to despair, but retained his faith and hope in God. Many who are in trouble seem to look for any sign, word, or action in others that they can misconstrue, then they add to their troubles the feeling that everyone is against them. But we do not find this in Joseph. He knew he was clear, so he looked for ways to help others around him. He showed sympathy and kindness, and helped to lift the load of troubles from others. He drew this from those secret springs of consolation that God has for those who have faith and confidence in Him. Look at his temperateness, forbearance, calmness, and simplicity. Even in referring to his brothers, he does not speak unkindly of them, but states he had been stolen and that he had "done nothing" that he should be put in the prison. What a wonderful example for us! He was not trying to fight his battles by running others down, but was trusting in His God to work out things for him. He saw a ray of hope through the restored butler that his case could be reviewed. Joseph had helped the butler when he was sad and in trouble. But how sad it was that the butler forgot him for two years! It was an act of inhumanity to forget him. Prosperity intoxicates some people and they forget the poor and those humble friends who had helped them in simpler days. But Joseph's God did not forget him. We, who might have been forgotten, can take comfort in this thought that Jesus never forgets us. Though he has been exalted far above all principalities and powers, He is not elated with His glory, so as to forget His poor suffering people upon the earth. We must be sure that we don't forget Him. Jesus said of the Lord's supper, "this do in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19)

There is value in suffering. It helps us to have sympathy for others if we will exercise ourselves rightly in suffering. It will help us to have a greater tenderness of heart toward God and mankind. Joseph wanted to be the best prisoner and overseer he could be and took time to see about the welfare of each of his prisoners. Although it must have hurt him to tell the baker that according to the interpretation of his dream

he would be hanged, he had to be truthful as that was his habit, as well as his principle.

Doing good and having works will not save us as many to-day seem to think. Our works must be done as unto the Lord and prompted by the Holy Spirit before they will be accepted of God. Our hearts must be clear before God and we be living according to God's Word.

—M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The current of Joseph's life surely did rise and fall with great rapidity. One day he was the "apple of his father's eye," around home, and the next he was sold a bondman to a foreign country. Before long he was master of another man's house, with almost unlimited authority, but in a matter of hours he was stripped of all, and just a common convict. A job well done soon won him favor in the prison, but after all, how far can a man advance in a prison? So for days and weeks, months and finally years, he labored on. He longed to be free, of course, and took advantage of whatever possibility offered itself to effect his release, but it was still two years before he was finally delivered from the prison. Upon release he almost immediately found himself again elevated to a position of great prominence. Few individuals experience such extremes of "ups and downs" but almost everyone does experience some. Joseph started out with the Lord as his companion from the very first and the outstanding example that he gave is that it is entirely possible to maintain that contact all along the journey of life. Up or down, high or low, the Lord is willing and able to walk with and sustain His trusting, believing children. Another factor well worth remembering is that anywhere along life's pathway God is willing to step in and become the Pilot for everyone who will receive Him. Joseph started at the beginning, and so the enemy whispers to folks that because their life is half or more spent and in such a mess there is no need for them to try. But the devil is a liar. The Lord told us of some whom He engaged at the eleventh hour and who received like reward with the rest. Salvation is available to all who will yield to Him.

—C. W. Wilson

### ON THE OTHER SIDE

Luke 10:29-37

In what ways can you help Jesus carry on His work? A poor woman earning \$6.00 a week in a textile mill in Lowell, Mass., supported four native preachers in India at a cost of \$120 a year. That left her \$192 a year on which she lived in a garret. She kept it up for thirty years. That is breaking

an alabaster box. That is real Christian service and devotion, don't you think?

We go our ways in life too much alone,  
We hold ourselves too far from all our kind.  
Too often we are dead to sigh and moan,  
Too often to the weak and helpless, blind,  
Too often where distress and want abide  
We turn and pass upon the other side.

The other side is trodden smooth, and worn  
By footsteps passing idly all the day;  
Where lie the bruised ones that faint and mourn,  
Is seldom more than an untrodden way.  
Our selfish hearts are for our feet the guide—  
They lead us by upon the other side.

It should be ours the oil and wine to pour  
Into the bleeding wounds of stricken ones;  
To take the smitten and the sick and sore  
And bear them where a stream of blessing runs.  
Instead, we look about—the way is wide—  
And so we pass upon the other side.

O friends and brothers, gliding down the years,  
Humanity is calling each and all  
In tender accents, born of grief and tears!  
I pray you, listen to the thrilling call!  
You cannot, in your cold and selfish pride,  
Pass guiltlessly upon the other side.

—Selected

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August 15, 1971

### JOSEPH'S FAITH REWARDED

Lam. 3:26; Gen. 41:1a, 8, 9, 12a, 13a, 14, 15a, 16, 25,  
30a, 34, 36-41

Lam. 3:26 It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation [deliverance] of the Lord.

Gen. 41:1a And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed:

8 And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit  
(33)

was troubled; . . . but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.

9 Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day:

12a And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams;

13a And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us,

14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.

15a And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it:

16 And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

25 And Joseph said unto Pharaoh the dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do.

30a And there shall arise after them [the seven years of plenty] seven years of famine;

34 Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years.

36 And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.

37 And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.

38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?

39 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, is none so discreet and wise as thou art:

40 Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

**Memory Verse:** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Rom. 8:28.

**Central Thought:** God allows those to slowly ripen whom He destines for a great work, or who will let God have the glory.

**Word Definition:** Interpret means "to explain the meaning of." The River means the Nile River. Blasted with the east wind. "The wind is from the south-east or desert of Arabia. It withers every green thing if it continues to blow any time." (Hom. Comm.) He shaved himself. Egyptian custom was to keep shaved and the hair cut.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

The butler forgot all about Joseph for two years, but remembered him when Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had some dreams in which his "spirit was troubled." God has a way of bringing His plans to pass. The people of Canaan were growing more wicked, and the family of Abraham, whom God had promised in time to have the land of Canaan, were small and could not long survive among the wicked nations. God had told Abraham that his posterity "shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years." (Gen. 15:13) So now we see that God had a plan to send Joseph to prepare the way for them in Egypt. Pharaoh had a part in these plans, also, and God gave him these dreams and then gave Joseph the wisdom to interpret them.

Pharaoh dreamed that he stood on the bank of the River, and there came up out of the river seven cows who were fat and they fed in the meadow. Then as he watched he saw seven poor cows come up out of the river and eat up the seven fat cows, but the seven poor cows were still very poor. Then he awoke. He slept again and dreamed that he saw seven good ears of corn come up in one stock. Then he saw seven ears of corn, thin and blasted with the east wind, spring up after them. The seven thin ears devoured the seven good ears. Pharaoh had called all the wise men and magicians of Egypt and they could not interpret the dreams. Joseph told Pharaoh the reason he had the two dreams was that God would "shortly bring it to pass." The seven years of plenty would come and then seven years of famine. Joseph told him to find a man who was "discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt." He recognized that God was with Joseph and chose

him for the job. Joseph was thirty years old at this time. He was 17 when he was sold by his brothers as a slave.

—M. Miles

**Lesson References:** 2 Cor. 3:5; Isa. 55:8, 9; Isa. 30:18; Isa. 49:23b; Lam. 3:25, 26; 1 John 5:4; Psa. 37:7.

### QUESTIONS:

1. How long did Joseph linger in prison before the butler thought about him? Had you been Joseph with the ray of hope that the butler would soon think of you, how would your faith be after two years? 2. What does the first verse of our lesson teach us after reading our lesson? 3. Discuss how Joseph prepared himself to appear before the king. 4. What did Joseph answer when Pharaoh asked if he could interpret the dreams? What was Joseph's attitude? 5. Joseph honored God. Whom did God honor?

### COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Today we can rejoice with Joseph. Deliverance has finally come for him. He has been taken from the prison and exalted to a position that God had planned for him, but he did not know about this. The long years of waiting and the many disappointments that he faced brought forth a work in his soul and life which nothing else could have done because he "exercised" himself in a right manner. The Apostle Paul tells us that "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Heb. 12:11. God permitted Joseph to be sold and torn from his home, put in prison and suffer much so he could sit on a throne. May God help us today. "Cast not away therefore your confidence which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." (Heb. 10:35, 36) Let those things that touch your life cause you to become real humble, tenderhearted, and patient, and increase your faith and confidence in God by trusting His wisdom in all things. God has great things for those who will prove faithful in the testing experiences in life. God is preparing us to be ready to enter those beautiful portals of glory and dwell with Him in eternity. We might realize great blessings here in this life in various ways but there is without doubt a "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," awaiting all who will prove faithful to God to the end. Be encouraged, dear weary pilgrim. Rejoice today with Joseph. He suffered much, but today he is exalted, yet there

is a work for him to do. There is a great responsibility resting upon him as we will see as we continue to study about his life.

Joseph honored God before Pharaoh, and God honored Joseph in the sight of Pharaoh. Joseph said, "It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." In interpreting the dream, he said, "God will shortly bring it [plenty and famine] to pass." Pharaoh saw God in Joseph and recognized that God had showed this to him. Pharaoh honoring Joseph was a virtual honoring of the God whom Joseph served. It is God that we want to be glorified and lifted up. Surely we have an example before us of one who did just that. —M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is rather peculiar the turn things take sometimes, isn't it? Joseph, in his youth, was himself designated a "dreamer," by his own brethren. But the process was in reverse back then. Joseph did the dreaming, and when he declared the details of his dreams, his brethren told him what it meant, and became angry. The next time he dreamed and told the details to his father, and his own father rebuked him, and interpreted the dream for him, and asked, "Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" There is no record of Joseph having hinted at any such thing; he simply told how he had dreamed that the sun and moon and eleven stars made obeisance to him. It was the Spirit of the Lord that made the interpretation, and put it in Jacob's mind. How many times in the years that flew by, did Joseph's memory carry him back to those boyhood dreams, and the meaning others put on them for him? There is a good possibility they came to him afresh when others about him began dreaming, but this time he was the interpreter instead of the dreamer. Let us do a little speculating. Joseph's dreams seemed to deal in general terms—one erect, others submitting. But the dreams of the butler, the baker, and Pharaoh were specific and well defined. Three days, seven years, etc. To them the dreams were meaningless, but to Joseph they conveyed a clear and distinct message. Could it be the spiritual condition of each heart involved that made them clear or meaningless? If a man knew not God and was not familiar with His voice, he would not be apt to recognize it when he heard it unless God made some special demonstration as He did for Paul on the road to Damascus. But if a man was acquainted with the Lord and had often heard His voice and was accustomed to His dealings with men, he might find quite a message where others found none. God sounded from heaven on

one occasion and declared Jesus to be His own Son, but some who stood by thought it thundered! Oh! what a vast difference there is between the voice of the great God of heaven, teaching and instructing, and the vague rumble of thunder in the ears! May God help us to live where we can distinguish clearly.

—C. W. Wilson

## JOSEPH

In Joseph we found the best qualities of his ancestors. Abraham was faithful to God—so was Joseph. Isaac was a humble man—so was Joseph. Jacob was an energetic man—so was Joseph.

## DEFEAT AND VICTORY

Mother Ellis sighed as she read the neatly-penned letter from her daughter, Mayme.

"That letter doesn't sound like Mayme," she confided to her husband who sat across the table from her. "Sometimes I wonder if it was best for her to take up training at the large city hospital."

"Listen to this," she continued, and read aloud:

"Yes, I go to church. And although I felt rather out of my element at first, I am beginning to like it. These services are so soothing and beautiful, and Dr. Rhinelander is just the grandest man. He has the finest philosophy of life—not a bit old-fashioned, even though he is past seventy. Maybe you don't understand, but he's just different from any preachers I knew before I came here. His interests are so broad. He is a member of the Hospital Board and various Community Clubs. Sometimes I wonder if we haven't been a little bit too narrow back home?" "

"She always used to enjoy us old-fashioned folks," remarked her father sadly.

"Well, it won't be long until she comes home for her vacation. I hope she will still be the same girl she was when she went," said her mother a bit wistfully.

Some weeks later when Mayme came home her parents were pleased to see her, but noticed at once the subtle change that had come over their daughter. And when they began to feel it, it tore and hurt their loving hearts with an agony too poignant for words. They could only look at each other sadly, numbed by the pain of it; for Mayme was changed.

Oh, she was gay and lively, but somehow not so joyous and carefree as she had been. She tried to appear interested when her parents spoke with concern about some of the spiritual problems of the young people in the community, but she was



plainly bored. She did not join reverently in the family devotions as was her habit, but looked on with an air of indulgent endurance. And once her mother heard her actually making fun of old Brother Brown's sermon because his English was so awful.

"Imagine any person noticing poor English when he speaks with holy zeal and passion," her mother had reproved mildly.

"Oh, certainly, I admire his earnestness," remarked their pretty, sophisticated daughter. "But I just wish you could hear Dr. Rhinelander. His English is beautiful!"

"What does he speak about?" asked her mother bluntly. "Does he magnify Christ as Brother Brown does? Does the love of God shine from his face, too?"

"Well, he is, as I said, different," replied Mayme somewhat nonplussed by the suddenness of the question. "He speaks beautifully of Jesus. He believes He was the greatest humanitarian that ever lived. But he isn't emotional like Brother Brown. I couldn't imagine him with tears rolling down his cheeks when he addresses an audience. He is always so self-controlled and calm."

As Mayme left them to go back to the city and under the influence of Dr. Rhinelander and others equally Christ dishonoring, they turned to the only recourse left to them—that of prayer—and their wounded hearts were soothed as they clung to God in simple faith.

Mayme wrote home that she was now a full-fledged nurse and on actual duty in a white uniform. Then one day a letter came stating: "I am caring for a very distinguished patient just now. It is none other than Dr. Rhinelander. He is a considerate patient. Surely his philosophy of life is correct, for he faces suffering with wonderful fortitude. And though he is a very sick man he is always ready for a good joke."

Her parents thought and prayed much for their accomplished but misguided daughter. They were somewhat surprised to receive a telegram only a few days later stating that she would be home the following day.

Mayme did not look so fresh and gay as she had the previous year. Her parents questioned her concerning the doctor of whom they had heard so much. She simply said, "He passed away suddenly." Then because she seemed disinclined to talk, they questioned her no further.

She had been home less than a week when the telephone rang late one night. Sister Brown's voice at the other end of the line sounded agitated and tremulous as she said, "I wonder if Mayme could come over. Father is real sick. He needs a good nurse; and it just seems we can't get hold of one."

"Surely she'll come," reassured Mother Ellis' voice. "And I'll come along, too."

"But it seems too bad when she is having a vacation," apologized Sister Brown.

With her characteristic efficiency Mayme was ready to go in a short time. As she entered the Brown home she learned that her patient was in a more serious condition than she had anticipated. All night long they worked hard and tirelessly over the worn-out veteran of the Cross, but by morning they realized that they were waging a losing battle.

Suddenly the sick man who had been only semi-conscious opened his eyes and smiled as he recognized his faithful wife by his side.

"Mother," he said in a voice vibrant with joy, "the battle is almost over and there is victory ahead! Christ is still the Captain. Oh, it is glorious!"

Mayme looked at Mrs. Brown and was amazed at what she saw. There stood the frail, white-haired little woman smiling bravely into the eyes of her dying husband. In a voice full of pathos she asked, "Are you feeling better, Papa? You look so happy."

"I am happy. And even though this old body will never be well, I am better for I'll soon be with Jesus!"

Mayme could feel his pulse weakening, but the kind old eyes still shone with joy, and as his heartbeats grew fainter they could still hear him whisper, "Jesus, Jesus." Then it was all over; and, while before them lay the old battle-scarred uniform to which the spirit had been confined, they knew that he who had lived and labored in it was in the presence of his Captain, victorious through faith—and they were hushed and subdued in their sorrow, for such victory did not call for weeping and lamentation.

All the way home Mayme was thoughtfully quiet. Her father and mother, too, were silent in the deep sadness they felt at the death of their beloved friend.

"Mayme, you look very tired," said her mother, "you'd better try to get some sleep."

"I am tired," and her voice had its old-time ring, "but I would not exchange what I've been privileged to witness this morning for all that money can buy. I've never seen such courage and devotion and holy joy! That has done more to confirm my faith than all the sermons I've heard preached."

The father and mother rejoiced to hear their daughter speaking thus.

"It was so different—" and she stopped suddenly as if she had said more than she had intended.

"Different from what, dear?" asked her mother.

"Different from another death scene I witnessed not so long ago. That was terrible. I fear I shall never be able to erase it from my mind." And her dark eyes reflected horror.

"Don't speak of it if it upsets you," said her mother.

"Yes, I want to," said Mayme suddenly calm. "It was Dr. Rhinelander's death. All through his sickness he was gay and even laughed and joked at death. I know now it was only a mask to hide his terror. But finally he could no longer hide it. I can still feel his fingers holding my arm in a frenzied grip as he pleaded of me not to let him die. Then with eyes staring from their sockets in terror he whispered hoarsely, 'It is dark!' There was a tremor and I felt his grip relaxing and I knew it was all over."

Tears flowed freely from the eyes of her parents as their daughter finished her sad account. "The poor soul had nothing to lean on, for a human Jesus could not sustain him," said her father in low tones.

"I have foolishly tried to make myself believe that the Christ Brother Brown loved and preached was a myth, but I know now that He is real. I want Him to be as vital a part of my life as He was of his, if He will have me."

"Let us pray," said the father in low reverent tones. And as they bowed in prayer, he pleaded in a broken voice for his penitent daughter.

Peace such as she had not experienced for years flooded the soul of Mayme Ellis, and in a broken voice she prayed, "O Father, forgive my foolish stubbornness, and help me to trust only in Jesus as my Saviour; and then 'let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his.' " —C. M. Baer

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August 22, 1971

### **HUMILITY WANTS FOR BLESSINGS**

**Gen. 41:43, 45, 46a, 49, 50, 51; Phil. 3:13, 14; Gen. 41:52;  
Gen. 41:55-57; John 6:33, 35, 44**

**Gen. 41:43** And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.

**45** And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On.

46a And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt.

49 And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number.

50 And unto Joseph were born two sons.

51 And Joseph called the name of his firstborn, Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

Phil. 3:13 (Paul says) Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Gen. 41:52 And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

55 And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.

56 And the famine was over all the face of the earth: and Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.

57 And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.

John 6:33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Memory Verse: Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place. Psalm 66:12.

Central Thought: Those who are perishing for the lack of bread need a Deliverer.

**Word Definition:** "Bow the knee" means to "do homage," or some render it, "abrech, or, tender Father." Poti-pherah and Potiphar are two different men. Zaphnath-paaneah, Joseph's new name, the meaning of, according to Clarke's Commentary, is little known, although some say it means "a revealer of secrets," or "the treasury of glorious comfort." Jerome translates his name as meaning, "the Saviour of the world." "All the countries" means all the lands adjacent to Egypt, such as Arabia and Palestine.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Joseph was seventeen when he was sold by his brethren and he was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh. We might note here that Jesus was thirty years old when he started on his ministry. (Luke 3:23) This is also the age which was appointed for entering the priesthood under the Mosaic law. (Numbers 4:3) Joseph was of a ripe age and experience when he took upon him this office as a ruler of Egypt. It is said, "that Providence which prepares events also prepares men for them." Remember that new positions bring with them new responsibilities.

We need to remember the names of Joseph's sons. In time to come each became a head of one of the twelve tribes of Israel who inherited the land of Canaan, thus Joseph was honored by his father. Jacob had twelve sons, but the tribe of Levi was to be scattered among the others to take care of the offering of sacrifices, thus leaving 12 to inherit the land, of which Manasseh and Ephraim were heads, instead of just Joseph.

Potipherah was a heathen priest in the Egyptian temple of the sun at On.

**Lesson References:** Acts 7:11; Daniel 1:19; Isa. 65:13; 1 Corinthians 1:26.

## QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss what an hour brought forth in Joseph's life, and what an hour will bring forth in the life of one who seeks after God. 2. What kind of preparation does it take to fit us for responsibilities? Note also the age of Jesus, Joseph, and the priests when they took positions from God. 3. Did Joseph forget his brethren's cruelty, and his sorrows by forgiving them? 4. Are we to forget hurts, troubles, etc., of the past and press on toward heaven? 5. Who is the Bread of eternal life to our souls? What are we to do to receive it?

## COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Notice what an hour can bring forth. Joseph was changed from prison clothes into the fine linens of a ruler. He left his chains in prison for a fine gold chain about his neck (which was a sign in Egypt that he was an officer or man of distinction). His prison walls were changed into a fine chariot of honor. His jail was changed to a palace. He was brought forth from a bad reputation, caused by Potiphar's wife, to the greatest place of honor and the best of reputations. A little while ago he was looked upon as one of the vilest of men, but now the king honors him as a man of incomparable worth. Oh, dear ones, can we not learn a lesson from this? Joseph honored God before Pharaoh, and God honored Joseph in the sight of Pharaoh. We also can learn from this that it does not pay for us to be cast down by reproach, neither should we become exalted by the praise of others. We all, who love God, will pass through those times when we will be reported to be evil, as well as good. Through all of this we should honor God. Humility goes before honor. How well God's children are paid for their suffering and patience! The grace of God kept Joseph from accepting vain glory and pride. He went about his work as a deliverer with calmness and wisdom, which he continually looked to God to give to him. He forgot the cruelty shown to him by his brothers and thanked God for being with him in the land (not his home) of affliction. But he still loved all of his family.

Hunger causes people to seek for food. Jesus pronounces a blessing upon those who "do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matt. 5:6) The soul that is void of God is not satisfied. They are ever seeking for something. Just as the people of Egypt in the famine "cried to Pharaoh for bread." He told them to go to Joseph. Today we are telling those who are starving on the husks of this world to go to Jesus, who is the Bread of eternal life. There if they will confess their sins with godly sorrow, they can be saved and their souls satisfied. They can be clothed with the "fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." (Rev. 19:8) Before they were in the prison of sin, but now they are delivered. Oh, glorious blessings await the souls who will seek after God with all their heart. They can be fully satisfied and become "kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. 5:10) We can reign above sin and have power with God and over all the powers of the devil through Christ, who is the Bread of eternal life. —M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A very important and perhaps deciding factor as pertains to the acceptability of our performance before the Lord will be the motive of our endeavor. A man, in order to please God, must have it fixed and settled in his heart to serve the Lord with all his heart whatever comes or goes, and then do it. So long as he continues steadfast in that position, God is able to do as He wills with the man, and the man will still be faithful. This series of lessons about Joseph and his experiences are outstanding examples of what God can and will do if He can find someone willing to let Him work in and through them. Joseph could not possibly have known what God had in mind when he dreamed of his brothers' sheaves bowing down to his sheaf. He had no way of knowing where it would take him, and what all he would have to endure in order for it to come to pass, but God worked it out. God knew from the beginning, just as He knows for each one of us what He has in store for us if we will be faithful. Likewise, we as Joseph, must walk the journey a step at a time and let our lives unfold one day at a time. There is no way to cram the experiences and accomplishments of a lifetime into a few weeks and then enjoy the full accomplishments of them from then on. Not until the end will the full picture be on display, and then it must be left for someone else to profit by.

For many generations folks have been being blessed and strengthened by Joseph's experiences, but to him it was just living out his life before the Lord. Because his life was given to the Lord, it became a blessing and an inspiration for many but I suspect for him it was much like ours—a constant pressing and striving to be what the Lord required. —C. W. Wilson

## THE OTHER SIDE

This isn't death; it's glory!  
It isn't dark; it's light.  
It isn't stumbling, groping,  
Or even faith—it's sight!

This isn't grief; it's having  
My last tear wiped away.  
It's sunrise; it's the morning  
Of my eternal day!

This isn't even praying;  
It's speaking face to face;  
It's listening, and it's glimpsing  
The wonders of His grace.

This is the end of pleading  
For strength to bear my pain;  
Not even pain's dark memory  
Will ever live again.

How did I bear the earth life  
Before I came up higher  
Before my soul was granted  
Its every deep desire?

Before I knew this rapture  
Of meeting face to face  
That One, who sought me, saved me,  
And kept me by His grace!

—Selected

### THE END MIGHT BE THE BEGINNING

A little six-year-old girl glued her face to the window of the train just as it stopped above the town of Bingham, Utah in a blinding snowstorm. She could see a few lights down in the canyon below, which was the town, and then the train began to slowly back up. She turned to her father in terror.

"It's all right," he explained. "This is the end of the line and the train turns around to go back."

"Then I don't want to get off," she sobbed. "This must be the end of the world."

Ivy Baker Priest was that little girl, who, in 1952, became Treasurer of the United States. As the years rolled by after she and her family lived in Bingham, many hard things came to them. Her father was often hurt in mining accidents. Her mother took in boarders to help with the family expenses. She learned to work hard and she learned the value of the simple pleasures of a small-town life, and a family that had very little. Later, she moved to Salt Lake City where she, as an adult, became active in many public affairs, holding various positions.

After her appointment as Treasurer of the United States, she was invited to dinner at the White House. The President came to her side and asked whether she was enjoying the evening. Suddenly her mind flashed back to Bingham Canyon and what she thought of it being the end of the world. She said, "I can't believe that I'm here in the White House for a dinner."

He smiled and said, "Sometimes neither can I."

Those hard times and the heartaches of former days helped her in her new world. Now she understood that what may seem like the end may also be only the beginning.



All the hard things that Joseph went through might many times have made him feel he had come to the end of the world. Sometimes it was so hard that he had to press hard to keep working with cheerfulness in the place that he held, but we find that he had God to help him. Within himself he could not have faced it. But now since he was ruler I am sure he could hardly believe it. He, too, knew that what might have seemed like the end was just the beginning.

Jesus went through hard things and faced many problems and troubles which came from every side. Finally they put Him on the cross. They thought they were rid of Him and this was the end of Him. But thank God, it was just the beginning. He arose from the grave with power. He brought to us salvation and now He is sitting on the right hand of God in glory. There He is interceding for you and me. If we have confessed our sins to Him with godly sorrow and have our names written in the Book of Life, we will some day live with Him in eternity that is without end. Death is not the end for the child of God. It is only the beginning. Be faithful and true to God. In this life we might suffer many hard things, but if we are faithful we will reign in glory with our Lord and Saviour. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." 1 Cor. 2:9, 10.

—Sister Marie Miles

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August 29, 1971

### **GUILT BRINGS UNHOLY FEARS**

**Matt. 10:28; Gen. 42:1-4, 6, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17; Prov. 1:29a;  
Genesis 42:18, Prov. 9:10; Gen. 42:19, 20**

Matt. 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Gen. 42:1 Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another?

2 And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die.

3 And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt.

4 And Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him.

6 And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth.

7 And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food.

9 And Joseph remembered the dream which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

13 And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not.

16 Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies.

17 And he put them all together into ward three days.

Prov. 1:29a They hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord:

Gen. 42:18 And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God.

Prov. 9:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

Gen. 42:19 If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses:

20 But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.

**Memory Verse:** Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. Eccl. 12:13.

**Central Thought:** The fear of God takes away the fear of man and fear of eternal punishment.

**Word Definition:** The Fear of God means that reverence for God which leads to obedience because of one's realization

of His power, as well as of His love to man. The fear of man would mean to have dread, dismay, painful uncertainty, doubts about being accepted. There is a fear of punishment from God for evils committed, if one is not clear before Him. Natural fears would be a shock of a sudden loud noise, alarm which suggests surprise by imminent or unexpected danger.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

First we trust you are keeping in mind as we mentioned before that the ones we study about in the Old Bible are not living under the New Testament teachings, nor are in this glorious gospel dispensation. They are not held as responsible as to understanding all the phases of right and wrong, yet God talked to them by His Spirit through their conscience and through others. They did not have the Bible as we have it today.

You may not be able to complete a lesson in one Sunday School session, but to get our thought today you will need to notice the 18th verse where Joseph said, "I fear God." Of course, it is clear about the brothers dreading to go to Egypt. They feared that their crime might be unfolded. Also their fear was great when Joseph used means which he thought would bring home to them their guilt. He knew them, but they did not know him. (Gen. 42:8). Joseph disguised, for a time, under a hard aspect a loving design. He expressed a righteous judgment by accusing them as spies, though not in form at this time, yet in reality that suspicion was justified. Guilty men who conceal a crime are open to suspicion of all kinds. One time Joseph was hated of his brethren for being, as they thought, their father's spy. One time he was hungry and in the pit while they were eating. They meet someone now who holds food for which they hunger. What a man sows that will he reap.

It had been twenty-two years since Joseph was sold by his brothers into Egypt.

Notice their bowing before Joseph, which is a fulfillment of his dream as a young lad, which his brothers ridiculed. (Genesis 37:6-8)

**Lesson References:** Neh. 5:15; Eccl. 8:11; Acts 9:31; Job 28:28.

## QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Joseph's brothers dread going to Egypt? They had heard, as well as their father had, about food being there.

2. What does guilt do to a person? How does it open him up to other suspicions? 3. As a lad, Joseph had dreamed some dreams. How were they fulfilled? 4. Describe the different kinds of fears. 5. What means does God use many times to awaken a sinner to his need of preparing for heaven instead of going to hell?

### COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jacob's sons sat looking at each other, trying to find comfort, yet all the time they were longing for food for their bodies. Word had come that there was plenty of food in Egypt, but they continued to sit around. Possibly at times they forgot their needs because of some momentary pleasure, but then when that passed, they were faced again with that severe need for food. Why didn't they go to get it? Guilt was upon their souls. Could they bear to travel the same road on which they knew their broken-hearted little brother had traveled because of their wickedness? Guilt hung heavily upon them, yet they needed food. They were in despair. Fear was upon them. They were helpless, lost, and undone before God. At times they feared greatly because of those judgments of God that might at any time be poured out upon them. But there was plenty of food in Egypt. All they needed to do was to go and get it. Notice that all ten of them went, that they might encourage and support each other, which shows evidence of fear. Their fears were fulfilled when they were treated roughly and put in prison. There they had time to think and to reflect on what they had done. They were unlike Joseph when he was in prison. He had God with him, but his brothers were terrified and full of fears. At the end of three days Joseph visited them. He assured them he had no designs upon their lives. He states plainly, "I fear God." What! an Egyptian nobleman know and fear the true God! What a relief flooded their souls! If so, they had no fear of injustice at his hands. Their fears had been awakened by threatenings and adverse circumstances, but now a gleam of hope appeared. They saw mercy, justice, and love. Thus God uses ordinary means to awaken the sinner and then gives him a ray of hope through Him for deliverance. They need not linger and starve, but should come to God for that eternal bread of life which Jesus gives to the hungry heart. Their sins and guilt can be washed away by the blood of Jesus and the fear of man and fear of eternal punishments can be taken away. They can find justice, mercy, and forgiveness in Jesus. Their hungry souls can be satisfied. Their fear of man and eternal judgments will be erased.

—M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

One can't help but wonder what thoughts must have passed through Jacob's mind when he decided to send the boys down to Egypt for food. Only ten went and Jacob was the father of twelve. Joseph and Benjamin were Jacob's two youngest sons, but there were more. These two boys were the sons of Rachel, the very Rachel whom Jacob had loved most of all. It was she he wanted from the start, and the one he seemed to favor the most, so that Leah sought to win his attention by the presentation of sons. But affection is a peculiar thing and once it gets fixed it is usually difficult to dislodge. One of Jacob's sons by Rachel was already gone, and somehow there seems to remain a lingering feeling that perhaps there had been "foul play" involved. Jacob was not blind to the enmity between the boys and there is also a good possibility that Jacob inadvertently added to the condition. It would be difficult indeed to have two children from one you loved above all the rest, and then ten more children by the rest, and not show partiality to the two. Children are real sensitive to such practice, and it has remarkable effects. Favored children tend to demand more favoritism, and rejected children develop very opposite attitudes, that given enough time will gender resentment and bitterness and hatred toward the favored ones. (Read the article entitled "Brown Eyes—Blue Eyes" in the April, 1971, issue of the "Readers Digest" magazine.) It is so easy to warp the personality of a child for life.

Jacob could not bear to have anything happen to the remaining child of his beloved, and so he just kept him at home. It seems such a sad thing that ten children had grown into manhood filled with such hatred and contempt for their own flesh and blood until their own father was now afraid to trust them with the last one! The world today is filled with just such conditions as this, for men's hearts seeth with hatred and rebellion and contempt because they feel they have been betrayed and done wrong. Oh, that souls would turn to Christ who loves us all with a true heart and will not disappoint a single one!

—C. W. Wilson

## DISOBEDIENCE

Young people, if you want to plant thorns on the pillows of your parents, and plunge daggers into their bosoms, be disobedient. If you want to make them as uncomfortable as they possibly can be in this world, then be disobedient.

I remember reading, not long ago, of a gentleman in England who had two sons. He was a kind, excellent, pious man, and did every thing for the comfort of his children, that

he thought it right to do. But sometimes the boys were anxious to do things which their parents were not willing that they should do. One Sunday, the older boy went to his father and asked permission to take the carriage and go riding, instead of going to church.

His father told him he could not. The boy was very much displeased because his father would not let him go riding, as some of the boys in the neighborhood had been allowed by their parents to do. He was so wicked about this that he determined no longer to stay at home because his father would not let him do just what he wanted. So, the next day, he persuaded his brother to go with him, and they went down to Portsmouth, a town by the seaside, intending to go to sea.

Before going, however, they called on the Mr. Griffin, to assist them to get a situation, on board a man-of-war. This good man perceiving that they were not accustomed to the mode of life in which they were about to enter, inquired of them their object in going to sea. The elder boy frankly told him they were going in order to spite their parents! Then he told him the story of what had taken place at home—of his father's unwillingness to allow him to ride on Sunday instead of going to church, and said he was going to sea in order to make his father feel sorry for refusing to gratify him. The good clergyman tried to show them the guilt, and folly, of the course they were about to pursue, and to set before them the unavoidable consequences that would result from it. The younger son was impressed by the counsels and advice of the clergyman, and went home, but the older son resolved to go on in his evil course.

Some twelve or fifteen years after this had taken place, the same clergyman was called to the prison in the town of Portsmouth, to see a sailor who was condemned to be executed and, who was going to be hanged in a few days.

When he entered the cell of the prison he saw a wretched, miserable, squalid-looking creature, sitting by a table in the cell, who looked up to him as he entered, and said, "Do you not remember me, sir?" "No," said the clergyman; "I do not recollect that I ever saw you before." Then the poor man recalled to him the story of the boy who went from home in order to spite his parents. "And are you the miserable man," said the clergyman, "who did this?" "Yes," said the poor culprit; "I followed out my own plan; I went on the course which I had chosen, contrary to your advice, and to my own convictions; I plunged into all sorts of wickedness, and sin, and finally became involved in a robbery, and murder, for which I am now about to suffer the penalty. And all this, in consequence of my disobedience to my parents!" The clergyman

wrote to the father of this unhappy man, who came to visit his son in his last hours, and who had the unspeakable anguish of standing by and seeing him suffer the penalty of the law, and reap the bitter fruits of his disobedience. —Richard Newton

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September 5, 1971

### MISERIES OF AN AWAKENED CONSCIENCE

**Heb. 9:14; Rom. 2:14, 15; Gen. 42:21-29a, 35, 36, 38**

Heb. 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Rom. 2:14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

Gen. 42:21 And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.

22 And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.

23 And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter.

24 And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

25 Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them.

26 And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence.

27 And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth.

28 And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?

29a And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them;

35 And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.

36 And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.

38 And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

**Memory Verse:** And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. Acts 24:16.

**Central Thought:** The conscience pursues the sinner everywhere, and time and place mean nothing to it.

**Word Definition:** The conscience is "that faculty within us which decides as to the moral quality of our thoughts, words, and acts. It gives consciousness of the good of one's conduct or motives, or causes feelings of remorse of evil-doing. A conscience can be educated, or trained to recognize good and evil, but its action is involuntary. A good conscience is one which has no feeling of reproach against oneself, does not accuse oneself of wilful wrong." —Crudens Concordance

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Our lesson took place 1701 B. C.

Our lesson in Genesis begins with the conversation between the brothers who thought Joseph could not understand them as he spoke to them through an interpreter so they would not guess who he was. Joseph had just told them they could all



go back but one, and he would be released when they brought Benjamin back with them.

Lesson Reference: 1 Tim. 1:5; 4:2; 3:9; 1 Cor. 8:7; Matt. 7:2; Luke 11:50, 51; Matt. 5:44.

### QUESTIONS:

1. The Bible says our conscience can be "seared," "weak," and need to be "purged." Is it safe to follow our conscience in matters of right or wrong? 2. What are we to follow? 3. How does God deal with us through an awakened conscience as in the case of Joseph's brothers? 4. Tell some of the regrets the brothers expressed and their fears. 5. Tell about the reaction of Jacob.

### COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The conscience is faithful and exact in reproducing the past so that every circumstance of an evil deed comes to recollection most vividly. In the fires of troubles or affliction, things temporarily forgotten fit one by one in the light of truth. They have a way of following one and almost haunting each footstep. Joseph's brothers relived that terrible scene of their intentions of murdering him, his cries from the pit pierce them afresh, and seem as loud as if it were yesterday. Again and again, as they toss upon their bed, or walk the floor, they see that pitiful picture of their brother roughly carried away by slave owners. They cry out, "Oh, we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." (verse 21) They would not hear him then and now they will not be heard. They cast him into a pit but now they are cast into prison. Over and over they relive the scene of that dark day with remorse and regrets. Reuben assures them that they might as well to expect blood for blood, because they would not hear his pleadings to spare the child. Again their conscience is pricked as they travel home with much forebodings when they find the money in their sack. They cry out with fear, "What is this that God hath done unto us?"

The conscience is intended to lead the sinner to repentance. Joseph's plan was to fill the brothers with consternation and fear. But his deeper purpose was to show them love so they could be brought to repentance and find forgiveness. In this way God deals with the sinner. He permits him to go into dark and perplexing situations so that he is utterly unable to see his design. When the sinner's sins are brought to his mind and his conscience is awakened, the load of condemnation

becomes heavy. This causes him to seek God with a repenting heart and there at the cross of Jesus he finds forgiveness. Oh, the great mercy of God to mankind! It is beyond our comprehension, but He deals justly, gently, and correctly with every soul. All of his designs are of love in bringing souls to repentance so they can live in heaven with Him and not choose to go to that place prepared for the devil and his angels.

—M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A heart that is being smitten by a guilty conscience will interpret everything it encounters as being directed to it. Folks have been known to accuse the minister of preaching "at" them when actually he knew nothing of their even being in trouble. Words of songs have been misunderstood and made to accuse. The more the conscience influences, the greater the guilt seems to become until it seems to the individual that it must be a monstrous, glaring, hideous thing that is obvious to everyone. It takes quite a bit sometimes to break folks down to the place that they are willing to acknowledge their need and cry out for mercy. How thankful we ought to be that God is a God of patience!

What was there about the circumstances these fellows were in that made them suspect that the episode of their enslaved brother was involved? They didn't recognize Joseph (though it was he who talked with them) then how could they possibly associate him with their plight? It was conscience. They knew in their own hearts that they had not done right and it was accusing them. Joseph attempted to show his love by placing the money into the neck of their sacks, but they interpreted it for evil. Most folks would have been pleased to have the money and the food both, but these fellows were alarmed. They were fearful that somehow their evil doings were going to seek and find retribution.

What a pleasing thing it is to realize that true love—heavenly love—does not seek to vindicate or "get even." Love does not enjoy seeing the object of its affection uncomfortable or belabored. Had it not been for this quality, God's love would never have reached down to deliver us from the discomfort and bondage of sin.

—C. W. Wilson

### "CHRIST, THE PERFECT PILOT"

She then told her class a little story that she had read. In the story the human heart was compared to a box securely locked and hidden in a large house. The first, or outside, door of this house opened into a vestibule, into which strangers

were admitted. The second door admitted acquaintances into the halls and parlors. The third door opened into the living room, and here relatives and intimate friends were entertained. The next opened into the chamber where none but the nearest and dearest could come. Aside from all these, there was still another door, which opened into the closet containing the secret box.

This box represented the heart, which contains the secret thoughts and desires of the soul, the best and noblest, as well as the lowest and basest. Now only God's eye can see into the heart and discern man's true character. But there is a day coming, Byron's teacher said, when the heart will be opened, and as the husks are stripped from the corn and the shell removed from the kernel, so the thoughts of our hearts will be revealed as they really are.

Some aged men were walking upon a seashore viewing the wreckage. One of them was evidently a sailor and a person well acquainted with that part of the country, for he could explain something about the greater part of the rubbish with which the coast was strewn.

As they came to the keel of a huge ship half buried in the sand, he said: "I remember well the night this came ashore. She was a fine ship and was well manned, and master's chart plainly described the bar on which she struck. He could have missed it, but he thought he could come a little closer than the map stated and still miss it. He tried it, but was caught in a storm, and his vessel was lost."

Coming to another wreck, he said: "And I remember, too, when this bark was heaving her anchor, one fine morning, with every promise of a prosperous voyage. Her captain thought she would not need a pilot, and the result was that she, too, came ashore. My friend," the old man continued, "as I look up and down this rocky coast and view the wrecks with which it is strewn, whose history I know so well, I am made sad indeed and life seems to be full of clouds and storms."

Many young people are starting out upon life's voyage. Some of them are wise enough to take a pilot with them, but do not listen to his voice and at the risk of their lives and friends venture too close to the bar and are shipwrecked. How I wish that everyone could realize his danger when he turns away from the warnings of his conscience and ventures too close to dangerous places. The conscience warns of danger, but its instruction is not obeyed. Like an abused and slighted friend, it will in time become wounded and silenced.

"I wish, young people, that you would each learn the great secret that Jesus endeavored to teach the people. If you will follow the directions that are laid down in God's chart, the

Bible, and let Jesus be your pilot, you not only will be able to plow through the foaming billows, but will land in the quiet waters of the haven of success, carrying with you rich cargoes of joy and happiness. Otherwise you are in constant danger of being either wrecked or carried away in the tide of sin and wickedness.

"How sad it would be when God calls you home should you find that your life had been wasted; that God's design for you had not been fulfilled because you refused to follow the instructions of the chart or obey the counsel of the Pilot. God wants you to have a purpose in life that will reveal the best that is in you. A strong Christian character and a distinct purpose are what God desires above all things else.

—Pilot's Voice

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September 12, 1971

### SUBMITTING UNTO GOD

**Matt. 26:39; Phil. 2:9; Psa. 37:5; Gen. 43:8, 13, 14, 16, 27, 28-31, 33, 34**

**Matt. 26:39** And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

**Phil. 2:9** Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

**Psa. 37:5** Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

**Gen. 43:8** And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones.

**13** Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man:

**14** And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.

**16** And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon.

**27** And he [Joseph] asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?

28 And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.

29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.

30 And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there.

31 And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread.

33 And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another.

34 And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times as much as any of their's. And they drank, and were merry with him.

**Memory Verse:** Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. 1 Peter 5:6.

**Central Thought:** God can help us to submit to Him and not submit to the trouble, circumstances, affliction, or problem.

**Word Definition:** Submit means "to yield, or resign, or surrender to the power, will, or authority of another." Submissive means to be "obedient, humble, meek, and yielding." (Webster's Dictionary)

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Benjamin was a year old when Joseph was sold. (Hom. Com.)

Jacob asked his sons to "take of the best fruits in the land" as a present to the man (or governor, who was Joseph). Also, they were to take the money they had found in their sacks to the man, "peradventure it was an oversight."

Notice how Joseph longed to embrace his brothers, but he felt they needed further testings. He sent five times as much food to Benjamin at the table as to the other brothers. He wanted to see if they envied Benjamin as they had him when he was at home. At the dinner the Egyptians ate at a table

by themselves as they thought it was an "abomination unto the Egyptians" to eat with the Hebrews. Joseph ate by himself and the brothers were at a table to themselves. This was according to their customs. (Gen. 43:32)

In our unprinted parts the brothers discussed their problem with the "steward of Joseph" before they went to dinner. He said to them, "Fear not, your God . . ." (Gen. 43:18-26)

**Lesson References:** Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:16, 17; 1 Thess. 4:3, 4.

## **QUESTIONS:**

1. Jesus is our example. How did He submit to God? What were the results? 2. Jacob did not know that the governor of Egypt was Joseph. Discuss the heartache and severity of his problem and finally his submission to God. 3. How can we submit to God and not to circumstances? 4. How was Joseph touched when he saw Benjamin and his brothers? 5. What was the test he gave to the brothers at the table?

## **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Jacob had a severe problem to face. Joseph was not, and Simeon was not, and now Benjamin's presence was demanded by the governor of Egypt. At first, he said firmly that Benjamin could not go. Reuben told his father if he did not bring Benjamin back, Jacob could slay his two sons, which was a rash and sinful offer, but Jacob still said, "No." The need for food became greater. Starvation was facing the family. Judah spoke to his father and told him that he would stand surety for Benjamin and said if anything happened to him he would bear the blame forever. Jacob could not submit to the possibility of losing Benjamin. Joseph and Benjamin were the children of his beloved wife, Rachel, and she was gone. He loved them dearly, and he had lost Joseph, and he could not bear to lose Benjamin. He guarded him closely. He didn't let him go with the ten brothers on the first trip to Egypt. The famine became "sore" in the land. Finally Jacob became willing. He looked to God and submitted to Him. He said, "God Almighty give you mercy before the man that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." (verse 14) Jacob submitted to God. Jacob realized his helplessness to do anything, but he saw the mighty power of God who was able to do all things. If God did not see fit to bring Benjamin back, then he was willing to be "bereaved of my children." What a blessing to have a way out in all of one's problems! How wonderful it is to

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have a God you can commit and submit everything to! What a load is lifted from the soul, mind, and heart! It was not that Jacob thought it right that his sons be slain or destroyed, but it was right to put them into God's hands.

You and I face problems like this in life. They are severe, and bring our heads down in sorrow and tears. Sometimes the trial is so great that we have to learn gradually, as Jacob, to submit and commit it all into God's hands and look at God's power and not the problem. But, oh! the blessing of the load being lifted when we turn it loose and give it to God. It might not be changed, but if we will keep it in God's hands, it will be changed. Jesus is our example. The cross was before Him. He felt the weight of it. His way out was when He prayed, "Not my will, but thine be done." He committed His will and the cross into God's hands. The blessing came in His resurrection. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him." Job did not submit to the loss of all he had, but to God. He said, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21) Queen Esther said, "If I perish, I perish." What a blessing awaits us if we submit to God. Sometimes it is hidden from us, as it was in Jacob's case, and the others mentioned. But, oh! the relief and joy it brings to the soul to turn loose and let go and let God have His will in all things that touch our lives.

—M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It takes more than one submitting to God in order for Him to bring His purpose to pass. If Joseph had not been submissive to God, there would have been no more food in Egypt than there was anywhere else, so Jacob would have had no decision to make. They would simply have starved. If Christ had not submitted to the will of His Father, there would have been no plan of salvation available for us to yield to and be saved. If no man had accepted His plan and submitted to His will, there would be no gospel preached for others to be saved by. Paul speaks of the body edifying itself in love. Nothing else but love would prompt anyone to give up all his own ways and submit to a program of service to others.

Someone might say, "But Joseph did not voluntarily enter into his service." Let's inquire a little and see. A prisoner or slave who is seeking an opportunity to escape is watching for every opening with no other thought on his mind. Does it not seem likely that when he was ruler of Potiphar's house he could have escaped if he had chosen? And certainly if not then, then when he was elevated under Pharaoh, he could have without suspicion traveled to the very borders of the land under

the pretense of seeing about the crop-gathering, and with the best of traveling equipment at his disposal, run for freedom. No, it seems most obvious that somehow he was able to see the will of the Lord for him in his situation, and so he submitted and endured faithfully. By his steadfastness, food was kept for the rest of the family, and by Jacob being willing to submit, many were blessed. I wonder how many folks today are missing out on and perhaps even perishing for want of blessings that simple submission on someone's part would have provided!

—C. W. Wilson

## THE SURPRISE PARTY FOR BESSIE

One day Bessie was invited to stay all night with a friend. She supposed she was to be the only guest, but found that a surprise had been planned for her. A goodly number of her friends and schoolmates were present.

The young folks spent a few hours very pleasantly in playing games, and Bessie enjoyed that part of the evening very much. But late in the evening someone proposed dancing, and the boys began to choose their partners. A very strange feeling came over Bessie when someone asked her to dance. She shook her head and said, "No, I do not know how to dance." Several urged her to try, but she said, "No, I would rather not."

She was the only one that did not dance. As she sat watching the others, she wondered if it were right for boys and girls to act as these were acting. She had never heard that it is wrong to dance, but it did not look or seem right to her. She decided that on reaching home she would ask her mother.

When Bessie got home the next morning, her mother asked, "Well, dear, did you have a good time?"

"Oh, yes," replied Bessie, "most of the time I did." Then she told about the surprise party and about all that happened, and concluded by asking, "Mama, is it right to dance?"

"I have been thinking for a long time, Bessie, that I ought to have a talk with you about dancing and tell you of some of the evils to which it leads," answered her mother. "Dancing is an amusement that many girls consider very attractive. When asked why they think so, they hardly know what to answer, but generally speak of the music and the graceful motions."

"Oh, Mama, the motions they made at the party last night were anything but graceful. I know you wouldn't have allowed me to do as they did, and I don't want to. It wasn't modest. I never want to go to a dance again."



"I'm so glad, Bessie, you feel as you do about dancing. Men of low character and of evil inclinations regard the dance-hall as a favorable place to betray unsuspecting girls and frequent it for that purpose. Their victims are usually the sweetest and most trusting girls. Their beauty attracts undesirable attention and their ignorance makes them an easy prey. You have noticed the immodest positions taken by those who dance, and you feel a deep sense of shame for them. Should you try to partake of their pleasure, your moral nature would be degraded, and you would in time lose that sense of shame and be as eager for the pleasure as any of the others. Thus, yielding, one step at a time, you would cease to look upon the dance as immodest and would find real enjoyment in it, and perhaps would be led into greater sin. It is in this way that many girls lose their old associates, who are really but a step higher in morality. Forsaken by friends, hopeless as to their future, deserted even by those who wrought their downfall, these poor girls sink lower and lower, and lead lives of shame and misery.

"No spiritual-minded person will take part in worldly amusements, for he cannot enjoy them. Christians who indulge in dancing turn away from God and seek fellowship with the world. Such are sure to lose the grace of God from their hearts."

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**September 19, 1971**

### **FALSELY ACCUSED**

**I Peter 3:16; 4:12, 13; Genesis 44:1-14**

**I Pet. 3:16** Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

**4:12** Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

**13** But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

**Gen. 44:1** And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth.

**2** And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.

3 And as soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses.

4 And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men, and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?

5 Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.

6 And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words.

7 And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing:

8 Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?

9 With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.

10 And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless.

11 Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack.

12 And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

13 They rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.

14 And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground.

**Memory Verse:** My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. James 1:2, 3.

**Central Thought:** If a person stays down in despair over being falsely accused, others might begin to believe it is true. God's grace is sufficient to help us rise above it.

**Word Definition:** "The divining cup still exists, and in the very same country, too, in which Joseph ruled. (Egypt) Now

though it is not likely at all that Joseph practiced any kind of divination, yet probably, according to the superstition of those times, (for I suppose the tradition to be even older than the time of Joseph,) supernatural influence might be attributed to his cup; and as the whole transaction related here was merely intended to deceive his brethren for a short time, as he affected to believe they had stolen it." —Clarke's Comm.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Clarke's Commentary brings out the thought that perhaps Benjamin drank from the cup at dinner.

Judah is the spokesman. Remember that through the tribe of Judah Jesus was to be born. The brothers were to be heads of the tribes of Israel, and they needed to be true men. God used Joseph to help bring this to pass.

Lesson References: 1 Pet. 4:14-17; Matt. 5:11; 10:20; 2 Cor. 12:9.

### QUESTIONS:

1. How can you live so those who falsely accuse you will be ashamed? 2. Are we going to have unusual or strange trials if we live godly in this world? 3. When will we be glad and rejoice with Christ? 4. What arose to darken the skies of the eleven happy brothers as they started home? 5. How were they falsely accused? What did Judah think had caused this to come upon them? 6. What do you think was Joseph's reason for doing what he did?

### COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

If you have never been falsely accused of doing something you have not done, then if you live to be very old, it will come to you. Someone received a letter a number of years ago which was very grievous to them. The person who wrote the letter signed his name to it. But a couple came to me some time later and accused me with some others of helping this person to write this letter. But the real fact of the matter is that I never read the letter, didn't know when it was written, nor mailed. All I knew about the whole matter was that the person said something to my father and me about writing the letter. My father advised them not to do it, but to commit the whole matter into God's hands, to which I agreed. The person did not take the advice nor did they let us know they had written it. This to me was a strange trial and a fiery one. After praying and weeping before the Lord, He comforted my heart. Then I could thank God that I could be a partaker of Christ's

suffering. Jesus was falsely accused and we should not think it strange that we be falsely accused. Are we better than our Lord? But it came from among those who professed to be saints. God knows what will be the greatest trial to us and He permits these things to keep us humble and to let us receive a blessing which goes along with being falsely accused. You can't get this kind any other way. (The couple were sorry.) God will work in various ways to help all of us get to heaven.

This was a severe trial to the brothers. They were happy, and on their way home with Benjamin and Simeon. The governor had treated them royally, and they were laden with corn. Soon they all would rejoice together with their father that all was well. But a dark cloud arose. They were overtaken and falsely accused. Evidence was found and they were unable to explain. Most of all it fell upon Benjamin, the one who was least likely to have done that deed. To make it more severe, Judah had promised to bring Benjamin back safely to his father. "They rent their clothes" as they were horror-stricken. Their sorrow knew no remedy.

Joseph's design may be easily read in the light of former events. He wanted his brethren to be brought to true repentance. Would they desert their brother, Benjamin, as they had him? Would they defend him? Their feeling toward him was tested by the cup in the sack. —M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Accumulated evidence is quite commonly accepted as sufficient proof of guilt. If someone at a certain place at a certain time is robbed of a certain amount and if someone else who is present cannot prove that he was somewhere else at that particular time, evidence is pointing toward him. Now, if upon search it is found that he is in possession of the exact amount that was robbed, more evidence is added. Then if it is learned that he is under a financial obligation, hard pressed to pay the debt, but without legitimate funds with which to pay, more evidence is added. And so the process continues until finally every normal reasoning man would be convinced he was the robber, and guilty. Situations of peculiar character have been known to develop where almost everything pointed to someone who was actually innocent. Some were discovered and corrected in time, while others, no doubt, left some poor fellow paying for something he did not do.

Now in the lesson we have an artificial, manufactured case with very convincing evidence, but the whole affair was fabricated! It would be useless for Benjamin to deny taking the cup, for there it was right in his own sack for everyone

to see. While he knew he did not put it there and his brothers trusted him enough to believe he would not do such a thing, yet here it was. How could he explain? No one would know how it got there but the one who actually put it there. Unless he were to step forward and clear up the matter, there was no alternative but for the obvious offender to suffer. It is a wicked and sinful thing to see someone suffering a thing that we could correct but because of influence or popularity or something, we shrug it off and let someone suffer. This sort of conduct will also reap its reward for there is One who sees and knows all and who will not overlook. —C. W. Wilson

### **"LOVE COVERETH**

"Mr. MacArthur," Fred began, "there is one thing that stands in my way of accepting Jesus Christ as my Saviour. Fifteen years ago I was working for a certain firm. I was only seventeen at the time. I liked my work, and everything went well for about six weeks, when one day I noticed that the men with whom I worked seemed to avoid me and would stand in groups talking among themselves. About two o'clock I was told I was wanted in the office. The president was standing with his hand on the open safe door. He said, "Mr. Bates, I'm sorry for you, but if you will confess and return what you have taken I'll drop the matter at once." I was dumfounded. "Confess?" I said. "What shall I confess? I have taken nothing nor have I, to the best of my knowledge, done anything that requires a confession." The president looked in surprise at me and was about to speak when the manager of the firm stepped to the center of the floor and addressing the president said, "It's no use wasting time on him. He's evidently an old hand at the game." A few more words were exchanged among the men, and though I pleaded with them to tell me of what I was accused, they refused to answer my question.

"How I suffered that night in jail God only knows! The next day I was given a hearing and then it was that I discovered that \$26,000 had been stolen from the safe in the office, and that I was accused of the theft. The manager, accompanied by a detective, had searched my room in my absence, and had discovered the money bag under my mattress but no money was found.

"I need not tell you about the days I awaited trial. Suffice it to say that I was found guilty by the court and sentenced to hard labor in the state penitentiary for a term of not less than five years. I was dazed. I could neither eat nor sleep. The injustice of the whole matter almost drove me mad.

"Five years later I once more became a free man. I had sworn that I would find the man who stole the money and placed the blame on me and that his life would pay for his crime. My heart was bitter. In a short time I discovered that the manager of the firm for which I had worked had resigned his position shortly before my release and that two months previous to his resignation the office safe had been entered at night and a large sum of money stolen. This confirmed my conviction that the manager was the thief in both instances. At once I began a search for him. I found he had deserted his wife and gone to Mexico where I went in search of him.

"After two years of futile searching I tired of my task, came north to St. Louis, and found employment. Once more I took to the trail and this time with something more deadly than my fists. I trailed him for over a year from one city to another, but always arrived too late. I finally gave up the hunt, settled down and established a home of my own. I am happy with my wife and little boy, but I cannot forget the past and my heart longs for revenge whenever I think of that man. I have suffered in a way that few men have suffered, and revenge would be sweet. I would like to be a Christian. I know I need Christ. I know I am a sinner. But I wonder sometimes if one who hates as I hate and longs for revenge as I long for it can ever be saved." Fred had finished his story and both men sat for a moment in silence.

"I presume if I had gone through such an experience as you have just told me that I would feel much the same as you do," the minister said. "But Fred, have you ever stopped to think that Jesus Christ suffered, too, for crimes He had never committed? He, too, was innocent of any crime and yet He was spit upon and lashed, and beaten, and crucified, and treated as the lowest of criminals. Yet we hear Him say, as they nailed Him to the cross, 'Father, forgive them.' I know of yourself you can never speak as He did, but I do know that if you will accept Him as your Saviour that He will change your heart that it will be possible for you to pray for this man as He prayed for His enemies. 'Love covereth a multitude of sins,' and once that love of God fills a man's heart and life, his hatred gives way to love, and the longing for vengeance to a spirit of pity."

"I believe you," responded Fred, "but it seems I am not willing to give up the desire to have revenge."

The minister asked, "What would you do if you were to meet this man who had caused you so much suffering?"

"I'd kill him," answered Fred with a flash of anger.

"Then what?"

"I presume that I'd be arrested and tried for the crime and possibly die in the electric chair."

"And what about your wife? What about Junior? What would they do then?"

Fred made no answer.

"And what about your soul?" the minister continued. "No murderer can enter the kingdom of heaven. Fred, you'd be a fool for doing anything like that. Can't you see it? You'd lose everything by such an act—your dear wife, your only son, your home, your soul, your joy, peace, everything. And what would you gain? Here you are in your own home with a loving wife and a darling child. The best years of your life are yet before you. But you would sell it all for the sake of revenge. Fred, is it worth it?"

Suddenly the front door opened, and little feet were heard coming through the hall. A childish voice called, "Daddy. Daddy!" Both men heard it and tears came to the eyes of both. Fred leaped to his feet and cried out in anguish of soul, "No! no! It isn't worth it," and sobbing, dropped to his knees on the floor.

Six months later a man knocked at the Bates' door and asked for a cup of coffee.

"Have him come in and eat breakfast with us," Fred called to his wife.

A moment later the stooped form of a poorly-clad figure entered the kitchen, rubbing his hands in an effort to warm them. And Fred recognized the man for whom he had sought in vain for years. To all appearances the man had not recognized Fred. For a moment Fred's hands were clenched, and then they relaxed.

Following the morning meal Fred led in the morning devotions. As they arose from their knees Fred turned toward the man and said, "I don't presume you remember me, Mr. Murly?" For a moment the man stared at Fred, and then the changed expression upon his face made an answer unnecessary. The man at once became uneasy, and Fred, noticing it, said, "Have no fear, Murly. I'll not harm you. Sit down."

Reluctantly the man obeyed, while Fred took a chair and sat opposite him.

"Mr. Murly," Fred began, "I am a Christian only six months, and you can be thankful that I am. Had you appeared here six months ago as you have this morning, I would probably have taken your life without a moment's hesitation. But God has planned it otherwise and I am glad for both of us that He did so."

Then he told the man of Christ, and pleaded with him to accept Jesus as his Saviour from sin.

" 'Tis no use, Mr. Bates," the man replied. "I am a hardened criminal and there's no hope for a man like me. I've committed so many crimes in my time that if I were to live for a hundred years I could not serve enough years to atone. I'm sorry I sinned against you as I did and, for some reason or other, since I came in here I regret the sinful life I have lived. But I'm getting old. Disease has laid its hands upon me because of my sins, and my days are few. I shall have to finish as I began."

Fred pleaded with the man to accept Christ. Assured of Fred's forgiveness, the man left the house, but not before Fred once more prayed for him and placed in his hands several bills that would help him to find food and shelter at night.

Two months later a letter came.

"Dear Mr. Bates: After leaving you two months ago I became more and more disgusted with my life and longed for the change of which you spoke to me. One night I staggered into a Mission, and although I didn't believe He'd do it, yet Jesus Christ pardoned and accepted me. Oh, the joy of that moment! But, oh! the regret of my life.

After that, I decided to tell the authorities of my past life, with the result that I have been committed to prison for life. I have also written to the firm and have told everything so as to clear your name. Since I came here I have broken down completely in health and the doctor says it is only a matter of a few weeks at the most. But I wanted to let you know that your kindness to me after the terrible crime I committed against you is responsible for my change of heart. But for you I would now be sinking into hell. God bless you! How I wish I had always lived a clean, upright life! Oh! believe me, 'the way of the transgressor is hard,' and apart from Jesus Christ there is no real joy in life. Goodbye. Murly."

—Paul Weaver

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September 26, 1971

### INTERCESSION

Genesis 44:15a, 16, 17, 18; (Read from the Bible Gen. 44:19-34, the touching plea of Judah to the governor),  
Gen. 45:1-3; Rom. 8:34b; Heb. 7:25; 2 Cor. 5:1

Gen. 44:15a And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done?

16 And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves?



God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found.

17 And he said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

18 Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh.

(Read from the Bible Gen. 44:19-34, the touching plea of Judah to the governor.)

Gen. 45:1 Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

2 And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph, doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.

Rom. 8:34b It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Heb. 7:25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

2 Cor. 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Memory Verse: For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. Titus 2:11.

Central Thought: We have One who is greater than Judah who makes intercession for us. Jesus Christ bore the curse that otherwise would fall upon us and appears in the presence of God and "maketh intercession for us."

Word Definition: Intercession: "An interceding, mediation, pleading, or prayer in behalf of another or others." —Web.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Joseph had his silver cup put in Benjamin's sack and then had the steward follow the brothers and accuse them of taking his cup. When it was found in Benjamin's sack, all returned and

fell down before the governor who was Joseph but they did not know it was he.

Judah seemed to be the one who spoke in a way that it had an effect. He stayed with facts and seemed to know how to arrange them.

Martin Luther said of Judah's plea that "I would give very much if I could pray to our God as well as Judah prays to Joseph here; for it is a perfect specimen of prayer—the true feeling that there ought to be in prayer."

Jesus was born of the tribe of Judah. "Our Lord sprang out of Judah." Heb. 7:14. He was "the lion of the tribe of Judah." Rev. 5:5.

**Lesson References:** Eph. 6:18; Acts 7:12, 13.

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What did Judah mean when he told the governor "God hath found out our iniquity"? 2. Did it seem that Joseph planned to keep Benjamin with him and let the others go home? Why? 3. Discuss the plea that Judah made in the light of intercession and its results. 4. Discuss the value of the intercession of Christ for us before God, the Holy Spirit helping us pray and then also our earnestness in prayer. 5. What blessings has God prepared for us through the intercession of Christ for us and if we prove faithful to Him to the end?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

There is in every person a tender spot, so to speak. Many cover up that tenderness and appear to be rough and hard. One man was dying and if anyone came near him and spoke to him about God he would curse and swear. One Christian lady took her little girl with her to visit him. He had a little girl one time but she had died. Through the child the man's heart was touched and he was brought to Christ.

In our lesson Judah did not know that Joseph's tender spot was the love he had for his brother and his dear father but we find in his eloquent plea he speaks of those things in life that were most tender which we find touched deeply Joseph's heart. Joseph, the governor could not withhold any longer his identity and from showing the great love that was longing for expression. Judah's intercession broke down all barriers between them and brought about a reunion which brought forth blessings to Joseph and to his family.

I am thinking of another intercessor. Jesus Christ, the perfect One who died on the cross and took our punishment for our sins. When we come to God, seeking forgiveness in prayer, Jesus intercedes for us. Jesus is touched when He sees

our godly sorrow for our sins and our earnestness, with tears, wanting the load of condemnation to be lifted. God is touched when His Son, Jesus, intercedes for us. God for Christ's sake forgives us and the load is lifted. Forgiveness is granted. We are united with our Saviour and God, our heavenly Father. Oh, the joy of that union!

The Apostle Paul also brings out that the "Spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Rom. 8:26, 27. Praise the Lord for our Saviour, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit that maketh intercessions for us before God, our heavenly Father. —M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

All the evidence of guilt was pointing directly at Benjamin and he was the one upon whom the sentence was passed. Somehow the thought keeps lingering that Joseph would have liked to have spent some time alone with his own full brother. This plan, however, didn't seem to be the Lord's design in the matter but rather He wanted them all blessed together. When Judah saw the turn events were taking and realized what the ultimate effect would be upon his father, he sought and obtained an audience with Joseph and just laid the whole thing out before him. Then he pointed out how he had stood as surety for his younger brother before his father. Next, he requested that he be allowed to assume the boy's obvious guilt and receive the penalty in order to spare his aged father. When Joseph realized the seriousness of the situation he recognized immediately that his false charges course would be a damaging thing and he also clearly saw manifested a tenderness in his older brethren that formerly was not there. Time and experience had worked a work upon their hearts as well as his own, and he could contain himself no longer. The "fountain of the deep" was broken up and the tears began to flow as he disclosed to them his identity. Now it was time for them to really be afraid for here they were at the mercy of him whom they had wronged. Of course, they had been all along, but just did not know it. It must have been a great comfort to learn he still loved the Lord and them as well. Joseph's revelation dismissed the charges against Benjamin.

The one who is accusing souls of guilt today would not and could not offer a sacrifice for their release. A thoroughly wicked devil could not possibly offer a holy sacrifice. A thor-

oughly holy God could not possibly be satisfied with a wicked sacrifice. That left but one possibility. The holy God prepared and offered the perfect holy sacrifice in the person of His own dear Son who took our sins upon Himself and through Him we are relieved of our guilt. —C. W. Wilson

### THE WHITE MAN'S RELIGION? EVERY RACE IS TO LOOK TO HIM

Notice it says, "Look unto me . . . all the ends of the earth." It does not say here, "Look to me only if you are white." The Bible teaches us that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world. The Scriptures declare "God so loved the world [that includes you] . . . that whosoever believeth [that means you] . . . should not perish but have everlasting life." The words "black man" or "white man" do not appear anywhere in these verses.

The Scriptures teach that every man, regardless of race, is born a sinner and will perish in his sins unless he receives Jesus Christ personally into his heart. The Scriptures say, "But as many [black or white] as received him [Jesus Christ], to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

I will be the first to admit that there have been occasions when I have been disappointed by some people who labeled themselves as Christians, but still maintained hatred in their hearts. But God is saying, "Look unto me." He is asking us to focus our attention on Him, not on the prejudice of others. He is asking us to look to Him, not to the social oppression. He is saying, "I am God. I am the solution to all the paradoxes of life. I am God and beside me there is none else."

The Bible teaches us that the very purpose of Jesus coming into the world was to do away with the sin that separates us from God and from man. For as long as there is sin in the human heart it means that man will be separated from God, and when man is separated from God, he is automatically separated from his fellow man. But, thank God, by the death of Jesus on the Cross, He has done away with sin and, by His resurrected Life, He has made it possible for each of us to belong to a new race.

Not the white race, or the black race, but a third race of men known as the Sons of God, transformed by the power of God. It can happen to you right this moment if you will confess before God that you are a sinner and then thank Him for taking away your sin on the cross. Invite Him into your life and you will be a son of God this very moment. Not a race man, but a son of God. Not a religious man, but a son of God.

The Bible declares that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

—Tom Skinner

## CHRIST PREVAILED OVER DEATH AND THE GRAVE

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:18).

Christ prevailed over the works of sin and of the devil. Salvation would not be complete unless it delivered us from death and the grave. Christ prevailed over temptations, demons, sin, sickness and disease; thus making it possible for man through His grace to have the victory over them. Jesus conquered death and the grave, which is man's last enemy; thus making it possible for us to gain the victory over the sting of death and over the bands of the tomb.

Christ said, "I am he that liveth, and was dead." We read how Christ accomplished this work; namely, he of his own will in order to redeem man from death and the tomb, entered right into the regions of death; and by the power of God wrestled with it and overcame it, and wrenched the keys of death and the grave out of the hands of Satan, as it were. The term "keys" here means the power and authority of death and the grave; and we know that they have power over the bodies of men, and have laid teeming millions in the silent tomb, and had not Christ "tasted death for every man" and "through death" destroyed "him that had the power of death, that is the devil," then we would never have been partakers of the resurrection from the dead; hence death and the grave would have been our ending, and we all would have perished world without end. But, blessed be the name of Jesus! He, by tasting death for us, and by rising from the tomb, destroyed the powers of death and the tomb and gave us hope through Himself, for He "is the resurrection and the life;" hence the hope of the righteous, that though "skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." —W. H. Shoot

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### "WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?"

Youth: Too happy to think—time yet.

Manhood: Too busy to think—more gold.

Prime: Too anxious to think—worry.

Declining years: Too aged to think—old hearts harder to get.

Dying Bed: Too ill to think—weak, suffering alone.

Death: Too late to think—the spirit has flown.

Eternity: Forever to think—God's mercy past, into hell I am righteously cast. Forever to weep my doom!

**ACCEPT CHRIST TODAY!**

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

—Selected

## **GOD'S GRACE**

The Grace of God can make us sing when suffering. See Acts 16:25.

The Grace of God can make us rejoice when persecuted. Acts 5:41.

The Grace of God can make us pleased when reproached. 2 Cor. 12:10.

The Grace of God can make us joyful when tired. See 2 Corinthians 7:4.

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## **THE SEED OF THE WORD**

A minister of Geneva, on a trip to Paris, one day fell into a conversation with a man who began to reason with him about Christianity. The minister answered every argument with a quotation from Scripture—not venturing a single personal remark or application. Every quotation his companion evaded or turned aside, only to be met by another passage. The skeptic became enraged. "Don't you see, I don't believe your Bible! What's the use of quoting it to me?" he shouted. But the minister's reply was another thrust of the sword of the Spirit, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Years passed, then one morning the minister received a letter. Opening it he read, "You took the Sword of the Spirit and stabbed me through and through one day, and every time I tried to parry the blade and get you to use your hands and not the heavenly steel, you simply gave me another stab. You made me feel I was not fighting you, but God." It was signed by the former skeptic in whom the "seed of the Word" had finally been mixed with faith.

Even as the natural seed changes soil into plants, so the living seed of the Word changes the character of the individual who comes in contact with it. For example, in the night of the Dark Ages when the Word of God was planted by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of chosen men, it brought forth the fruit of the Reformation. There was a rediscovery of the truth, that salvation is not by ritual or works, but by faith in Jesus as our Saviour.

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If you are depending on church membership, religious rites, or your own goodness to save your soul—stop right now, because God does not accept man-made religion. "Ye must be born again," Jesus said.

## YOUR HELPER

A boy had been told by his father to carry a very large basket of apples into the house. "But Daddy," the boy cried, "I can't even lift the basket. How can I carry them?"

The father stepped over to his son's side, put one hand on the other side of the basket, and the two of them lifted it quite easily. "Oh," said the boy, "when you help me, Dad, I can do things I could never do by myself."

And that's the way it is in the Christian life. In the Word of God we read of several things God wants us to do. People who are not saved often say, "There's no use for me to become a Christian. I could never do all those things." But they do not understand that after a person is saved, God gives the wonderful Holy Spirit to help the Christian live the Christian life. It is true that we can not do the things God wants us to do, by our own power. But we have the power of the Holy Spirit to help us, just as the boy had his father to help him carry the heavy basket.

Whenever you read something in God's Word that you think you cannot do, remember that He has given the Holy Spirit to help you do that very thing. God led Paul to write in Phil. 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." You need not be afraid, then, to testify for Jesus, even though your knees may be knocking together. If you ask Jesus He will help you through the power of the Holy Spirit. And it will be that way with everything you are called upon to do in the Christian life. You may not be able to do it in yourself, but you have the power of the Holy Spirit to help you. Count on it. —Selected

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A woman said to D. L. Moody, "Please pray for my unsaved husband. He does many sinful things, but he has a good heart." Moody protested, "That's where you are wrong, Lady. Your husband has a sinful heart and that is why he does sinful things. He needs a change of heart." The Bible says, "Except a man be born again [made new] he cannot see the kingdom of God."

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People often see you as you are outside.  
But Jesus really knows you for He sees inside.  
How about your heart? Is it right with God?  
That's the thing that counts today.

## PRAYED FOR FAITH

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I prayed for faith, and thought that some day faith would come down and strike me like lightning. But faith did not seem to come. One day I read in the tenth chapter of Romans, "Now faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." I had closed my Bible, and prayed for faith. I now opened my Bible, and began to study, and faith has been growing ever since. —D. L. Moody

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In the cold Cathedral of Lubeck, Germany, is the following inscription:

"Thus speaketh Christ our Lord to us:

Ye call me Master, and obey me not;  
Ye call me Light, and seek Me not;  
Ye call me Way, and walk Me not;  
Ye call me Life, and desire Me not;  
Ye call me Wise, and follow Me not;  
Ye call me Fair, and love Me not;  
Ye call me Eternal, and see Me not;  
Ye call me Noble, and serve Me not;  
Ye call me Mighty, and honor Me not;  
Ye call me Just, and fear Me not;  
If I condemn you, blame Me not."

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I have read the Bible through one hundred times, and always with increasing delight. Each time it seems like a new book to me. . . . The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our lives and thoughts. I solemnly state this from the experience of fifty-four years. —George Mueller, one who is an outstanding example of faith, with results through earnest prayer.

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The heart of your problem is the problem of your heart. Only God can change your heart and thereby change your life.



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