

The Catholic Children's
BIBLE



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Joseph Explains Dreams

JOSEPH EXPLAINS DREAMS

Genesis 41

In Egypt Joseph was sold to Potiphar, the captain of the king's army. Potiphar trusted Joseph and gave him a position in his own household. Potiphar's wife became jealous of Joseph and lied about him. Joseph was cast into prison.

Here again Joseph found favor. The chief keeper gave him charge of a number of prisoners. Among them were the king's baker and his chief butler.

One morning both the baker and the butler appeared sad. Each admitted having had a bad dream.

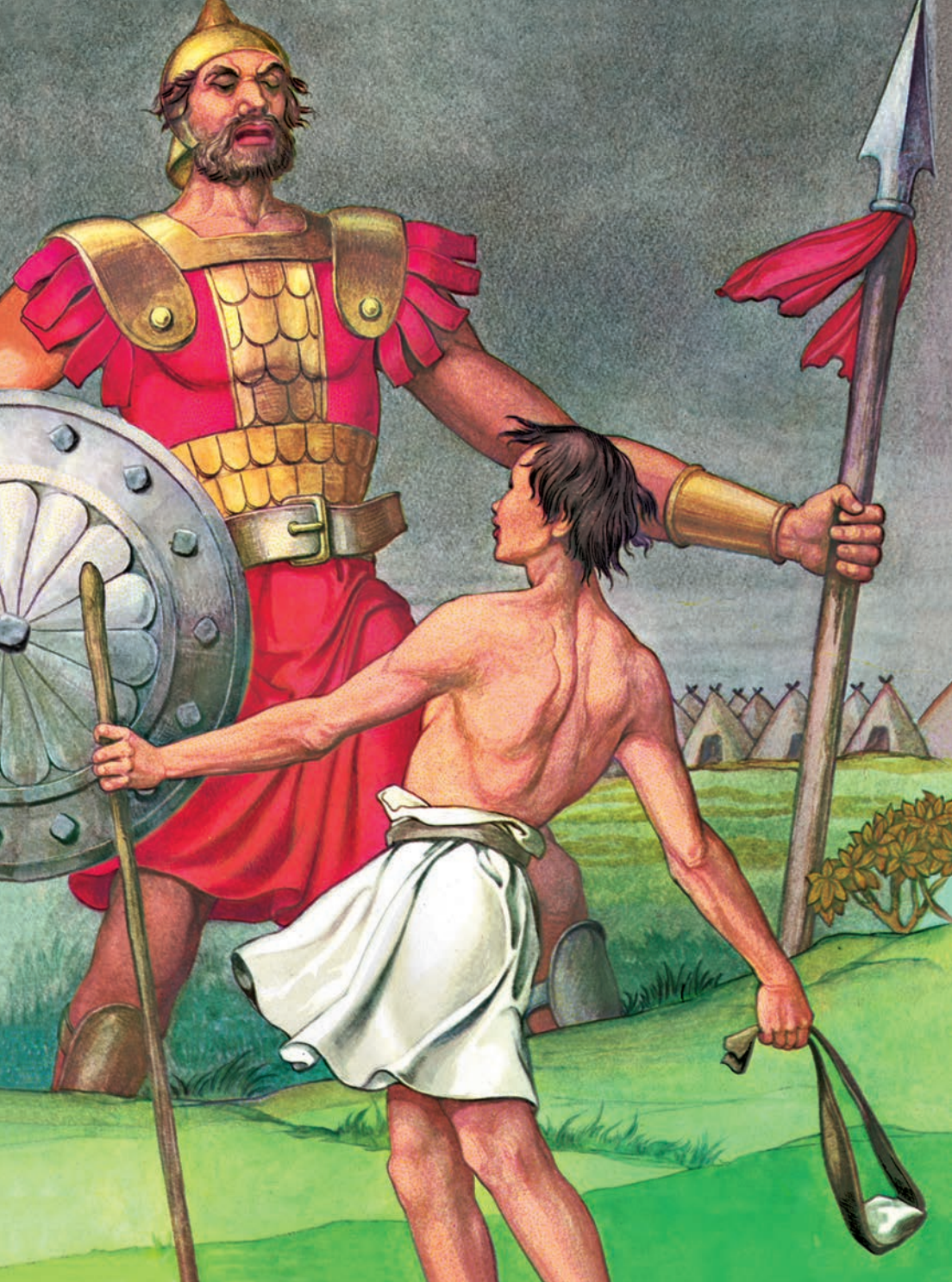
"Tell me your dreams," said Joseph. "With God's help I shall explain them to you."

In his dream the butler saw a vine which had three branches. The butler took the grapes, pressed them into the cup, and gave the king the drink. The baker in his dream was carrying three baskets on his head. The top-most basket contained all sorts of pastries. The birds of the air ate from it.

Joseph gave these meanings to the dreams. The three baskets on the baker's head meant three more days until he would be hanged and the birds of the air would eat of his flesh. The three branches in the butler's dream meant three days also, but for these, the king would restore him to his former post. He would again present wines to the king.

Joseph asked the butler to remember him when he was again in the king's presence. Events happened as Joseph had predicted. The butler was overjoyed, but he soon forgot all about Joseph.

However, God was still mindful of Joseph in prison. One night, two years after the butler left prison, it happened that Pharaoh, the king himself, had two dreams which all the wise men of Egypt could not interpret. Then the butler remembered Joseph. When the king heard about Joseph's ability to interpret dreams, he sent for him.



David

DAVID

1 Samuel 17-30

Although Saul had fallen from his high position, the Lord did not forget about His people. He had chosen the man they needed, one who was brave, tender of heart, and great of mind. Long before Saul's death, the Lord had inspired Samuel to go to the house of Jesse in Bethlehem to anoint David the shepherd boy as the future king of Israel.

God strongly supported David. In his youth, all unknowingly, David was being prepared for the great work God wished him to do. His life as a shepherd made him gentle toward his flocks and strong against wild, marauding animals. Later as the king, he was both gentle and valiant. Gifted with musical talent and having the opportunity to play to his heart's content in God's open country, David became an expert harpist and a singer of psalms to God. Eventually his skill on the harp brought him to the royal house of Saul where he learned courtly manners and later secured posts of honor.

The Lord continued directing David's life toward doing His will. The bravery David showed in his gallant and successful combat with Goliath never died in the hearts of Israel's warriors. David had saved them. He was their honorable hero. Now that there was no king after Saul's death, it was only natural that the elders looked to David. At Hebron, he was publicly anointed the king of Judah, and there, with the Lord's guidance, he began his royal work.

Meanwhile, Abner, the commander of Saul's army, brought Ishbaal, Saul's remaining son, forward and set him up as the king of the remaining tribes of Israel. For a long period, there was a struggle between Saul's family and David's supporters. The conflict went on for seven and a half years, but the fortunes and powers of David increased while the cause of the supporters of Saul's family became weaker.

Abner, quietly and discreetly, sent word to David offering him the land and rule of Israel. At the same **117**



The Birth of Jesus

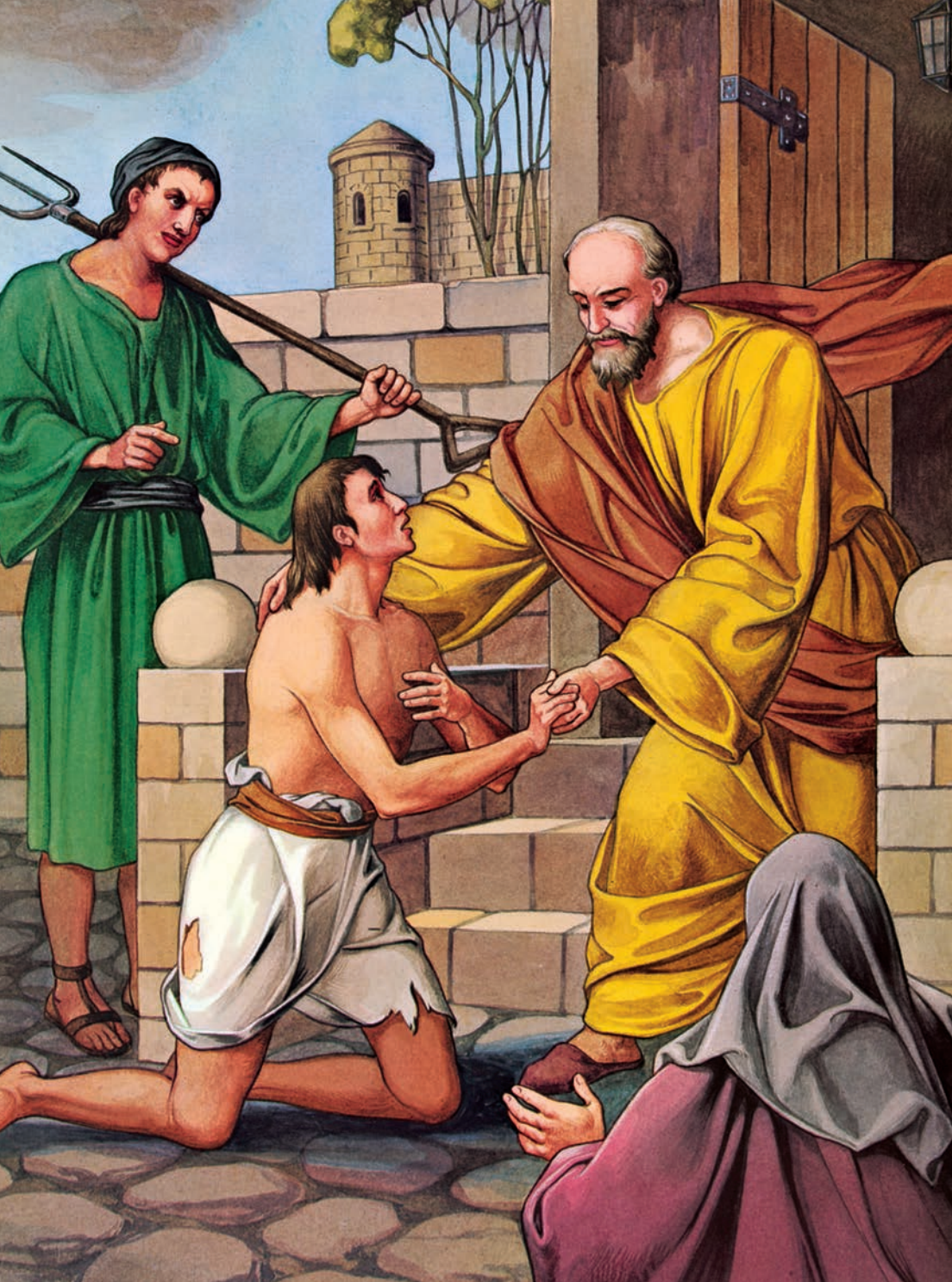
THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Luke 2

Several months after the return of Mary to Nazareth, Joseph brought Mary, his promised wife, to live with him. Joseph knew from the message of an angel that Mary carried within her the Lord of heaven and earth Who in time would be born of her. Mary's heart and all the thoughts of her mind were fixed on God and the great blessings which had come to her. The months passed quietly and serenely in their modest home.

Then one day the peace of the town was disturbed. Caesar Augustus, the great emperor of Rome, through his governor Quirinius, announced that a census would be taken. For the census, each man was to go to the town of his birth and register there. It did not matter that traveling was inconvenient to Mary. God's will was expressed through the exact demand of the law. In obedience, then, to the imperial decree, Joseph and Mary gathered together a few necessities for the journey and set out for Bethlehem, the town of Joseph's birth. After weary traveling of four or five days, they reached Bethlehem. Joseph immediately sought for lodging, but there was none to be had. There was no room for them in the inns.

Night had already fallen when Mary and Joseph found shelter in a manger where animals were kept. Here in the midst of the silent night, Mary gave birth to the Child Who was Christ the Lord. Mary knelt in deepest adoration before her Son Who was the great God of heaven and earth. Joseph joined Mary in silent prayer. God had come, a tiny Baby, to live among men. The Word, the Promise of God the Father, was made Flesh and dwelt among us.



The Prodigal Son

THE PRODIGAL SON

Luke 15:11-32

Jesus told a story to His disciples about a man who had two sons. The younger son said to his father, “Sir, give me my inheritance.” Having received it, the younger son left home and went to a faraway land where he spent all he had in riotous living. Then a famine came to that land. He was reduced to complete poverty. He found work as a keeper of pigs.

Lonesome and hungry, he thought within himself, “The many servants in my father’s house have more bread than they can eat and here I am perishing with hunger. I will arise and go to my father and say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and you. I am not worthy now to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.’”

The young man started for home, but while he was still a far way off, his father saw him. Running to meet his son, he hugged and kissed him. Then the son said, “Father, I am not worthy to be called your son.” The father would not listen. He called to his servants, “Bring out the best robes. Put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet. Prepare a feast. Let us eat and make merry, for my son here was dead and has come back to life again. He was lost and is found.”

The elder son had been away from home. As he drew near the house, he heard the merrymaking. On learning the reason for it, he refused to go into the house. His father tried to win him over, but the elder son said, “I have lived as your son and have never transgressed your command, but you have never made me a present of even a young goat to make merry with my friends. Now when this son of yours who has squandered your wealth in fast living comes home, you have killed the fattened calf in his honor.”

The father said to the elder son, “My son, you are always at my side, and everything I have is yours. However, there is a good reason for this rejoicing and merrymaking. Your brother was dead and has come to life again. He was lost and is now found.”