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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1806 ~ Joseph and His Dreams.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

When we go to sleep each night, our brains don't stop functioning. We still need to breathe and dream. Most people only remember a few if any of their dreams, unless they become nightmares. However, doctors say that our brains dream while we sleep and if prevented from doing so by drugs, human beings would go mad.

Some people tell others of their dreams for the future. But this is only wishful thinking of what they hope might happen at some future time. It's called day-dreaming. However, God has spoken to people through their dreams many times in the Scriptures to let Godly people know what He wanted them to do. In Genesis, Chapter 15, God revealed to Abraham the future descendants that he would have as well as their 400-year captivity in Egypt.

Many of our dreams don't seem to make much sense to us or we can only remember fragments. Jacob's teenage son, Joseph, was having dreams too and he didn't understand the meaning of them either. Was God speaking to him in a way that was preparing him for events in the future? When he shared his dreams with his family, he did so with confidence. But his dreams were about his whole family bowing down to him, and this brought rebuke from his father and jealousy from his brothers.

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Dreams can come from three different sources: from demons, from our own mind and emotions, or from God's Holy Spirit. Dreams may not always be prophetic as Joseph's were. Some can also bring comfort, endorsement, warning or guidance. Remember that Jacob's father-in-law, Laban, was warned in a dream not to harm Jacob.

God is still speaking to people in dreams today. There are growing numbers of reports regarding 'Jesus' dreams in the Middle East, especially to Muslims. Many times, knowing nothing about Jesus Christ prior to their dream, people have immediately converted to following Jesus overnight and then possess a depth of knowledge that would have been impossible to have by natural means.

One man told his story that he thought he was having a dream. The Lord Jesus told him to read His words in a book. When the man woke up, to his utter astonishment, he discovered that he was holding a Bible in his hands. Sometimes, several people within a village have the same dream the same night, and whole villages have literally come to know the Lord overnight.

Many dreams, if not recalled first thing in the morning, will be forgotten. However, vivid dreams stay fresh in the mind for years. This was probably the way Joseph's dream felt when he saw the sheaves of wheat bowing down to his sheaf, as recorded in Genesis, Chapter 37.

So why did Joseph's stories of his dreams frustrate and anger his half-brothers? Obviously, they thought that Joseph was no better than them, irrespective of what the dreams implied. The dreams indicated that Joseph would be chief among them and as he was the 11th born boy in the family, they considered that this wasn't right. Position in an Israelite family was considered to be very important.

We see the same response by older brothers towards a younger brother when Samuel the prophet went to anoint the 2nd king of Israel. David, the youngest child of Jesse's family, wasn't even invited to come to the house to greet the great man Samuel.

David wasn't considered important enough. But God had great plans for David's life and when king of Israel, David was considered to be Israel's greatest king.

We can all get frustrated with someone, whether they be in our home, workplace, church or neighbourhood. How can we overcome our frustrations with others when they occur? Frustration is about wanting things to be different to how they are but not having the power to control that outcome. We can become frustrated when people don't do or do something differently to how we would like them to do it. But getting upset doesn't always give us the ability to change a certain situation that we're facing. When we can't escape our circumstances, we need first and foremost a change in our perspective about the events. Joseph's older brothers didn't think there was any problem with them. Sadly, Jacob should have seen signs of a rift widening and deepening between Joseph and the rest of his older sons.

The older brothers should not have expected Joseph to behave exactly like them; they should have found ways to accept Joseph while at the same time, asking him not to talk about his dreams. Another alternative was to speak with their father Jacob about their upset and anger towards Joseph and together, find ways of resolving such upsets and grievances by Jacob being less obvious with the favouritism he bestowed on Joseph.

But neither of these things happened. In time, the older brothers' frustrations with Joseph boiled over and they took matters into their own hands, thinking that they could make things better in the family. But their decisions only made the situation worse. And guilt usually does. The brothers didn't appreciate Joseph bringing them food and self-pity-turned-selfishness seemed part of their problem. Unkindness to Joseph by stripping him of his coat of many colours and imprisoning him in a dry pit was just a further step that they took in their selfish and unjustified poor behaviour.

How did Joseph cope with being grabbed and thrown down a pit in the ground? He'd just walked 65 miles carrying a basket of food for them and he must have been very tired. But his brothers didn't consider his needs at all.

While down in the pit, Joseph must have wondered what his brothers were planning to do with him. Had he treated them so badly that they would kill him? These hours must have been the first of many times his earlier dreams would have comforted him. Instead of becoming fearful, Joseph could trust in God and His unfailing words: "Do not be afraid."

Fear can be a terrible thing to live with. Many people go through life fearing something that'll never happen to them. The opposite of fear is courage. Contrast someone who has a perpetual state of fear with what a famous missionary, Mary Slessor, said when leaving the safety of England for the dark jungles of Africa during the 2nd half of the 19th Century: "Why should I fear? I am on a royal mission; I am in the service of the King of kings." Although she didn't know what would happen in her future, she was absolutely sure that the Lord Jesus was with her to help and protect her in whatever situation she would find herself.

A woman trying to break victimization within her ethnic group said: "Knowing what must be done, does away with fear." She felt that the Lord would give her the strength to endure whatever she had to face. "Settle in your mind what is right and you will find courage in your heart," she said.

You may be saying that you're not like those brave people who give their lives to a great cause. Where can we get the courage to go on when life seems too hard or difficulties seem to be too large? In Isaiah, Chapter 41, God says: "Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand." True courage comes from understanding that God is stronger than your biggest problem or strongest enemy. Be certain that He wants you to use His power to help you. Courage is not confidence in your own strength but well-placed confidence in God's abilities to change any type of situation.

In our prayers, we can ask God to take away the things that frighten us. Fear is part of life and comes from feeling alone against great odds. The early church was constantly threatened by religious persecution. The believers didn't pray for the threats to end, but rather, for the courage to face them. Sometimes God will remove the things that frighten you. But often, the Holy Spirit will give you the boldness to turn those threats into opportunities for spiritual growth and declaring your faith.

In Job, Chapter 11, it says: "Having hope will give you courage." Hope helps you to see beyond the immediate crisis. If God took away everything that frightened you, there would be no need for hope in your life. For it is through hope that you accept Christ as your Saviour and place your eternal future in His hands.

We can ask: are there any bad consequences for not exercising courage? Standing up for what is right can get you into trouble with corrupt people. Failing to stand up for what is right can get you into trouble with God. Whom should we fear the most: God or people?

In the Old Testament of the Bible, there are over 300 references that speak about 'the fear of the Lord'. The fear of the Lord is reverential trust and hatred of evil. In Proverbs, Chapter 9, it says: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding!" Another writer said the 'fear of the Lord' is to him like the continual awareness that God is watching and weighing every one of his thoughts, words, actions and attitudes. Such fear keeps sin at bay in our lives and gives us a foothold for wisdom.

The Lord Jesus said in John, Chapter 14, Verse 27b: "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." May God give you peace as you keep your mind and trust in Him to bring good out of every situation for your good and for His glory!

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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