

September 13, 2020

“Obedient Love”
Lesson 2 of Unit

Gen. 41:25-33, 37-40, 50-52

Intro

In last week’s lesson, Joseph angers his brothers with his prophetic dream and they sell him into slavery. In today’s passage, Joseph is 30 years old, meaning he has spent half his life in Egypt. Our text offers these additional ideas about Joseph: “Joseph...adopted various facets of Egyptian culture as his own while being most resistant to changing his “one God” worldview... Joseph looked, acted, and spoke like an Egyptian most of the time. But he did not lose his sense of dependence on God in a pagan culture. Whether in prison or in power, Joseph remained God’s man—obedient, faithful, and willing to give God the credit.”

Today’s study focuses on Joseph interpreting Pharaoh’s dreams. As you read/study this story, consider how it fits the theme of “Struggles With Love” and today’s title of “Obedient Love”.

Read Genesis 41:25-33

1. What is the essence of Joseph’s interpretation of Pharaoh’s two dreams in vs. 25-28? To whom does Joseph give the credit for his interpretations (see 41:16 as well)?
2. In what way is Daniel showing “Obedient Love” to both Pharaoh and to God in 41:25-28?
3. Text note: “Most people took for granted that multiple gods existed and governed the world. These gods were often associated with a group of people in a specific locale. Whenever a person moved to another nation or people group, it was believed that he or she had left that deity’s jurisdiction and come under the reign of another (see I Kings 20:28, 2 Kings 17:26). Joseph, however, held to a very different view of God. The Lord would show himself able to carry out his will in any country, not just among the people who knew him.”
4. What words/phrases does Joseph use to describe the seven famine years in vs. 29-31? What does the usage and repetition of these descriptions tell about the coming famine?
5. What significance does Joseph attach to the double dreams of Pharaoh? Looking back, what does this suggest about Joseph’s dreams in Gen. 37 from last week’s lesson?

6. Why does Joseph mention God twice in vs. 32? What does this reason tell us about Joseph?

7. Look at vs. 33. What is Joseph's reason for this statement? Bucking for the job? Simple observation? Something else?

Read Genesis 41:37-40

1. What seems to be indicated about God's interaction with Pharaoh by what happens in vs. 37?

2. In what ways has Joseph shown himself to be "the man of the hour" as vs. 38 shows Pharaoh thinks? (Vs. 38 doesn't provide the answer to this; you'll need to do some individual thinking!!!)

3. What reasons does Pharaoh give in vs. 39 for promoting Joseph? How has Joseph's obedience to God influenced Pharaoh's view of God?

4. In what way are Joseph's job duties now similar to his duties in Potphar's house (39:4-6) and in the prison (39:20-23)? What does this indicate about God's role in Joseph's life?

Read Genesis 41:50-52

1. Knowing what Joseph knows about future coming events, how does vs. 50 show Joseph's confidence toward God?

2. What are we to learn about Joseph in vs. 50 from seeing that he married the daughter of a pagan priest?

3. In vs. 51, Joseph names his first son Manasseh. What does the name mean, and why might Joseph have chosen that name for his son? What does this say about Joseph and his relationship to God?

4. In vs. 52, Joseph names his second son Ephraim. What does the name mean, and why might Joseph have chosen that name for his son? What does this say about the way God deals with Joseph?

5. What does Joseph giving his sons Hebrew names instead of an Egyptian name like he himself got (41:45) say about what Joseph thinks about God and about his birth family?

Application: Some (many?) of us have been in situations like Joseph, where things happened completely opposite of what we expected or wanted. And it would be easy to respond, “Why me?” It’s interesting to note that we don’t every see Joseph responding this way; he may have done it, but it’s not recorded anywhere in Scripture. Instead, Joseph takes each situation as it comes and maintains both his character and his faith in God through difficult and challenging circumstances.

The God that Joseph served is the same one we serve today. Regardless of what happens to us, he does not change, and he is always in control. Wherever we are in life, at the top of the world or in the pit of despair, God is there. Throughout many years of slavery, God showed Joseph multiple proofs that he was not forgotten, giving Joseph confidence that his faith in God, his love for God, was well-placed. That sounds like a good example for us to follow.

Prayer: Father God, help us to remember that, just like Joseph, you are with us in all the circumstances of our lives. Help us to grow in love for and faithfulness to You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

