

THE RESTORED CHURCH OF GOD®

CHILDREN'S BIBLE LESSONS



Jacob and Joseph



LEVEL 3
LESSON 3

Jacob and Joseph

In Lesson 2, we learned Jacob married two wives, Leah and Rachel. We also learned that God made great promises to Jacob for his descendants.

For these promises to come true, God blessed Jacob with many children. In fact, Jacob had twelve sons!

Their names were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamin. These twelve sons would begin the twelve tribes of Israel through their children and grandchildren.

Jacob Leaves Laban

After 14 years of serving Laban, Jacob wanted to move his family back to Canaan.

At first, Laban did not want Jacob to go. Laban received many blessings from God during the years Jacob worked for him. But they finally reached an agreement and parted ways.

Jacob took his family and caravan and headed to Canaan. As he got closer, Jacob began to worry. Remember, he had left to escape his

brother's anger so many years before.

He thought, "What if Esau still wants to kill me?"

Jacob Wrestles God

As Jacob neared Canaan, he sent messengers to announce his arrival: "Tell Esau that I am returning to Canaan with my family. But also tell him I would like to return home on friendly terms with him."

They relayed the message to Esau and quickly returned. "We delivered the message as you said, and Esau is coming to meet you with 400 men!"

Jacob heard that and was scared. He wondered why Esau would bring 400 men just to greet him. So, he divided his family and herds into two groups. If Esau's men attacked, at least half of his family could escape.

Jacob prayed fervently to God for help and deliverance. He knew that God would keep His promises to protect him and his family.

Then, he instructed his servants to take his best animals—goats, sheep, cows and donkeys—as a gift to Esau. Perhaps a gift would calm

any anger Esau still felt toward him.

Then, Jacob told his family to go ahead of him. He camped alone that night to pray again to God. He knew he needed God's help to succeed with Esau.

That night, a stranger suddenly appeared. He grabbed Jacob and began to wrestle with him. They continued to wrestle through the night. When the man saw that Jacob would not give up, he touched Jacob's hip and put his joint out of place. This caused great pain in Jacob's hip, but still he would not give in!

Jacob knew he was wrestling no ordinary "stranger." He was wrestling the Messenger of the Eternal, also known as the Word, who would later become Jesus Christ.

Then the Messenger of the Eternal said, "The sun is rising. Let me go!" Jacob refused again. He replied, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"

Turn to Genesis 32:27-29 to find out what happened:

"So He said to him, 'What is your _____?' He said, '_____.'



"And He said, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but _____; for you have _____ with _____ and with men, and have _____.'

"Then Jacob asked, saying, 'Tell me Your name, I pray.' And He said, 'Why is it that you ask about My name?' And He _____ him there."

So, Jacob's name was now Israel, which means "he struggles with God" and "he will rule as God." Jacob refused to give up no matter what. God gave him a great blessing because of his determination.

Jacob and Esau Meet

That morning, Jacob limped away to meet his family. As he arrived, he

saw Esau coming in the distance with his 400 men.

Jacob bowed several times as he met him. He hoped Esau would see him as a friend and brother, not an enemy.

As Esau came near, he did not say a word. Instead, he ran up to Jacob and gave him a big hug and kiss! He was so happy to see Jacob after so long that he forgot all his past anger.

Jacob introduced his family and insisted that Esau take the gifts he offered. The brothers made peace



with each other, and Jacob continued on his way.

Joseph Sold

Time passed and Israel's family settled in the valley of Hebron. Israel's wife, Rachel, had died many years earlier during childbirth. He missed her very much, and their son Joseph had become his favorite.

Parents should always love their children equally. But Israel favored Joseph, and his brothers resented him for it.

Even worse, Israel made a very special coat of many colors just for Joseph. This made his brothers even more jealous.

One day, Joseph went out to meet his brothers. They saw him coming and plotted to kill him!

Reuben, the oldest, heard the plan and stopped them. He did not like Joseph either, but he did not want to kill his brother.

"Throw him in this pit here instead," he suggested. "That will teach him a lesson!" Reuben planned to return later and help Joseph escape.

His brothers agreed and threw Joseph into the pit and took his beautiful coat as well. Then they sat down to eat dinner nearby. While they ate, some traders came by on their way to

Egypt. Suddenly, they had a better idea now that Reuben was gone.

“We should sell Joseph to these traders and make some money,” said Judah. The brothers agreed.

Turn to Genesis 37:32-34 to see what they did next:

“Then they sent the tunic of many _____, and they brought it to their _____ and said, ‘We have found this. Do you know whether it is your _____ tunic or not?’

“And he _____ it and said, ‘It is my son’s tunic. A _____ has _____ him. Without doubt _____ is torn to pieces.’

“Then Jacob _____ his clothes, put _____ on his _____ waist, and _____ for his son many days.”

Joseph’s brothers sinned badly by selling Joseph into slavery. Not only did they betray their own brother, but they also lied to their father and broke his heart.

Joseph and Potiphar’s Wife

The slave traders took Joseph and sold him to a man named Potiphar. Potiphar was an Egyptian officer of

the Pharaoh and captain of the guard.

As God did with Joseph’s father and grandfathers, He protected Joseph and blessed him even as a slave.

Joseph found favor with Potiphar for working hard and being loyal. Potiphar put Joseph in charge of his household and business affairs. Joseph did a good job, and God blessed Potiphar’s house.

As Joseph grew up, he became a handsome young man. Potiphar’s wife noticed his good looks and grew to like him too much. She should only have had those feelings for her husband. Instead, she gave in to her human nature and constantly pestered Joseph to be intimate with her. He refused over and over again because he knew it was wrong. He did not want to commit sin by disobeying God’s law.

One day, Joseph was alone in the house with Potiphar’s wife. She caught Joseph by the arm and tried to tempt him. Joseph immediately pulled away and ran outside. As he did, his cloak came off in her hands.

Potiphar’s wife was embarrassed and angry with Joseph, so she accused him of trying to hurt her. She lied to the other servants about what happened. “Joseph tried to be intimate

with me, but I screamed, and he dropped his cloak and ran away!”

Potiphar heard what happened and became angry. He believed his wife’s lies and threw Joseph into prison unjustly.

Joseph in Prison

Although Joseph was in prison, God was with him and showed him mercy. He inspired the prison keeper to put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners. Because Joseph obeyed God, the prison prospered.

During this same time, the Pharaoh in Egypt became upset with his chief butler and chief baker. He put them into the same prison with Joseph.

One night, they each had strange dreams that made them sad. Joseph noticed and asked, “Why do you each look so sad today?”

They replied, “We had dreams last night but do not know what they mean.”

Joseph knew that only God could truly explain dreams if they had special meanings. So, he encouraged the butler and the baker to tell him their dreams. God would reveal the meaning to Joseph if it was His will.

The chief butler went first. “I saw a vine with three branches that brought forth clusters of grapes. I

took the grapes, pressed them into Pharaoh’s cup, and made wine. Then, I gave the cup to Pharaoh.”

God revealed the meaning to Joseph and he replied, “The branches on the vine are three days. In three days, Pharaoh will let you go from prison. You will return to his household and have your old job back.

“But remember me when you are gone. Please show your thankfulness by speaking kindly of me to Pharaoh. Perhaps he will then free me.”

The baker was excited. Maybe Joseph could tell him that his dream meant something good too. He told Joseph, “In my dream, I had three baskets on my head. The top one had all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds kept eating from it.”

Joseph replied, “Here is what your dream means. The three baskets represent three days. In three days, Pharaoh will release you from prison. But instead of returning to your old job, he will hang you from a tree, and birds will pick at your body.”

Three days later, the exact events that God revealed to Joseph through the dreams took place. The chief butler returned to his job, and Pharaoh hanged the chief baker.

But the chief butler thought only of his own happiness. He forgot about Joseph and at first did not mention him to Pharaoh.

Pharaoh's Strange Dreams

Two slow years passed while Joseph remained in prison. He knew God was with him and would work things out. But prison life was unpleasant and he longed for freedom.

One night, Pharaoh had two strange dreams. He awoke troubled because he did not understand their meaning. Pharaoh did not know or obey God, so he called for all the magicians and fortune-tellers in Egypt. Not even one could interpret the dreams! This was because they did not rely on God to reveal the meaning. They tried to use their own reasoning, which was influenced by Satan, the god of this world.

It frustrated Pharaoh that no one could interpret his dreams. Suddenly, the chief butler remembered Joseph! "Pharaoh, there was a young Hebrew man in prison that told the baker and me the meaning of our dreams when we were there. And the events came to pass exactly as he said!"

Pharaoh immediately called to the prison keeper and sent for Joseph. When he arrived, Pharaoh said, "I

have had two dreams that I cannot understand. Can you tell me their meaning?"

Joseph replied, "I cannot interpret them myself, but God will give you an answer by revealing them to me."

So, Pharaoh told Joseph his dreams. "In the first, I stood by the river. Suddenly, seven well-fed cows came out and began to feed in the meadow. Then, seven ugly starved cows followed them. The second set of cows ate up the first cows but still appeared hungry. Then I woke up," said Pharaoh.

He continued, "In my second dream, I saw seven heads of grain



grow plump and healthy on one stalk. Then, seven thin heads grew up after them. And the thin heads devoured the good heads.”

“What do they mean?” asked Pharaoh.

Joseph replied, “The dreams mean the same thing. God has shown you the next 14 years.

“The first seven cows and heads of grain signify seven years of fertile blessings from God. Egypt’s farms will produce much more than you need. But, the second seven cows and heads signify seven years of terrible hunger.”

When Pharaoh heard the interpretation, he wondered what to do.

Joseph continued, “Pharaoh, I respectfully urge you to do the following. Select a wise man and set him over Egypt. He can choose officers to set aside one-fifth of all the

food Egypt produces. Then, during the seven years of famine, there will be plenty for everyone.”

Pharaoh listened to the advice and decided it made sense. Then he chose Joseph to look after the storage of the crops. Because God was working with Joseph directly, there was no wiser man.

“Joseph, you will be second only to me in Egypt. Here is my ring, fine clothes and a gold chain to show your position and authority,” said Pharaoh.

During the following seven years, Egypt’s land produced plenty, just as God had revealed.

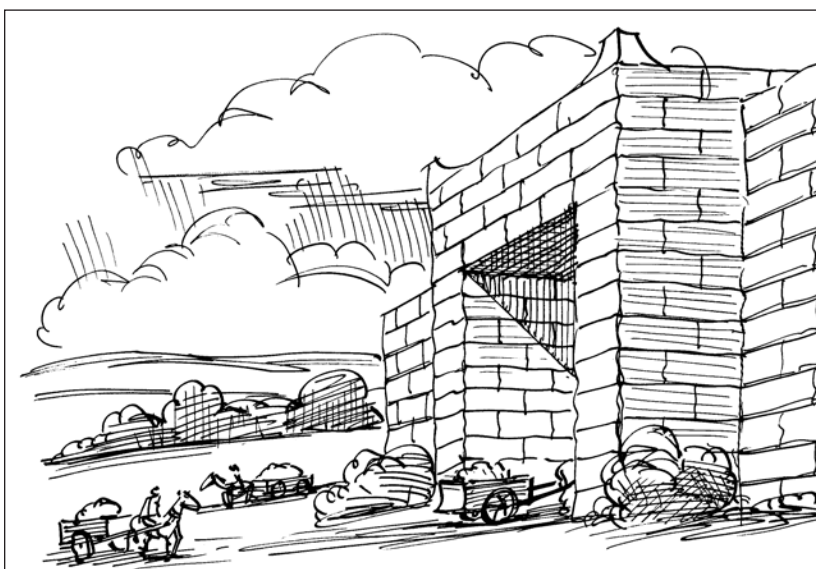
Joseph made sure to set aside one-fifth of the crops in the storehouses. When the famine came, Egypt would be prepared. Also during this time, Joseph had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

The seven years of plenty came to an end, and just as Pharaoh’s dreams showed, famine started.

People came from far and wide to buy from Egypt’s storehouses.

Brothers Reunite

Back in Canaan, the famine hurt Jacob and his family as well. He



instructed his sons to go to Egypt to buy grain.

All but Benjamin set out for Egypt. Jacob did not want to lose Benjamin as he had lost Joseph.

The brothers arrived in Egypt and lined up to buy food. As they approached the head of the line, Joseph recognized them. Happiness filled him at seeing his brothers again!

But, to teach them a lesson, he did not say who he was. Many years had passed, and now Joseph dressed as an Egyptian. His brothers did not recognize him.

“Where do you come from?” Joseph asked. They replied, “From Canaan to buy food, sir.”

“I don’t believe you! You are spies!” exclaimed Joseph. The brothers were horrified! “No, sir, we are only honest sons here to buy food.”

Joseph did not want revenge, but he decided to test his brothers. He said again, “I think you are liars and spies!” With that, he instructed his servants to put his brothers in jail.

Three days later, Joseph came to them in the jail. He said, “Nine of you may take the grain back to your family. But one must stay behind in prison. When the nine return with your youngest brother, only then will I free your other brother.”

The brothers discussed their options. “This is happening because of what we did to Joseph,” they said. “Didn’t I tell you not to harm him? Now we must pay for what we did,” said Reuben.

Joseph overheard what they said. He still loved his brothers very much, despite what they had done. He turned his back as tears came to his eyes.

The nine brothers headed for home and left Simeon in prison waiting. When they arrived home, they explained to their father what had happened. Jacob was frightened to allow Benjamin to go back to Egypt. However, the grain eventually ran out and they had to return.

They set out for Egypt, promising their father that they would protect Benjamin.

Joseph saw them arrive and ordered his servant to take them to his home. He would prepare a great dinner for them. He had Simeon released from prison to join them. While they ate, the brothers wondered why Joseph had invited them, still not knowing that he was their brother.

The next morning, they left for home. They had not gone far when they noticed chariots chasing them. The chariots surrounded them, and Joseph’s servant stepped out. “Why have you repaid my master’s gener-

osity with offense? You stole his special silver cup,” he said.

Joseph’s brothers were shocked. They did not know that Joseph had put the cup in Benjamin’s bag. He had also put the money they paid for the grain back into each of their bags.



Remember, Joseph was trying to teach them a lesson.

They insisted that they had not stolen the cup. “Search our bags and you will see,” they said.

So, the chief servant began to open their sacks. One by one, he opened them and pulled out the hidden money. Then, he reached into Benjamin’s bag. Out came Joseph’s cup! The brothers were confused. They did not know how the money and the cup had gotten into their bags. But they knew the consequences. Benjamin would die, they would become the servants of Pharaoh’s chief officer, and their father would be heartbroken.

They arrived at Joseph’s palace and bowed deeply before him. Judah said, “We do not know how the money or silver cup appeared in our sacks. But because we have sinned

in the past, we will be your slaves anyway.”

Joseph replied, “Only Benjamin need be my slave. I will only punish the one who stole my cup.”

“Please, no!” Judah cried. “If we return to our father without his youngest son, he may die from sadness. Take me instead to spare him!”

Joseph could not hold in his secret anymore. Tears fell from his eyes as he saw the love his brothers had for his father. “Brothers,” he said, “I am Joseph whom you sold into slavery so many years ago. Hurry, go to our father and tell him you have found me. Tell him you may bring your families to live in Goshen and have plenty during the famine.”

The brothers could not believe what they heard. They hugged and kissed Joseph and left to tell Jacob the wonderful news.

Ephraim and Manasseh Blessed

So, Jacob reunited with Joseph and moved his entire household to Egypt. There, they prospered and had plenty despite the worsening famine.

Many years passed and Jacob grew older. He called Joseph to him along with his two sons.

“Joseph, God Almighty blessed me many years ago. He promised to make my descendants multiply and give us much land. Now, your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, are my sons as you and your brothers are,” said Jacob.

Adding Ephraim and Manasseh as Jacob’s sons would allow them to be a part of the blessings that God reserved for Jacob’s family. So, Joseph brought his sons over to Jacob for his blessing.

Jacob placed his right hand on Ephraim’s head to begin the blessing. “Father, you have put your right hand on the wrong son. Manasseh is the firstborn who should receive the right hand blessing,” said Joseph. But Jacob refused to switch his hands.

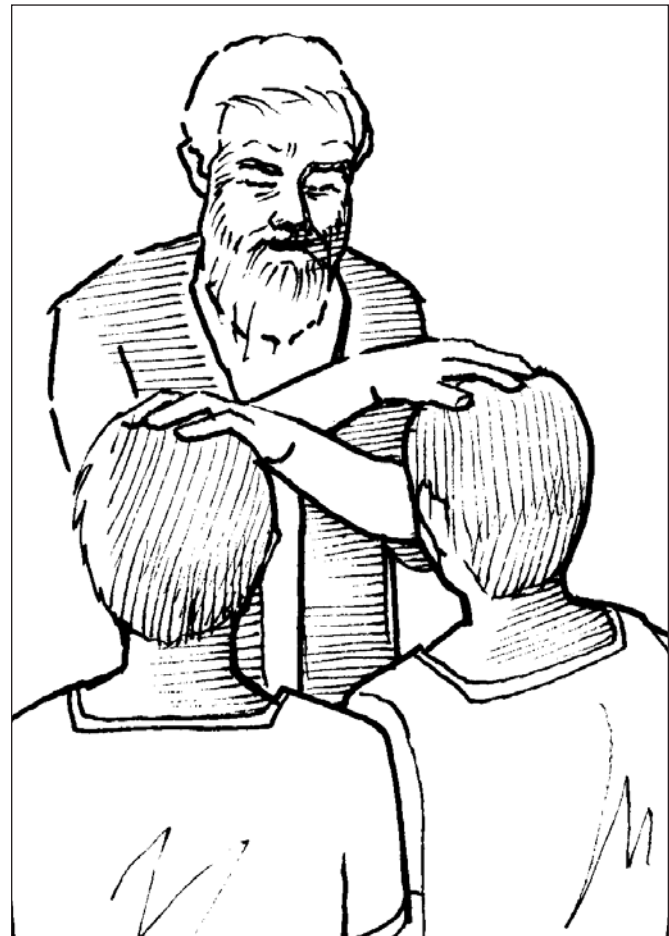
For he said, “Manasseh will become a great people and nation like no other in history. But his younger brother, Ephraim, will be

even greater. Ephraim’s descendants will become a multitude of nations.”

Shortly after, Jacob called all his sons to him. “Let me tell you what will happen to your peoples in the last days.” He proceeded to tell his sons of their descendants in the future as God revealed it to him.

When Jacob finished speaking, he drew his last breath. Another great servant of God died, but he left behind many important lessons from which we can learn.

In our next lesson, we will look at the life of yet another great servant of God—Moses.



BIBLE MEMORY: Sons of Israel

Reuben	Issachar	Joseph (Ephraim, Manasseh)
Simeon	Dan	Benjamin
Levi	Gad	
Judah	Asher	
Zebulun	Naphtali	

WORD SEARCH

Find each word from the list below in the puzzle. The words may be found in any direction. Be sure to check off each word as you find it.

<input type="checkbox"/> JACOB	K	R	A	H	C	A	S	S	I	Y	U	D	O	A
<input type="checkbox"/> ISRAEL	P	D	A	B	N	P	N	A	P	H	T	A	L	I
<input type="checkbox"/> REUBEN	D	Y	I	V	H	L	J	W	E	R	T	G	P	L
<input type="checkbox"/> SIMEON	X	L	J	A	H	M	I	A	R	H	P	E	H	K
<input type="checkbox"/> LEVI	V	F	D	C	Y	K	F	U	C	G	D	S	A	S
<input type="checkbox"/> JUDAH	M	U	R	X	U	O	D	H	I	O	B	V	C	I
<input type="checkbox"/> DAN	J	G	T	Z	A	B	S	R	E	U	B	E	N	M
<input type="checkbox"/> NAPHTALI	I	N	U	L	U	B	E	Z	E	R	T	Y	U	E
<input type="checkbox"/> GAD	B	V	S	M	R	H	A	N	H	I	O	L	P	O
<input type="checkbox"/> ASHER	D	O	Y	A	T	U	K	X	J	G	E	N	T	N
<input type="checkbox"/> ISSACHAR	H	A	I	N	G	J	M	C	E	A	T	H	G	W
<input type="checkbox"/> ZEBULUN	L	P	N	A	F	Y	O	K	R	I	M	P	B	D
<input type="checkbox"/> JOSEPH	P	E	K	S	D	T	U	S	E	L	N	I	O	V
<input type="checkbox"/> BENJAMIN	J	A	H	S	S	G	I	Z	E	B	G	V	N	E
<input type="checkbox"/> EPHRAIM	T	K	L	E	A	B	A	A	D	P	R	E	Q	F
<input type="checkbox"/> MANASSEH	N	A	S	H	E	R	S	Q	C	K	H	L	S	B