

19. The Butler and the Baker

The Word of the Lord: The Old Testament for Young Children

Notes for Parents & Teachers

19. The Butler and the Baker

- a. Start by saying that Joseph was a very good man, even though he had been treated badly. He did what was right.
- b. Being a slave—explain what that meant.
- c. But Joseph's goodness meant he rose to be in charge of many things in his master's house. But then he was unfairly thrown into prison. Even there the ruler of the prison trusted him and put him in charge.
- d. The story of the butler and the baker is obvious, but emphasize that the Lord had special plans for Joseph, so He allowed Joseph to know what dreams meant.
- e. Both dreams came true, but the butler didn't remember Joseph. You might ask them why he wouldn't—perhaps because he was thinking of himself, and because of his relief in getting out of the prison. Maybe this leads to a talk about gratitude, and how easy it is to forget some good thing someone did for you.
- f. Your children might ask why the baker was put to death. I guess the answer is that what he did had to be a lot worse than what the butler did.



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The Lord Protects Joseph in Egypt

Now Joseph was taken to Egypt. And the Lord was with Joseph and kept him safe through many years in Egypt—first when he was made a servant, and then when he was thrown into prison even though he did nothing wrong. The Lord was with him, and protected him, and did not forget him.

In the jailhouse were two prisoners of Pharaoh the king. They were a butler and a baker. And they had sinned against Pharaoh and he was very angry with them, so he put them in prison. The guard of the jailhouse put Joseph in charge of them. And they each dreamed a dream in the night. When Joseph came in to see them in the morning, they were sad. Joseph asked them saying, “Why do you look so sad today?” They said, “We have each dreamed a dream, and there is no one to tell us what they mean.” Joseph said to them, “Meanings belong to the Lord. Tell me your dreams, I pray you.” Then each man told Joseph about his dream, and the Lord helped Joseph so that he could tell them the meanings of their dreams.

The butler told his dream to Joseph and said to him, “In my dream there was a grape vine. On the grapevine were three branches. The grapevine grew well and bunches of red grapes grew on it. Pharaoh’s cup was in my hand and I took the grapes and I squeezed them into Pharaoh’s cup. Then I gave the cup to Pharaoh.” Joseph said to him, “The three branches are three days. In three days Pharaoh will set you free and bring you back to your position as his butler. When you are free, please remember me to Pharaoh and bring me out of this prison.”

When the baker saw and heard that the butler’s dream was good, he said to Joseph, “I dreamt I had three baskets with holes on my head and in the top basket there was food for Pharaoh that I had baked, but the birds came down and ate out of the basket on my head.” Joseph answered and said, “This is what your dream means. The three baskets are three days. In three days Pharaoh shall take you out of jail and you shall die for what you did to Pharaoh.”

Three days later it was Pharaoh’s birthday and he had the baker and the butler brought out of the jailhouse. And the dreams came true, just as Joseph had told them. The butler went back to work for Pharaoh and the baker was put to death. But the butler did not remember what Joseph had done for him.

Genesis 40

