

Joseph—Genesis 41:37-57

Joseph Prepares for the Famine

I. Additional Scriptures...

1. Daniel was said to have a “spirit of the gods” (Daniel 4:8).
2. How to get wisdom (James 1:5).

II. Chronology.

Bible Period: **Patriarchy.**

Joseph has spent about two years in Potiphar’s household and eleven years in prison. Now there comes 7 years of plenty in Egypt. Joseph is placed in charge of storing up 20 per cent of the produce of the land. In this period Joseph will produce two children (41:51-52); then comes 7 years of famine (41:53—47:26) when the brothers of Joseph arrive in Egypt in search of food (41:53—47:26). Jacob arrives during this period of famine and lives for 17 more years. The sojourn in Goshen, part of Egypt, lasted about 70 years (47:27—50:26). [This chronology data is from Chart #15 in James E. Smith’s, *The Pentateuch*].

III. Summary.

Upon the suggestion of Joseph and with the help of his servants, Pharaoh begins to think about whom would be the best man to be charged with the responsibility of preparing the land for the coming famine. Having considered the many possibilities, Pharaoh comes upon the wise idea to select the one to whom God revealed the future to fill the position. Joseph would be given nearly unlimited power to get Egypt ready for the famine—Pharaoh would still be ruler, but insofar as authority in the land is concerned, no one else would be above him. Pharaoh gave to Joseph all of the outward signs of authority. He gave Joseph a new name and a wife.

We are told in the text that Joseph is now thirty years of age. In the same diligent way he had served Potiphar and the keeper of the prison before, he begins his service to Pharaoh and the people of Egypt and others who would benefit from this revelation from God. The text pictures for us vast amounts of grain being stored.

During this period of plenty, Joseph was blessed with two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

The seven years of famine began to come upon the earth, but under Joseph’s guidance Egypt was well prepared and in Egypt there was bread. Other nations came to buy corn from Joseph.

IV. Outline.

1. Joseph’s plan to prepare for the seven years of famine is accepted as a good idea by Pharaoh (37).
2. Pharaoh begins a search for the right man to place in charge of getting ready (38).
3. Joseph is selected as the one to do the job (39).
4. Joseph will be granted enormous power and the symbols to represent it in his new position (40-44).
5. Joseph receives a new name and a wife (45).
6. Joseph is now 30 (46).
7. The years of plenty were very plentiful and provided generously for Joseph’s storage plans (47-49).

8. Joseph is blessed with two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim (50-52).
9. The seven years of dearth were indeed difficult and suffering people from other lands even came to buy corn from Joseph's stores (53-57).

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ The famine was only felt by the Egyptians.
02. _____ Joseph became second in command in the land of Egypt.
03. _____ Ephraim was Joseph's firstborn son.
04. _____ Pharaoh gave Joseph his own ring.
05. _____ Joseph has now been in Egypt nearly as long as he spent in his father's house.

Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. _____ Pharaoh told Joseph it would be only in the: (a) throne; (b) nation; (c) government--that he would be greater than Joseph.
07. _____ This chapter tells about other countries coming into Egypt to: (a) salute Joseph's wisdom; (b) pay homage to Pharaoh; (c) buy corn.
08. _____ Besides Pharaoh's own ring, Joseph was also given: (a) vestures of fine linen; (b) a gold chain; (c) a & b; (d) none of the above.
09. _____ Joseph's two sons were born: (a) before; (b) after—the beginning of the seven years of famine.
10. _____ The expressive term used to describe the plentiful harvest: (a) massive; (b) by handfuls; (c) abundant.

Fill in the Blanks

11. Daniel _____:_____ “But at the last _____ came in before me, whose name [was] Beltshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom [is] the _____ of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, [saying].”
12. Joseph gathered corn as the _____ of the _____.
13. James 1:5 “If any of you lack _____, let him ask of God, that giveth to all [men] liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be _____ him.
14. Genesis 41:_____ “And Joseph called the name of the _____ Manasseh: For God, [said he], hath made me forget all my _____, and all my father's house.”
15. “... and the dearth was in _____; but in all the land of Egypt there was _____.”

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be given on next week's handout

ANSWERS: Lesson 01-04: [01—False, 2; 02—True, 23; 03—True, 4; 04—True, 7-8; 05—False, cf., 10, 16; 06—a, 1; 07—b, 20-22; 08—d, 10-11; 09—b, 19; 10—a, 14; 11—stolen, nothing, dungeon, 15; 12—cupbearers, 1 Kings 10:5; 13—God, answer, 16; 14—king's cupbearer, Neh 1:11; 15—hanged, Joseph, 22].

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. *And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh...* (Gen 41:37). It would be very easy for prejudice or pride to have caused Pharaoh to reject receiving advice from this lowly imprisoned slave (a Hebrew at that). However, the miraculous interpretations (including that of the Chief Butler and Baker) by Joseph were powerful signs. The advice he gave was sound and any ruler would have been foolish to dismiss his

- suggestions. Once again we see the purpose of miracles being to produce faith. Pharaoh trusted in Joseph and his God.
2. *...a man in whom the Spirit of God is...* (Gen 41:38). Evidently, it was by his close connection with the miraculous dream interpretations, primarily, that Pharaoh and others judged that the Spirit of God was in Joseph. The reason Joseph was chosen to receive such revelations and was given such powers was his faithfulness to the Lord. Joseph was an instrument of God in carrying out His plan to bless all nations through the seed of Abraham. The Spirit of God was **IN** Joseph the same way He is in any faithful Christian. The Spirit is in us as we live and walk according to the teaching of the Spirit (Gal 5:16-26).
 3. *...and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt* (Gen 41:43). Here is a remarkable rise to the top. From the prison cell to the palace was the precipitous shift in young Joseph's career. Who can deny that it was the Lord's providential care toward this godly young man that brought about this shift? Though not mentioned, perhaps Joseph's boyhood dreams came to his mind at about this time.
 4. *And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt* (Gen 41:46). Throughout the record, we are given indicators of chronology. It is remarkable that at this point in his young life, Joseph had spent nearly as much time in Egypt as he had spent in his father's home. Yet we know that Joseph did not consider Egypt his home because of the request he makes about the disposition of his remains (Gen 50:25; Heb 11:22).
 5. *and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same* (Gen 41:48). This had to be a HUGE logistical problem with which Joseph had to deal. His wisdom is seen in the plan revealed here. Getting the food stored up where it could be available at the right place when needed was very important for the success of this massive effort. Joseph demonstrates remarkable leadership and insight in getting this large nation ready for the impending disaster.
 6. *And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house* (Gen 41:51). In the naming of his firstborn son, Joseph gives glory to God. The optimistic way that Joseph looks at life is surely a brilliant example to all of us. How difficult would it be for us to be cut off in such an ungodly way from our families, as Joseph was, and then to put that behind us in such a way that we praise God for it? The labors of Joseph during his service in Potiphar's house and during the eleven year imprisonment were also tremendously challenging, but Joseph's attitude is: "I'll put all of that behind me and express gratitude to God by my choice of the name for my son." The second son's name fits into the very same pattern. What an **OPTIMIST** is this Joseph!
 7. *...but in all the land of Egypt there was bread* (Gen 41:54). Here is the result of the seven years of Joseph's hard labor. He had successfully performed his assigned task once again and the benefactors are the people of Egypt, other nations, and even his own family.
 8. *...Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do* (Gen 41:55). This statement has to do with Pharaoh's instruction to the people of Egypt. It was stated in the context of an orderly way of distributing the stored up goods to the people. However, we can use these words ourselves in living the Christian life to our strong benefit. Study about Joseph and how he behaved himself in the various circumstances. His excellent behavior and his strong faith in God and his undying optimism and sense of the providential care of Almighty God are lessons we do well to learn. **Go unto Joseph** seems good advice to me. Let us

encourage our young people to study about Joseph and appreciate and value the remarkable life he lived and let us likewise benefit from the study of his life.

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

W S X M C D E R G F V V B G T Y H N U J
 K J G A S O N S B O A Z X S F W D D C V
 B J A N G H J K M N O B V C X I Z A W Q
 W S S A F G B T Y H N D M K I O N U J M
 Z A E S W E D C V F E T R F V V F D Q S
 A Z N S X S W E D C E V G H J K O P I P
 W E A E R F V B N E M J U I O S O R E K
 R W T H A X Z W R E D C V F R T G B N H
 Y U H I O P K C M G H A N D F U L S U I
 A F L Z A W S E D C V F R T G B R N H Y
 M A K E O I P U J M N H Y T G B R I F V
 A M Q W D X C E N D E D R G T H J M N H
 Z I Q A S X C D E R F V B U G T Y J T G
 M S N H N U M B E R Y T O O T G B R V A
 B H G T R F V C D E W H S X V Z A A Q T
 Z E W S X W C D E R T I F V B E G T Y H
 H D N H O Y U J M I K R I O D L R P M E
 Q A Z B X S W E W D C T V B G T Y H N R
 N M E P H R A I M J U Y Y H N B G T R E
 F S T O R E H O U S E S V C D E W S X D

[The list below includes one word from each of the verses of this lesson text. See if you can find them above.]

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 01. good | 02. find |
| 03. discreet | 04. ruled |
| 05. over | 06. ring |
| 07. bow | 08. without |
| 09. Asenath | 10. thirty |
| 11. handfuls | 12. gathered |
| 13. number | 14. sons |
| 15. Manasseh | 16. Ephraim |
| 17. ended | 18. dearth |
| 19. famished | 20. storehouses |
| 21. sore | |