

WHAT HAPPENED TO JOSEPH TO AND HIS FAMILY

WHAT DID IT MEAN TO THEM

1) Joseph His Father's Favorite

The redemption story of Joseph begins and ends with his family. The years between the start and finish are laced with strands of obstacles and disasters. Born to his father, Jacob, in his old age, the Bible tells us that Joseph was his father's favorite (Gen 37:3). Joseph was already hated by his brothers for this fact alone. But then one day Joseph had a dream and he shared with his brothers. Genesis 37:5-8 is the verse at the beginning of this study. So when Joseph shared this dream with his brothers they hated him even more.

Joseph is so hated by his brothers that they plan to kill him. However at the last minute his oldest brother, Reuben stepped in and argued that they shouldn't kill him, but instead they should throw him in an open pit. While the brothers were sitting having lunch a caravan came by and they made a deal with the people traveling to have them buy Joseph as a slave. They thought that this would be the end of the "dreamer".

2) Continuation of Joseph's Troubles

The Ishmaelites that bought Joseph took him to Egypt where they sold him to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh. (Genesis 39:1). Even as a slave Joseph never forgot his dreams and he worked hard. Like Michael Jordan with his dream the road wasn't easy. After a while Joseph found favor in Potiphar's eyes. He worked his way up until he was the head of all of Potiphar's household. God was looking out for Joseph and blessing him for his loyalty to Him. There were many servants and much business that all fell under the manager's responsibilities of "The Dreamer".

In the book of Genesis, Chapter 39, we can read that Joseph had eventually taken over all of the work of Potiphar responsibilities and it is said that Potiphar "did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate." (Vs 6). There was only one thing that Joseph was to have no part in and that was Potiphar's wife. However, his wife was attracted to Joseph and invited him into her bedroom, but Joseph refused her. Day after day she propositioned Joseph and each time he refused.

Genesis 39:8-9 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. 9There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

One day when Joseph was in the house and Potiphar's wife was the only other one home he was close to her and again she propositioned him. As he turned to run she got a hold of his outer garment and pulled it off of him. He had to run off without his garment.

Jonah 39:17-18 When Potiphar came home she told him, "The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me; so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside." Potiphar's anger raged and without asking Joseph his side of the story he had him send into prison.

3) One step forward and two steps back... and forward again

When Joseph got to the prison where Pharaoh's prisoners were held again he found favor in the eyes of the one in charge. Before long he was in charge of the other prisoner's in the prison. One day the cupbearer and the baker for Pharaoh were sent to the prison by their master. A while later both the cupbearer and the baker had dreams that worried them. They couldn't find anyone to interpret their dreams until Joseph (the "dreamer) told them that with God's help he could interpret them.

He explained that the cupbearer would be restored to his original position in 3 days and that the baker would be killed and eaten by the birds in three days. Joseph asked the cupbearer to remember him when he was restored. Unfortunately the cupbearer completely forgot about Joseph.

Two years later Joseph was still in prison and Pharaoh had two dreams and called on everyone he could find to interpret them. When he couldn't find anyone the cupbearer remembered Joseph in prison and told Pharaoh about him. He called Joseph up out of prison and was happy with him and his interpretation.

Genesis 41:17-32

So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "In my dream, there I was, standing on the bank of the Nile; ¹⁸ and behold, seven cows, fat and fine-looking came up out of the Nile, and they grazed in the marsh grass. ¹⁹ Then behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and thin, such as I had never seen for ugliness in all the land of Egypt; ²⁰ and the thin and ugly cows ate the first seven fat cows. ²¹ Yet when they had devoured them, it could not be detected that they had devoured them, for they were just as ugly as before. Then I awoke. ²² I saw also in my dream, and behold, seven ears of grain, full and good, came up on a single stalk; ²³ and behold, seven ears, withered, thin, *and* scorched by the east wind sprouted up after them; ²⁴ and the thin ears swallowed the seven good ears. Then I told it to the soothsayer priests, but there was no one who could explain it to me."

²⁵ And Joseph said to Pharaoh, "Pharaoh's dreams are one *and the same*; God has told to Pharaoh what He is about to do. ²⁶ The seven good cows are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one *and the same*. ²⁷ The seven thin and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven thin ears scorched by the east wind will be seven years of famine. ²⁸ It is as I have spoken to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do.

²⁹ Behold, seven years of great abundance are coming in all the land of Egypt; ³⁰ and after them seven years of famine will come, and all the abundance will be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and the famine will ravage the land. ³¹ So the abundance will be unknown in the land because of that subsequent famine; for it *will be* very severe. ³² Now as for the repeating of the dream to Pharaoh twice, *it means* that the matter is confirmed by God, and God will quickly bring it about.

Joseph told Pharaoh what he should do to prepare for the 7 years of drought, by taking advantage of the 7 years of abundance. Pharaoh was very pleased with Joseph and considered him the godliest and wisest of all the men in Egypt and put him in charge running everything in all of Egypt.

Genesis 41:39-40

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. 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."

4) God's Timing

Even at this point we can see that God has had a plan all along for Joseph. From the time that Joseph had his dreams as a boy God has moved ahead of him in all he came up against. From favorite son to being thrown into the pit, from the pit to a slave in Egypt to running the entire affairs and household of Potiphar, from prison to becoming the one in charge all of the prisoners, from a dream interpreter of the baker and cupbearer to two more years of prison, from interpreter of Pharaoh's dreams to running the entire nation... through it all God was redeeming Joseph over and over again. But the best is yet to come.

5) Fulfillment of the dreams

It is amazing how dreams play a part in nearly all of Joseph's life. So far all of the dreams that Joseph has been involved in have seen God's hand working to His glory through the life of Joseph. Through all of these years since he was sold by his brothers, Joseph has not forgotten the dreams he had as a boy. He has waiting on the Lord through it all.

If we fast forward through the 7 years of plenty and into the 7 years of want, we see God's hand again at work to fulfill the dreams of Joseph.

Genesis 41:56-57

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. ⁵⁷ And all the world came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe everywhere. The stage is set for Joseph and his family that he has been separated from for many years.

Joseph's father, Jacob, sent his remaining sons to Egypt to get food so that they didn't starve to death. When they arrive Joseph recognized them but they did not recognize Joseph. He tested them over and over again and found that they were different than they had been when he was a boy. When they had arrived in front of Joseph the dream that Joseph had dreamed as a boy was fulfilled.

Genesis 42:6

Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the person who sold grain to all its people. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground.

At the end of the story of Jacob, Joseph and his brothers there is a verse that speaks to the entire story of Joseph. God had been faithful to Joseph, because Joseph had remained faithful to God. Joseph forgave his brothers because he believed the words he gave his brothers.

Genesis 50:19-21

But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? ²⁰You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. ²¹So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.