

January 9, 2022

“Joseph Finds Favor”
Lesson 2 of Unit

Genesis 41:37-46

Genesis 41:50-52

Intro

Last week we looked at how Joseph showed Godly character in the way he behaved while in Potiphar's house, even as Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him. He ended up in jail because of her false accusation. Between that event and today's passage, several notable things happen to Joseph.

First, he is made the assistant to the warden of the jail, in charge of the prison and the prisoners. This is the same scenario when he was made the head of Potiphar's household. While there, he becomes the personal attendant of the Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker, sent to prison for unstated reasons. They both have dreams, which Joseph correctly interprets, telling them that the interpretation of dreams belongs to God.

Two years later, the Pharaoh has two dreams, which none of his wise men can explain. The cupbearer remembers Joseph's correct interpretation of his dream, and Joseph is called to Pharaoh. He again gives the correct interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams, gives God the credit, and suggests a plan of action for how to deal with the coming famine. Pharaoh's reaction to this plan is where today's lesson begins.

Read Genesis 41:37-46

1. vs. 37: Joseph's plan is approved by both the Pharaoh and his officials

The plan is specific, detailed, and decisive

This is not like typical vague answers that the king's counselors would have given

2. vs. 38: Egypt worshipped multiple gods

Here, Pharaoh seems to be acknowledging the God of Joseph specifically

Vs. 39 supports this

Pharaoh also notes that Joseph is uniquely qualified to lead the carrying out of the plan

“Can we find anyone like this man...?”

3. vs. 39: Pharaoh acknowledges where Joseph has gotten his knowledge

“God has made all this known to you”

Therefore, “there is no one so discerning and wise as you”

This reminds us of Pr. 1:7: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge

Joseph walks with God, who rewards him with spiritual insight and wisdom

In vs. 33, just prior to our lesson, Joseph lists the qualities needed to lead this effort

Pharaoh here uses Joseph's list to show that Joseph is the best man for the job

4. vs. 40: Joseph gets a big promotion!

He is now 2nd in command in all of Egypt

Only the Pharaoh is higher than Joseph

He is in charge of the Pharaoh's palace

Sounds like being over Potiphar's household, only even more so

He is over all the people
“all my people are to submit to your orders”

5. vs. 41: This verse clarifies Pharaoh’s promotion in vs 40
Joseph is in charge “of the whole land of Egypt”
This makes it crystal clear to all who are present
Joseph is to be obeyed in everything
Joseph has been in Egypt for 13 years by this point
He is very likely fluent in the language and customs, making his task easier

6. vs. 42: There are three symbolic items/actions here
The Pharaoh’s ring shows Joseph has authority
The ring is also used to put the king’s seal on official documents
The robes of fine linen show Joseph’s upper class status now
He isn’t wearing prison clothes, but these are another level of improvement
The gold chain is another symbol of both power and wealth
These chains usually had a precious stone of some kind in them

7. vs. 43: Pharaoh next makes sure that the people know about Joseph’s status
He rides him in a chariot so all the people see him
There are no technologies then that we have now (TV, internet, etc)
This is the fastest way to have many people learn of this change
The men going ahead shouting to “make way” are a sign someone important is coming

8. vs. 44: Pharaoh’s words here emphasize Joseph’s position and authority
“Without your word, no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt.”
It takes a man of great humility and discernment to handle such power

9. vs. 45: Joseph sees changes in his personal life
His name is changed
The exact meaning of his name is not known for certain
This action reminds us of Daniel getting a new name in Persia (Dan. 1)
He is given a wife
She is from a highly respected family
Her father is a priest in the nearby town of On
His name is Potiphara, very similar to Potiphar, but not the same person
It is interesting to note that Joseph married a “heathen”
We are told not to marry unequally (believers with non-believers)
God has been blessing Joseph, and does not prevent this marriage
We can speculate about why, but the key thing is that God allows it

10. vs. 46: We are told that Joseph is now 30 years old
He takes his new position seriously
He travels throughout the country
He needs to see everything to understand best how to plan for the future

In vs. 47-49, the text tells of Joseph's work during the seven years of plenty

Every city has grain storage facilities

There is so much grain that no one keeps a record of it

Read Genesis 50-52

11. vs. 50: During the 7 years of plenty, Joseph and his wife have two sons

Joseph is traveling around the country a lot during these years

His wife is the daughter of a pagan priest

How are his sons to learn about who God is and what He has done?

The scriptures don't address this point

Speculation is that Joseph's wife must have become a believer

It is hard to imagine Joseph not living boldly for God on a daily basis

He has demonstrated his faith in God in all areas of his life

This surely had to have an impact on his wife

12. vs. 51: The first child is Manasseh

The name comes from a Hebrew word meaning "forget"

Joseph says God made him forget "all my trouble and my father's household"

He hasn't really forgotten his troubles or his family

The joy of wife and children cause the sharpness of those trials to be less intense

13. vs. 52: The second child is Ephraim

The name means "being fruitful" or "becoming fruitful"

Joseph has become fruitful in Egypt

Powerful political position and connections

A wife and two children

Application: Joseph has had a challenging last 13 years

Sold into slavery by his brothers at age 17

Sold as a slave to an Egyptian official, Potiphar

An attempted seduction of him by Potiphar's wife

Thrown into prison because of a lie told by Potiphar's wife

Forgotten in jail for years after helping another prisoner

He handled these adversities well

Because he has, we know he will handle the challenges of prosperity well

He has been given position, power, and wealth

For most people, those items cause people to fall away from God

This isn't the case with Joseph, who credits God with all the good he has received

Prayer: Father God, thank you for the blessing we have received. Help us to handle these blessing wisely, to recognize them as coming from You, and to use them wisely for Your glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

