

A Family Bible Story Book

MIGHTY ACTS OF GOD

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Mighty Acts of God: A Family Bible Storybook
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THE STORY OF CREATION

God's Powerful Word Creates

Genesis 1:1–31

1

Even though the Bible is made up of sixty-six different books with many different authors, written over a period of centuries, it tells one main story. That story is the story of God planning, creating, redeeming, and perfecting people who would be his own special people. The main character of the Bible story is God. In smaller story after smaller

“By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.”

Hebrews 11:3





story, he is the one who plans, who promises, who keeps his promises, who saves, who blesses, and who judges. Each story shows us God at work. As we read Bible stories, we always want to ask ourselves: What is

God doing in this story? What can I learn about God here? Our little minds will never understand all there is to our great God. But if we read all the stories he gave us in his Word, always looking for him in those stories, we will have a very clear picture of what he wants us to know about him.

The first story in the Bible is a famous one: the story of God creating all that is. And the first verse is a very famous verse: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” What a great amount of information we already know about God, just from those ten words! We know that in the beginning, when nothing else existed, God was. **God is eternal.** He had no beginning and he will have no end. This is one of several ways that God is **unique**—one of a kind. **There is no one and nothing like God.**

Genesis 1:1 also tells us that **God alone is uncreated.** Everything in the universe

depends on God for its existence. **God alone is completely independent.** He needs nothing to exist in the first place, and he needs nothing to keep him existing. That is another way in which God is unique. The first verse of Genesis tells us that God created the heavens and the earth. That means that God is separate from his creation; he is not a part of it. That may seem obvious to you, but many people in the world believe that if we put together every single thing in the universe, the sum total would equal God. You plus me plus the tree plus the clouds plus the chair plus every other thing, all put together, equals God. Genesis 1:1 shows us that this is not correct.

The third verse of Genesis adds to the amazing things we know from verse one. The third verse shows us how God created. “And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.” From verse three, we learn that God speaks. For us his creatures, having a speaking God makes a tremendous difference. What if there was a God who had made everything and who had made us, but who never spoke? How would we know why he made us, what he wants from us, or how to be right with him?

In this verse and in the rest of the chapter, we also see how wonderfully powerful

God's word is. First, God created the light, separating it from darkness. Then he created the sky, followed by the dry land and all the plants that cover it. Next, God created sun, moon, and stars, followed by all the birds, all the sea creatures, and all the animals. That would be wonderful enough, but what makes it even more amazing is that God did all that simply by speaking. Imagine a boy who is really hungry for chocolate cake. Someone explains to him that he will have to find a recipe, buy ingredients, measure and mix those ingredients, bake the cake—and he responds, “That’s too much work. I’m going to do it this way: Let there be cake!” We would think he was crazy. No one can make anything that way—no one except God. **God’s word is so powerful that he commands things that don’t exist to exist, and they obey.**

Not only did God make everything simply by speaking, but he made it all from nothing. The one exception is man. God made the first man from the dust of the ground. Then he made the first woman from the man’s rib.

If I buy flour, eggs, and sugar and bake a batch of cookies, whose cookies are they?

Mine, of course; I made them. What can I do with my cookies? I can do whatever I want to do with them; they belong to me. Since God made us, we belong to God. He may do whatever he likes with us, because we are his. And because we are his, we are to live our lives doing what he wants us to do.

AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE...

- ▶ **Take one thing from God’s creation, such as a human ear, and consider together how amazingly God has made it. Surely we can trust him to know and to be able to do what is best for his people.**
- ▶ **Work through the alphabet, naming a plant—or an animal or a bird—for each letter, to get a little idea of the astonishing variety in God’s creation.**
- ▶ **We may not like everything about our circumstances or about how we were made. Discuss God’s right, as Creator, to make and do with us as he sees best.**

FROM SLAVE TO RULER IN EGYPT

God Works Even through Evil

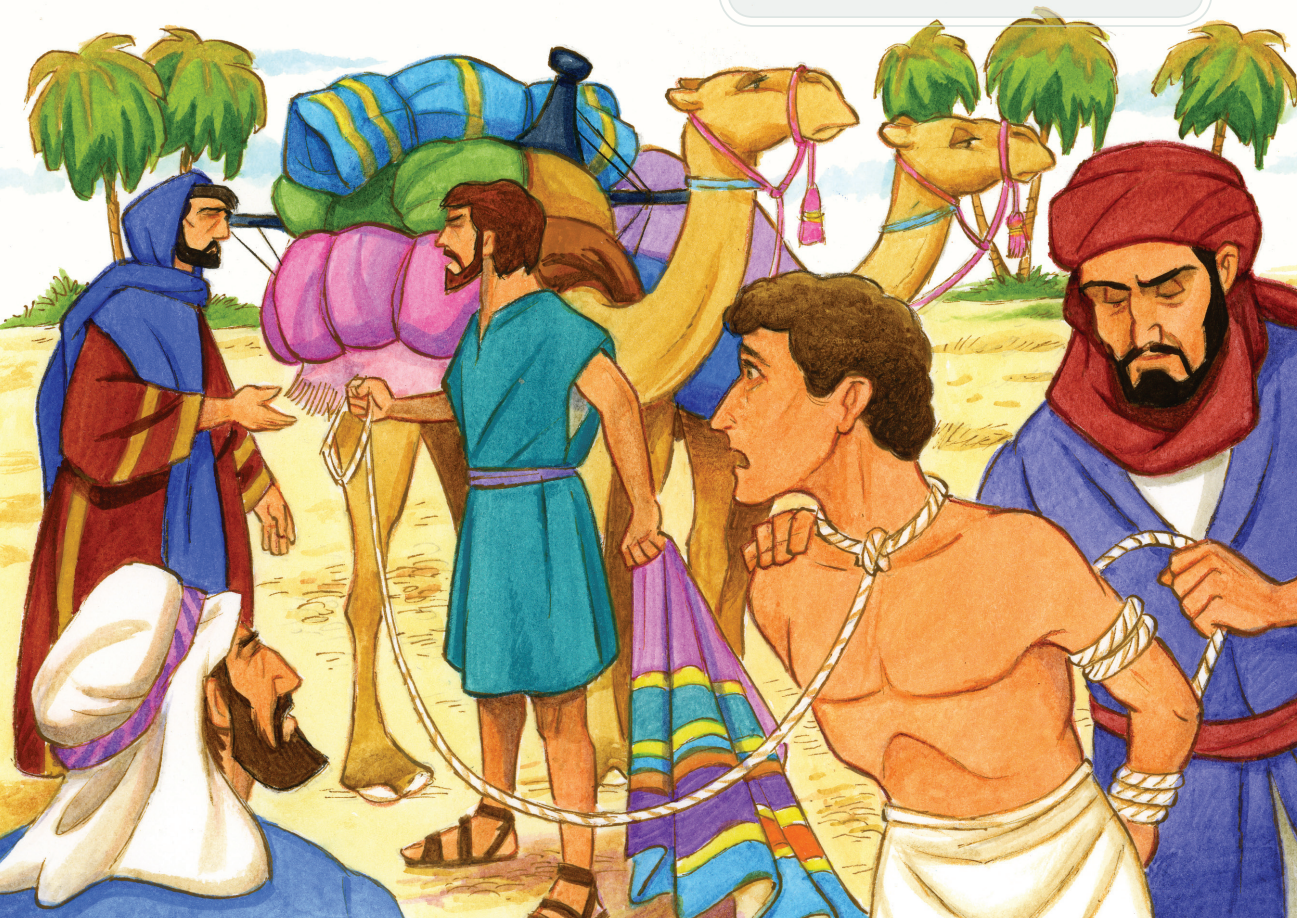
Genesis 37; 39:1–42:2; 45; 50

9

Do you always get along well with your brothers? Joseph didn't, and he had eleven of them! One brother was very little; the other ten hated Joseph. They hated him so much that one day, out in the field while their dad was nowhere in sight, Joseph's ten brothers seized him and ripped from him his beautiful coat of many

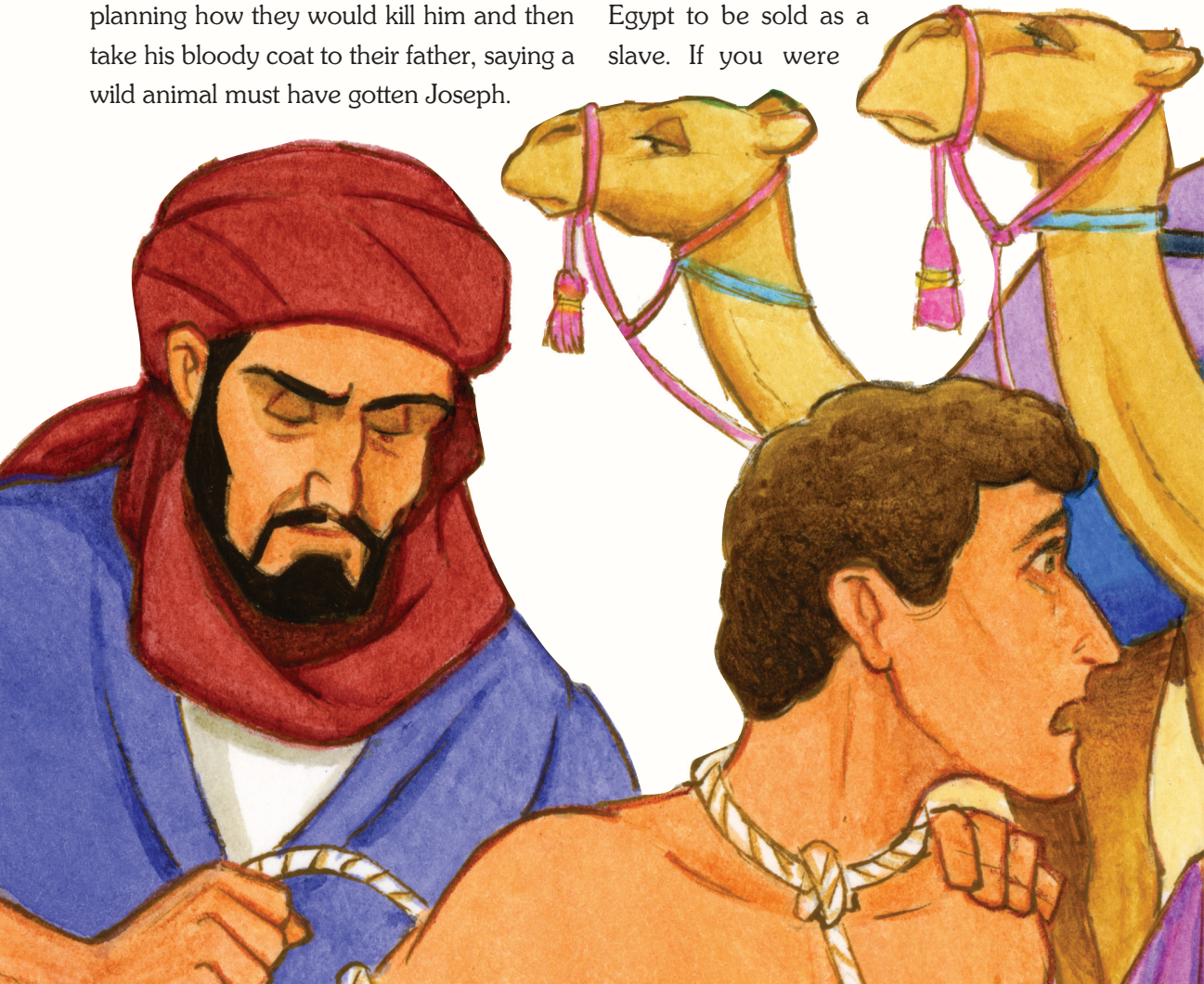
“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.”

Genesis 50:20



colors. (This coat had been given to Joseph by his father and was one of the reasons the ten brothers hated him. Their father hadn't given any of them a coat like that.) Joseph's brothers threw him into a deep, dark, damp hole in the ground. Joseph could hear them up above him, eating their lunches and planning how they would kill him and then take his bloody coat to their father, saying a wild animal must have gotten Joseph.

"Wait!" said Judah, one of the brothers. "Here comes a caravan of traders. Let's sell Joseph to them! We can get rid of him and make money." So the brothers hauled Joseph out of the pit, flagged down the traders, worked out a deal, and sent their brother off to Egypt to be sold as a slave. If you were



Joseph, and if someone had said to you right then, “This will turn out to be the best thing that could have happened,” would you have believed it?

Joseph worked hard for his new master, and God caused everything Joseph did to succeed—which certainly pleased the master. One day, though, the master’s wife made up a lie about Joseph and told it to her husband. Joseph’s master grew very angry and put Joseph in prison. Do you think Joseph would have thought that being sent to jail would turn out to be the best thing that could have happened?

God was with Joseph in the prison, as he had been with him in the master’s house. The keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners. Again, God caused everything Joseph did to succeed. God even made Joseph able to explain the dreams that two of the prisoners had dreamed. These two prisoners were Pharaoh’s servants who had offended the king and been put in jail. Joseph told them both what would happen to them, based on what they had dreamed, and it all came true just as he said. When one servant got

his old job with the pharaoh back, Joseph said to him, “Remember me here in prison; see if you can get me out.” But two whole years passed while the servant forgot all about Joseph. What if someone had said to Joseph, “Being forgotten in this prison will turn out to be the best thing that could have happened”? Would it have looked like that to Joseph?

Pharaoh’s servant finally remembered Joseph. Pharaoh had dreamed a strange dream: seven fat cows were gobbled up by seven skinny cows, followed by seven good ears of grain being gobbled up by seven bad, skimpy ears of grain. That reminded the servant of his own dream, and he told Pharaoh, “I know someone who can tell you what dreams mean.”

Pharaoh sent for Joseph, who listened and then told Pharaoh what God showed him to be the dream’s meaning. “There will be seven good years for growing food, when there will be more food than Egypt needs,” Joseph said. “These seven good years will be followed by seven years of famine so bad that they will use up all the food from the good years. You should put

someone in charge of carefully saving up food in the good years so there will be enough during the bad years.”

“A great idea,” said the pharaoh, “and that ‘someone’ is going to be you.” That’s how Joseph became the second highest ruler in all of Egypt, and how it happened that during seven years of horrible famine, there was plenty of food in Egypt. The famine reached even Joseph’s old home, and his own family ran out of food.

Jacob, Joseph’s father, sent Joseph’s brothers to Egypt to try to buy food for the family. Imagine their surprise to discover that their own brother Joseph was the ruler of all Egypt! Imagine their fear that now, with such power, he would work a terrible revenge on them. But Joseph did not. Instead, he told them, “You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive.” Joseph sent his brothers home to get their father and their wives and their children and bring them all to Egypt, where they would have plenty to eat until the years of famine had ended.

The Bible makes it clear that when people intend evil, as Joseph’s brothers did, it is wrong and God will hold them account-

able for it. At the same time, though, the Bible tells us that God is always at work in everything that happens to accomplish his purposes. Often, we will not know what God’s purpose is in bringing to us what seems sad or bad, but we can trust him to be doing only what will turn out to be the very best.

AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE...

- ▶ **Help your children to think through the consequences for the world if Jacob’s family—Israel—had perished in the famine. How would God’s promises to Abraham, that all the families of the earth would be blessed through him, have been fulfilled? Who would have received and kept the Scriptures? How would Jesus have been born?**
- ▶ **Discuss with your children hard things they or others have endured or are enduring right now. Where possible, discuss the good God has brought through these things. Where God’s plan is not obvious, pray for God’s grace to enable those who suffer to trust God.**