

## Lesson 16

Joseph in Potiphar's house and in prison

Genesis 39:1-23 and Genesis 40:1-41:57



**Teacher, please remember that the commentary below is intended to help you in your study, not to be read to your students. Make your own list of applications, using the help from the commentary, but don't necessarily try to cover everything! Think of the students in your class, then be prayerfully selective.**

Contents:

1. Preparation
2. Memory verses
3. Theme
4. Lesson introduction
5. Verse by verse commentary (suggested location of activities included)
6. Suggested prayer to close
7. Attention grabbers
8. Activities
9. Bible Text (in full, without commentary)

### **1. Preparation**

- 1) Choose memory verse
- 2) Select attention grabber to start off lesson / break the ice - optional, recommended for younger classes. (see point 7)
- 3) Suggested activities- optional, recommended for younger children (see point 8)

### **2. Memory verse**

**Matthew 5:10**

<sup>10</sup> Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

### **3. Theme**

God never forgets us.

### **4. Lesson introduction**

**To the teacher:**

This is a combined lesson of Joseph in Potiphar's house and Joseph in prison. Take the lesson of Joseph in prison as the main focus. The lesson of Joseph in Potiphar's house is included, but use it only to summarize an introduction for the reason why Joseph ended in prison. Do not read the Bible text with them, or pick only a few verses, and then continue with the part of Joseph in prison from Genesis 40 onwards.

### **Introduction:**

As you remember last week, Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery. The Ishmaelites took him into Egypt. There, Potiphar, an Egyptian, purchased him. Things looked pretty scary for Joseph, but God blesses those who are faithful in difficult times

The false accusations of Potiphar's wife had put Joseph in prison. God was faithful to Joseph, even in this difficult time, and the prison keeper put Joseph in charge of the other prisoners.

We do not know how long Joseph remained in prison. He was seventeen years old when he was sent down into the land of Egypt and thirty years old when he was summoned before Pharaoh. He must have spent thirteen years total in Potiphar's house and in prison. In our own understanding, it may have seemed like a sad waste for a bright young man to spend such a long time in servitude and in prison. In God's planning, however, Joseph's time in prison was not a waste at all; rather, it was necessary preparation for the great work God had in store for him. When God judged Joseph seasoned and ready and the timing was right, God would begin to change circumstances for Joseph and His marvelous plan would begin to unfold.

As God was always with Joseph, God is always with us; He will never leave us or forsake us. We cannot get away from God even if we try; He is always with us. He is there when it feels like we are all alone or feels like we are locked up in prison. Not only is God with us, but all the circumstances of our life are working together for good (Romans 8:28). God never forgets us.

### **5. Verse by Verse Commentary**

#### **Genesis 39:1-2**

Joseph, once the favorite son of his father, became a common slave. Being a Christian and serving the Lord does not mean we will not experience trouble. Joseph did nothing to deserve the cruel consequences of his brother's jealousy. Being a Christian and serving the Lord does mean God will watch over us and work all things together for good in our lives.

Potiphar was the captain of the guard for Pharaoh, a wealthy, influential man. As Potiphar's slave, Joseph was hard working and honest. He did not allow a bitter and angry attitude to affect his zeal for service. We note, "The Lord was with Joseph." God enabled Joseph to serve zealously in his difficult circumstances and caused his hard work to be prosperous. As one of Potiphar's best workers, Joseph became a witness of God to his master. God blesses those who are faithful in difficult times.

#### **Genesis 39:4-6**

Because the Lord blessed and prospered the work of Joseph hands, his master put him in charge of the house. Joseph was over all of the other servants, the crops, the house and all of Potiphar's possessions. God blessed all of Potiphar's house because of Joseph. The Lord turned Joseph's difficult time into a prosperous time. He became second in command over Potiphar's house. God blesses those who are faithful in difficult times.

We can be encouraged from this story that—in good times and in bad times—the Lord will always be there for us. How important that we, when faced with difficult circumstances, keep our focus on God—who works all things together for our good. May we, as Joseph, remain obedient and faithful to the Lord. We can trust God to accomplish His purposes.

### **Genesis 39:7-10**

Joseph was handsome, and Potiphar's wife was attracted to him. She wanted Joseph to commit adultery with her, but Joseph knew this was a great sin before God. Joseph also knew it was wrong to take advantage of the trust Potiphar had in him. Daily, she tried to tempt him, but he would not even be with her; he avoided all opportunity to sin.

It must have been difficult for the young man to be pressured daily, but Joseph was faithful to the Lord and passed the test. We, too, can say no to the temptations that the enemy puts in front of us. What are some things that Joseph did to resist temptation that we can learn from when we need to resist temptation? James 4:7,8 says, "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you...." God blesses those who are faithful in difficult times.

### **Genesis 39:11-12**

One day when Potiphar's wife found Joseph alone, she tried to tempt him again. He immediately ran away. Joseph did the right thing. He did not fight her or argue with her. He did not assume that he was strong enough to resist temptation. Joseph ran away.

Like Joseph, we must run when we face temptation to sin. When someone tries to get us to sin, we need to leave immediately. It is dangerous to linger and "think" about sin. We are weak within ourselves. II Timothy 2:22 exhorts, "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

### **Genesis 39:13-18**

Joseph ran away so quickly, he even left his robe behind because Potiphar's wife had grabbed it. Potiphar's wife—probably, embarrassed and angry—sought to get Joseph in trouble by creating a false story: Joseph, she said, had tried to force her to sin with him. Joseph was blamed for the very sin he tried to run away from!

Have you ever had someone lie to get you into trouble? It is not very much fun, is it? Joseph was going through a very difficult time, and it gets worse. Let's see what happens.

### **Genesis 39:19-20**

A false accusation caused Potiphar to put Joseph into prison. Joseph chose to do what was right in a difficult situation, and his circumstances got worse. Perhaps Joseph did not understand the things that were going on in his life at that time; God's wonderful plan would be revealed later. Sometimes, when we do what we know is right, it may seem like the outcome is worse; but, God will honor our good choices. May we be patient and trust God, He will work all things for our good. God blesses those who are faithful in difficult times.

### **Genesis 39:21-23**

Again, we see that the Lord was with Joseph. Even when his circumstances got worse and worse, the Lord never left him. As Christians, we have God's promise in Hebrews 13:5, "...I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Though we may face bad circumstances, God will be with us, just as He was with Joseph. As Joseph remained faithful and patient, God, once more, prospered him. Soon, he was in charge of all of the other prisoners; and once again, he became a great witness to the Lord. God used Joseph even during this difficult time. We need to keep our focus on the Lord and His plans for us, especially in difficult times. God blesses those who are faithful in difficult times

What an example of faith and perseverance Joseph was through very difficult times. As a slave and later a prisoner, he remained faithful and devoted to God. When daily Potiphar's wife pressured him to sin, he remained faithful to God, fleeing temptation. In the midst of these difficult circumstances, "God was with Joseph" and prospered him. As the story of Joseph continues to unfold, his perseverance will be rewarded, for God was working a wonderful plan. May we be faithful and patient through difficult circumstances for we, too, have God's promise that all things are working for a good purpose in our lives. God blesses those who are faithful in difficult times.

### **Genesis 40**

Although Joseph probably spent several years in prison, only one event is recorded--probably, because it led to Joseph eventually being freed from prison.

The Pharaoh's butler and baker were thrown into the prison where Joseph was. The butler was the overseer of Pharaoh's vineyards and wine cellar as well as his cupbearer. He was responsible to see that all drinks served to the King were both safe and of the best quality. Likewise, the baker was responsible for the food served to the King. The butler and the baker had somehow offended Pharaoh and were thrown into the same prison as Joseph.

It does not say what their crimes were, but it is very possible that it was a capital offense, because the baker lost his head over the matter. Some believe that perhaps the guards found poison and threw the baker and the butler in prison because they are the ones who could successfully carry the poison to Pharaoh. It's believed that they were thrown in jail while an investigation was made to uncover the guilty party. Both men were placed under Joseph's custody.

One night, they each had dreams that really troubled them. The Egyptians always believed that dreams were symbolic of something that would happen. Both men had dreams concerning the positions they held for Pharaoh. Neither knew whether the dreams had a good or bad meaning. When Joseph came to check on them in the morning, they were obviously upset. When Joseph questioned their sad appearance, they told him of their dreams and confusion. Joseph informed them that the interpretations of dreams belong to God. He asked them to tell him their dreams.

The chief butler reported his dream and received Joseph's interpretation. In his dream, there was a vine with three branches. As he dreamed, he observed the branches budding, blossoming, and finally bearing luscious bunches of grapes. The grapes were immediately ready for plucking, so the butler dreamed that he picked them and then pressed the grape juice from them into Pharaoh's cup, which had mysteriously appeared into his hand.

Joseph's divine revelation told him that the three branches represented three days, and this meant that in three days he would be released from prison and restored to his former office. The butler was happy at the revelation. Joseph asked him to remember him before Pharaoh, for he was kidnapped and was innocent of any wrongdoing.

The baker hearing the favorable report given to the butler told Joseph about his dream. In his dream he was carrying baskets of baked goods on his head to Pharaoh. Birds came and ate the baked goods out of the baskets. However, the interpretation Joseph received was entirely different than that of the butler's. The three baskets again represented three days, but instead of being reinstated at that time, his very head would be removed from his body and his body hung on a tree. Instead of the birds eating Pharaoh's bread, they would be eating his flesh.

The interpretations had come to pass exactly as Joseph had said. Joseph's hope of being released went with the butler, but the Bible says the butler forgot him. We know that God did not forget him. God never forgets us.

#### **Genesis 41:1-13**

So, Joseph continued in the prison for two more years. We are not told if Joseph became discouraged in all this time, but we know that he kept his faith in God. Let us remember to trust God in those times we could easily become discouraged. God has not forgotten us; He has a plan in store for our lives. God never forgets us.

Pharaoh had two dreams that troubled him greatly, especially since none of Pharaoh's wise men or magicians could interpret the dream. He dreamed that seven plump healthy cows were standing half submerged in the water and then came out of the water for pasture. Seven ugly thin cows came up and devoured the seven fat cows.

The second dream had a similar meaning. Seven plump ears of corn on a single stalk were swallowed up by seven thin and scorched ears of corn that sprouted after them.

There it was then that the chief butler finally remembered Joseph. Knowing Joseph's ability to interpret dreams, he told Pharaoh the two-year old story about his time in prison when Pharaoh had been angry with him and the baker; he told him of the troubling dreams both he and the butler had. He explained that "Joseph" interpreted the dreams precisely; everything he said came to pass.

God's master plan is now seen unfolding. If Joseph had been released from prison when the butler was released, Pharaoh would not have yet had this dream. Who knows where Joseph would be, perhaps back with his family?

#### **Genesis 41:14-44**

Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and Joseph was taken out of jail and made presentable before Pharaoh. As Joseph stood before the King, he maintained that same attitude of dependence on God, declaring that it was not him, but God who would give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

Pharaoh then told his dreams to Joseph; and without hesitation, he interpreted the dreams for Pharaoh, adding to his interpretation the advice that he should appoint officers and conserve the plenty of the first seven years in order to supply the need for the next seven. After Joseph interpreted the dreams and advised the Pharaoh, the Pharaoh recognized that Joseph was a man who had the Spirit of God (a man who spoke under God's direction). He appointed Joseph to a great position of authority. He would be first in the kingdom. Only Pharaoh was more powerful.

The appointment of power was then followed by Pharaoh placing on the hand of Joseph his own signet ring, giving him fine linen clothing, placing a gold chain around his neck, and permitting him to ride in the second chariot.

God can certainly change everything for us in an instant. God does not forget about us and will work all things together for good in our lives (Romans 8:28).

*Suggested activity: grocery goof-ups*

### **Genesis 41:45-57**

Pharaoh then gave Joseph the name "Zaphenath-paneah." He gave Joseph a wife, "Asenath," who was the daughter of an Egyptian priest in the land of On (the "city of the sun" and the great educational center of Egypt).

Joseph was thirty years old at this time and his position gave him the opportunity to travel all over Egypt. Pharaoh's dreams were coming to pass; the land was producing abundant crops for seven years, and Joseph put them into storage in the Egyptian cities.

Joseph gave two sons which he gave Hebrew names, the first he named Manasseh, which means "forget," because God had made him forget the misery of his separation from his family. The second he named Ephraim, which means "fruitful," because God had made him fruitful in the land of Egypt.

Joseph's wisdom was from the Lord; the seven good years were indeed followed by the seven years of famine. Not only did the Egyptians come and buy grain, but people from all over the land came to buy grain.

Look once more at Joseph's life. His brothers' hatred led them to sell him to a caravan going to Egypt. In Egypt, he was made a slave and took care of Potiphar's house; he was faithful in doing his best and God blessed him. He was also faithful in doing his best while in prison, so he was blessed and made head over the prisoners. Just think of how Joseph learned organization and management at Potiphar's house. He learned to deal with people in prison. Certainly in a leadership position, second in command over the whole land of Egypt, he could use any skills he acquired in management and in dealing with people. Remember, God used Joseph to warn the people of Egypt of the approaching famine—many lives were saved.

And, as Joseph assumes the position God prepared for him, we will see still more of God's wonderful plan for him unfold; in our next lesson, we will see Joseph reunited with the family he had not seen since

he was carried away into Egypt. God never forgot Joseph, even when circumstances looked the bleakest. God had a plan for Joseph's life. God's ways are truly awesome! God never forgets us. As God had a special plan for Joseph, so He has a special plan for our lives. Sometimes our problems seem huge, and we can lose sight of God's promise to work circumstances in our lives for good. We need to remember that God is still in control and that God never forgets us.

*Suggested activity: Jungle bungle*

### **6. Prayer:**

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for God's continual remembrance of His children. If there are any if there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

### **7. Attention Grabbers**

What you will need:

- 1) Un-popped popcorn kernels and warm popped popcorn
- 2) As many interview sheets as the number of children in your class, pencils and chairs.

Carrying out the attention grabber:

#### **1) Taking the heat:**

Take some un-popped popcorn kernels and pass a few out to each child in your class. Ask them if they would like to have some popcorn. It obviously is not going to taste very good un-popped. Ask the class what has to be done to popcorn kernels to make it tasty popcorn (It has to be cooked, or heat applied to it). Have your aide with a couple of volunteers pop a bag of microwavable popcorn and bring it into the class.

Let the children each sample some warm popcorn. What is different from the kernels they had seen before? The popcorn had to go through a "terrible trial" ...it had to be cooked!

Explain that difficult times are often compared to going through heat. We sometimes refer to a trial as a "fiery" trial. God often uses hard times to make us more usable for His kingdom, like the popcorn becomes more usable (and tastier) after it has "taken the heat."

Explain that in today's lesson, we will see Joseph going through fiery trials. Yet, through all his trials, the Lord was with Joseph, and his difficult circumstances would work together to fulfill God's good purposes. God blesses those who are faithful in difficult times.

#### **2) Interview a friend:**

Keep the interview a secret until partners are chosen. You can choose partners by placing chairs in the room back to back and playing "musical chairs." But in this case, there will be the exact amount of chairs necessary for everyone to sit on.

When the music stops have everyone sit down, then have them turn the chairs around to interview the person sitting opposite them. This way you will not have only friends pairing up.



Give each child a pencil and a copy of the provided interview sheet. Have them ask the questions on the sheet and write down the answers.

When the whole class is done, collect all of the sheets, allow some of the students to introduce their interviewee to the class. See how many of the questions they remember the answers to. Can anyone remember the answers to ALL of the questions about their partner?

When a few introductions have been made, point out that even though we cannot remember all of the answers to questions we have just asked, God will always remember everything. He knows us perfectly and God never forgets us. It may have seemed that Joseph, now in prison, was forgotten by all. But God did not forget. He knew just where Joseph was and had a good plan for Joseph's future.

(Interview sheets at end of the lesson)

### **8. Activities:**

#### What you will need:

- 1) A basket, fake or real groceries, some grocery lists, and a timer.
- 2) A tape of jungle or Caribbean music.

#### How to carry out the activities:

##### 1) Grocery goof-ups:

You will need a basket, fake or real groceries, some grocery lists, and a timer. Set the items in rows around the room to represent the shelves in a grocery store.

Ask your class, "As much as your mothers love you, have they ever forgotten something you wanted or needed from the store?" The answer will most probably be affirmative. Have your students pick a grocery list from several options you provide. They must read the list and give it back to you. Then have them "shop" for the items they must remember. You can make this as difficult as is age appropriate. Set the timer for 30 seconds. When your students are done shopping, explain that it's easy to forget an occasional item or two when there are so many items to remember, but God never forgets. He is always thinking of us, and working circumstances together for good in our lives. God never forgets us.

God had not forgotten His faithful servant Joseph. He had an incredible plan for his life.

30 seconds and let them shop. Compare the items they have collected with the lists they turned in.

##### 2) Jungle bungle:

Seat your students in a circle. Tell them you will be testing their memories to see if they can remember as well as God can. If it is available, play a tape of jungle music (African, Indian, or Australian stuff will do). Have them tell you their favorite jungle animals to spark some enthusiasm. Then begin the game.

Going around the circle have the first child make a jungle animal sound, then have the second child make the first sound and add his own sound. The third child repeats the first and the second sound and then adds his own. Repeat this around the circle. If anyone forgets the sounds he must point his index finger and touch his hand to his forehead to represent an elephant's trunk. They must keep their trunk up while

the whole class repeats the sounds to help him. Go around the class, maybe even a couple of times depending on class size and time.

Explain to the class that it's difficult to remember when there are so many things to remember, but God never forgets any of us ever. As many people as there are in the whole world, He knows the number of hairs on each head...and that's always changing! God never forgets us.

### **9. Bible text (NIV):**

#### **Genesis 39:1-23**

##### **Joseph and Potiphar's Wife**

**39** Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there.

<sup>2</sup> The LORD was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. <sup>3</sup> When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, <sup>4</sup> Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. <sup>5</sup> From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. <sup>6</sup> So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, <sup>7</sup> and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"

<sup>8</sup> But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. <sup>9</sup> No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" <sup>10</sup> And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

<sup>11</sup> One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. <sup>12</sup> She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

<sup>13</sup> When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, <sup>14</sup> she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. <sup>15</sup> When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

<sup>16</sup> She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. <sup>17</sup> Then she told him this story: "That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. <sup>18</sup> But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

<sup>19</sup> When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, "This is how your slave treated me," he burned with anger. <sup>20</sup> Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined.

But while Joseph was there in the prison, <sup>21</sup> the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. <sup>22</sup> So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. <sup>23</sup> The warden paid no

attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

## **Genesis 40**

### **The Cupbearer and the Baker**

**40** Some time later, the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their master, the king of Egypt. <sup>2</sup> Pharaoh was angry with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, <sup>3</sup> and put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the same prison where Joseph was confined. <sup>4</sup> The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, and he attended them.

After they had been in custody for some time, <sup>5</sup> each of the two men—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were being held in prison—had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own.

<sup>6</sup> When Joseph came to them the next morning, he saw that they were dejected. <sup>7</sup> So he asked Pharaoh's officials who were in custody with him in his master's house, "Why do you look so sad today?"

<sup>8</sup> "We both had dreams," they answered, "but there is no one to interpret them."

Then Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams."

<sup>9</sup> So the chief cupbearer told Joseph his dream. He said to him, "In my dream I saw a vine in front of me, <sup>10</sup> and on the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, it blossomed, and its clusters ripened into grapes. <sup>11</sup> Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup and put the cup in his hand."

<sup>12</sup> "This is what it means," Joseph said to him. "The three branches are three days. <sup>13</sup> Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand, just as you used to do when you were his cupbearer. <sup>14</sup> But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison. <sup>15</sup> I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon."

<sup>16</sup> When the chief baker saw that Joseph had given a favorable interpretation, he said to Joseph, "I too had a dream: On my head were three baskets of bread. <sup>[a]</sup> <sup>17</sup> In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head."

<sup>18</sup> "This is what it means," Joseph said. "The three baskets are three days. <sup>19</sup> Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and impale your body on a pole. And the birds will eat away your flesh."

<sup>20</sup> Now the third day was Pharaoh's birthday, and he gave a feast for all his officials. He lifted up the heads of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker in the presence of his officials: <sup>21</sup> He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, so that he once again put the cup into Pharaoh's hand— <sup>22</sup> but he impaled the chief baker, just as Joseph had said to them in his interpretation.

<sup>23</sup> The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

<sup>2</sup> The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, <sup>3</sup> but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

<sup>4</sup> "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. <sup>5</sup> "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

<sup>6</sup> When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

<sup>8</sup> Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup> But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

<sup>10</sup> He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

<sup>11</sup> And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

<sup>12</sup> The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

<sup>13</sup> Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

## **Genesis 41:1-57**

### **Pharaoh's Dreams**

**41** When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing by the Nile, <sup>2</sup> when out of the river there came up seven cows, sleek and fat, and they grazed among the reeds. <sup>3</sup> After them, seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, came up out of the Nile and stood beside those on the riverbank. <sup>4</sup> And the cows that were ugly and gaunt ate up the seven sleek, fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.

<sup>5</sup> He fell asleep again and had a second dream: Seven heads of grain, healthy and good, were growing on a single stalk. <sup>6</sup> After them, seven other heads of grain sprouted—thin and scorched by the east wind. <sup>7</sup> The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads. Then Pharaoh woke up; it had been a dream.

<sup>8</sup> In the morning his mind was troubled, so he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for him.

<sup>9</sup> Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, "Today I am reminded of my shortcomings. <sup>10</sup> Pharaoh was once angry with his servants, and he imprisoned me and the chief baker in the house of the captain of the guard. <sup>11</sup> Each of us had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own. <sup>12</sup> Now a young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams, and he interpreted them for us, giving each man the interpretation of his dream. <sup>13</sup> And things turned out exactly as he interpreted them to us: I was restored to my position, and the other man was impaled."

<sup>14</sup> So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from the dungeon. When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh.

<sup>15</sup> Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it."

<sup>16</sup> "I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."

<sup>17</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "In my dream I was standing on the bank of the Nile, <sup>18</sup> when out of the river there came up seven cows, fat and sleek, and they grazed among the reeds. <sup>19</sup> After them, seven other cows came up—scrawny and very ugly and lean. I had never seen such ugly cows in all the land of Egypt. <sup>20</sup> The lean, ugly cows ate up the seven fat cows that came up first. <sup>21</sup> But even after they ate them, no one could tell that they had done so; they looked just as ugly as before. Then I woke up.

<sup>22</sup> "In my dream I saw seven heads of grain, full and good, growing on a single stalk. <sup>23</sup> After them, seven other heads sprouted—withered and thin and scorched by the east wind. <sup>24</sup> The thin heads of grain

swallowed up the seven good heads. I told this to the magicians, but none of them could explain it to me.”

<sup>25</sup> Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh are one and the same. God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. <sup>26</sup> The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads of grain are seven years; it is one and the same dream. <sup>27</sup> The seven lean, ugly cows that came up afterward are seven years, and so are the seven worthless heads of grain scorched by the east wind: They are seven years of famine.

<sup>28</sup> “It is just as I said to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. <sup>29</sup> Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt, <sup>30</sup> but seven years of famine will follow them. Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ravage the land. <sup>31</sup> The abundance in the land will not be remembered, because the famine that follows it will be so severe. <sup>32</sup> The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon.

<sup>33</sup> “And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. <sup>34</sup> Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. <sup>35</sup> They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food. <sup>36</sup> This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine.”

<sup>37</sup> The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. <sup>38</sup> So Pharaoh asked them, “Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God[a]?”

<sup>39</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. <sup>40</sup> You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.”

### **Joseph in Charge of Egypt**

<sup>41</sup> So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.” <sup>42</sup> Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph’s finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. <sup>43</sup> He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command,[b] and people shouted before him, “Make way[c]!” Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt.

<sup>44</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt.” <sup>45</sup> Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah and gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On,<sup>[d]</sup> to be his wife. And Joseph went throughout the land of Egypt.

<sup>46</sup> Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from Pharaoh’s presence and traveled throughout Egypt. <sup>47</sup> During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully. <sup>48</sup> Joseph collected all the food produced in those seven years of abundance in Egypt and stored it in the cities. In each city he put the food grown in the fields surrounding it. <sup>49</sup> Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure.

<sup>50</sup> Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. <sup>51</sup> Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh<sup>[e]</sup> and said, “It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s household.” <sup>52</sup> The second son he named Ephraim<sup>[f]</sup> and said, “It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering.”

<sup>53</sup> The seven years of abundance in Egypt came to an end, <sup>54</sup> and the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said. There was famine in all the other lands, but in the whole land of Egypt there was food.

<sup>55</sup> When all Egypt began to feel the famine, the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Then Pharaoh told all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph and do what he tells you."

<sup>56</sup> When the famine had spread over the whole country, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout Egypt. <sup>57</sup> And all the world came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe everywhere.

## Interview A Friend!

What is your name? When is your birthday?

What is your favorite color? What is your favorite food?

What is your favorite thing to do? What is your favorite school subject?

What do you want to do when you grow up?

If you could go on vacation anywhere in the world where would you go?

Do you have any pets? What are their names?

What is your favorite verse in the Bible?

What are the names of your brothers or sisters?