

(Genesis) Genesis 41-42

by Joe Focht

The sermon explores Joseph's journey from prison to power, emphasizing God's sovereignty and the importance of faith in difficult times.

Duration: 1:02:14

Scripture: Genesis 42:13-18, Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 5:25

Topics: "Genesis"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Joseph and his ability to see beyond the human transactions of the world and recognize God's sovereignty. He emphasizes the importance of not getting caught up in earthly circumstances and instead focusing on God's plan. The preacher also highlights the significance of God confirming his messages to us multiple times, using the example of receiving the same message from different sources throughout the day. Finally, the sermon concludes with Joseph giving Pharaoh advice on how to prepare for the upcoming years of plenty and famine.

Transcript

I hadn't had the opportunity to share this archaeological account on Sunday night. Did I last Sunday night with you guys? I didn't think so. This is in *The Signature of God*, a book by Grant Jeffries that really touches on a lot of different things.

But it is interesting here it says that Dr. Crutenden, an English explorer, found a rich tomb of a wealthy Yemenite woman who had died during the time of the Egyptian famine recorded in Genesis 41. This Yemenite tomb, 3,000 years old, fortunately discovered around 1850 after being exposed following a flood which uncovered the grave site. The Yemenite inscription about the famine during Joseph's time reads like this, and this is remarkable.

In thy name, O God, the God of Hamyar, I, Tasia, the daughter of Tzu, Shefar, I sent my steward to Joseph. And he, delaying to return to me, I sent my handmaid with a measure of silver to bring back a measure of flower. Not being able to procure it, I sent her with a measure of gold.

And not being able to procure it, I sent her with a measure of pearls. And not being able to procure it, I commanded them to be ground to powder. And finding no profit in them, I am shut up here.

Whosoever may hear of it, let him commiserate me. And I should, that any woman adorn herself with an ornament from my ornaments, may she die with no other death than my death. So from a Yemenite tomb, southern part of Saudi Arabia, an inscription about the famine and how this wealthy woman had sent her servants to Joseph in Egypt to procure grain, and how she was unable to do that, and at that point saying, all of the gold and silver and pearls, you know, you can't eat krugerrands.

We hear a lot today about krugerrands. I think it's wise to invest your money. I don't know that much about it.

It doesn't matter because I don't have that much to invest. I have four kids that eat all mine. But if you're in that position, I think it's wise to understand the investment and the market.

But when push comes to shove, even in the book of Revelation, it tells us that people will be trading gold for wheat, a wheelbarrow of gold for a wheelbarrow of wheat, because you can't eat gold. And in the bottom and final analysis, grain is worth more than gold is. And here's this woman saying how she had sent her servants to Egypt in the famine to procure grain from Joseph, and was unable to do that.

So we pick up in Genesis chapter 41 in our record. And the reason I read that is because I want to give you all a sense, again, that this is not a Bible story. It is a historical record.

The beauty of it is God's involvement in it. And I think of all historical accounts ever written, this must be one of the most beautiful that's ever been recorded. And not only because we have the humanness and the struggle and the pathos and the emotions of it, but woven within all of that, we see the hand of God and we see him working.

And we actually see again that the nations are but a drop in the bucket to him. He is more concerned with this man and his family in the growing of a nation called Israel, and is able to, again, maneuver the entire world to bring that about. And we mentioned last week, remember while we're reading this story, we don't even know what Pharaoh's name was.

His title, we know, Pharaoh. We don't know his name. We know Joseph's name.

Even his Egyptian name, Zaphnath-Peneah, we'll see tonight. But we don't even know who Pharaoh is. God mentions Pharaoh in passing because to God, that's who he is.

He's one of the rulers of this world. He's a passing figure. And yet we have 13 chapters on Joseph.

We know how he grew up, the struggles of his early childhood and his youth and being sold into Egypt. We have record of his entire life. And Pharaoh is a title mentioned about the ruler of Egypt.

In passing, we know nothing of him. Because, again, there's another, you know, the hand of God. And God's only involvement, again, in history and his only interest in history is as it relates to Jesus Christ and those that were chosen in him from the foundation of the world.

He has a much different perspective of history than we do. So here we have our record of Joseph. If you remember, he had been carried away to Egypt, sold on the auction block to a wealthy man, captain of the guard named Potiphar.

Worked in his house for some time. God prospered his house because of Joseph's presence there. And Potiphar trusted him with everything he had.

Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph. You know our record. He fled from her in her anger.

She accused him of rape. He was thrown into prison. And that is where we left off.

Joseph in prison. No doubt years of questions in his own heart. Thirteen years now.

He's thirty years old. He was seventeen when he was sold into slavery and taken down to Egypt. We picked up the story here tonight where he is thirty years old.

To encourage him, I believe God had sent this baker and cup bearer so Joseph might interpret their dreams and then again watch those dreams come to pass exactly as he had interpreted them. And then remember, that's right, Lord, you gave me a dream of my brother Sheeves bowing down in front of me, of the sun and the moon and the stars coming down, Lord. And if these things are fulfilled exactly the way you said they would be, so will the dreams, Lord, that which you've sown in my heart, though it has not yet come to fulfillment, Lord, I know that it will.

And in Psalm 105 verses 16 and 17 tell us there that the word of God tried Joseph until it came to fulfillment, that that dream, Joseph didn't have an Old Testament. The word of God was that dream that he had given to him, that it tried him. And the idea is like refining metal in a fire, in a crucible.

It tried him until it became a reality. It tested him because Joseph looked at it. It was his hope.

God had given him a promise. Yet everything was falling apart around him. He clung to that promise.

Then he wondered if he had it straight. Then God sent the butler and the chief baker. He interpreted their dreams and he realized, yes, these dreams will be fulfilled.

So as just as they have been, so will my dreams be fulfilled. And now he had said to the the cupbearer of Pharaoh, when you are reestablished in your position in the kingdom, remember me. And at that time, I think Joseph felt this is great.

Finally, this is my ticket out of here. The cupbearer probably being the closest person to Pharaoh, the one who would taste his food, drink his wine to make sure there was no poison and put his line on life on the line for Pharaoh every day. And yet it tells us now it's two full years.

Every time Joseph hears the prison doors creak open and slam shut, he's thinking this is it. I'm out of here. They finally remembered me.

No, it goes on and it goes on and it goes on for two years. Definitely the hardest two years he had. And if Joseph had been delivered as soon as this cupbearer was released, Joseph no doubt would have gone back to Canaan and many thousands upon thousands would have died in this famine that was coming.

And the children of Israel would never have been established in Israel and the line of Judah would have perished and the Messiah would not have come and we wouldn't be here tonight studying this. So I'm glad that the cupbearer forgot about him personally. Again, you know, as we read this, keep it in mind, there may be times when somebody you've helped forget you because God won't let them remember you.

Seems to be the case here. We tend to be mad at people. Joseph always had that ability to lift his eyes above the human transactions of this world and realize that God was sovereign.

Chapter 41 says it came to pass at the end of two full, and I bet they were full, they were full of days. Joseph was waiting for this guy to remember him. Two full years that Pharaoh dreamed and behold, in his dream he stood by the river.

Behold, there came up out of the river seven well-favored cows, fat-fleshed, and they fed in the meadow. Now, for Pharaoh, because they worshiped the Nile, in his dream he's standing by the Nile and he would immediately look for some significance in the dream. Then seven fatted cows came up and fed.

When we see some of the inscriptions of Osiris, one of the major Egyptian deities, he is portrayed as a bull, a great bull with seven fatted cows next to him. So as Pharaoh sees this scene by the river and seven fatted cows, no doubt his heart is stirred and it would mean much more to him than it does to us. And behold, then seven other cows came up after them out of the river.

They were ill-favored and lean-fleshed, sickly is the idea, and stood by the other cows upon the brink of the river. And the ill-favored and lean-fleshed cows did eat up, and the King James literally, they chewed up the seven well-favored and fatted cows, so Pharaoh awoke. That would tend to seven skinny killer cows that would wake up anybody.

Strange dream, and evidently the skinny ones that chewed up, imagine eating the other ones, they were still skinny when they were done. So this is strange stuff. Pharaoh wakes up, rolls around, wipes the sweat off his head, thinks what in the world was that about? Fell back to sleep, and he dreamed a second time.

Behold now seven ears of grain came up upon one stalk, and they were, the King James' rank, which is an old English word for full, they were full and good. Behold seven thin ears that were blasted with the east wind sprung up after them. And the seven thin ears, now we have a different word, devoured, it's literally they swallowed up the full ears.

And Pharaoh awoke again, and behold it was a dream. So he sees the seven blasted and withered stalks of grain actually just swallow up the full ones. And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled.

God at this point is controlling the direction of the world by a king who eats too much pizza before he goes to bed and has these dreams. Isn't it remarkable God just reaches down into human history and touches somebody, gives them a dream and changes the course of things. He was troubled in his spirit.

Most of the time when I wake up, first of all, you remember the dream just when you're waking up. Then five minutes later you're thinking what in the world was that? I know I dreamt something. What was that dream about? I dreamt something last week.

I did something bad, I forget what it was. I was glad when I woke up that it was a dream. You do that, you dream you kill somebody or do something bad and you wake up and you think, boy, man, am I relieved.

Glad I'm better than I thought I was. People come up and lots of times ask me about dreams. I don't have the gift of different Joseph.

I don't know. It came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled. So he sent and he called for all the magicians of Egypt, all the wise men thereof, and Pharaoh told them his dream, but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.

Now these are, again, heavy-duty guys. You have to remember that. These wise men and sorcerers and magicians of Egypt, when Moses comes before Pharaoh, Charlton Heston, get the movie, watch it, we're coming there.

Just a great reminder of the whole story. We have it in the video lending library. And he throws down his staff and it turns into a serpent.

And the magicians of Pharaoh throw down their staffs. They also turn into serpents. Of course, Moses swallows theirs up.

Moses turns water to blood. The magicians of Egypt turn water to blood. Moses calls up frogs upon the land.

They call up frogs upon the land. It isn't until Moses turns the dust of the earth to lice that they say to Pharaoh, this is the finger of God. So these are no lightweights.

These are no phonies. These guys come in. Pharaoh tells them the dream.

They can't interpret it. And it's because the dream was not inspired by an evil spirit. They have no access to the realm that the spirit has come from.

God has inspired this dream. And he has saved the interpretation for Joseph. So with all of their power, they have no ability to help.

Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying now I remember my faults this day. Nice guy. Pharaoh was wroth with his servants and put me inward in the prison of the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker.

And we dreamed a dream in one night. I and he, we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. And there was there a young Hebrew, a servant of the captain of the guard.

We told him and he interpreted to us our dreams to each man according to his dream that he interpret. And it came to pass as he interpreted to us. So it was.

And notice this me, he speaking of Joseph, me, Joseph restored under my office and him, Joseph hang. They believe that the person who had the power to interpret the dream was the one who was then bringing it to pass. So so now he's remembering, you know, me, he restored the power, but he hanged the chief baker thinking that Joseph had this supernatural power to do this.

Now, again, you know, isn't it just like this? You know, it's, it's, it's bad enough when you help somebody and they forget you. You know, there's some people you wish they would forget you, but there's some people that you out of your way and you help them and you do good things for them and you help them paint their house and hang their sheet rock. And again, then they, you know, they, they have a party and invite everybody, but you, and then three months later, when they have to paint the basement, they call you back and they want you to come help them again.

And, and, you know, this is typical stuff we can all relate to here. You know, the chief Butler doesn't remember Joseph because of his kindness. He remembers Joseph because there's a need again.

Oh yeah. We got to interpret a dream again. You know, look, call the guy, you know, I forgot about him for two years, but he's a guy that can do this.

And the remarkable thing is again, to see Joseph's heart above all of these things. When he comes out, he has not a, and, and, and we will follow him again from the time he comes out of prison at 30 till he's 110, 80 years in these remaining chapters of his life. In 80 years, he doesn't speak a bitter or an anger or angry word against his brothers who hated him and sold him not against Potiphar or Potiphar's wife, not against the Butler who forgot him.

It is really remarkable to, to think of the character of this man. He interpreted to each of us our dreams and they came to pass. As he said, then verse 14, Pharaoh sent and called Joseph and they brought him acely out of the dungeon and he shaved himself and changed his clothing.

I guess he did. And he came to Pharaoh. Now Jews did not shave.

Egyptians did. This was probably the first time Joseph at 30 that he had ever shaved in his life. That's quite a growth.

And probably with the Egyptians many times presented before Pharaoh, his head would be shaved, his eyebrows, his beard, everything shaved. When it says shaved, it means capital S-H-A-V-E-D. He was shaved and no doubt they put some scent on him and a clean Egyptian garb and made possibly even some of the eye makeup.

They, they fixed him up and brought him before Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream. There is none that can interpret it.

I have heard say of thee that thou canst interpret a dream, understand a dream to interpret it. Joseph answered Pharaoh saying, how remarkable, it is not in me that thou canst interpret a dream. God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

Shalom. God will give you an answer of peace, Pharaoh. I don't have any ability to interpret dreams.

Isn't it remarkable? If you're going to put a 30 year old over the known world, he has to be a refined 30 year old. And I mean refined in God's fire. And here comes this kid 30 years old and he refuses to touch the glory.

You know, he doesn't say, I could probably interpret the dream if you cut this cupbearer's head off. Oh, you're much better. He forgot me for two years.

You know, he doesn't, you know, there's none of that. He doesn't say, yeah, yeah, I can interpret dreams. You know, praise the Lord.

You know, none of this TV evangelist sideshow nonsense taking the credit to himself. You know, I have the power kind of, no, it's not within me. Just a man.

God, God is the one Pharaoh that can give you an answer of peace. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, in my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river. Behold, there came up out of the river, seven cows, fat flesh, well favored, and they fed in the meadow.

The old seven other cows came up after them. Poor, very ill favored, lean flesh, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness. So it tells why he woke up after this and the lean and ill favored cows did eat up the first seven fattened cows.

And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them. In other words, they were still skinny, but they were still ill favored as at the beginning. So I woke.

These were the meanest, orneriest, skinniest looking cows I ever saw. I never saw anything like the land of Egypt. And after the eight, the fat cows, they were still skinny.

Why? So I awoke, he says. And I saw my dream and behold, seven ears came up in one stock, full and good. Behold, the seven ears and behold, seven ears withered and thin blasted with the east wind sprung up after them.

And the thin ears devoured the seven good ears. And I told this unto the magicians, but there was none that could declare it to me. And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, the dream of Pharaoh is one.

In other words, what he's saying, you've dreamed two things, but it's the same message. God's saying the same thing in both dreams. God has showed Pharaoh what he is about to do.

The seven good cows are seven years and the seven good years of grain are seven years. And the dream is one. They're both saying the same thing.

And the seven thin and ill-favored cows came up after them. They are seven years and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine. This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh.

What God is about to do, he has shown unto Pharaoh. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt. And there shall arise after them seven years of famine.

And all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt. So severe that people won't even remember how good it was. And the famine shall consume the land.

And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of the famine following, for it shall be very grievous. And for the dream, it was doubled unto Pharaoh twice. It is because the thing is established by God and God will shortly bring it to pass.

Joseph now saying to Pharaoh, the thing is confirmed. Now I think maybe this gives us an insight into Joseph's heart because his dream was he saw these eleven stalks of grain that came down and bowed down before him. Bowed down before his stalk of grain.

Then he dreams again, the sun and the moon of stars came and bowed down before his star. God had given him the same dream twice. Certainly different aspects, but the same kind of impression upon the heart.

Joseph says, the reason that you had this dream twice, Pharaoh, is God is confirming. It's something that's established. And as I look at that, I think, had that thing been established in Joseph all of those years, that dream that God had given him when he was 17, had it been established, I believe it was in his heart.

I believe he struggled. I believe as the scripture says, it tried him and refined him until it became a reality. But somehow he knew the double impact of that thing happening twice.

It was something that was established before God. Now, take note of that. I think that's something great for you to remember.

You know, again, you know, if you come down the steps in the morning and you trip because the kids left something on the steps and you start yelling and you're miserable and you spill, you pour your coffee, you know, the coffee in the mug and the mug cracks in half and all the hot coffee pours on your laps and you scream at your wife and then you get down the steps and you open morning by evening devotion by Spurgeon and your message for that morning is love your wife the way Christ loved the church and you're going to, you know, and then you put it away and you go and you get in the car and turn on the radio and Charles Stanley comes on and says, love your wife the way Christ loved the church. And you go, you know, and God's given it to you two or three times during the day. Take note of that.

Joseph says, God does that when he's trying to establish something, he's trying to confirm something and you're laughing, but you know how that goes. Now, of course that happens to wives too. I, I just doesn't happen to husbands and you wives take note too.

Uh, but I'm sure that's happened in your life. You, you read something or you hear something on the radio and then you run into your friend and they say, Oh, you know, God was really ministering this heart. You know, this morning we, we were here in Genesis and we studied chapters.

Uh, I kind of overview chapter 42 through 45. The third service is over. Great young guy walks up, says I'm not saved this week.

I sat home, decided to read the Bible and I read Genesis 42 through 45 came here to the church this morning. You taught the chapters. I'm ready.

God's saying, you know, but God will continue to work in his life throughout and in ours. So just take note of that. Something to tuck away and remember that God oftentimes will double or triple something to confirm it to us that we might learn and realize he's speaking because we're God's kids.

It's only fair. Your kids at home, you have to tell them some, at least two or three times before it gets across. We're just God's kids.

He tells us two or three times to get it across. Now, verse 33, Joseph now has interpreted the dreams for Pharaoh, but this is what he, now he gives Pharaoh something that he didn't ask for. He gives Pharaoh the advice on what to do in response to the dreams.

He's interpreted the dreams. Basically he said, Pharaoh, there are seven years of plenty coming. Unlike Egypt, the scene just filled with, with, with a great harvest, but it will be followed by seven years of famine.

So severe that people won't even remember how good it was. And the reason God gave you the dream toys, confirming it in your heart, the things established. And that was all fail.

Pharaoh really asked for, but now Joseph continues. I believe God's spirit by God's spirit and tells him how he needs to respond to the dream. So we give Pharaoh free advice.

Now, verse 33. Now, therefore, let Pharaoh look out for a man discreet and wise and sent him over the land of Egypt and let Pharaoh do this and let him appoint officers over the land and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. Let them gather all of the food of those good years that come and lay up grain under the hand of Pharaoh and let them keep food in the cities.

And that food shall be in store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land of perish not through the famine. So Joseph says, find someone that you think has wisdom, put them over the management of this. Take a fifth in the good years.

Now it was common in many ancient cultures to take a 10th for the government to take a 10th right across the board from the populace. Joseph says these seven years will be so abundant that you'll be able to take 20% instead of 10% and the people don't even mind. Take 20% of the increase of the grain of those years and put them in national granaries and store them there.

And then when the seven years of famine come, you will have stored up then what you need. Now, of course, the interesting thing is Joseph has been trained by God. He's going to the seminary of the Holy Spirit.

He has learned to work in abundance in Potiphar's house, and he's learned to work under very difficult circumstances managing a prison. Thirteen years of management, part of it under a very full life and wealthy and lavish, I'm sure. And then a number of years, many years managing a prison where things were very sparse.

So God had been training him in ignorance, you know, much like what he does in our lives. How many times do we look back and we think, God, you were at work long ago. Before I realized the Lord, that's why you were doing, you know, God is preparing us and working in our lives.

He's not dependent on us to understand everything is doing. His ways are above our ways as the heavens are above the earth. So are his thoughts above our thoughts are past finding out.

The great consolation is that this shepherd is not dependent on the sheep's IQ to lead them. Praise God. It's so relaxing for me to be a dumb sheep and let him lead.

My brain may not be up to the job, but my heart is willing to be led. Joseph had been trained when he had not even realized it. Verse thirty seven says the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants and Pharaoh said unto his servants, can we find such a one as this is a man in whom the spirit of God is.

And again, by the way, I don't believe that meant to Pharaoh what it would mean to you and I. Theologically, as Christians, we would understand what it meant for the Holy Spirit of God to be working in Joseph. Pharaoh did not believe in a one true God. He was polytheistic, but he took note what he saw.

The evidence that he saw was the same. He'd understand theologically the correctness of the fact that it was the one true living God working in the life of Joseph. But he saw the evidence of of a supernaturally divine force giving this young man wisdom and says, how could we find someone like this in whom the spirit of God is working? So the Pharaoh said unto Joseph, verse thirty nine, for as much as God has showed thee all of this, then there is none so discreet and wise as you are.

Thou shalt be over my house and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled. Only in the throne will I be greater than you. Now, this is a strange day.

Joseph's, you know, what a life. I mean, here's a kid, the beloved son of his father, one day sent out by dad to check on the older brothers, kind of being the foreman, coming out with his technical or dream coat in the morning. He's he's the loved son of the father.

By that night, he's been sold into slavery. He's on his way to Egypt. One day he's in Egypt.

He serves for years. Potiphar's entire mansion and his estate, even his fields are blessed because of Joseph. He wakes up in the morning and he's he's a man of God.

He's he's he's over all of the wealth of Potiphar's house. By the same day in the evening, he's in the dungeon for rape, for something he didn't do. His life changes in one day all the time.

This morning, he wakes up in prison. He's given out bread and water for breakfast. The door opens.

Pharaoh wants to see you. By the afternoon, he's ruling the land of Egypt. Same day.

Strange circumstance, you know, circumstance for young men. Psalm 75 says this. Lift not up your horn.

Don't try to elevate yourself on high. Speak not with a stiff neck. Don't open your mouth with pride.

For promotion cometh neither from the east or from the west or from the south. But God is the judge. He put us down one and he set us up another.

That God is the one who puts men and women in positions, takes one down, sets another up. It's the theme of Daniel's prophecy that even the rulers of the nations, God puts one where he wants him, takes down another, and he sets over nations, sometimes even the basest of men. Joseph now, by the evening, is over the entire land of Egypt.

Verse 41, Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all of the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring, his signet ring, the sign of authority and power in Egypt, from his hand and put it upon Joseph's hand. And he arrayed him in vestures of fine linen.

And he put a gold chain about his neck instead of the shackles that had humbled him in prison. And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had. The license plate said number two.

And they cried before him, Bow the knee. And he made him ruler over all of the land of Egypt. Now he had been in God's seminary for thirteen years to be prepared for this.

He had dreamed the dream in chapter 37 of others bowing down. But he was thirteen years away from being the man God wanted him to be so that he could be worthy to rule when people did bow down. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, verse 44, I am Pharaoh.

Without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all of the land of Egypt. Joseph, no one shall even move in this land without you. And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Peneah.

You know, Joseph probably said, That's the name I was thinking of. Called him Zaph for short. I don't know.

What a name. And by the way, in Coptic, it has something to do with the revealer of secrets or the one whom secrets is revealed. In more ancient Egypt, scholars try to say it has something to do with preserving life.

I really haven't read one group of scholars or commentators that are agreed on what it means. The meaning of Zaphnath-Penea is related to the fact that he interpreted the dreams for Pharaoh and would be preserving life. We know that.

The exact meaning of it, I don't know. When we get to heaven and you see Joseph, you'll know him when you see him. Peter, James, and John knew Elijah and Moses, talking with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.

So when you see him, you'll know him. You can say to him, What the heck does Zaphnath-Penea mean anyway? And he'll tell you. Just one of the things you can look forward to in heaven.

Thought I'd mention that. You know, there's been all kinds of things. We'll go on there.

Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Penea, giving him an Egyptian name. Egyptian citizenship wanted him to hold the respect of the people that he would be ruling over, making his job easier. And he gave him a wife, Asenath, the daughter of Potipharah, the priest of On, Hierapolis.

And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt. Now, the priests of On were almost equal in power to Pharaoh. It was there in Hierapolis and On where the universities were all ancient writers, even to Strabo and Plato.

And many of them had traveled there and studied there with the priests of On in Egypt. There was a university there. There were libraries there.

Supposedly much of the learning of ancient Egypt was recorded there. And the priests of On were the major worship of Ra and Atum, the sun god, and were considered sometimes almost as powerful as Pharaoh. So for Joseph to have been given the daughter of one of these idolatrous priests, but powerful in Egypt, it was also a sign of favor.

And, you know, I look at this and I think, isn't it interesting? I mean, Egypt is forbidden after the children of Israel are taken out of it. And yet here is a young man, you know, it's like being set over Hollywood or Las Vegas or something and given an idolatrous wife and, you know, and an idolatrous name and put in the middle of all this. And yet, because God's favor is on his life, the land of Egypt is preserved.

No doubt his wife becomes a believer. His servants will see more evidence of that as we study on. His children.

Remarkable. Joseph was 30 years old when he stood before Pharaoh, King of Egypt, and Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went throughout all the land of Egypt. Imagine him traveling in his chariot throughout the land of Egypt.

And in the seven plenteous years, the earth brought forth by handfuls. The idea is when they harvested the grain, there was so much they just actually took it in handfuls of grain. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt and laid it up, laid up the food of the cities, the food of the field, which was round about every city he laid up in the same.

And Joseph gathered grain as the sand of the sea very much till he left off numbering. He could no longer keep record in hieroglyphics and tombs. We find constant inventory taken of years of harvest.

It says in these seven years, the harvest was so great it was like the sand of the sea. They left off numbering. It was without number.

They couldn't keep up with the harvest. And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath, the daughter of Potiphar, a priest of On, bear unto him. And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh, which is from the Hebrew verb forgetting.

For God, saith he, hath made me to forget all my toil. No, but he's wrong here. And all my father's house, how Jacob and his father's house was still in his heart.

But the idea of the bitterness of it is the idea here. God, he said, if you if you are dealing with bitterness and unforgiveness and you're carrying the weight of that, have you been hated by your family, sold into slavery, accused falsely of rape and imprisoned 20 years of your life, wrongly gone down the drain? Joseph is able to say without a New Testament, without the revelation of Jesus Christ, we have without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, where we cry Abba, Father, without so many of the benefits we have, Joseph is able to say, God hath made me to forget the years of bitterness. And he's the same today, yesterday, today, forever.

The Old Testament says, I am the Lord. I change not. So my encouragement to you this evening is if you are dealing with great bitterness and great anger, the same God is the God of of today, of yesterday, today and forever.

He is able to make you to forget also in the sense of leaving off the venom and the bitterness and the hatred. Not the lessons that you were to learn through those hard times, but the bitterness of the experience. The name of his second son, he called Ephraim, which means fruitful, to be fruitful.

For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction. And seven years plenteous that was in the land of Egypt were ended. And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said, and the dearth was in all lands.

We read this evening about a princess in Yemen who came under the effects of this. But in all the land of Egypt, there was bread. Now, by the way, now we are 20 years since Joseph was sold.

He's 30 years when he comes out of prison. The seven good years have gone by. He's 37 years old now.

This is 20 years again since he's come out of Canaan. And again, just remember how remarkable it was for him to have sat on the knee of Jacob, the son of his old age. Jacob's name changed to Israel and to ask him of the stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

And again, for Jacob to say to Joseph as he was a young man, you know, it was because of a dream at Bethel. My brother hated my guts. I was running.

God gave me a dream at Bethel and I saw a stairway to heaven. And God changed my life that night. Yes, I served Laban 20 years.

Interesting number, huh? Seven years I worked for Rachel and I was ripped off. Woke up and it was Leah. Served seven more years for Rachel.

Then I served six more years after that and it was 20 years before I was restored and come back to the land. Isn't it interesting because Joseph listening to that Joseph's life would be changed by a dream. Joseph would be hated by his brothers.

Joseph would be 20 years before he would face them again and see those of his own household once again. How God wondrously prepared him as a youth when he wasn't even aware of what God was doing, how faithful God is again. Can't you think back to times before you were saved when God was doing things? You know, after we're saved, we look back, we think, Lord, you were at work.

Lord, I remember now. Lord, it's amazing how that happened. You saved me or you kept me from being killed or Lord, you preserved me in that circumstance or Lord, you let me in that circumstance and broke my heart.

And part of my broke because of my broken heart is one of the reasons I turned to you and I was saved. 20 years, verse 55, when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried unto Pharaoh for bread and Pharaoh said to the people, go to Joseph, whatever he says that do. And the famine was over all the face of the earth, the whole Mediterranean world.

Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold unto the Egyptians and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. And notice all countries came unto Egypt to Joseph to buy grain because the famine was sore in all lands. Now we're set up here when Jacob saw he's back in Canaan, that there was no, that there was grain in Egypt.

Jacob said unto his sons, why do you look one upon another? And whenever I read that, I think that's what I call hungry. You know, I, you always, you know, you see one of those cartoons where there's two guys on a desert island and one guy's looking at the other guy and he turns into a big drumstick, you know, he's looking at our big hot dog or something, you know, here we are in the famine, there's starvation and, and Jacob saying to his sons, what do you guys stand around looking at each other for? You know, one of them is called Reuben. You know, you look at him and there's corned beef and sauerkraut hanging out.

Why do you guys stand around looking at each other? You know, take Benjamin out of your mouth. What are you doing? And he said, behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Get you down there and buy for us from there that we may live and not die.

Now it is interesting that from some Egyptian records, we know that it was considered an insult for you to send your servant to represent you in Egypt. Maybe that's why this princess in Yemen was not given grain. Jacob sends his sons down to Egypt to represent him.

And Joseph's 10 brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt, but Benjamin, Joseph's brother, that is by Rachel, by the same mother, Jacob sent not with his brethren for, he said, lest preadventure mischief shall befall him. And the sons notice of Israel, Jacob came to buy grain among those that came for the famine was in the land of Canaan also. And Joseph was governor over the land, no doubt working in the border areas where people were coming in with ships and so forth.

And he, it was that sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brethren came down and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth. Now look down at verse nine.

It says, Joseph remembered the dreams. This is from back in chapter 37. Here, Joseph, now they come down to buy grain.

They have not seen him for 20 years. He was 17 years old when they sold him into slavery. He is now 37.

Those were, those were at least 13, very hard years. Joseph is dressed in Egyptian guard. He's a man.

He may be, maybe his head is shaved or braided at this point in time, possibly eye makeup. They look at Joseph and don't recognize him. Joseph recognizes them.

And Joseph will speak to them through an interpreter. Joseph understands them because he understands Hebrew, but he doesn't want to let on who he is. So he uses an interpreter who does speak Hebrew to speak to them.

And the meantime, it says in his heart. Now he's remembering the dreams that he had. And lo and behold, here are his, his 10 brothers bowed down in front of him to buy grain.

So Joseph is going to deal with great emotion at this point in time. And it's remarkable the way God records it for us. Verse seven says, Joseph saw his brethren and he knew them, but made himself strange to them and spoke roughly under them.

And he said unto them, whence come ye? And they say from the land of Canaan to buy food. And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. So Joseph speaks roughly to the interpreter.

He says something in Egyptian and you know, like he's mad. And the interpreter says to these guys, he wants to know who you guys are and what you're doing here. And, uh, they say, well, we've come from the land of Canaan, uh, to buy grain.

And, uh, the interpreter says back to Joe, you know, I think I'm going to buy grain. Verse nine said, Joseph remembered the dreams, which he had dreamed of them and said unto them, no, to the internet now through the interpreter, you're spies. You came to see the nakedness of the land.

That's why you've come. There's famine everywhere. You want to figure out how you can rip off grain.

You're spies. There's 10 of you. That's why you've come.

They said unto him, no, my Lord, but to buy food or thy servants come. We are all one man's sons. We're a family.

Now these guys are all between 40 and 60 years old. Now they were all older than Joseph. Joseph was 17 when he was sold in Egypt.

Only Benjamin is younger. So they were all between 20 and 40, 20 years before this. So they're all between 40 and 60 years old now.

Now that's middle age. Joseph lives to be 110. You know, it's not as old as it sounds today.

We are all one man's sons. We are true men or honest men, or they're saying to Joseph, you can trust us. He's thinking, yeah, I know we are honest men.

Thy servants are not spies. And he said unto them, no, but to see the nakedness of the land, you've come. And maybe when Joseph had come from Jacob to see what they were doing, maybe they accused him of being a spy for daddy.

I get the feeling as I read through this. And they said, no, thy servants are 12 brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan. And behold, the youngest is this day with our father and one is not.

Imagine Joseph hearing that he's the one who is not, by the way, if you're not keeping up with the story here, Joseph's thinking you could say that one is not. They just said you can trust us now. I'm sure Joseph is dealing with in his heart now.

Is dad alive? Do they hate Benjamin the way they hated me? Are they persecuting him? Have they injured him? What in the world did they tell dad happened to me? Where are their hearts? So instead of immediately revealing himself to them, he hesitates. No doubt he wants time to pray and seek the Lord. But I'm sure he's as startled as they are as he confronts the situation.

Verse 15, he says, and no, I think you're spies. Verse 15. Hereby shall you be proved.

This is how I'll know that you are honest men. By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go forth from here, except your youngest brother come down, send one of you, let him fetch your brother, and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you, or else by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies. I'm going to send one of you back to Canaan to get Benjamin.

You bring him down here, and if he comes back with the younger brother, then I'll know you're telling me the truth. And he put them all together into the prison inward for three days. Now you can imagine Joseph is musing and praying during these three days.

Joseph himself remembering the pit. These 10 brothers were going to find out how guilty their conscience is. It is starting to eat at them now.

And Joseph is no doubt saying, God, what do I do? Lord, this is the fulfillment of a dream you've given me. But how do I process all this? Lord, how do I respond to this? How I've been your servant these years. Lord, I was your servant in Potiphar's house.

I was your servant in the prison. I have stood before Pharaoh and served you, and I'm not taking any glory. I've lifted your name up now.

Lord, these things are happening in my life. How do I respond? And no doubt in these three days, Joseph gains what he feels is direction in the situation. Verse 18, Joseph said unto them the third day, this do and live notice, because I fear God that must have convicted them.

If you be true men, honest men, let just one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison where you were. Go ye, carry the grain for the famine of your houses, but bring your youngest brother unto me. So shall your words be verified and you shall not die.

And they did so. Now he begins to let them go. And they said one to another.

Now you have to understand this. Look down in verse 23. Joseph is eavesdropping on the argument they're going to have.

And it says they knew not that Joseph understood them, for he had been speaking to them through an interpreter. So now they break out into this argument before Joseph in verse 21. They say one to another.

We are verily guilty. Truly, we are guilty concerning our brother in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us and we would not hear. Therefore, is this distress come upon us? Here is Joseph listening.

And these guys are saying, hey, when we threw Joseph in the pit, we listened to him. We sat down and we ate lunch. We didn't have any mercy on him.

He was pleading with us. We didn't listen to the sound of his voice. We had no mercy.

And because of that, this is coming upon our heads. Still, 20 years later, guilt. They're still hearing his words come up out of the pit.

Reuben answered and says to them, spake I not unto you saying don't sin against the child? No. Here's Reuben 20 years later still saying, didn't I tell you so? Don't you love to have somebody like this around 20 years later still saying, I told you. I told you so.

Didn't I tell you not to sin against the child? And you would not hear. Therefore, behold, his blood is required of us. Imagine this again all these years later.

You know, there is this incredible record of Joseph overcoming bitterness and unforgiveness. And on the other side, there's this emotion threaded through here of guilt. 20 years later.

Now, again, I shared this morning when I was a kid, five or six years old, 1955, my first cousin, my dad's sister's son, 17 years old, he's older than me, got in a fight with his best friend over a girl. And as they fought, there was a gun there and he grabbed the gun. And in the struggle, one shot and off, one shot from a .22 rifle killed his best friend, went through his head.

17 years old, he got murder one life sent to Gratersford, 17 years old. Now, as a five or six year old kid, I remember the anguish of the family. I remember the tears.

I remember them coming in with suits and not knowing what was going on. And the verdict was passed. And I remember asking what happened.

And they would say, well, he's at college. You know, tell me something. I was a kid, he's away.

It wasn't until I was older, 13, 14, they told me the story and I went and visited him a number of times. Gratersford. Well, he was paroled 20 some years later.

In the 1970s, he went in around 1955 and it was around 1976, 77, he's paroled. Now imagine how much the world had changed between 1955 and 1976. He hadn't changed much.

He's paroled. Within a year and a half, he's involved with a minor and something happened and he was back in again. Year and a half back in, paroled again, he's back out.

Fist fight, I don't know, something. Back in, paroled again, back out. 30 years after he killed his best friend, he drove back to Scranton, to the area where he killed him, took a hose, put it on the exhaust pipe of his car and asphyxiated himself, killed himself.

30 years later. Now I had heard the last year or so he was living with a Christian family. So sometimes in the back of my mind, I wonder if God got to him.

God's pretty amazing. But 30 years later, he was still ridden with guilt. Now, as a Christian, we should not be dealing with that.

If you if you are a Christian and you are still handling some kind of guilt, maybe from an abortion, maybe from a family that you destroyed. And now there are teenage kids who don't even want to see you. They don't want to visit with you.

They don't want anything to do with you. Maybe from somebody else's life that you just caused to be a disaster. I don't know all of your stories, but I do know this, you know, here we are working through this record that God gives to us of how he worked in the lives of men and women in history.

And here are these brothers 20 years later still bearing this tremendous guilt. God is bringing them to the point where they're going to hear Joseph say, God sent me to Egypt to preserve life. So it was not you that sent me.

It was God. Joseph's not going to say what you did was right. But he's going to say that God.

Providence was was riding all of this, making things come out of it that we hadn't dreamed of so that I am not bitter with you. You know, maybe you need to ask someone forgiveness and hear their voice like Joseph's voice to his brother saying, be not angry with yourselves or grieved with yourselves. Or maybe you need to go to God and maybe you need to believe again that he has forgiven you, that it's all been taken care of 2000 years ago on the cross and that when he saved you, he cleansed you as far as his records are concerned.

Of all of your sin past, present and future, that he's removed all of your transgression from heaven's record. And maybe you just need to believe that, you know, maybe you read in the word that God has forgiven you, but you can't forgive yourself for some reason. And if you have come in with a piece of that baggage, I pray that you leave it here tonight before you leave.

If you've come here this evening with the weight of guilt upon you because you're not a Christian, maybe you have gone to church and that really won't do anybody any good going to church because there are people all over the country that go to the house of God and never know the God of the house that they go to. I grew up in a church system. Didn't do me any good.

I wasn't saying I didn't know Christ. I didn't know one who was risen and loved me. If you're here this evening and you don't know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, I'm not talking about religion.

I'm talking about relationship. The vast difference. Again, I know about Benjamin Netanyahu, the prime minister of Israel.

I know information about him. I know about him, but I don't know him. His kids know him.

His wife knows him. Big difference. A lot of people grow up in church and they know all the information about Jesus.

He was God's son. He was the Savior. They have the information, but they never know him.

They just know about him. And there's a vast difference. Again, Jesus, when he was amongst us, said, I am the bread of life.

If you partake of me, you'll live forever. And just like those starving in Egypt, they could have known what the bread of life was, that the loaf of bread was sitting in front of them. They could have known it was made from the grain that had been kept in the storehouses there.

And they could have starved to death looking at the loaf of bread. And you see, if their wife ate it, they wouldn't get full. They'd still die.

Their wife couldn't eat it for them. Their parents couldn't eat it for them. And the Bible says that flesh and blood does not inherit the kingdom of God.

It can't be left to you from your parents' will, their faith. Jesus said, I am the bread of life. You can know all the information about that loaf of bread and die of starvation.

It won't do you any good unless you partake of it, unless you take it and you eat it and you put it in your mouth and put it in your life. And my challenge to you this evening is if you don't know Jesus personally as your Lord and Savior, I'm talking about religion, talking about knowing him. I encourage you before you leave this evening, after we end the service, we're going to sing a song and in the service, we'll have the musicians come.

You guys want to come? The elders and the pastors will be down the front. What I want you to do is I want you to come down the front and pray with us. We'll give you a Bible.

We'll give you some literature to read. Jesus said this, if you are ashamed of me in this adulterous and wicked generation, I also will be ashamed of you. But if you're not ashamed, if you'll confess me, I'll confess you before my father and before all of his angels in heaven.

If the cost to you is your pride and all it costs you is to walk down the aisle and say, all right, I want to pray. Let's do this. I'm ready.

He hung naked before the world for you. He hung naked before the world for you. And you don't have to come down here to be saved.

That's not the point. It has to be real. It has to be in your heart.

It can't be phony. And I'm sure if you've grown up in the church and you're not saved, you don't want anything phony. But it's a wonderful time to know in your heart there was a moment in time I prayed with somebody.

I was not ashamed. I asked Jesus to be my savior. And if that's you this evening, I pray that you don't leave because we can't guarantee you're not going to meet a tractor trailer on the way home and your soul be cast out into eternity without Christ.

But I can guarantee you this. If you pray with us here tonight, when you leave, before you leave and you meet the tractor trailer, you're going straight to heaven from there. I can guarantee you that.

So if you don't know Christ, I'm making appeal to you.

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