
Life application of its truths...

1. God's presence is evident in Joseph's life wherever he finds himself. How does this fact bring you much comfort, especially amidst adversity?
2. God was shaping Joseph through all circumstances, both good and bad, that he faced. How does his experience when he is forgotten while in jail, even though innocent, prefigure what Jesus would experience too (Matt. 27:46)?
3. Joseph interprets dreams but attributes this ability to God; for God alone knows the future. How does this give you the assurance that your life is lived under His sovereign control?
4. God strategically places Joseph, through adverse circumstances, in a foreign land, giving him a position of royal prominence. How aware are you of God's invisible hand at work in and around you in this world?
5. God's promises are being fulfilled, even though only partially at this stage. How are Joseph's two sons proof of this - even while living in a foreign land?
6. What does Joseph's ability to interpret dreams in contrast to Pharaoh's wisemen's inability to do so strikingly reveal?

The end...

Joseph has been elevated from prison to the palace; he has been vindicated by God and placed in a prominent royal position in Egypt where he will be instrumental in sparing everyone from starvation due to the famine – including Jacob's descendants living back in Canaan. And God's name is being made known even in Egypt by Joseph. Surely this is evidence of God's sovereign control.

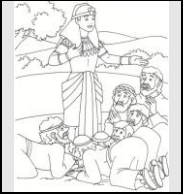
study

OLD TESTAMENT: *Genesis 37-50*

4

THE LIFE OF JACOB'S SONS

Pharaoh's dreams reveal future



Genesis 40:1–41:57

The story so far...

Joseph was detested by his brothers because of their father's favouritism of him. And his youthful arrogance regarding his dreams of grandeur didn't do him any good either! So, his brothers sold him into slavery, instead of ending his life. And as quickly as Joseph rises above his dismal life's circumstances as a slave in Egypt to prominence in his master's house, just as quickly he descends to the depths, finding himself in prison simply because he avoided sin. His master's wife wanted to seduce him, yet he escapes from it, keeping his purity intact. Living a righteous life certainly cost Joseph. Yet even in prison, despite his innocence, the Lord was with him; this is seen by his promotion to oversee all the prisoners as well as the success he achieved at every endeavour.

The story unfolds...

1. What makes Joseph's position in prison key to his future liberation (40:1-4a)?
2. How does Joseph claim to interpret the meaning of the dreams (40:4b-8)?
3. What is the significance of the favour Joseph asks of these royal officials (40:14-15)?

4. Both royal officials share their dreams with Joseph; he interprets both sets of dreams, but the prospects of these royal officials are starkly contrasted. Why is it so important that Joseph's interpretation is fulfilled (40:9-22)?

5. Why is the royal official's forgetfulness so devastating for Joseph (40:23-41:1a)?

6. Why is Pharaoh so disturbed about his dreams (41:1b-8; 41:24b)? What does it indicate when Pharaoh's magicians can't interpret his dreams?

7. Why is the pardoned royal official's placement in Pharaoh's palace so strategic now (41:9-14)? And how is this much more than just a forgetful official remembering Joseph – as Joseph had asked (see 40:14)?

8. How does Joseph again claim to be enabled to interpret dreams (41:15-16)?

9. Pharaoh tells Joseph his two dreams (41:17-24). What is the purpose of the dreams Pharaoh has had (41:25-32)?

10. Joseph shows himself to be a wise man in suggesting a plan of action to Pharaoh for survival during the predicted famine (41:33-37). Why was Joseph once again placed in charge – this time of the whole land of Egypt under Pharaoh (41:37-44)?

11. What does his marriage - even though it's to an Egyptian wife - and children born from that union indicate (41:45; 50-52)?

12. What does the fulfilment of Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams indicate (41:46-49; 53-55)?

The devastation of the famine will bring people from all over the world to Egypt in search of food to spare them from starvation (41:56-57). And it's no surprise that God has strategically placed Joseph in this powerful position at this stage of the story to ensure the preservation of among others, Abraham's descendants.

Towards its fulfilment...

How does this episode show the fulfillment of God's promises regarding:

1. The promised land?

2. The promised descendants?

3. The promised blessing?

4. God's promised rule?